Summary

"It's Jimin I'm in love with, hyung," Taehyung says, pressing Yoongi a little harder against the wall. He drags his thumbs over his lip, slowly, measured, thinking he wants to have it swell under his own. "Don't misunderstand."

Notes

alternative title : spoiled brats and the cheating fest

i tagged what i thought was the most important/prominent (?) so that no one is uncomfortable, but if you see something that should be in there but isn't, please let me know!
Chapters starting from 65 and up have been beta-ed by my favourite person.
I love you and I'm forever thankful♡
1.1 Ghosts

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“A-Ah, fuck— ”

Yoongi’s moan dies in his throat. His forehead feels sweaty against the metallic wall of the bathroom stall, his fingers slide down the cold surface. He hates the sound it makes. His tie feels too tight around his neck, the crisp fabric of his dress shirt sticking to his skin and the air around them is too thick for him to breathe properly, but Taehyung tightens his strokes just a little more on his dick and that’s all it takes for him to forget about it.

“I bet you let all those fancy New Yorkers fuck your tight little ass,” Taehyung growls in his ear, pressing his front against Yoongi’s back and canting his hips so he can feel the outline of his cock press against his ass.

Yoongi lets out a breathy laugh at this, scrunches his eyes shut and snags his bottom lip between his teeth. “Yeah,” he drawls, his chest heaving fast, the warmth of Taehyung’s exhales against his nape making him shiver. If they don’t make their way back to the meeting soon, it’ll become suspicious. “Ye-eah, I did. And you know w-what? They were a-all better fucks than you.”

Taehyung gives an almost violent shove, pushes him harder against the pale wall, and that makes Yoongi snicker. But it’s nothing amused. It’s closer to something desperate and a little confused, a little delirious. With a hint of self-disappointment, maybe.

“Don’t lie, hyung.” Yoongi can hear the smile in his voice, can almost picture him all just from that, from the thousands of little fragments of memories of him he held onto. “We both know very well that no one will ever fuck you as good as I do.”

And Yoongi would have something to say, so he parts his lips to argue for a while more, but Taehyung shuts him up, strokes him faster, until he’s a mess of pathetic whimpers and shaking legs and coming all over his hand.

Taehyung slumps against Yoongi’s back, his taller, broader frame feeling heavy, but it’s a heaviness he always secretly liked. Always somehow found comforting.

Taehyung still hasn’t been touched, probably won’t ask to be. They don’t really have the time, and in those kind of situations, he rarely ever prioritized himself.

“Fuck, I’ve missed this,” Yoongi whispers, dizzy on post-orgasm high. The words slip out, and they already taste like regret on his tongue.

Taehyung doesn’t answer.
Taehyung keeps spacing out.

People around him talk business and profit and statistics and for once he can’t stay focused. He would’ve left long ago; he isn’t really the type to endure boredom or to fake interest. But he’s the son of the CEO, and as an act of courtesy, he’s required to stay.

It’s not difficult to find something else worth spending thoughts on, though, and he blatantly keeps staring at Yoongi, who’s sitting on the other side of the table, just a bit on the right.

The now 22 years old Yoongi who came back after 14 months of absence. The Yoongi who dared saying ‘I’ve missed this’ after Taehyung did as little as rub his dick in a cold-white bathroom stall at coffee break.

He didn’t answer because he, himself, doesn’t know if he’s missed this. Or him. Or anything in between. He can’t even decipher how he felt when he saw Yoongi appear, marine suit and white shirt perfectly fitted to his slender frame, black hair parted and brushed neatly, gaze as feline as he remembered it as he entered the meeting room with his own father. He felt warmth, certainly. From anger, from embarrassment. Hard to tell. Lust, also, violent and scorching. Maybe some kind of twisted Pavlov right there. For the rest, Taehyung has shut everything up.

Yoongi is just the slightest bit of slumped in his cushioned chair, gaze absent, taking notes lazily, and Taehyung stares at his hands. His long, pretty fingers, the way they curve around the pen. This has Taehyung thinking about just earlier, when Yoongi had made them slide across the wall, trying to find purchase on anything. Has him thinking of how pale they always looked against the tan of his own skin. Has him thinking about those blurry memories of Yoongi writing his first lyrics, scribbling notes and melodies everywhere because 16-years-old Min Yoongi wanted to be a music producer.

And now he’s here, years later, listening diligently to stuff that used to bore him out of his skull. How funny.

Taehyung scoffs, rather loudly.

The whole muster turns to him, his father goes silent in his speech. He crosses his legs under the table, tries not to make his smile too obvious.

“I’m very sorry, please continue,” he says, lips loose around the words, and he sets his stare heavily on Yoongi.

And when they finally make eye contact, something tightens around his insides with anticipation. But instead of the complicity he used to find there, they just mirror cold questioning.

“Remember that your teammate will be decided with the topic of your project,” Taehyung flaps his notebook closed at this, listens distractedly as he gathers his belongings on the desk. “You have until next week to choose your subject, the list will be available online. It’s a first-come, first-served, so choosing more than a preferred subject might be a good idea.”

Chairs screech onto the flooring as the students get up, rendering the rest of the teacher’s greeting
inaudible, and Taehyung doesn’t waste time in stuffing his supplies in his backpack, swinging it over his shoulder. He wants out. Because being stuck with people he can’t stand for 3 hours straight makes him feel like he’s suffocating. And because he needs a cigarette.

Sometimes, very late at night, or too early in the mornings, he wonders why he’s even bothering to attend college with those daddy’s princesses and first-rate fuckboys, spending hours being doused in numbers and statistics and leadership advices that could be translated as how to lie to the people trusting you. Second year of college, third semester learning about something he came to loathe, with people he came to loathe. Taehyung used to be good at making friends, now his relationship basis with every new person he meets is set to ‘distrust’.

He climbs the stairs like a ghost, sees how crowded the doorway is. Maybe in another context he would care about not bumping into anyone. His shoulder snags against someone’s as he makes his way to the corridor. He doesn’t apologize. And he gets called out for it, with a sarcasm-dripping tone.

“Thanks for trying to be careful, Kim Taehyung.”

“Get your ass outta the way Park Jimin, and that won’t happen again.”

“Dickhead.”

Taehyung flips him the bird over his shoulder as he walks away.

No exceptions, no matter how cute the guy is. Taehyung despises them all equally.

The lighter clicks, and the little flame starts dancing, fragilized by the wind and Taehyung cups his hand around it, lights his cigarette up before his thumb releases the pusher and he puts it back in his pocket. He takes two long drags that he savors, closes his eyes and sighs the smoke out.

He enters the building in which his apartment is, takes the elevator up to his floor and fumbles in his backpack to find his keys, cigarette hanging between his tightened lips. He unlocks then closes the door behind him, throws the bag and all it represents in the entryway, ready to be ignored for days. Or hours, at least. It’s a little past 2pm, and his flat doesn’t bathe in natural light so it’s duller than it should, but he feels no need to change that. Taehyung isn’t really the type to mind about those kinds of things. Bright as day, dark as night. Doesn’t really make a difference for him. Never altered his way of living.

He walks up the corridor, reaches the kitchen and takes another drag, then forgets the stick to burn away in the ashtray on the counter. He puts his phone on the table, passes his shirt over his head, shrugs his pants off along with the rest and he walks to the bathroom, doesn’t even close the door.

The shower is short, always. Dampen, lather, rinse. Don’t repeat. It’s useless.

He ruffles his wet hair with a towel when he comes out, walks around naked to the kitchen again. Living alone; perks of being the son of a rich man. His hand molds the handle of the fridge’s door, but his eye catches on the soft LED light of his phone blinking, telling him he’s got a new notification. He goes to it, forgets his first intention.

It’s amazing, in this day and era, humans are made slaves of tiny flashing lights.
An update notification that he dismisses, and a text that he opens with a swipe of his thumb.

**Min Yoongi:** i need to buy a car, wanna come with?  
16-03-2016, 14:19

He freezes halfway back to the fridge, air stuck in and he blanks out for a few seconds. His eyes flicker to the previous message received from this number, the one he spent too much time staring at in lost hours, until the pain became so close to his heart that it numbed, and became a good friend.

**Min Yoongi:** im sorry  
31-12-2014, 23:11

Taehyung sighs, throws his phone back on the table, sets on grabbing the beer he originally wanted. He uncaps it using the edge of the countertop right next to the fridge and he chugs down half of it. He wipes the back of his hand over his mouth, rakes his fingers through his still damp hair. He breathes in, breathes out for a while, gaze lost somewhere in the corridor that extends until the entryway. He turns around, grabs his phone more roughly than he means to, and his thumb starts hovering the letters.

**You:** theres somewhere i wanted to go tonight  
16-03-2016, 14:31

And that’s in fact only half true, it’s just that he hopes it’ll shrug him off. He takes another swig, stares at his phone stupidly.

**Min Yoongi:** ah  
16-03-2016, 14:33

**Min Yoongi:** refinery?  
16-03-2016, 14:33

Taehyung lets out a breathy laugh. Yeah, of course Yoongi would know. Only Yoongi would know.
He wills himself to move, to continue existing outside of that fucking screen and he heads to his room, not exactly putting clothes on, but at least a pair of boxers. His phone not buzzing is frightening, in a way, but he forces himself to think that it should be relieving instead. Taehyung doesn’t want to deal with that.

Then the answer comes, and Taehyung closes his eyes, feels dumb anticipation about a conversation that didn’t really needed a continuation. He ignores it, leaves his phone on his desk and exits the room, but then it vibrates again and his gut gives a squeeze. He walks back.

They say curiosity is a sign of intelligence.

**Min Yoongi:** we can go after
16-03-2016, 14:38

**Min Yoongi:** if you want
16-03-2016, 14:39

Taehyung doesn’t want.

He knows how easy it is to fall back into old habits, he knows that it’s a bad idea. He just knows. Feels it. Besides he’s used to going alone, now. Used to spend his evenings or his nights with nothing but the concentrated version of his thoughts, used to exist there as though he’s the only person in the world, the only one spinning. The refinery became his home of truth, and he doesn’t think he’s ready to share that again.

His thumb presses on a letter, then erases it.

Yoongi left the meeting two days ago without even looking at him, anyway. This proposition probably doesn’t mean a thing.

**You:** ok
16-03-2016, 14:42

Taehyung turns the engine off, pulls the handbrake up.
Yoongi is standing a couple meters ahead, waiting in front of the building, scrolling through his phone. Taehyung just then remembers how big the gap is between the everyday-Yoongi, and business-Yoongi. The unwrinkled suit is gone, he’s replaced it with a snapback worn backwards and holding his hair away from his forehead, dark skinny jeans and leather jacket. He looks up when Taehyung’s staring and meets his gaze but doesn’t budge, doesn’t really acknowledge him, and goes back to reading whatever is on the tiny screen.

Yoongi has never been an expert at greetings, but he’s done better than that.

Taehyung scoffs.

“Cadillac, I’m not surprised,” he drawls, getting out and slamming the door shut.

“Of course you aren’t,” Yoongi says that without looking at him, fingers moving around the device for a couple more seconds before he finally stuffs it in his back pocket. And Taehyung could swear there is more to that sentence. Yoongi just doesn’t want to say it.

Taehyung slips his index through the key ring, enfolding the tiny pieces of metal of his palm, lets Yoongi’s eyes meet the wall of his, and follows him.

And really, it’s not much more than that. Taehyung is heavily questioning why he’s there waiting, instead of chain smoking on his balcony and watching dumb movies. There’re no valid reasons to answer his whys, Yoongi is doing well on his own, he doesn’t even ask for advices or opinions.

Taehyung trails behind, useless. He couldn’t care less for the cars around, he already has his own. And so he stares, instead. Because that’s all he seems to be doing since Yoongi is back. He watches him stroll around, the dealer tending to him blabbering things and being too eager to please. Watches him run his fingers on the smooth curves of certain cars, the ones Taehyung knows interest him the most. Dark in color, always. Watches him nod to what he’s being told, watches him purse his lips when he’s inside himself and thinking instead of outside and listening.

Most of his habits are still the same, from the drop of his voice when he asks a disinterested question to the glimmer in his eyes when he falls a bit in love with what he sees. He smells different, though. And that bothers Taehyung. He tries to guess the brand of his new cologne, he knows it’s expensive; it’s not the first time he smells it. But he just can’t pinpoint where and when. He wonders, brows slightly creased, how Yoongi got it, who gave it to him. Why he stopped wearing the one he received as a gift when he turned 19.

He still emanates the same thing he used to, he’s still calm and mostly silent, the air still weighs more around him. He exudes something powerful without even knowing, and it has nothing to do with how he’s dressed or how much money he’s got in his wallet. Taehyung has grown accustomed to it with time, so he doesn’t notice it as much, but he knows just from the way the seller moves around him, the way he talks to him. It’s all hidden in the way Yoongi walks, hands more often than not in his pockets, the slight frown on his features when he’s focused, the way he looks at things like they’re all his, looks at people like they’re all preys.

Taehyung groans. Yoongi still turns him on doing practically nothing.

But of course Yoongi is not really how he appears to be. His words are polite and amiable, despite how he slurs them sometimes, and if you’re close enough, then he might allow himself a little
sweetness from time to time. Just a little sugar sprinkled over a sentence in between ordinary ones, so that it doesn’t stand out too much.

Taehyung makes his keys jump in his hand. Again, and again, looking around, at the other few people in the building. Yoongi is going through paperwork now so he has to wait, and he’s bored and horny and his cigarettes are in the console of his own car, out of reach.

Yoongi comes to him after a while, with a single key that he swings mid-air in a satisfied show. Taehyung smiles, a less than comfortable pull of his lips, and he was completely useless, *this was a stupid idea*. Time changes things, breaks and builds them, and Yoongi was probably naïve in thinking they could still share the same complicity they did before he left for America.

Taehyung turns tail and heads to his car, takes the first steps outside, where the sun is slowly setting.

“*You’re not coming with me for the first drive?*”

Because Min Yoongi is a reckless man who buys a car without even trying it. That’s the kind of things growing up filthy rich makes you do. Taehyung hesitates but doesn’t stop walking. He makes his way to his car, his Audi that’s been neatly parked there for over an hour, unlocks it, bends over the driver seat and reaches to his cigarettes. Yoongi is still, observing him with a blank expression. Taehyung swings the door closed, slips a stick between his lips as he walks back towards the other, lighting it meanwhile. And when they’re standing close enough, he takes another one from the pack, makes it twist between his fingers and presents it to Yoongi’s lips. Yoongi gauges him but not for long, and he takes it easily, lets his mouth close around it.

“*Sure.*”

Yoongi changes gear and the car gives a kick. Taehyung lets his head fall back against the headrest, air squeezed out of his lungs, closing his eyes around the overly-warm feeling that’s settled in his belly. Yoongi still drives the way he used to, and it still does things to Taehyung like it used to.

They’re silent, not even the radio as a faint background noise. Just the powerful purring of the car, Taehyung’s increasingly uneven breathing, and Yoongi’s aura of dominance. He shudders.

He opens his eyes, stares at the dark and smooth ceiling, then angles his head towards Yoongi, observing him. Again. Endlessly. He’s got this laid-back pose, slouched in his seat but not really, body not exactly following the curve of the leather. He’s wearing this small frown again, concentration. He radiates a silent satisfaction, a silent sense of control, and he probably doesn’t care much for Taehyung’s who’s set on low simmer right beside him. Yoongi always looked manly when he was driving, even when he was 18 and just fresh with his driver license, driving his father’s car. And Taehyung likes that he’s still enjoying things that himself stopped enjoying a while ago. His left hand is wrapped on top of the steering wheel, firmly, the other one splayed loosely on the gearshift. And Taehyung gets stuck on that. Because Yoongi always liked to make his fingers dance on it, tapping, brushing it, and it always had Taehyung’s mind racing.

Yoongi releases the gas pedal as he presses on the clutch. His hand cups around the gear knob, just the way Taehyung knows he hold his own dick when he touches himself. He shifts, the car picks up even more speed. Taehyung readjusts himself in his seat. This is hell.
Yoongi is in love with this car.

The round sounds it makes, the barely-there rumbling he can feel as it eats the road up. The metallic black of the exterior, the dark seats, dark leather and dark everything because that’s how he likes it. He isn’t stupid, he hasn’t tried the car here, in Korea. But he did back in New York. Because he’s been dreaming about it for weeks, months.

He drove them in a place he knows he’ll be able to really test the thing, where there’s little to no traffic, no curves where he’ll need to slow down, mostly straight lines where it’d be easy to let loose if he still had some remnants of recklessness.

He wants to taste more of the speed, more of the pull. He changes gear. Taehyung sighs beside him and he tries to pay it no mind. He half regrets what happened at the meeting, that’s not what he was aiming for. But he thinks, wishes, that he can still bring them back on better tracks, settle them in something different than they were in when he left. Something a little more distant, and little calmer and tamed. And, hopefully, they will hold out.

“Pull over,” Taehyung’s voice comes out low and hoarse, and it rings into Yoongi’s ears like a long lost melody.

“What?”

“I said *pull over.*”

“Yeah I heard that, but why?” And Yoongi’s brows knit further in confusion, his eyes never leaving the expanse of asphalt extending ahead.

“Just do it.”

Yoongi clicks his tongue, downshifts as fast as he can manage without forcing anything, slowing down and making his CTS-V roll to the right side of the road.

“What the fuck, Tae.” And when the car finally comes to a stop, Yoongi puts the car in neutral, lets go of the wheel with a sigh and turns to Taehyung. And their gazes touch. “What? What is it?”

Taehyung only unfastens his seatbelt with nimble fingers, and the next moment he’s going over the console, straddling Yoongi’s thighs in this cramped space. He kisses him. More teeth than lips.

Truthfully, Yoongi’s plan was to pretend nothing ever happened, and try to start over. Except they can’t. It failed. A failure like everything else.

And now he has to deal with it.
everyone is born a year later in this, just to clear up some eventual confusion? and i started writing this as a long oneshot, then had to cut it into chapters and hehehoho, the fun I had, you wouldn't believe. so I apologize if sometimes the ending of the chapters are a bit ???

also if y'all haven't seen how pretty a refinery is at night, please please google it, very worth it
Taehyung twists his body, makes it slip through the tear in the metallic fence. The air is full here, he likes it. He hears the rustling Yoongi makes as he passes through too, but doesn’t turn to look at him, just fishes in his pocket to take his pack, again. A little closer to death every time.

He could have chosen a better place to smoke than this refinery dealing with oil products, but frankly, it’s a little hard to care. Because whenever he gets in here, he’s getting in another mindset completely. One that’s a little floaty, a little slower, never too worried. The refinery becomes his new sky, splotched in orange lights, towers of them. It has this surreal and hypnotizing glow he never gets tired of. He can literally spend hours just staring at the flame dancing on top of the gas flare, drinking the night away.

Taehyung walks slow and Yoongi quietly follows. He’s headed towards his favorite spot, the not-so-tight space between two storage tanks. He can sit or lie down or do whatever, it’s doesn’t matter.

It’s still surprising that he’s never been caught, even after so much time. From the moment his father bought him his Audi, he’s parked it right by the fence, and even right now, both their cars are there and no one will say a thing. Maybe the company doesn’t care. Or maybe they somehow know who Taehyung is.

Taehyung leans back against the tank, folds his arms over his chest and over his hoodie, eyes set on the flame. It’s probably awkward between them. Yoongi passes by him and says nothing, goes on nightly adventures further between the installations. It’s definitely awkward, and he’s sure it has to do with that messy make out session in his brand new car earlier in the afternoon but Taehyung lets it be. If there’s one thing he stopped doing over a year ago, it’s overthinking and planning stuff.

“Hyung, you just turned 22,” he voices absentmindedly. But he doesn’t mean it to be a conversation starter.

Yoongi takes a couple more steps. “Yeah.”

Too bad you came back too late and I couldn’t get you a gift.

The rest of the evening is quiet, dead still.

It’s one week later and he’s sitting in that room again, scribbling things at the top right corner of his notebook, that’s just how bored he is. Class hasn’t started yet and the students keep coming in noisy, exaggerated laughs and stupid jokes that make Taehyung grit his teeth.

Yoongi and he haven’t talked or texted in over 3 days, Taehyung knows he’s busy and working a lot, but he also knows that it’s not it. If he wants to pretend that everything is normal then fine. Taehyung can play pretend too.
The teacher’s voice starts ringing and after a few sentences, Taehyung already feels like someone is rubbing his skin with low grit sandpaper. He sighs and closes his eyes when he realizes he’s forgotten to pick a subject for his project. He’s tempted to regret the couple of beers he chugged down and the new series he’s decided to start watching on Netflix the previous night instead of doing actual assignments. But there’s no point. He became good with improvisation, so he can deal with that. He rolls his pen between his fingers, gaze a little dead and fixated on the head of dark brown hair in front of him like it’s the most interesting thing he’s ever seen.

Students rush to the front like the sheet is a fucking buffet, the pencil passing from a hand to another almost violently as they take turn to write their name next to their desired subject. Taehyung’s remains seated. He knows he’ll end up with a shitty project, and with shitty teammate, because he studies something he doesn’t like in a university he hasn’t chosen. So he internally shrugs, waits for most of the people to be back in their warmed up seats before he stands and goes down the small set of stairs. There’re two squares left, and the first subject has a name that sounds like what puke looks like, so he just fills the last available space.

Subject: Marketing of the 1970’s
Teammate 1: Park Jimin
Teammate 2: Kim Taehyung

He looks at the letters for too long, letting the information sink in, and he lets out something that’s between a curse and a laugh, before he goes back to his place.

He listens as the teacher names the teams and their subject one by one, gaze zeroed on his future teammate and when he hears his name, Jimin slightly perks up, then deflates right out. He turns his head to Taehyung and they share cold eye contact.

“I’m as happy as you are, Jimin, don’t worry,” he tells him after class is over and Jimin made his way to him. “So here’s how we’ll do this,”

“Ah, because you get to decide that?”

“Yes. Schedule.”

Jimin frowns, slightly scrunches his nose in confusion. “What?”

“Your schedule. Show me.”

Jimin rolls his eyes. “So full sentences aren’t a thing anymore?” He begrudgingly takes his agenda out of his backpack, flips the pages to his schedule one. “That promises some great fun.”

“Do you always talk this much?”

“Yeah.”

“Cool.”

Okay, listen you p—“

“Here,” Taehyung presses his finger on a blank space on the page. “Fridays. 3. At mine’s.”
“Why yours?”
Taehyung sighs, his patience is wearing thin. And this is stupid, because it’s only 13h24 when he looks at the clock, and there’s still 12 hours left to his day and some grocery shopping he needs to do. He bridles himself, because he won’t deny he’s being an asshole right now, and this is school and it’s apparently important. So he has to somehow behave.

“Got a flat?”

“Uh, well—”

“That’s why it’s going to be at mine’s. There’s no way in hell that I’m spending my Friday afternoons in your parents’ house.”

Jimin scoffs. It’s petulant on the border of childish. “You know who I am, right?” Words he seems to have said too many times.

“I give no shit about that kinda stuff. I just wanna get this done,” and surely Jimin can hear his impatience now.

They stare for uncomfortable seconds, Taehyung knows he’ll give in. He has no reasons not to.

“Fine.”

“Good. Phone.”

Jimin stills. “Do you even know how to talk?” He fishes in his back pocket, takes his phone out. “Why the fuck do you talk like this?” He unlocks it with his thumb, going into the contact section, and taps to add a new one.

Taehyung reaches and takes the device when Jimin offers it, can’t help but notice the size difference between their hands as he does. He enters his name and his phone number, sending himself a text before he gives it back.

And just like that, as Jimin is still looking at him expectantly for maybe a semblance of closure for the conversation, Taehyung goes out the room.

He walks back to his apartment, uses a path that takes longer than his usual one. To calm himself a bit. He puts his earphones in, no music, and smokes the annoyance away. He looks around and checks out the small businesses around his apartment. Cafés and fancy food stores and then not-so-fancy ones. March is that boring month that’s still too brisk to be comfortable, but that’s isn’t as beautiful and the as the months of real cold. People are tired, too. The sky is grey and it’s grey all around and everyone is just wearing winter on their faces and dragging it everywhere they go.

Taehyung exhales, vaporous patterns dancing out of his lips. Wind ruffles his hair, runs along his bare neck and slips under his clothes by the collar of his jacket. He curses, tensing, stopping momentarily to throw his cigarette butt on the ground and stomp on it, and buries his hands in his pockets.

He could be home by now, and this detour is one of those choices he might never make again, but less than two minutes later, he’s practically bent in half and nose squished in the window of a pet
shop he’s never seen before and he forgets about it.

“A cat would be nice,” he whispers, looking at the kittens play in their space. His gaze goes further into the store though he can’t see much, and he snaps out of it when a couple of passersby makes a comment on the older cat alone in its tiny cage and Taehyung feels sorts of sad.

He walks away. Having no one home suddenly feels more bitter than it used to.

A weird kind of anticipation blooms in his chest when, once outside the apartment building and phone in hand, he sees the tiny LED flash to tell him he’s got a message. Yoongi, perhaps.

**Unknown number:** a

23-03-2016, 13:26

He sighs and saves the contact as *Park Jimin from class* and throws the device on the couch when he gets home. Yeah, Min Yoongi is back from America. But Taehyung thinks that if he wants them to be friends again, he still has a long way to crawl back. And he’s not going to crawl too and meet him halfway.

Δ

Yoongi says another polite goodbye, gives another polite bow before he goes his way, a file in hand. The meeting ended over an hour later than it was supposed to and he reached a whole new level of blasé.

He enters the elevator and holds the door for the girl speed walking to make it before it closes. She smiles. It’s one of those giggly *hi I know who you are and I want to look good in front of you* smiles. And Yoongi gives her a faint smirk. She might assume that’s because he finds her interesting. But it’s just because he thinks she’s being laughable.

He settles in the driver seat, unbuttons his suit jacket, nearly rips his tie off and undoes the first three buttons of his dress shirt. No new message on his phone. Taehyung plays hard to get but that’s fine. It’s understandable, why he can’t trust him anymore. He clicks his tongue and lets his head fall back against the headrest.

Feeling guilty is a strange thing.

It’s being uncomfortable, it’s feeling heavy and carrying the stones you created, but it’s also being all soft inside, so very light as to not disturb anything, it’s wanting to make things better no matter how ugly they turned out to be.
He gets home and greets his mother, says he won’t be there for dinner, that he has somewhere to be. She thinks he’s lying but she doesn’t say anything. He takes a shower, scorching hot because it’s March and the cold humidity sticks to the skin and permeates the bones and he needs that.

**You:** im free on fridays, wanna hang out?

23-03-2016, 17:03

He doesn’t know where that comes from, this urge he has to cradle those feelings and try to soothe them, to make them good again. But he’ll roll with it. They’ve kissed and they’ve touched and the start is off, but if there’s still something to salvage, he’ll try.

Taehyung: got class at 8:30 and some stuff to do in the afternoons but yea

23-03-2016, 19:59

It’s way past midnight when Yoongi finally sees it, and he dismisses the device, returns to his paperwork. But he can’t quite focus anymore.

Δ

The kiss tastes like cheap beer and cigarette. Taehyung’s never been fond of that kind of mix but he’s not going to complain. He probably tastes the same.

Around it’s dark, it smells like too-sweet hand soap and lost, fallen hopes. In the background, there’s the low thumping of bass, but they’re not in the crowd dancing to it, not anymore.

The guy doesn’t kiss like Yoongi and Taehyung doesn’t want him to. In fact, the farther he can get from the thought, the better he’ll be. Oh, the peaceful time when he knew he was in America and unattainable, the safety of being unable to reach. He’ll miss that.

He’s being pushed until his back hits a wall. His fingers twist in the smooth fabric of the other’s shirt. It feels great, he’s just tipsy enough. But then one of the guy’s hand is fumbling with his belt, trying to unbuckle it and that’s where it stops for Taehyung. He’s here and he wants something but he doesn’t want everything. And no one ever just wants to make out.

He gently grabs his wrist and makes him understand. And the guy, well, he doesn’t stick around for long after that. They never do.
The sounds of the refinery play like an endless tune, it drowns the silence that would otherwise feel too violent. He was fine before Yoongi came back. The quiet wasn’t as scary, he wasn’t constantly looking for something to fill it.

The cold of the tank seep through his hoodie and he straightens up for a bit. He can’t wait to be able to sit on the ground again for hours and hours. He takes a drag and taps the ash off his cigarette, holding the smoke in for a couple seconds before he pushes it all out. It’s peaceful, here, there’s no one screaming or giggling or making any other type of unnerving, useless noise.

Something moves in his peripheral vision and his eyes set on it, the tiniest hint of stress tickling at his insides. It’s quick to go though, and he relaxes, despite being a little surprised. It’s been a while since he saw Namjoon. They give each other a curt nod from afar and that’s it. No more, no less. Namjoon isn’t always around, but even when he’s out of sight, Taehyung assumes he’s there somewhere.

They don’t know each other much but they share a kind of quiet respect, of the other, but also of the boundaries that came with not wanting to be associated. If they feel like talking, they will. If not, they won’t. Namjoon is smart, Taehyung knows that much. It’s audible, it’s visible. But he wasn’t born covered in money, and struggled too much trying to pay for university and had to drop out.

That’s the kind of things that make Taehyung sad. That, and also the old cat that no one will ever want to buy at the pet shop.

He also knows that Namjoon deals. All sorts of stuff. Taehyung knows because he bought from him a couple months back. He thinks it’s funny, since he doesn’t think Namjoon is ever on drugs.

His phone buzzes against his thigh and he grabs it, watching Namjoon disappear behind one of the tanks.

**Park Jimin from class:** tomorrow’s friday

24-03-2016, 22:47

Taehyung frowns, his thumb starting to glide over the letters.

**You:** friday usually comes after thursday yes

24-03-2016, 22:48

**Park Jimin from class:** amazing i hadn’t realized
Park Jimin from class: tomorrows friday and im apparently going at yours without havign your address

Ah, right. They don’t have class together on Fridays and as he types his address and that he visualizes Jimin in his apartment, sitting at his table, around his stuff, he’s suddenly very tempted to bail on him or propose to go somewhere else instead.

Park Jimin from class: thanks

Park Jimin from class: i have class before that so i might not be there at exactly 3

Park Jimin from class: dont be an asshole about it if it happens

As if. But Taehyung doesn’t answer. Having to deal with Yoongi and his project in the same day might not be his best idea.

He meets Yoongi around noon, at that place they used to get coffee all the time. And they do just that. Paper cup in hand, they roam around the mall and they talk sparsely. Taehyung wonders how Yoongi feels now that he’s not the one making conversation. Now that he’s shut himself so tight that they’re both the same level of quiet.

He looks at him perusing through clothes, shoes, phones, as if they didn’t have those in New York. His hair is stuffed under a beanie, loose strands on his forehead that keep getting stuck in eyelashes and jumping when he blinks. That’s cute. He receives texts often, he smiles at his phone often. That’s intriguing. A little obsession-inducing. He wonders if he kept his old passwords.

Yoongi buys a ridiculously big scarf that he rolls around his neck and that looks kind of perfect with his leather jacket. Taehyung tilts his cup one last time to get the last gulp and he throws it in the trashcan.

“You could have recycled that,” Yoongi drawls, putting his in the hole meant for recyclables.

Taehyung says nothing, but he does feel a little bad. One more thing to add to the stuff he assumes he wasn’t taught properly because he was solely raised by an absent father. And the maid.
“D’you wanna eat somewhere?”

At that, Taehyung takes a quick look at his watch and hums.

“Someone’s coming at 3 for a school project so I should probably go back. But you can come and we can eat at mine’s, I don’t mind.”

Yoongi nods quietly. That’ll be a miracle if he indeed stays with a stranger around. Taehyung knows just how carefully he chooses the people he spends his energy on.

“We have to stop that,” Yoongi whispers, breath fanning over Taehyung’s lips. It’s a little stupid, considering he’s the one who grabbed him by the collar of his shirt to pull him in and slot their mouths together.

Taehyung chuckles dryly.

“I’m getting mixed signals here, hyung.”

Yoongi’s fingers loosen in the fabric, and Taehyung detaches himself. But they stare, for long, too long, and slipping would be so easy, that’s all they’ve ever done, never really had to resist that temptation before. The eye contact is ripped and Yoongi wordlessly returns to his knife and to his tomatoes. That self-control. Taehyung’s lips curve up and his gaze drops to the floor. His hands feel moist where they’re gripping the counter behind him and his body is still lowly buzzing with arousal that he’ll have to will away because the next moment, there’re quick knocks at the front door.

Taehyung looks at the clock on the wall. 14:57. Not bad.

“Who made you think it was a good idea to live on the 13th floor, mhm?” Jimin pants as soon at Taehyung opens the door to let him in.

The level of energy Jimin emanates contrasts so drastically with the one in the apartment that Taehyung can almost feel Yoongi tensing in the kitchen.

“There’s a reason why there’s an elevator, mhm,” Taehyung lets out, gesticulating to him where to put his shoes and his coat.

Jimin freezes.

“… An elevator. Where the fuck?”

“Yes, an elevator. Did you seriously run up the stairs?”

“Yes?” Jimin squeaks, eyes round.

“Jesus.”

He can hear Yoongi laughing through his nose from afar, in between the sharp sounds he makes on the cutting board.

“Hyung, this is Park Jimin from class,” and it’s not even close to a proper introduction, but that’s the best he felt like he could do.
“Hi, Park Jimin from class,” Yoongi turns to look at Jimin as he says this, and though he doesn’t offer his hand to shake, the way they first look at one another makes Taehyung uneasy. “Yoongi, by the way.”

Jimin greets him, politely and all and the atmosphere becomes disgustingly dense.

“Okay, let’s not make things weird,” Taehyung mutters. The room suddenly feels too small and it’s either the ambience, or the fact that he’s never had more than one person over at a time. “D’you want something to drink? Water, juice, vodka?”

“Vodka? Dude it’s 3 pm.”

“Never too early to drink.”

Jimin makes a face. “I’m fine, thanks.”

Taehyung shrugs and gets himself a glass of water, guides them to the living room and to the coffee table where he knows they’ll have enough space to work.

Barely knowing one another at least allows them to focus more easily. They have nothing to make small talk about. They’re discussing their presentation’s medium when Taehyung hears the clacketing stop in the kitchen, and firm padding traveling the corridor. Yoongi gets in and puts a plate down on the table, slouching on the couch on his own to munch on his snack.

“Your phone buzzed on the counter by the way,” he says flatly and without looking at Taehyung, scrolling through his own social medias.

Jimin’s eyes go from one to the other before they drop back to his tablet.

“You got yourself a roommate to be your personal chef and secretary, how great,” he sneers and Taehyung’s hand remains suspended in the air where he was about to grab at a piece of fruit.

Yoongi laughs lightly and is quick to say that they’re not roommates and Taehyung feels so, so snappy. Raw like a nerve. Then again, when is he not. His lips curve up, and he takes the time to chew thoroughly and swallowing to cut the edges of his words a bit.

“That’s great, uh? You know what else he can do?” Jimin meets his gaze, and he looks so unimpressed and impatient, that makes Taehyung want to provoke him even more. “He can kick you the fuck out. So keep your stupid tongue in your mouth when you’ve got nothing pertinent to say and that you’re in here. We’ll all benefit from it.”

“I can kick myself out just fine, thanks,” Jimin nearly giggles and this is not going to work, Taehyung can tell. Because Jimin is wearing a thick coat of fakeness over himself and that’s just something he can’t learn to deal with. “But we apparently have this project to work on, you see, and nowhere else to go.”

Taehyung hears Yoongi make an annoyed noise in the back of his throat.

“Nah, we could go somewhere else. I just don’t want to be seen with you in public.”

“Okay, babies,” Yoongi sighs, standing and going to grab his jacket. “This is officially a middle-
school conversation and I’m not here to babysit. I’m out.”

And he barely gives them a last glance before the exits the room and the apartment.

Yoongi and conflicts. They never really worked well together.

Jimin doesn’t apologize. Taehyung doesn’t apologize. But they do soften after that. What hangs between them is a strange feeling of acceptance and dissatisfaction, like two university students who would’ve preferred to do their project alone than to go through this. They don’t get much work done, spending too much time debating on the formatting and the presentation and Taehyung thinks they’re working backwards and that it’s the last thing they should care about for now. And from the way he talks and expresses himself, from the mindset he seems to have, Taehyung feels like things in general don’t take the usual road with Park Jimin.

He leaves an hour or two later, it’s a little cold and a lot graceless. And the “see you Wednesday” he’s given as Jimin put his Timberlands on makes him want to cringe. He does, silently.

Taehyung makes it to the kitchen but he’s not hungry, he just wants his cigarettes and check out his phone that’s waiting sadly on the granite countertop.

**Dad:** I need to talk to you, son. Call me.

25-03-2016, 15:07

Taehyung dismisses it, selects his conversation with Yoongi instead.

**You:** sorry about earlier

25-03-2016, 17:29

He sends this before he grabs his pack, fits a stick between his lips and goes out and on his balcony, without shoes on. He likes smoking in the obscurity of the winter the best. He likes when the frigid air slaps at his lungs when he inhales, likes the patterns of the smoke against darker skies, they swirl and dance up and fade into the night. His phone vibrates in his pocket but leaned on the railing, he keeps looking below and at the passing cars, the orange lighting of the street lamps.

He hasn’t been this antsy in a long while. He must admit that being alone most of the time felt great for that reason. People can become addictive and Taehyung tends to create addictions easily, and the whole thought is as scary as it’s exciting.
Passersby are so tiny under him, and he watches them like some passive scientist. The snow falls in fat snowflakes, and on the sidewalk, two friends are messing around and pushing each other playfully. The sight falls heavy in his stomach. Memories. He’s full of them yet he feels empty.

**Min Yoongi:** it's fine

25-03-2016, 17:36

**Min Yoongi:** there's a meeting on monday, will you be there?

25-03-2016, 17:37

**You:** you know i have to

25-03-2016, 17:41

**Min Yoongi:** yea well, i thought that with uni and all

25-03-2016, 17:43

**You:** no i still have to be there

25-03-2016, 17:43

**Min Yoongi:** ok

25-03-2016, 17:44

**Min Yoongi:** tell me when you feel like hanging out

25-03-2016, 17:47

And both “whenever you can” and “never again” would be truthful answers and Taehyung vaguely wonders if they’ll find an equilibrium again, if he’ll stop swaying between those two states.

He wonders if they’ll ever be able to get over it.

Δ
“A whole semester, hyung. Think about it.”

Jimin can’t even find the strength to move. He’s sprawled on the sweat-moistened floor of the dance studio, staring at the ceiling as the others are slowly gathering their stuff and heading home. Even after they calmed down, the tension level had been so high for the whole time between Taehyung and him, that the emotional sponge that he is kept it all inside just to puke it out in the form of dancing harder than usual.

“It’s not a whole semester, you’re making it a bigger deal than it actually is,” Hoseok stands like a tower above him, dabbing at his face with a small towel, his loose tank top hanging from his frame. “It’s like, 2 hours per week.”

“For the whole semester.”

“For the whole semester, yes, but it’s not that massive of a thing. There’s 168 hours in a week, so you’re complaining for something that will roughly take 1% of it.” He extends his hand for Jimin to take and Jimin eyes it pitifully. “It’s not that bad, come on.” Hoseok ruffles his own hair a bit with his other hand and wiggles his fingers to reiterate his proposition and Jimin melts a bit inside. “Come on. You told me he’s hot, it can’t be that bad.”

Jimin makes a distressed noise and finally reaches, letting himself being pulled up. “Being hot doesn’t matter much when you’re an asshole, hyung.”

“Mhm, it kinda still does.”

His legs feel like jelly, his face like an oven-baked potato. His clothes are glued to every part of his body and he longs for a cold shower and 3 gallons of water.

“And I remember hearing about his hot friend too,” Hoseok says as they both grab their bag and head to the door.

“A friend or whatever, they felt a little off together.”

“Aim for the friend then.”

Jimin smiles at that. “I should.”

Hoseok pats his back, hums in approval. They get outside, and while it somehow feels good against his skin, it also feels like thousands of needles biting at it. He mumbles a curse and his body shrivels up, his arms closing around himself. Hoseok gives him an amused look, squints to look over his shoulder where there seems to be some commotion and people swearing at the snow.

“Hyung are you giving me a ride home?” Comes an excited and shivering voice behind him and Jimin can’t help but shake his head at how unabashed it sounds. Hoseok laughs through his nose and agrees, Jungkook passing right past them and getting into the passenger seat of the car.

“This kid,” Jimin breathes and Hoseok says nothing but he smiles, because Jungkook is a brat but they both like him a lot.

“Anyway, about that Taehyung guy,” Hoseok starts and Jimin’s suddenly attentive again. “Remember that you’re not an easy temper to work with when someone isn’t close to you.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“You’re a little of a bitch sometimes.”
“Thanks, hyung.”

Hoseok grins. “You have a very honest best friend, you should be grateful.”

“You know I am.”

“Yeah, I know. Now get in your car, you’ll become a popsicle.”

Jimin nods and as they separate, his car parked just a little further. “I’ll text you later,” he nearly screams so Hoseok can hear him and he gets a thumbs up as an answer.

The ride home is filled with thoughts instead of booming bass. It’s been a long time since he’s felt like this, so shaken up by someone. Just over a year. And he doesn’t know if he’s happy about it.
Taehyung missed Yoongi’s skin so much. Missed the smoothness, the softness of it. He likes how his breathing quivers when his lips go from his neck and trace down his sternum, his stomach, when he grazes his teeth along the flesh just under his navel. He can still trace him perfectly, with eyes closed he would recognize every edges and curves of his body, draw it in the finest details and he feels a little bitter at the thought that he’s the only one he’s known.

He kisses wetly down his length, open mouthed and willing and Yoongi’s inhale shakes and catches, a hand going to Taehyung’s hair, more a warning than an encouragement. It’s funny how he seems to be as conflicted as he is. He could have stopped things before they ended up like this, but didn’t.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” he sighs, while Taehyung’s tongue is working on the tip of his cock. “The meeting is in like,” and he whips his head to the side to look at the pristine-white clock on his bedside table, “less than 40 minutes.”

Taehyung knows it’s not just because of the meeting but lets that part go.

“The office is at less than 30 minutes by car from your house, hyung,” he breathes before he takes him in his mouth. He hollows out his cheeks and makes the suction nice and wet and Yoongi squirms just enough to rile him up even more.

“I know, but—“

“Since when do I need more than 10 minutes to make you come, mhm? I’ll stop if you really want me to, though, you know that.”

Yoongi looks at him with hooded eyes, his chest moving in ample motions and his black hair starting to get sweaty on his forehead. There’s this silence between them, so heavy it’s hard to even bear, but Taehyung is patient, and he holds his gaze, fist going up and down his dick in slow and controlled strokes. Yoongi is quiet and it speaks more than words and Taehyung gets him, because he’s known him for so long, knows how to read the words he has yet to say.

His lips fall open and he sticks his tongue out to lick at the cockhead, and the way he stares asks for confirmation. Yoongi rakes fingers through his hair, swallows thickly, and from the canting of his hips when he tries and push his cock further down Taehyung’s throat, he’s got his answer.

If he could be as focused at school, Taehyung would be quite satisfied. He’s not sure what makes him feel so awake and there but he is, and that renders meetings surprisingly more interesting. At this point, he’s learned enough to understand most of the approached topics, though sometimes he just doesn’t get the emotional value those are given.

The big point, today, is competition. And he just can’t seem to understand what’s the big deal about it. That’s business, of course there should be competition. Of course there’s that big company threatening their profits with similar products and services. That’s how it works. Taehyung suspects
it has more to do with the fact that the CEO of that evil company was his father’s friend and that their relationship turned sour and his father got salty about it. Holding grudges for years is a fucking hassle.

Yoongi gives him those smiles sometimes, those knowing ones, because that’s an old story they know by heart. ‘They’re the enemy, we need to crush them.’ Taehyung, most of the time, shakes his head lightly or rolls his eyes.

“Why didn’t you call me back?” his father asks him after the meeting is over and that he’s taken him aside.

“Forgot,” he mutters, and he makes sure his body language shows how closed he is to this conversation.

“That’s a bit irresponsible. It could have been an important matter.”

“You never just text me for important matters, dad. I know you’ll call me if that’s crucial or business stuff, I’m not stupid.”

His father sighs, carefully placing files in his leather briefcase.

“Your mother called.”

“Yeah, thought so. What does she want?”

The briefcase is clasped shut, and with that, air becomes acrid in the room. Anger, remorse, filled with hard feelings. Grudges and grudges. Taehyung wants to laugh.

“Know how you’re doing. She wants you to call back.”

And that, that makes Taehyung let out an amused scoff.

“She and I haven’t talked since I was in the hospital, dad.”

“I know that.” His father makes his way out, Taehyung politely following him, closing the door when they exit. “And I know that you and I don’t have the best relationship, son, but I won’t push you to do something you don’t want to, when it comes to her. Message is passed on. I’ll send you her number and you do what you want with it.”

Taehyung hums. No words are exchanged after that. It’s usually like this, when his father half opens up to him. When they share, for very fleeting moments, what he guesses should be a healthy father-son relationship.

Taehyung drank too much, smoked too much, once again. His head is pounding, his eyes feel attacked by the artificial lighting of the classroom, and he’s pretty sure his shirt smells like weed and that the girl sitting next to him can taste it.

He’s been drawing little cubes all over his pages for over 40 minutes now, he hears the teacher talking but it sounds like an alien language and he stops bothering with trying to understand. He’ll leave on the first break.
Park Jimin from class: what the teacher just said could be a good idea for our project
30-03-2016, 11:07

Taehyung squints at the screen. Bad, bad idea to get shitfaced alone, in the middle of the fucking week.

You: i wasn’t listening sorry
30-03-2016, 11:08

Jimin turns to him from where he’s sitting closer to the front of the class and normally Taehyung would feel at least a little offended by his judgmental look, but not today. His brain can’t process a thing today.

Park Jimin from class: what the fuck
30-03-2016, 11:09

Park Jimin from class: how useless is it of your ass to be sat here then
30-03-2016, 11:09

You: how bout you chill a lil
30-03-2016, 11:09

You: no one asked for ur sermon
30-03-2016, 11:10

Jimin turns to him again, brows furrowed, and Taehyung almost makes him a face. But even being a 5-year-old seems too arduous right now. He decides he likes his other classes better. They might start at 8:30am, but at least there’s no one in the group leeching off his energy.

The next day, just after he’s back from university and the sun has already set, a wave of guilt
drenches him whole and he skips his meal to get right into some assignments. After the third cigarette break, his phone sings his text alert and he wills himself to ignore it, temptation gnawing at him until he gives in.

Min Yoongi: i need some air, refinery?
31-03-2016, 19:03

He frowns. His other hand pushes his hair back away from his face, and he pulls his sole earbud out, putting it down on the kitchen table. That’s kind of weird, coming from Yoongi.

You: whats up
31-03-2016, 19:08

He tries to get back to his work, but he just ends up rolling his pen between his fingers and staring at the sprawled sheets in front of him.

Min Yoongi: nothing bad
31-03-2016, 19:10

Min Yoongi: you want to go? im going like, now
31-03-2016, 19:10

Taehyung hesitates. He stares at his phone for too long, and he hesitates. He knows how he’ll feel if he goes, that stressed-out sensation with just the tiniest hint of self-disappointment. But he also knows how he’ll feel if he doesn’t go after Yoongi reached out for him like that. Like he needs him. And with that last thing in mind, the choice isn’t that hard to make. He sighs and stands, grabs his wallet and his keys, puts his Converses on.

You: yea i’ll meet you there
31-03-2016, 19:13
Yoongi breathes out smoke and Taehyung realizes he never stopped being mesmerized by it. Yoongi is the one who taught him how to smoke, a couple years back when being caught could have put them in a lot of trouble. You need to really breathe it in, Tae, not just keep it in your mouth and then spit it out. They used to do it in secrecy, in Taehyung’s room mostly, because his father was rarely there and the maid knew how to keep a secret.

Now all those years and mistakes later, and he still can’t keep his eyes away from his lips when they curl around the white clouds. He probably never will be able to, neither. And Yoongi knows. They don’t say it, but they’re aware of everything going on, the both of them. How what happened isn’t forgotten, hasn’t been forgiven or apologized for, and how it would’ve have been better if they never tried to be friends again.

Yoongi doesn’t talk about why he needed to get out, Taehyung doesn’t ask. He’s not someone who tends to speak easily about things like that. If he wants to address it, he will. It’s as simple as that.

They’re immersed in a conversation about their fathers’ company. They would be associates after all, if Taehyung wanted of the business to begin with. But it isn’t the case, so he knows it won’t end up like that. He lets it flow nonetheless.

A metallic noise resounds not too far from them and they go silent, eyeing in the direction it came from. Taehyung assumes it’s Namjoon, but then he hears the person laughing and it’s definitely not him. They watch, doubtful, until a silhouette staggers out from behind a tank. And that person is without a doubt drunk as fuck.

“’the fuck,” Yoongi whispers. “Who’s that?”

Taehyung gives a shrug Yoongi can’t see and he’s just about to reply something when they get spotted and the boy freezes, mouth in a nearly perfect ‘o’ shape.

“Hyung! There’s people here!” he screams and Taehyung nearly winces because that’s too harsh against the calmness he usually finds here.

“That’s like, a kid,” Yoongi observes, taking a drag and tapping the ash off.

“Hello!” the boy greets them with a smile, and Taehyung is tempted to find him cute. He starts making his way to the stranger, cautious. “Hyung!”

And this time he’s screaming at someone who’s further behind, and an alarm is about to go off in Taehyung’s brain. That could be anyone. Really. That could end very badly. A shadow detaches itself from the night when there’re less than a couple meters between the stranger and him.

“Jungkook come back here what are –“ Oh. “—hey.”

Relief. His heart beats against that useless rush of stress, and he pushes some smoke out to regain control of his breathing.

“Hey.” That’s interesting, how Jimin is dressed. All in dark, dark sweater, dark snapback, dark skinny jeans, perfectly adjusted to his shape. It’s different. He looks like he’s going through a rebellion phase.

“Didn’t know you were hanging around here.”

“I could say the same thing.”

Yoongi drags his feet on the ground, slowly walking to them, while Jungkook seems lost, his eyes
glassy, hair all mussed up, gaze going back and forth between the two.

“In fact when we come here,” and Jimin reaches and gently wraps a hand around Jungkook’s forearm, bringing him back and closer. Taehyung spots his sweater paws. “We usually are far over there.” He points behind them, and Taehyung knows this place like he knows his own apartment and strangely never saw anyone that far into the refinery, so that must be new. “But Jungkook here decided it was a good idea to compete with Namjoon to see who’s more tolerant to rum.”

“Obviously I won,” Jungkook chuckles.

“Yeah, sure. And so he ran all over the place and sobered me up in the process.”

Yoongi’s eyes meet Taehyung’s. This is kind of mood ruining. Taehyung sighs.

“Is he even legal?” Yoongi asks, and it’s so easy to see that he’s bothered by the whole thing too.

And when the other two exchange a glance that they maintain for too long and that Jimin goes “Uh, well,” and that Jungkook simultaneously starts laughing drunkenly, looking at his feet, Taehyung sighs again. And he makes sure it’s audible.

Jimin’s amused expression fades rather quickly. Taehyung won’t deny he likes the way his eyes crinkle when he smiles just as much as he likes the depth in them when he stares.

“You look annoyed,” he says.

“That’s because I am,” Taehyung replies, and he flicks the remainder of his cigarette to the ground.

“Why? Because we’re here too?”

“It could be summarized like that, I guess.”

Jimin slightly cocks his head to the side, takes a step forward and towards Taehyung. Passive-aggressive.

“Is there stuff I missed? Is this your place or something?”

“Yeah, okay, I’m out.” Yoongi gives a silent greeting that both Jimin and Jungkook return and he walks away, taking his time. “I’ll wait for you there, Tae.”

“Hyung,”

“It’s fine, Jungkook. Go ahead and I’ll find you at the usual spot. I just need Taehyung to explain some things to me.”

It doesn’t need much more than that for them to be alone. The weight of silence presses on them and Jimin looks at him, and waits but at this point, Taehyung wonders why they’re being like this.

Jimin is covered in mirrors, and he reflects what people want to see of him and of themselves. That, he can see. And himself is spitting venom at whoever comes near because he ended up so closed up that he can’t seem to deal well with any kind of proximity.

In front of him, Jimin, with his stupid orange hair and his perfect lips, suddenly feels very human and very similar to him. Built of flaws and beautiful things Taehyung can’t see because he’s hiding them, surely, like most people do. He’s protecting them.

“Explain to me,” Jimin reiterates, “I’m genuinely curious to know why our presence offended Your
Majesty’s ass.”

But Taehyung’s looking inside himself instead of back at him and the whole situation stops playing fluidly like would a film, it’s too chopped up with his own thoughts.

“I owe you no explanation, I’ve—“

“Stop being an asshole, Kim Taehyung. That never works for anyone.” And Jimin turns, and walks away. “See you tomorrow.”

“That’ll turn to shit if we do that.”

“No, it won’t. Trust me.”

“That’s the issue here, you see?”

Taehyung half-groans, half-whines, knots tired fingers in his hair.

“That’s not gonna work,” he lets out and Jimin places his pencil on the table impatiently. “If you don’t trust me and I don’t trust you then we won’t be going anywhere.”

“It’s not fucking couple counselling, Taehyung, it’s a school project.”

“It’s a bit of the same. It’s teamwork.”

Jimin mutters a ‘oh my God’ before he lets himself fall on his back from where he’s sitting on the floor.

“Keep rolling your eyes like that,” Taehyung’s makes his voice low and sarcasm-dripping, “I like how they disappear into your eyebrows. I like it a lot.”

“I don’t think you can truly understand the extent of how much I wanna punch you in the face.”

“It’s a shared sentiment, don’t worry.”

“Fuck, man,” Jimin exhales loudly, “why is working with you so complicated, what the fuck.”

“I need a drink,” Taehyung stands, makes his way to the kitchen. Defense mechanisms. Don’t get close. Don’t appreciate me. I don’t want to appreciate you, either. “Want one?”

“Whatever.”

“That’s a weird way of saying ‘yes’,” he speaks, louder.

“Fuck you.”

“Uh-huh.”
Strangely enough, it turns out that being tipsy and working on their project works better for them. Jimin keeps texting and smiling dumbly at his phone and it’s just short of being annoying, but alcohol did cut the edges. And in between undeserved breaks and vodka shots and inaccurate imitations of their teacher’s weird habits when he talks, they still manage to get some work done.

And when he leaves, a little before 7pm and that Taehyung is smoking outside, he feels lighter. And it has nothing to do with how intoxicated he is.

Δ

“Like, I don’t wanna hate him, but I kinda hate him a bit.”

“Don’t lie, Jimin. You’re drunk.”

“I’m not lying?” he looks mildly offended and Hoseok offers him a bottle of water. Jimin, when drunk, will lose his aptitudes to talk and walk straight before his ability to dance.

“Who makes a hate confession with that kind of stupid smile on their face?”

Jimin frowns. That’s an interesting question. Hoseok leaves him at that, taking his phone and making the music blast in the speakers again, and he gets ready to continue.

The room spins around him but he always finds his rhythm, no matter how wasted he is. And that’s probably the only reason they let him be. They go through the routine a couple more times and he ends up dizzy in a different way than when he got here.

“Hyung,” he whines, and Hoseok gets to him, unceremoniously wipes a towel in his face to make him whine even more. “Hyung, I’m not feeling well.”

“You’re still half drunk, you haven’t eaten since your lunch break, and you just spent 2 hours straight dancing your ass off. That’s kind of understandable.” He wraps an arm around Jimin’s shoulder, their skins glue together in an uncomfortable way but he endures it, Hoseok is the only one he’ll endure it for. He’s being led to the door carefully; he feels like the zombie version of himself.

“Wanna come at mine’s for the night?”

He makes a noise that Hoseok’s knows means ‘yes’. Jimin didn’t come with his car, Hoseok wouldn’t let him drive and decided to go fetch him at Taehyung’s. So might as well.

Jungkook’s excited padding comes behind them until it stops at their sides.

“I’m sorry about yesterday, hyung,” he says, running a hand through his sweat-moistened hair, expression sheepish. He has yet to realize just how attractive he is and that’s probably better this way. Safer for all the poor hearts.

“It’s fine,” he says, and it is. He shouldn’t have to feel bad because Taehyung has an inherent tendency to shitty attitude. “Don’t worry about it.”

He weakly pats him on the back and he watches him jog through the parking lot to get to one of the guy’s car and nausea is starting to creep up his insides. His legs are wobbly and his tongue feels too thick in his mouth, but he thinks that if it allows him and Taehyung to at least be a tad productive, he doesn’t mind too much.
Jimin is *bored*.

He already perused the whole store twice and he still has to wait for over 40 minutes. It’s Sunday and Hoseok is getting off work at closing time. The mall is mainly empty at this hour and it seems like such a waste of money to keep everything rolling until 10pm. Hoseok’s workplace is great, though, so he won’t complain too much.

He takes a vinyl with a colorful cover, flips it between his hands. He’s just vaguely familiar with the band, but it looks great and it’d fit well in his collection. He looks up to find Hoseok, for advice because he knows his stuff, and he finds him chatting with a client. It looks like they’re discussing an album because they keep looking at it together, and Hoseok is all gestures and flirtatious smiles, and the other guy seems completely enraptured and captivated. Hoseok has such power, it makes Jimin shake his head affectionately.

“It’s a nice album,” comes a gravelly voice behind him and Jimin almost jumps, his fingers tightening around the edges of the cover. “I’m saying this in case you’re waiting for the dude over there to come and tell you about it.”

“Ah,” is all Jimin manages to voice with how flustered he is, but he turns to Yoongi still, and tries not to be weird about the whole situation. “Thanks.”

“No problem,” Yoongi leans over the wooden cubes containing the huge albums, goes through them with nimble fingers. He’s got this aura around him, calm and powerful. He’s a rich kid, Jimin can tell because he’s one of those kids too, but he doesn’t let it show. His jeans are ripped in a thousand places but it doesn’t look like he bought them like that, and his open shirt over his plain white t-shirt reminds him a bit of Hoseok. But he likes it.

“You look like you’re waiting for him too,” Jimin says after a while, and Hoseok gives him a questioning look when he meets his gaze from the other side of the store. He’s still talking with his client and Jimin doesn’t want him to overthink things so he just gives him silent reassurance.

“Mhm,” Yoongi’s eyes don’t leave the items but that strangely doesn’t make Jimin feel out of place. He’s relaxed, even, around him. “Placed a personal order and they called to tell me they got it. So I’m here to get that.”

In the next quiet moments they spend going through albums, Jimin slowly realizes that Yoongi is that kind of person people might feel special being around. Like that cool hyung in high school, or that friend’s older brother you develop a crush on. He’s that sort of intriguing type, mysterious almost, though Jimin doesn’t feel like there’s an impenetrable wall standing around him. Unlike Taehyung. He finds it even a little weird that they’re friends. Or whatever they are, really. They’re different in so many aspects, yet the more he sees them together, the more they look bounded in a way that makes them hardly separable. Like they fit.

“Hey,” Hoseok’s warm voice breaks his haze and he suddenly finds himself being stared at by two persons.

“Uh, go ahead,” he takes a step back to allow Yoongi to face Hoseok properly, but that does nothing to make to atmosphere less dense. Perhaps that’s just him, though.
“You were here first,” Yoongi adds, returning to his previous activity.

“I wasn’t done anyway, so you go first, hyung,” and Jimin gets stunned by his own words. “Oh, is calling you hyung okay? Is it weird?”

“Hyung is not weird, I prefer that,” he replies and Jimin feels so confused for no reason, and for all the reasons at the same time. “You sure I can go first?”

“Of course, yeah.”

And when Yoongi follows Hoseok to the back of the store, Jimin finally puts the album that’s still in his hands in its original place.

“What the fuck,” he mutters, taking his phone out to look at the time. 20 minutes left.

“You’re always flirting with the customers,” Jimin jokingly admonishes when Hoseok is locking the store behind them. “They’re all wrapped around your fingers.”

“It’s part of the business, Jiminie,” he answers with his serious tone, and Jimin can tell he felt attacked by his remark. “I won’t sell shit if I’m not friendly or flirty. That’d mean that I’d lose my job, and I kinda need it to pay the bills.”

“I know, hyung, I wasn’t being serious.”

Hoseok is especially touchy with everything that concerns money or job or school these days, and Jimin, no matter how hard he tries to tiptoe around those, doesn’t always succeed.

“We could talk about how weird you were around that Yoongi guy, if you wanna.”

Jimin snorts, then sighs.

“Yeah, I don’t know what happened. Just a weird day, I guess. He’s the hot friend, by the way.”

“That explains things,” Hoseok pushes open the door of the mall, holds it for Jimin. “You weren’t exaggerating.”

“Since when do I exaggerate on those kinds of things?” Jimin zips his jacket, rolls his scarf tighter around his neck.

“Since you find everyone attractive.”

“I don’t find everyone attractive. Also, attractive and hot aren’t the same thing.”

Hoseok laughs, light and airy. He’s tired. Jimin drags a comforting hand down his back.

“If you say so. You’re still coming over or?”

“Eunji will be there and I don’t wanna intrude.”

“You’re not, you know that.”

“I’ll buy takeout then. For your kind hospitality.”
“What about the last 5 years, mhm?”

“Slowly but surely.”

Hoseok makes a skeptical noise before they separate, get to each their own car.

“Just know though, Eunji is overly affectionate these days, since our 4 months’ anniversary is in two days and all that stuff.”

Jimin gives him a thumbs up, pressing on the unlocking button on his car remote.

“It’s okay, I can share.”

Δ

Park Jimin from class: want me to bring something for friday?

05-04-2016, 22:05

That’s the first thing he sees when he gets out the shower, undressed and uncaring and post-orgasm hazy. His lips curve up slightly, he knows Jimin is referring to alcohol. Silent contracts are fun. Now they both know that booze will have to act as a screen between them as long they won’t get along. Taehyung is fine with that.

You: whatever you feel like drinking

05-04-2016, 22:31

Park Jimin from class: ok

05-04-2016, 22:32

Park Jimin from class: see you tomorrow in class

05-04-2016, 22:33

Taehyung cringes again. There’s a friendliness to it that he’s not ready accept yet. Jimin is not his friend, not even remotely close to that. And Jimin says those things but they’re probably feeling forced for him too and this is all very fake but it’s fine, it’s just for this semester. Just for this 40% worth project. They can return to their own lives after that, won’t need to keep them intertwine in this uncomfortable way.
He wakes up brutally to the chaotic sound of his phone vibrating on the floor. He extends his arm and his fingers blindly close around the device, bringing it to his ear as he straightens to sit on the couch. Too-long naps on Thursday evenings, way to fuck someone up.

“Yeah?” he saw the contact on his screen before answering, but his brain didn’t fully process and he should have let the call go to voicemail.

“Son?”

“Who else.”

His father sighs. It’s a fairly good start.

“Were you sleeping?”

“It’s okay dad, just, tell me what’s going on.”

His father lets out this laugh, this bitter and tired one that he learned with time could be translated as “I can’t believe I raised you”. *How disappointed must you be, that your son can’t hold social interactions as well as you do. But you made me like that.*

“The annual charity gala is this month. Min’s son will be there. So you have to come or else it’ll make me look bad.”

“You can call him by his name, you know, you’ve practically seen him be born.”

“That’s a line of familiarity I don’t want to cross.”

“You used to call him Yoongi, though,” his words make him sound like he’s amused, but it’s just that anger always twisted him around in a weird way. “That’s because of what happened, right?”

“He made you sick, son.”

Ah, yes. There it is. Soaring anger.

“He didn’t make me sick, dad, you did,” his voice drops, it’s night, around, and inside. It’s night, it’s dark, it’s ink everywhere.

“If that’s what you want to believe. Gala is on the 16th. And don’t pretend to forget, this year.”

“Are you kidding me? What the fuck, that’s what, next week?”

“Yes, but I doubt you had anything interesting planned with some friends, right? Knowing you.”

“Fuck you, dad.”

“Don’t talk to me like –“

The remainder of the sentence dies against the wall, where Taehyung makes his phone smash.
He’s been walking for a while. He knows because his toes are going numb in his Conversees and the fingers of the hand holding his cigarette are an angry red. He knows but he doesn’t remember. All the streets he’s crossed, how many cigarettes he’s smoked, how many times he’s turned the conversation with his father in his head. Upside down, inside out.

He’s blankly staring at the window of the pet shop, his breathing deep but uneven. It’s closed, obviously, and most lights are out, but he can still see the tiny silhouettes. Most of the kittens are sleeping, rolled up or sprawled out, and though the sight makes him calmer, he still feels as heavy.

He swallows, his throat is dry from the cold but his nose is running. He bends, sees that the old’s cat cage is not there anymore. “Good,” he whispers to no one. And just as he’s about to go, a car passes behind him and casts light inside the shop.

The cage is not gone, it was just placed somewhere else.

Taehyung slams the door of his car closed and chain smokes the rest of the way to the refinery. He feels ugly inside and outside and even the orange lighting in here looks grey. He won’t be able to sleep, he knows. His father sent him in a spiral again, and he’s going to keep spinning on himself, tripping on every memory he hasn’t been able to close the drawer of.

Taehyung is sure he’s alone, tonight. And he’s made himself out of reach, too. His phone is still lying somewhere in his living room, in pieces. He’s too blinded by other stuff to care.

His back slides against the frigid metal of the tank until he’s sitting on the ground, knees almost to his chest.

Tomorrow is Friday, there’s class in the morning, and Yoongi is supposed to come over after that, and then Jimin in the afternoon. And this suddenly feel like so, so much. Too much in too little time.

His cigarettes smolder away, merely touched, they combust until they reach the filter and burn his fingers. Over and over again.

That night, Taehyung has nightmares wide awake and eyes open, staring at the light of the gas flare. He retraces the things of the past like he knows he shouldn’t do, he lets them scratch him until he’s unscabbed all over and bleeding regrets. And in the end, he falls asleep. But the descent is so slow, he can’t tell if it’s the cold or if it’s exhaustion.
You: at what time do you want me to be there
08-04-2016, 10:11

You: is around 12 ok
08-04-2016, 10:49

You: tae
08-04-2016, 11:23

You: well im leaving now so i should be there in 20
08-04-2016, 11:53

And he tries not to overthink. But it’s Taehyung. And he’s apparently always having a hard time controlling his feelings when it comes to him.

The elevator dings and the door smoothly slides open. He takes one last look at his phone, still no answer. At this point, he just hopes that he won’t find himself in front of a locked apartment.

He doesn’t.

It’s silent, in an unnatural way. He calls Taehyung’s name carefully, but gets further when he gets no response. He doesn’t bother taking off his shoes, just walks straight through the corridor until he reaches the living room and his gaze darts to the couch, where he finds him.

“Tae,”

He’s curled up, eyes closed and motionless except for the movements of his ribcage around his uneven breathing, and the occasional shivers making his body quake. Yoongi gets closer, his shins hitting the edge of the sofa as he looks down at him.

“Tae,” he whispers again, unsure, and he places a hand on his cheek. His skin is sticky and moist and too warm to be comfortable.

He peruses around, searching for any kind of hint, until his eyes fall on the mess that’s Taehyung’s phone on the laminate flooring. He clicks his tongue. This brings back weird memories.

He crouches, wraps his arms around Taehyung to try and maneuver him so he stands, but he can barely get him to sit that he starts babbling panickily.

“Wann’ stay here,” and he makes himself heavy and unmovable, just like a kid who doesn’t want to be carried.
“I need to get you in your bed,” he says, patiently, pulling him up again.

And Taehyung resists, keeps repeating he doesn’t want to, that he wants to stay on the couch with his sleepy voice and that gives Yoongi a weird impression. But he stops insisting and lays him back down.

“Where are the blankets?”

“Mhm?”

“The spare blankets, where do you keep them?”

“Closet. Bathroom.”

Yoongi goes back to the entryway and finally removes his shoes, then heads straight to the bathroom. He grabs blankets, a wet washcloth, a glass of water, ibuprofen and he returns to him, sets him up properly. Taehyung is usually a bad patient but isn’t, this time. Yoongi presses the cold material to his forehead for some temporary relief, and as he takes it off, Taehyung’s hand goes to his forearm; a plea to leave it there for a little longer. And that’s just then that he notices Taehyung’s fingers. Burns. Blotchy and scorched and darkened into the skin of his index and middle fingers.

“Shit, what the fuck?”

He indeed leaves the cloth there but he takes Taehyung’s hand in his own to examine it better. Cigarettes. Fucking cigarettes. This, also, brings back weird memories.

“What did you do last night, Tae?” He doesn’t mean it to sound reproachful, but it just does, because those aren’t just accidental scratches and he’s worried.

Yoongi knows he’s not sleeping, so when he gets no reply, he asks again. And this time, Taehyung tries to pull his hand away, and he lets him. He lets him and he adds nothing, but he still treats the wounds, letting the both of them bathe in a silence that suits his upset mood.

Only when this is done does he allow himself to retrieve the pieces of the phone and inspect the whole thing, sitting in the space Taehyung’s legs leave him. He puts the battery back in and it barely holds there from all the missing parts, but it’s going to be enough for him to check what he wants to know. The screen is badly cracked, not much is still visible, and Yoongi knows that trying to fix it would be useless.

He gets to the lock screen, to Taehyung’s usual black and white picture, and he stares a few seconds at the keyboard asking for the PIN number.

“What’s your phone’s password?”

Taehyung hums, and Yoongi knows he’s heard but isn’t sure if he processed. The fever probably makes him float between two worlds.

“0531,” he finally answers, in a fashion that sounds much more clear-headed.

Yoongi’s heart gives a squeeze and he closes his eyes. He hasn’t changed it. He enters the digits and unlocks the phone, and his first reflex is to go to his call history, because he knows only one person capable of putting Taehyung in that state.

And just as he thought, he finds it.
Yoongi sighs, puts the phone of the coffee table and stands.

“Your phone is dead,” he says. He’s softened. Some things never change.

“I know,” Taehyung whispers.

And without another word, Yoongi throws his beanie next to the corpse of the phone, and he settles in the armchair.

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He knocks once, twice.

Jimin hates how loud the paper bag sounds in the empty corridor. Even the sound of his keys is an irritant at this point and he just wants Taehyung to open so he can get in and stop feeling so out of place.

But Taehyung doesn’t answer the door. Yoongi does.

“Oh,”

“Ah, I forgot you were coming.”

And Taehyung not answering his messages this morning didn’t bother him more than that, he knows he’s not very skilled in keeping conversations active when it comes to texting. But now that Yoongi is standing in front of him, welcoming him, the paper bag doesn’t seem so bad.

“Is everything okay?” he asks, he’s kind of afraid of having interrupted something.

Yoongi steps to the side to let him in, and Jimin doesn’t hesitate, though he maybe should.

“Yeah, everything’s chill. Tae is just… a bit sick.”

“Ah,” Jimin smiles. Yoongi waits for him to take his boots off but he doesn’t. He contemplates going back. “Do you want me to leave? I mean, it’s fine—”

He just has the time to see Yoongi’s lips quirk before he’s walking away, seemingly headed to the living room.

“Nah he’s actually sick. I wasn’t pulling some metaphorical bullshit here.”

Jimin gets through the hallway after making himself shoeless, eyes running along the wall and across the pictures laid there.

“Jimin’s here,” he hears Yoongi say.
“Tell’im to fuck off.”

Jimin shakes his head but he doesn’t feel any bite in the words, so he just goes to the kitchen to put his paper bag containing his rum bottle on the countertop before he joins them. Taehyung is all rolled up in a thick navy blanket on the couch, a human burrito, and his hair is sticking to his forehead. His skin is glistening and flushed, eyes bloodshot.

“Can he even work on stuff?” he turns to Yoongi, who’s gathering some things on the armchair. “His fever seems pretty bad?”

“He’s under 39, now. And he’s awake, which is good, but –”

“I can work.”

Jimin looks back at Taehyung, and the lack of credibility almost hurts.

“That’s funny, I have doubts,” he drawls. “We can work on the project later, it’s okay. Don’t feel bad for that.”

“No, I can work.”

Yoongi mutters stubborn brat behind them, and just to prove his point, Taehyung sits.

“I can work.”

“Jesus fuck, yeah I understood that part,” he drops his backpack to the floor, notices the exploded phone on the table in the process. “Fine. That thing looks like it needs some help though.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi grabs it, and all the tiny pieces scattered across the floor and Jimin frowns. “If you tell me you’re gonna stay here, I’m gonna leave for a while. Get him a new phone and some other stuff. Just,” and he hands Jimin is own phone, wordlessly asking him to enter his number. Jimin does, saving his, too. “That way you can reach me if something happens with him.”

“So if we bring this element in the beginning of the presentation, that’ll create a more uh… homogenous content.” Jimin lifts his eyes from his tablet. “You fell asleep again, didn’t you?”

“No,” Taehyung mumbles, but he’s slouched against the lower part of the couch, head lolled on the side and half hidden in the blanket.

And Jimin isn’t mad, the pills and the fever probably make him drowsy, but it’s just annoying, this feeling of talking alone. He sighs, rolls his pencil between his fingers.

“Just sleep, Taehyung. It’s fine.”

“I’m not sleepy.”

“Don’t lie.”

Taehyung’s eyes slowly crack open, and they fall heavily into Jimin’s.

“You little fucker, are you calling me a liar?” So, so quick to ignite.
“That’s exactly what I’m calling you, yeah. Now get your ass on that couch. And fucking sleep, okay?” Taehyung still glares at him for a couple seconds and Jimin thinks his ego is probably taking a hit to the face with a shovel.

“What’cha gonna do? Watch me sleep?”

“Why are you being like this even when you’re sick? Who hurt you?” he watches Taehyung climb back up, and settle on the cushions, affronted expression on his face. He wonders when Taehyung will drop his stupid defense mechanism. “I’m gonna try to work some more until Yoongi comes back.”

And he tries, he really does. But every time Taehyung’s breathing gives a sharp sound, that he mumbles incomprehensible words or that he shifts in his sleep, he loses focus. It’s peaceful, at least. In this state, Taehyung exudes calmness and he’s, no use in denying things, cute. Which contrasts a lot with how hot Jimin usually thinks he is. His features are all softness, he’s all made of curvy lines, from his eyes to his lips, and Jimin decides he prefers seeing him like that than with the frown he seems to be permanently wearing.

Then just as he’s in another mindless moment of observation, Taehyung wakes, and of course, catches him staring.

“So you’re watchin’ me sleep for real,” he says, blinking slowly.

“Yeah, because you’re a noisy sleeper and you keep disturbing me.”

“Sorry,” he whispers, he sounds genuine. He rolls himself back in tightly, turning so his back is now facing Jimin.

Well, that’s new. And like this, his brown hair looks awful, disheveled and sticking up in every direction, but Jimin knows that he’s can’t say he dislikes Taehyung anymore.

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You: cant make it tonight hyung, sorry
08-04-2016, 19:12

Hobi hyung: you okay?
08-04-2016, 19:14

You: yea yea don’t worry
08-04-2016, 19:15

You: smt just came up
08-04-2016, 19:15
Jimin has to stop a couple times, looking at the ceiling and asking the Gods for help, because he kind of forgot why he’s cooking soup in someone else’s kitchen and skipping dance practice.

He’s given Taehyung another two pills, because the last ones were over 6 hours ago, made him drink a glass of water and now he’s trying to make something decent with unknown pots and pans.

“What the fuck am I doing,” he whines, adding some green onions to the broth. He’s just grateful that his mother taught him how to prepare this.
Jimin fills a bowl after having let the mixture cool for a bit, and he’s feeling bad for interrupting Hoseok’s dance practice so he just tells him he’s going to call him later before he shuffles around to find a spoon. He dampens a towel and brings everything to the living room.

“I brought you soup,” he says, and Taehyung makes a noise, doesn’t budge. “I literally cooked soup for you to feel better, can you at least try to eat some?”

Taehyung inhales deeply, like moving is sucking all of his energy and he sits, eyes half closed and skin still rosy from how warm he must be, all wrapped up like that. Jimin hands him the towel so he can wipe his face, and Taehyung does, freeing his arms with great effort.

“I feel like shit.”

“M’yeah, nothing really surprising there,” Jimin agrees, settling next to him on the couch and balancing the tray on his own thighs and transferring it on Taehyung’s once he’s done.

He brings the soup to his mouth, sips a bit of the liquid and immediately jerks back, expression pained.

“Too hot,” he whines, and Jimin feels as annoyed as he feels endeared.

“I let it cool but if it’s still too much, just wait a bit more,” he answers, watching the other giving it another go. “Why am I taking care of you, mhm?”

“Don’t know.” Taehyung lets silence hang as he carefully eats, and then the faintest of smiles draws itself on his lips. “Are you crushing on me?”

“Dude.”

Taehyung shakes with weak laughter and the bowl and the spoon and the tray, everything trembles and Jimin is horrified.

“Don’t spill everything Taehyung, I swear to God.”

He wheezes and Jimin knows there’s something heavier behind it but he can’t help but smile too, because it’s not even that funny, and the view is ridiculous, and this evening is ridiculous and he kind of feels confused.

“Did you eat?” Taehyung asks, after his body stopped going through light seizures, and his eyes are clearer when he looks at Jimin, maybe a little more sunny when it used to be all clouds.

“I didn’t.”

“Then eat some of that too,” he offers his bowl to him and Jimin shakes his head.

“It’s yours, your food.”

Taehyung gives him an unimpressed look, and insists, extends his arm even further towards him.

“Eat. Or cook yourself something else. You need to eat.”

“Or what?” This feels like a conversation he’s had in the past, and he suddenly becomes
“I need a cigarette.”

Jimin looks at Taehyung from his side of the room, where he’s losing time on his phone.

“You’re gonna have to crawl to get them because I’m not giving them to you when you’re in that state.”

Taehyung blinks, once, twice, and his body slips down the couch and onto the floor, and he tries to make his way to the entry, where he left them in the pocket of his jacket.

“Ugh, what the fuck,” the sight makes Jimin feel guilty and he stands, gets them for him. “You’re not smoking outside though.”

“I need to.”

“You just don’t. It’s your apartment and I don’t mind so don’t go out there.”

“I don’t like smoking inside.”

“Too bad, you’re still feverish.”

They end up on the balcony, ass in the tiny part of the floor that’s not covered in snow or ice or both.

The view is pretty, the city extending before them, its bright lights and smaller streets. Jimin doesn’t know what time it is, but it must be getting late, because it’s quiet all around, serene.

Taehyung isn’t saying a word and neither is Jimin. He feels like he’s witnessing some ritual of his, and he doesn’t want to disturb. He steals glances from time to time, liking the way Taehyung looks when he exhales the smoke. His ex was a smoker, too. And while himself doesn’t get a cigarette that often, he always liked the vibe it gave off. And Taehyung, despite being sick, has it just right.

Taehyung flicks the ash off, pushes his air out and leans back against the glass patio door. He proposes his cigarette to Jimin. Jimin takes it. But in the process, he notices the dark patches on his fingers and his ribcage tightens. It looks sore and raw, and he wonders how he hasn’t noticed them before.

The wind blows, icy and merciless, and he takes a drag.

“What happened?”

Taehyung turns to him when he breaks the silence, and there’s this look on his face, like he’s deep in thought and Jimin doesn’t like the way his feelings adapt to this whole thing.
“Mhm?”

“Your fingers.”

Taehyung slips his hand back into the bundle of blankets and looks away, messy hair being swept across his forehead. And this is how it ends. This is how far Jimin can go. They’re not there, yet.

**Hobi hyung:** you still ok?

08-04-2016, 21:19

**You:** yea, taehyung's sleeping, im just waiting for yoongi to come back

08-04-2016, 21:21

**Hobi hyung:** all of this seems very weird

08-04-2016, 21:21

**You:** it is

08-04-2016, 21:21

**You:** calling you when i get outta here

08-04-2016, 21:22

The front door opens and Jimin nearly jumps out of his skin. He straightens from where he fell asleep on the armchair and his phone falls to the floor with a dull sound.

Yoongi enters the living room with a couple bags and Jimin exhales with relief, bending to pick up the device and inspecting for any damage.

“I’m late, sorry,” Yoongi says to him, placing the bags on the ground and going to gauge Taehyung’s state. He seems worried, caring, and he gives off a kind of affection that’s even hard to look at, like Jimin is standing right in their intimacy. Yoongi pulls the blanket upper on Taehyung’s frame. Jimin tries to look away.
“It’s fine,” he swallows. It’s like he spent a couple months on another planet and now he needs to get back home. “He’s been sleeping for a while, fever has gone down a bit.”

“Good.”

Jimin stuffs his tablet into his backpack, swings it over his shoulder. He probably looks like he’s in a haste to leave. And truthfully, he is.

“Someone’s waiting for me so I’ll go,” he nearly whispers, trying not to disturb Taehyung. It’s only half the truth, but it’s an easy way out.

“Okay,” and Yoongi escorts him to the door, watches him fetch his jacket and put his boots on.

When his lungs meet frigid air again, Jimin closes his eyes and fills them up, taking the time to process everything.

He gets into his car, throws his stuff on the passenger seat and leans back.

“What was that?” he talks to himself as he fits his key into the ignition and starts the car. On his right, his phone lights up.

You: are you guys together or smt
08-04-2016, 22:35

Yoongi: no we’re not
08-04-2016, 22:37

He nods to no one. He doesn’t even know why he asked. What purpose it served. Float in his brain
questions about why Taehyung was even sick to begin with, and why his fingers where scorched exactly where he holds his cigarettes, but he doesn’t ask them. He thinks it might be taking things too far.

Because Jimin, as he’s driving home and chatting with Hoseok on Bluetooth, feels like he’s just stepped in something that’s way more complex than it looks like.

The next day, Taehyung wakes up alone in the living room. He stands, lets the blanket to fall on the floor and walks to the patio door. It’s still early from the light outside, and the snow is melting, the water drops catching in the sunlight just before they fall. He slides the door to open it just barely, cool air filtering in and it feels great. Spring. He hopes it’ll bring beautiful things, this year.

It’s only later, when he’s taken a shower and something to help his headache that he notices the phone on the coffee table. He takes it when he sees the LED light flash, presses the home button for the screen to turn on. No password.

Min Yoongi: thats your new phone, i chose the same model you already had
09-04-2016, 3:02

Min Yoongi: contacts have been transferred and all that
09-04-2016, 3:03

Min Yoongi: i left when i considered you stable enough
09-04-2016, 3:15

Taehyung grows warmer inside. Like he’s standing under the sun, too.

You: thanks, hyung
09-04-2016, 8:39

Going on a road trip. He’s sitting in class and that’s the only thing on his mind.
The teacher is talking about things Taehyung knows will be on the upcoming exam and he’s trying to concentrate but it’s not happening. The weather has been so great in the last days, being stuck inside is some kind of passive torture.

“You should be into the meat of your project by now,” he announces and Taehyung doesn’t know how he should feel about the fact that they aren’t past the discussion part yet.

Notebooks are being flipped closed, messy, disjointed choir and everyone stands and rushes to leave.

“Hey Taehyung,”

“Yeah?” he looks up, eyes zeroing on that girl he recognizes is in the same morning class as him on Tuesdays.

“D’you remember the deadline the teacher gave us to turn in our texts yesterday?”

“On the 24th.”

And just as she thanks him and turns to talk to someone else, Jimin parks himself right in front of his desk.

“How you feeling?” He asks, his fingers combing through his hair, and this and the way he’s being looked at makes it hard for Taehyung to hold his gaze.

“Better,” he zips his backpack, wonders what path he should be using today, for a change.

“Don’t go all cold on me, Taehyung. I spent my Friday night making sure you were warm and feeding you soup.”

The two girls next to them stop talking. He can’t see, but he knows they’re staring. And strangely enough, he’s more bothered by their unsubtle ogling than by what they’ve heard. He climbs up the stairs silently, and when he notices Jimin isn’t behind him, he looks over his shoulder to find him.

“Are you coming or?”

Δ

“Thanks,” he says, taking the cigarette Taehyung offers him. He’s careful to gauge the state of his fingers, too. It still isn’t pretty, but it’s healing.

They’re just out the main entrance of the university, and the air smells like spring. It’s the second time they smoke together. It would be an unhealthy habit, but Jimin wouldn’t dislike it, if it’s to always feel like a damn ritual like this.

“We’re a bit late, aren’t we? For the project.” Jimin says, vaguely looking around. The walls of the building look eerie in this light, beige and brown stone against the spotless blue of the sky. Snow has been melting for a couple of days and it’s wet everywhere and the sun is blinding, when it hits the snowbanks.
“We’re not late,” Taehyung exhales his smoke in the opposite direction before he stifles his cough in the hollow of his elbow. He takes a couple steps around in a fashion Jimin associates with trying to deal with awkwardness. “We got until the end of the semester, don’t stress.”

Jimin hums. “Did you get a new phone?”

He’s yet to know what happened the Friday before, why Taehyung was feverish like that, and why the phone had been thrown hard enough to create a dent in the wall. He’s curious about it. The questions are dancing on the tip of his tongue but he feels like it’s not his place to ask them. Misplaced curiosity.

“Yeah, hyung got it for me.”

He nods, watches some ash land on the snow at his feet. Taehyung is hard to talk with when he pulls up the walls around him. But silence at his side isn’t as painful as it used to be.

“Thanks, for last week,” he eventually says and that makes Jimin buzz with a nervous kind of discomfort.

“It’s nothing,”

Taehyung lets out a breath of a laugh and when their eyes lock, his lips are pulled up in a small smile.

“You didn’t have to do what you did. Your kindness isn’t ‘nothing’, Jimin.”

His insides twist.

Pushing him to eat.

According value to the little things he does.

Taehyung tells him things like he knows exactly where to press with his words, like he can feel where his weaknesses are so he can put his hand on them to soothe the pain. And Jimin wonders if he’s like that with everyone, if it’s something that is easy for him to do, reading people.

“Well that got deep a little too quick,” he mutters to dismiss those thoughts, but he’s smiling too, and if they can’t become friends, then at least now they’ve established their own kind of respect.

They smoke through the rest of their cigarettes wordlessly and Taehyung, when he’s done, looks down and it and then at the trashcan, before walking the few meters to it and throwing it in there.

“I’ll go,” he says. “Bring your stuff for Friday, I shouldn’t be in burrito-mode then.”

Jimin laughs through his nose, takes one last drag before he throws the stick away too and readjusts the strap of his backpack on his shoulder.

“I left my rum at yours anyway, didn’t I? Where’s your car parked?”

“Back at my apartment.”

“Ah,” and that’s a bit surprising, this right here. A 2016 Audi sleeping in a parking lot. “D’you want a ride back?”

“No, it’s fine,” his eyes soften, and it reminds Jimin of when he was a lump of blankets and sipping on soup. “But thank you.”
No matter how hard he tries, Jimin can’t stop peeping.

The others are behind him and where he’s looking at is in the completely opposite direction. But he’s been like this since he’s seen them there once. And every time he comes to the refinery, he’s stuck with this anticipation that they’ll be there again.

Except that they are, this time.

They’re at their usual spot, and himself is just standing there, half hidden in a shadow, a hand in his jacket pocket and the other at his side, clasped around his cellphone. His gaze is going from Namjoon and Seokjin to Taehyung and Yoongi. Stuck between two places and he’s kind of lost in thought.

Taehyung is leaned on the tank, Yoongi standing at his side and they’re smoking and talking, but it somehow looks so intimate, and they’re so close, Jimin feels like some kind of voyeur. Yoongi told him that they’re not together, but they’re so heavy around one another that Jimin could literally grab at the tension between them.

Fuck buddies, maybe.

“Jimin-ah!”

Jimin jumps before he shrinks onto himself at the way his name echoes between the metallic structures. He whips his head to the back and sees that Seokjin is gesturing at him to get closer, and then he looks back at Yoongi and Taehyung to find them staring. He curses, suddenly embarrassed and he goes back, Namjoon and Seokjin meeting him halfway.

“You okay?” Namjoon asks, lazily strolling towards him.

“Yeah, yeah,” he assures, wanting to dodge the subject, but he can see that they’re both looking over his shoulder.

Namjoon raises an eyebrow. “Are they bothering you that much?”

“Oh. He’s back.”

Seokjin’s tone is weird. Somewhere between surprise and worry.

“Yeah,” Namjoon hums, “he’s been for a couple weeks, it seems.”

Jimin looks between the two. They’re obviously referring to either Taehyung or Yoongi, something that they both know and that he doesn’t, even if he’s known both Namjoon and Seokjin for months, and that he’s been coming to the refinery for weeks. He hears footfall coming their way so he can’t ask all his questions, and those too will have to be kept simmering inside.
“You’re back,” Seokjin says, not too loud, and with the hint of amusement in his voice.

“Yeah,” Yoongi’s voice is a bit of the same, and Jimin turns to him, and there’s a least one answer in there. “Since last month.”

Seokjin takes a few steps towards him and he’s smiling, and Yoongi is smiling too, and Jimin is swimming in confusion and foreign feelings. They shake hands in a friendly manner instead of a polite one and they talk for a while. It’s all about vague things, it’s not hard to see that they’re being careful because Namjoon and he are near.

Still in his place is Taehyung, he looks calm and close to uncaring, scrolling through his phone and looking at them from time to time. And from there, Jimin asks himself if Taehyung knows Seokjin too. Seokjin who’s also wealthy, yes, who’s always well dressed with finely adjusted jeans and spotless though casual shirts tucked in them, but who’s working part-time and at the same café Namjoon does, and studying in a less prestigious university. Seokjin who’s so kind and open, who contrasts so much with the wild energy that both Taehyung and Yoongi give off.

His phone lights up and dings in his hand, and next to him, Namjoon looks down at it too.

**Hobi hyung:** sorry i got out late  
14-04-2016, 22:26

**Hobi hyung:** i should be there soon  
14-04-2016, 22:26

“Hoseok?” Namjoon asks and Jimin nods. He lifts his own phone to his eyes and looks at the time.  
“Shit man, they’re keeping him up so late these days, no wonder he’s tired like that.”

Jimin hums, the low hum of Seokjin and Yoongi’s conversation still mixing up with the sounds around the refinery. “Eunji is starting to complain, too.”

“Yeah, he told me she’s starting to become a bit difficult.”

**You:** its fine hyung, dont rush  
14-04-2016, 22:27

**Hobi hyung:** btw i got those tickets i talked to you about last month  
14-04-2016, 22:28

**You:** thats nice, you deserved them  
14-04-2016, 22:28
Hobi hyung: right? it’s this saturday tho
14-04-2016, 22:29

Hobi hyung: i know it’s last minute, but do you wanna come?
14-04-2016, 22:29

You: ah, im sorry hyung, i already got something
14-04-2016, 22:30

Hobi hyung: it’s okay, it was super last minute anyway
14-04-2016, 22:30

Hobi hyung: i’m gonna ask Eunji, don’t tell her I asked you first
14-04-2016, 22:31

Hoseok sends a winking emoji after that, and it makes Jimin feel sad. Hoseok too often finds himself in relationships where he can’t find a balance.

You: you know i wont
14-04-2016, 22:32

“Jimin,” and he perks up from his phone mid-text, meeting Yoongi’s gaze, and he’s way closer than he remembered him to be.

“Mhm?”

“You coming tomorrow?”

It takes probably too long for him to understand that he’s talking about the project and Yoongi gives him a smile that makes everything that much more complicated.

“I should be there, yeah.”

“Good,” he says, extending a hand to pat his shoulder and Jimin gets stunned. “I’ll see you there, then.”

And when Yoongi walks off, Taehyung gives Jimin the smallest of salutations before he follows him further and out the refinery.
Jimin sighs. Bad. This is bad.

“Fuck.”

Δ

Taehyung’s hand cup around Yoongi’s face and he kisses him deeper.

It’s a dance they danced so often, but now, it feels as bitter as it feels satisfying. Yoongi was his first addiction, and he’s a weakness that’ll follow him until the end.

He feels him fist at his shirt and growling against his lips and this will never stop feeling like a perfect song. He backs him up against the wall near his bed, just firmly enough to make his breath catch. Today, they won’t be able to stop to just mouths and hands. The first time in months and months and Taehyung is eager to know if Yoongi craves this as much as he is.

Taehyung touches him in a fashion that he used to accompany with words that he can’t say anymore. His thumb rolls on Yoongi’s cheek and it feels like home.

When he’s as riled up as he can endure and that Yoongi has started rolling his hips into his, Taehyung breaks the kiss and leaves him hanging, but just for a couple of seconds, because the lube is in the other nightstand and he needs that. They’re far from needing to be careful with each other. Physically, at least. Taehyung remembers him like he’s never left, he’s engraved all his habits and all his likings into his brain so they never could be forgotten. He knows his limits and until where he can take things and it’s like a second nature to him to work with them.

He’s back and nearly towering over Yoongi, and Yoongi stares at his lips but won’t take, because there’s still guilt floating around him, and Taehyung knows. He’s trying to be responsible, but he can’t. Never really could.

“Pants off,” Taehyung whispers, so close to Yoongi’s lips but he won’t give. And he sits on the edge of the bed, waiting.

Yoongi glares, but when Taehyung is like that, he knows it’s a battle he can’t win. So he does. He unclasps his belt and loosens it, undoes the button of his skinny jeans but his eyes never leave Taehyung’s. He pulls them along his legs until they pool at his feet, does the same with his boxer briefs and he waits. He waits until Taehyung reaches with his arm to grab at the side of his t-shirt and pulls him onto his lap, straddling his thighs. He leans down for a kiss but Taehyung pushes the bottle of lube into his chest instead and he grabs at it reflexively.

“Prep yourself.”

Yoongi’s exhale quivers and that makes Taehyung smile. There’s no objection voiced, as expected, no matter how grown-up Yoongi tries to be, he’s more willing then he’ll ever tell.

Taehyung is patient, it’s been a long time for the both of them and he snakes a hand under his t-shirt, pulling him closer by the small of his back as Yoongi moves against him. He draws abstract patterns with his lips along his neck, he insists in places he knows make him shiver. He rubs and scrapes at his back, his other hand running on his thigh and when Yoongi finally moans and drops his head on his shoulder, Taehyung’s hips roll up against his ass.
“Okay,” Yoongi breathes, removing his fingers when he deems himself ready.

Taehyung glances at his alarm clock on the tiny table. 14:37. It’s 25 minutes until Jimin arrives and while he wishes they had more time, this, for today, will have to do.

He tilts his chin up and Yoongi meets him halfway, and it’s sweeter than it should be. It’s deliberate and practiced, with a pinch of the past Taehyung doesn’t want to think about. He hooks his thumbs in the hem of his sweatpants, tugs them down with what’s under them, just enough to have full access to his dick.

“Let’s see if you’re still shaped like me,” he teases, reaching for the lubricant and coating his cock with it.

“Shut up.”

Taehyung half laughs, and he steadies Yoongi’s hips as he aligns their bodies. And just when he’s about to press in, Yoongi jerks up like he’s just been burnt, pushes at Taehyung’s chest to keep some distance.

“Condom, Taehyung. Put a condom on.”

Taehyung’s stock-still. They never used a condom before. Never had to.

“I’m clean, hyung.”

“No I know, it’s me. I just haven’t had the time to go get a check up since I came back. Condom would be safer.”

He stares. He can feel his heart beating harder against his ribs. It’s surprise, it’s anger. It’s a bit of deception hiding some sort of hurt disgust. His hands fall from Yoongi’s body and off his own.

“So you were serious when you said you got fucked in America.”

Yoongi seems to deflate.

Misunderstandings. They’re not used to running into those. Once upon a time, Yoongi and Taehyung didn’t need words to communicate. When he doesn’t get an answer, he smoothly pushes Yoongi to the side and on the bed.

“Tae,”

“I don’t care, hyung. I don’t care,” he stands, tucks himself back in.

“Don’t lie.”

“No. You don’t lie, hyung, because we both –“

Brief knocks on the door cut them off. Taehyung looks past Yoongi and at his clock again. 14:43. Why the fuck is he so early. He sighs, makes a quick trip to the bathroom to wash his hands, doesn’t look back at Yoongi who’s still half naked on his bed.

“I’m here early,” Jimin announces when Taehyung opens, “you happy?”

He answers nothing but steps aside to let him in.

“Apparently not,” he continues, taking his boots off. “Are you sick again? Or is your head just stuck
“Go sit in the living room, Jimin.”

“Rectum it is, then. Great. I’ll just go get my rum in your kitchen instead and spare myself some pain.”

Taehyung watches him go up the corridor, and he expects it. He expects something awkward to happen, because Jimin butted in at the worst moment, and he’s standing between two reactive elements that could end up like a disastrous mix.

And it happens right there, when Yoongi and Jimin meet just in front of the kitchen, and that Jimin eyes the leather jacket he’s wearing.

“Oh, you’re leaving?”

“Yeah,” and he gives him an uncomfortable smile. They’re odd, together. There’s something between them, it’s barely there but he can see it, from the way they look at each other. It’s the same thing he sensed the first time he introduced them.Interesting. “There’s somewhere I need to be, but I’ll see you around?”

Oh, ‘I’ll see you around’. And this, this brings Taehyung back in the pit of messy feelings he was in when Jimin got here.

Yoongi closes the door behind him and Jimin grabs a glass to pour some rum in. Taehyung wants to scream some things out of his system, but can’t.

Jimin visibly tries to compensate for the way Taehyung keeps spacing out.

Taehyung feels bad about it, but his thoughts are rolling and he can’t focus. The color on the wall is too pale and this armchair is boring. The floor is too clean and when he’s alone, the silence is too hard to deal with. Taehyung has spent so much time on his own in the past year that this apartment became his home as much as it became his cage.

A fancy cage, but he was doing fine.

Until voices started filling the space from time to time, Yoongi’s low voice here and there, Jimin’s laugh here and there.

Now coming out the shower to an empty apartment is pinching at his nerves, and eating at a table meant for four people makes him feel hollow. Drinking and smoking weed feel better, but that’s nothing to be rejoiced about.

He’s been looking through the doorway of the living room for some time now and Jimin is not stupid, he’s noticed. But he’s still acting prudent around him, and Taehyung understands. No one would throw themselves to walls covered in blades. Taehyung is behind them and he can’t do much, he’s too scared of putting them down.

The color is still too pale and the flat is still too big, and it bubbles up in him like boiling milk, expending and expending, ready to overflow. And then Yoongi, and America, and all those others he doesn’t know about. All this ink spilled on something he thought was white all along.
“Tae, you okay? You’ve been staring there like you’re waiting for someone.”

And these not-so-faded memories he can’t let go of and all those images he keeps creating of Yoongi and unknown bodies in unknown places. He’s getting nauseous.

“I need to go,” he says hurriedly, scrambling to his feet.

“Cool. You’re pretty much already at home though.”

“No, there’s somewhere I wanna go,” he walks out the room, goes down the corridor leading to his room and changes clothes. Anything to get out of this cycle.

“I’ll take it that I need to leave?” he hears Jimin say loudly from where he’s still sitting next to the coffee table. He doesn’t sound surprised, and it gets to Taehyung maybe more than it should.

“You can come if you wanna,” he kicks his sweatpants to the side, puts on the first pair of jeans he can find.

“Okay? My car?”

Taehyung thinks of Jimin’s half emptied rum and coke. “Mine.”

He passes a hoodie over his head, grabs his keys on top of his commode. He rushes to the living room and he’s in such a hurry, he’s barely thinking. He’s nearly panting when he stops right in front of still-sat Jimin, dressed up and shoes on.

“You’re coming or?”

“Are you some kind of spy, Kim Taehyung? I swear –“

“Are you coming? Because I’m going, like, now. This instant.”

Jimin drops his pencil on the table, then his hands up in surrender.

“Okay, fine, fine. What the fuck dude.”

“You’re kidding me, right?” Jimin bends next to him, squints to look through the tall window. Taehyung ignores him, embraces this feeling of rightfulness spreading through his chest instead.

“Tae,”

Taehyung presses a finger to the glass, stupidly, then his whole hand. The cat, from its tiny cage, its ridiculously tiny cage, looks at him with numbed passivity.

“It looks old, Tae, why would you—“

“You can fuck off if you’re going to be a talking trashcan.”

Jimin straightens.

“Did you drink concentrated testosterone? ‘the fuck is wrong with you?”
Taehyung gets in, a bell ringing as he pushes the door open, ringing once more to announce Jimin. He looks around and over the shelves to spot an employee. The woman he finds wears the mandatory lime green t-shirt and an expression that tells just how unsuited she is for this job. Taehyung asks about the cat. The employee stares at him like she misheard.

“You’re talking about the tortoiseshell one near the window?”

Jimin lazily walks up behind him, stands there quietly. Somehow, Taehyung is glad he came along.

“Yeah, that one.”

“We’re about to send it away because it’s kind of wasting our space.”

Taehyung breathes out a laugh, looks at the ceiling. “Wasting your space, uh?”

“Pardon?”

“I’ll buy her.”

“Christ,” Jimin mutters, and this is the most satisfying thing Taehyung has done in a while.

“Oh, okay,” and the woman looks surprised, and Taehyung despises her even more when he doesn’t find relief in her expression. “Would you need anything else? Litter box? Food bowls? Toys and food?”

“Just give me everything that usually goes with a cat,” at this point he just wants to get this cat out of here. “Except for the food.” The lady gives him a questioning look, wondering if he’s serious. Waiting for him to laugh it off, perhaps. “I can afford all the stuff, it’s fine.”

She disappears in the aisles. He probably made her day.

“Tae,”

“Jimin, do you have some expertise in cats?”

“No?”

“Then pretend you do and go choose some toys, yeah?”

“Are you ordering me around?”

“What’s new?”

“Are you like that with everyone or am I your convenient punching bag?”

“I’ll go get the tiger while you do that.”

“I’m not sure if I chose well, though. Don’t blame me if it doesn’t like it.”

“It’s a she. And it’s fine, I’ll readjust myself if I need to.”

Taehyung uses his credit card to pay for everything, and for the first time, the lady is smiling. He’s tempted to be deeply disgusted, but the fluttering in his stomach when he thinks about the furry being
he’s about to bring home is strong enough to shush it.

“You could have left her in the cage until we got back at least,” Jimin whines when Taehyung takes a curve a little too tightly and the cat stabilizes herself with her claws in his left thigh.

“Put her on the back seat if she’s hurting you,” and in retrospective, setting the cat free in the car the moment they left the pet shop wasn’t a good idea on many levels. But it’s done now, and he’s going to deal with that once they’re parked somewhere safe. He just couldn’t bear seeing her squeezed in such a cramped space anymore.

“She’s kind of fat.”

“I know, that’s why I’m going to the vet to get some food. That’ll give her a chance.”

He feels Jimin looking at him fixedly from the passenger seat, and he doesn’t meet his eyes, because that would open the door to a conversation he doesn’t want to have. The cat lets out a distressed noise that startles him and he looks at her, only to see that despite his own plaintive noises, Jimin is petting and holding her close. And Taehyung smiles. Genuinely.

He then meets green eyes drowning in their pupils from the stress and the fear, a round face with neatly divided colors right in the middle, with a side almost completely black, and the other dotted in caramel and darker oranges. And it comes to him naturally.

“Cannelle.”

“Uh?”

“Her name. Cannelle.”

“I think she doesn’t like her new home,” Jimin says flatly, bringing his glass to his lips for the last sip, his legs dangling off the countertop.

“Can you just,” Taehyung finishes tearing the packaging of a toy, and sends it rolling on the floor. “She’s stressed, she’s gonna hide for a while. Let her be.”

Jimin hums but adds nothing. He watches him unwrap most of the things and arrange them around, place and replace them. Taehyung finds it weirdly intimate but doesn’t comment on it. It’s already a lot that they manage to get along, he’s not going to take the risk to break the little they built.

“Thanks, for doing this with me.”

And it’s true that he didn’t leave him much of a choice, but Jimin went along with it anyway. Jimin shrugs. Taehyung’s waiting for it, the “it’s nothing”.

“It was kind of fun,” and the smile he gives Taehyung lets him know he chose his words. It’s hiding some sort of playfulness, and it has Taehyung stopping to look at him for an unnaturally long moment. Then he drags his fingers through his hair, and it hits Taehyung once again, how attractive he is. Jimin looks away. A reflex. He probably doesn’t even know himself how he reacts to that kind
of attention. Like he’s not worthy of it. Like his self-esteem had been stepped on too many times.

But Taehyung is not imagining what’s happening, the one drink he had didn’t render him delusional. Jimin is sitting on his kitchen counter, and he’s flirting with him.

Δ

“We still haven’t done shit about the project though,” Jimin adds, to cut through the silence around them. Because he’s caught Taehyung staring at his lips and his too-strong rum and coke is hitting hard on his empty stomach and he feels playful. And this is not a good thing.

Taehyung looks at his left and at the luminous numbers on the microwave.

“Oh, fuck.”

Jimin laughs. It’s already past 6. Dance practice is in a little over an hour.

“You have something on Friday nights, right?”

“Kind of,” he places his glass on the surface next to his thigh, grabs his phone. “But if you wanna work on the project I can stay.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah,” and Jimin is about to send a text to Hoseok, but notices there’s already a notification waiting.

You: by any chance are you still at taehyung’s place?
15-04-2016, 18:01

Jimin’s brows crease. This gives him a weird feeling.

You: yeah, why?
15-04-2016, 18:19

His thumb glides over the screen until he’s in his conversation with Hoseok. The thought of them wanting to see one another but himself being in the way is quite plausible, and it makes him bitter.

You: hyung, will you hate me if i miss practice again
15-04-2016, 18:19
Jimin smiles, laughs softly. He doesn’t know what he did in a previous life to deserve someone as good as Hoseok for a best friend. Taehyung gives him a questioning look that he dismisses with a shake of his head.

**You:** tae bought an old and fat cat

15-04-2016, 18:22

**Hobi hyung:** uh

15-04-2016, 18:22

**Hobi hyung:** okay

15-04-2016, 18:22

**Hobi hyung:** now how does this fat cat stop you from coming tonight

15-04-2016, 18:22

**You:** we havent had time to work on our project bc of that

15-04-2016, 18:23

**You:** so we’d strat right now

15-04-2016, 18:23

**You:** start*

15-04-2016, 18:23

**Hobi hyung:** it's for school what can i say

15-04-2016, 18:23
Hobi hyung: im forcing you to come tomorrow afternoon tho, i dont want you to get late on the choreo

15-04-2016, 18:24

You: deal, i’ll be there at like, 10

15-04-2016, 18:24

“It’s all good,” he says, tossing his mobile to the side and jumping off his seat to prepare himself another drink. Taehyung shows no excessive relief or joy, but he hums, and that’s a more than sufficient answer.

There’s more take-out containers on the coffee table than actual school stuff.

Their tentative is only half a failure, because they did manage to do some work, despite Cannelle being a sporadic distraction. Until food got here and that Jimin’s rum and coke became three parts rum and one part coke, and that Taehyung stopped mixing his vodka with anything.

They’re full and slow, talking lazily about this and that and Jimin occupies the couch while Taehyung tries to swim on the floor. Jimin is closer to the wasted line than he is of the tipsy one, and he watches with mild fascination the way the other moves against the flooring.

“Tae,”

“Mhm,”

“Where you tryna go like that?”

“Cannelle.”

Jimin’s lips curve up at his even more slurred pronunciation of the foreign word now that alcohol has taken his tongue over.

“Yeah, what’s with her?”

Taehyung stretches his whole body, trying to move forward on his belly, and like that he takes a big portion of the living room’s width, and fuck okay, he’s tall. Jimin’s phone lights up, he takes it.

“She’s there,” and he extends his arm, reaching under another side table.

Yoongi: that’ll probably seem strange but i left my wallet in his room

15-04-2016, 22:01

Yoongi: if youre still there do you think you can go check

15-04-2016, 22:01
Yoongi: its probably somewhere on the floor next to the bed

15-04-2016, 22:01

This is indeed odd, but Jimin’s too gone to really care. He stands and Taehyung doesn’t even seem to notice, makes his way to his room and finds it easily, a thick and black leather wallet forgotten exactly where he’s been told. He makes sure it’s Yoongi’s IDs that are in it before going back to the couch and texting back.

You: yea itshere

15-04-2016, 22:04

“Jimin,”

“What?”

“Jiminnie,”

Jimin rips his eyes from his screen and sets them on the tall spread form. This certainly feels weird. But not a bad kind of weird. A warm and fuzzy kind of weird.

“What?”

Taehyung doesn’t answer, grabs a squishy ball instead and gently makes it roll to where Cannelle apparently is. He’s in a worst state than Jimin expected.

Yoongi: aight, can i meet you somewhere tonight or tomorrow so you can give it back to me?

15-04-2016, 22:06

And this is even more strange, but Jimin, for whom the letters on his keyboard are starting to blur, doesn’t think too much of it.

You: gotta be near the uni tomarow mornnig you can meet me there

15-04-2016, 22:06

Yoongi: yeah ok, send me the address?

15-04-2016, 22:07
Jimin sends him the directions to the dance studio and brings his knees closer to his chest, lets his head fall back against the cushion. Taehyung is keeping still, now. His breathing is deep and even, and if Jimin couldn’t see him blink every few seconds, he’d probably think he’s sleeping. He spaces out easily, getting lost in his thoughts and he finds himself marveling at the curves of Taehyung’s body under his clothes, the perfection of his ass in those sweatpants he put back on.

He sighs. He’s still too clear-headed. He needs another drink.

“You want another one?” he asks, picking up Taehyung’s empty glass and stumbling out the room.

Taehyung emits an affirmative noise and Jimin would roll to the kitchen if he could.

When he gets back, a drink in each hand, Taehyung is rolled onto his side, still transfixed by the little space under the side table.

“I dunno where you’re from or why they decided to leave you after so much time,” he mutters and Jimin doesn’t even know where he should sit anymore. So he settles on the floor, back resting against the couch. “But I’ll love you.”

This suddenly sits heavy in the cavity of Jimin’s chest, those words he knows aren’t meant for him. Taehyung sounds so genuine and pure, and he once again has the right words to soothe the holes still gaping inside. He feels like he shouldn’t be witnessing this.

He bends as low as he can, just to see Cannelle expertly dodging each of Taehyung’s fingers. Then he notices the band of his boxers and his gaze glues there, at this and at how his t-shirt rides up his stomach, exposing faint but there nonetheless, abs.

“How old is she?” This is a poor, poor tentative at taking his thoughts somewhere else.

“They had written ‘born February 2006’ next to her price.”

This is sad. All of this is sad and Jimin doesn’t understand why. He watches him for a while more, and when it’s too painful to endure, he chugs down his rum and stands.

“Smoke time.”

Outside it’s beautiful. The clear sky, the soft glow of stars and vibrant moon amongst blurry street lights.

Taehyung is beautiful. His eyes say he’s hiding somewhere else but his hand is gentle when he offers his cigarette for Jimin to share.

Jemin thinks he’s already deeper than what he was ready for.
When Cannelle finally comes out from her hiding place, Jimin and Taehyung are sitting crossed-legged next to each other on the couch, having important conversations about cars, and they both freeze up.

“Oh,” Taehyung breathes, “the beast is out.”

He lifts his hand as if to reach her, and even if he’s trying to be as unthreatening as he can manage, the cat still recoils with every centimeter his arm travels in the air.

“Stop it,” Jimin gently grabs at Taehyung’s wrist to bring it back down, and it only occurs to him now that he has no idea why he’s still here.

“I wanna pet her.”

“You’re scaring her.”

“You’re still holding my hand.”

Jemin looks down, at how childlike his fingers look around Taehyung’s wrist like that. His cheeks are feeling warm and the whole room practically revolves around itself, but this, this appears very clear to him.

“I am.”

Jemin loosens his grip but doesn’t let it go. And there’s no other reason, no other motive than wanting to know how Taehyung feels under his skin for a little longer.

“It’s past midnight.”

They lock gazes. Taehyung’s eyes are hooded, he’s flushed from the alcohol, his body looks too heavy to even bear. He’s probably going to pass out soon. Jimin takes his phone on the coffee table next to his half-full glass, over one of his Economics notebook.

00:22.

“Yeah, it is.”

“It’s past midnight, Jimin.”

“You already said that.”

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You: hyung i love you

16-04-2016, 00:23

“M’not letting you drive like that.”

“I’ll call a cab.”

“M’not letting you go like that.”
“Why’re you being like this?” Jimin laughs dismissively. That sent a tremor through him that he hadn’t felt in a long time.

“We’re friends, can’t let stuff happen to you,” he closes his eyes, slouches back. His wrist is still under Jimin’s fingers, he doesn’t move it.

Friends.

Hobi hyung: Park Jimin are you drunk again
16-04-2016, 00:25

You: mayybeee
16-04-2016, 00:25

“What could go wrong if I take a cab, mhm?” the haze is fading, now, but he’s tired. It’s this strange sensation of waking up while falling asleep.

“You can take my bed if you wanna.”

Jimin looks at him, wordless, and for longer than he should, if he was really considering himself a friend. Jimin doesn’t think they’re friends.

And there could be the whole ‘I don’t even know if he’s into dudes’ thing, but that’s not even it. Not really. Jimin doesn’t complicate stuff, when it comes to relationships. He just goes with his feelings, because that’s the only way he learned he could stay true to himself. His brain tends to mess things up.

Jimin doesn’t think they’re friends. He thinks they jumped over this step.

Hobi hyung: you know how you are when you’re drunk
16-04-2016, 00:29

Hobi hyung: so be safe, love you too
16-04-2016, 00:29

He just hums and gnaws at his bottom lip when Taehyung stands and gets some blankets, because he doesn’t know what else to say, or how he should object.

“So bed? Couch?”
“Couch.”

Everything is dropped onto it sloppily. Jimin picks up their glasses on the table, goes to put them in the sink of the kitchen, stops to consider sleeping on the cold tiles before he goes back. Taehyung is still there, blocking access to Jimin’s temporary bed because he’s transfixed by the cat.

“You pretty thing,” honey-like words, sweet and affectionate.

“Why are you lying to her?”

“Stop bullying my cat, Park Jimin.”

That makes him snort, a very ugly sound that escapes his lips, and why the fuck did I agree to this. Taehyung turns to him, offended, makes the already small space between them feel even narrower.

“I’m serious though,” his voice resounds low, Jimin knows he would feel it if he were to splay a hand on his chest. “She’s beautiful, leave her alone.”

Taehyung carefully, weirdly, places a hand on Jimin’s shoulder, just at the base of his neck.

“You’re beautiful too, Park Jimin. Leave yourself alone.”

What the fuck.

It hurts. They’re nice words but they hurt. White blade through already sore skin.

“What is this,” he mutters, his throat is too tight.

“I’m drunk.”

“Big surprise.”

“And I tend to do stupid stuff when I’m drunk.”

Jimin swallows, his eyes won’t leave Taehyung’s no matter how hard he tries.

“That makes two of us.”

He holds his air. If something is to happen, he won’t be the one initiating it. Because it’s Taehyung, and he’s touchy. But he knows that if Taehyung leans in, or if he just walks away, he won’t be satisfied either way.

Taehyung’s fingers glide over his skin, just for a fleeting moment before his touch is being ripped away.

“Good night.”

Jimin sighs when Taehyung passes by him. The lights go off and he hears the door of the bathroom being closed. He throws himself on the couch, squints at the brightness of his phone screen.

You: hyung this is bad

16-04-2016, 00:41
Chapter End Notes

Just a quick word to tell you that as of now, this story is 20+ chapters and there's still a lot to write! And also thank you all so much for the support!
Yoongi wakes up. It’s abrupt, wide eyes meeting the obscurity his opaque curtains provide. His alarm clock indicates 5:52. He won’t be able to fall asleep again. He rolls onto his side, the satin of the sheet feeling cold against his bare skin. He fumbles in the space that could welcome another body until he finds his phone.

**Caitlyn**: Why won’t you answer me anymore?

16-04-2016, 3:02

He huffs, puts the device back where he took it and rubs at his eyes with the heels of his palms. He stopped playing along, stopped texting back and answering her calls weeks ago. He doesn’t plan on doing differently today.

When he goes downstairs and that his mother greets him with a peck on his cheek that he’d want to avoid, he remembers that she’s still buzzing with the joy of him being back and he reigns himself in. He also knows his father is busy, with all the new aggressive marketing strategies they need to implant and the gala tonight, his mother doesn’t need to say anything for him to understand she’s lonely.

He drinks his black coffee in the solarium, listening to this new album he’s just bought. He doesn’t want to think too much about what happened with Taehyung the day before. They were bound to stumble upon that anyway. It’s just that it didn’t happen in the most delicate of ways, and that Yoongi haven’t been the most diplomatic about it. But they had taken things that far without Yoongi being reminded of it, because he was impatient, eager. He could have taken it up the ass without saying a thing, because in all honesty he doesn’t think there’s much risk. But he just won’t do that to Taehyung.

Yoongi has been dishonest for 14 months straight. Dishonest to Taehyung, and to himself. And for all the damages it made, he can’t allow himself that anymore.

It’s past 8 and he wonders when would be a good time to text Jimin about the wallet thing and this
place where they have to meet up. He enters one last column of data in his Excel worksheet, sitting back in his chair. Working on a Saturday morning, Min Yoongi has changed.

You: hey  
16-04-2016, 8:17

You: when do you want me to be there  
16-04-2016, 8:17

The answer takes a while to come and his thoughts wander, a little over and around Jimin, if he’s still with Taehyung. Jimin, the kid who caught his interest the moment they met. Yoongi doesn’t think it ever happened to him before, that kind of instant attraction. But Jimin’s got this aura around him, something Yoongi wants to hold and take care of, and this messily mixes with this undeniable lust he can feel between them.

A bit weird, a bit exciting. A lot hard to deal with.

Park Jimin: hey  
16-04-2016, 8:42

Park Jimin: gotta go home grab some stuff and then im headed there  
16-04-2016, 8:43

Park Jimin: i should be there by 10  
16-04-2016, 8:49

Yoongi’s Cadillac rolls into the parking lot and into the first free spot he finds. This dance studio looks tiny amongst the tall buildings of the city, a little old, even. But he guesses there’s something more here, if Jimin could afford frequenting fancier places but doesn’t.

The music is barely audible from the outside, but the moment he opens the main door, it slaps him in the face and he nearly backs away. From the lobby, there are 4 doors and only one is open, where the beat comes from and where Jimin probably is. And from how loud everything is, there’s no way he could just call his name and be heard. But he peeks in nonetheless, angling himself from outside the doorframe so that he isn’t visible but that he can still look at them.

They’re four, their backs at him, synchronized even in the smallest of details and of course, of course Jimin would be like that. Of course he would dance like this, in the most precise and captivating of ways, his moves of impeccable finesse and alluring sin. Of course his body rolls would be perfect
and his hips hypnotizing, his eyes sultry and inviting even when he aims them at no one.

Yoongi wants to laugh. Jimin is coming into his life at such a bad moment. He takes a few steps back, unlocks his phone to text him. The faster he’ll be out of here, the easier it’ll be for him.

You: im in the lobby
16-04-2016, 10:32

He sighs and leans on the wall and it’s quick to come, the overly loud chirping of Jimin’s phone. The sounds of feet become chaotic until they stop along with the music, and he mutters words Yoongi can’t understand.

“Hey, hyung,” Jimin beams when he sees him and Yoongi, hands in his pockets and dressed like night, wasn’t ready for the sun.

“Hey,” he attempts a smile that would hide the mess his thoughts just became. “Sorry about that by the way, I know it probably seems weird to you.”

Because that’s how it feels for him. Weird. Being uncomfortable with the idea of he and Taehyung being alone, that’s never happened before.

“It’s fine,” he shrugs. He’s panting and his hair is just sweaty enough to make him that much more attractive. “That’s your business, not mine.”

He’s wearing a long-sleeved shirt but it’s so loose on his frame that it exposes the whole of his collarbones, and as Jimin approaches to hand him his wallet, Yoongi eyes won’t leave his skin, the base of his neck, his throat, his jaw. Park Jimin is a temptation.

Yoongi doesn’t reach to take it, but he leans in instead, closer and closer and Jimin, even if shocked still, accepts him. He breathes in his space, invades it inch by inch, until he can feel the warmth of his lips against his, a feather-like touch to test the waters before he allows himself to dive in.

And this is not how he was planning things to go but it feels right, and Jimin feels right in the way he responds, not too eager but still curious. Yoongi sighs against him when their bodies come closer, and he wants to cup his hand over his neck but someone comes out the room and the moment shatters.

“Hyung, are you—oh.“

They break the kiss and Jimin looks surprised, but he doesn’t engage in some kind of secretive behavior like Yoongi would’ve thought he might. He steps back though, it’s shy without being dismissive and Yoongi gets him, takes his wallet from his still outstretched hand.

“I won’t be long, Jungkookie.”

“Okay,” and Jungkook grins, goes back in with a polite nod of his head.

It’s only the second time Yoongi sees Jungkook, but every time he does, he’s painfully reminded of a younger Taehyung. Light and free, ready for whatever. And this, this sends Yoongi in a spiral of memories and that’s enough to have him close up on himself.
Now he just wants to leave, bury himself in music and let this wave of reminiscence engulf him in silence. But he’s still in the lobby, and Jimin is still there and there really is no proper way to go about this.

“I’ll text you,” he says, voice barely a whisper. Because this wasn’t supposed to happen, he stupidly wasn’t ready and he needs some time to reflect on this move he shouldn’t have made. He doesn’t want to hurt Jimin. He doesn’t want to hurt Taehyung.

Jimin gives him a soft smile, looks at his feet and up again. “Yeah,” and that’s all there is to it.

Yoongi meets the cold and he instantly wants to go back inside and apologize. But the truth is that he doesn’t know what he should feel bad about. He wanted this. It’s just that it adds one more string to the web and knots he’s already stuck in.

Δ

Taehyung grew to hate his father’s house. He knows all its small corners and hiding places, played hide-and-seek too often within those walls. But the older he got, the more it felt like a prison. Maybe that’s the way most teenagers feel about their childhood home, Taehyung can’t be sure. But his old bedroom still reminds him of Yoongi and he still avoids looking at the longest counter of the kitchen, in case there are still little bottles of yellow pills on it.

“Your father is in the shower,” the maid tells him, taking his coat from him. He tells her that he won’t stay for long and that he can keep it on himself but she insists, and Taehyung bends. She’s getting older, but she’s still the same soft lady with mischievous eyes, and he doubts that will ever change.

“He won’t be long.”

He thanks her, and they share that knowing look. Taehyung hates this house but he misses her.

He’s probably living the dream of a lot of young boys; looking at himself in the mirror and adjusting his suit on himself, at his father’s side. But this doesn’t feel like a dream and it’s rather acidic for his insides. He tightens his tie a little more, folds the collar of his dress shirt over it neatly before he pulls lightly on his sleeves. It’s funny how the suit has been made to his measurements, but never really seems to fit him comfortably.

He loosely combs his hair with his fingers, brown strands falling over his eyes. It’s probably too long for what’s acceptable in the etiquette of the rich people, but that’s how he likes it.

“You’re looking good, son.”

Taehyung meets his gaze in their reflection and says nothing, just walks away and through the door.
Min Yoongi: are you there

16-04-2016, 17:51

Min Yoongi texting first is still a new concept that he could get used to.

You: we just left, you?

16-04-2016, 17:51

Min Yoongi: we’re still on the road

16-04-2016, 17:52

Min Yoongi: im so excited, i cant wait

16-04-2016, 17:52

And it screams so much sarcasm that Taehyung breathes out a laugh. And it doesn’t take much more than that for them to be okay again.

“Our biggest competitor will also be here tonight, son,” his father says this when they’re just out the car and walking down towards the building, when there’re strangers and a public around them. That way he knows Taehyung can’t do anything but smile and agree because they’re important people and he needs to be polite, no matter what he’s being told. “So behave.”

He offers no reaction. There’s nothing for him to say, he’s not stupid. He already knew that. His father wouldn’t have insisted for him to parade around wearing his most expensive suit if it wasn’t the case.

He gets in the main room, the yellow lighting, massive chandeliers and jazzy music instantly making him sigh. Just another night built around fancy champagne and fake applauses, hoping that Yoongi won’t be too busy elsewhere so that he doesn’t have to endure all the boredom on his own.

Taehyung should care, the gala is for a great cause and is overall a very important event and sometimes he wonders why he just can’t give a fuck about the company. Maybe he misses singing too much and he can’t look forward without always peeking behind.

Min Yoongi: where you at

16-04-2016, 18:18
Yoongi gets to him a few minutes later, making his way through the crowd of hundreds of people with respectful bows and polite smiles.

It’s fascinating, how he manages to practically fit in. It’s the same Yoongi who wanted to spit on everyone objecting his life choices two years ago, the same Yoongi who argued with his parents too many times about working in the company. Now he still doesn’t fit into the mold, but a part of him visibly tries to, if the way he initiates handshakes is any indication. That’s funny. Taehyung wonders what kind of people he met in New York for him to become like that. What made him change his mind.

Yoongi gives him a teasing smile and Taehyung returns it. He never really looks like how wealthy he is, only when he really wants to. Taehyung always liked to see him like that, all dressed up in a bespoke tailored suit and exuding even more confidence than he usually does. It doesn’t happen often, and it’s the only reason he started appreciating nights like tonight.

And for a while they stay like this, sipping their champagne in a snobby fashion and watching different company representatives going on the stage and giving supposedly heartfelt speeches. Some are laughably fake, most are boring. He wonders how his father made it through so many years. How Yoongi will.

From time to time, someone comes to greet them and he lets Yoongi take the lead. Taehyung is the son of the CEO, but he can hardly act like it.

He doesn’t remember how many flutes he’s had, but his vision is starting to get a bit foggy. Yoongi had to go meet some of his father’s friends after dinner was over and now he’s on his own and bored. It’s just more speeches no one really listens to, he’s just standing in the biggest room of hypocrite people pretending they’re here for the cause but in fact just want to show off their money.

He slips his phone out of the pocket of his trousers to look at the time.

20:10.

“Fuck,” he mutters, stuffing it back in. He’s not out of there for another 2 hours at minimum.

He’s tempted to text Jimin, though he’s not sure if it’s not just out of boredom. It wasn’t exactly awkward when he left this morning, but the look Jimin gave him as he went through the door let him believe that something was out of place. He doesn’t remember everything that happened the night before, but he’s pretty sure he remained in the friend-safe zone.
His father being introduced on the microphone brings him out of his daze and he looks towards the stage. Every year Taehyung has attended it was the same, and he’s a little hypnotized every time. Because it’s amazing, what kind of bullshit he can say to look good. And this time again, his father doesn’t mention him. He’s probably not ready to share his slice of fame.

He’s being applauded as he comes off the stage, that signature smile of his stretching over his face, and when he makes his way to his son, everyone is already looking at someone else. So ephemeral.

“How was it?” His father asks, in search of some more attention.

“It’s the same shit you rehash every year, dad,” Taehyung brings his flute to his lips, swallows around a bigger mouthful than he expected. Frustration and its automatisms.

“And that’s the one you’ll rehash too when you take over,” at this Taehyung breathes out a laugh.

Sure.

“They always present the big contributors last,” he continues, his voice dropping to a low, muted sound. “And since I’ve just been named, you know who’s coming after.” Taehyung hums, doesn’t bother making eye contact. “I’ve heard he finally brought his heir tonight. I was starting to think that he had been lying about having offsprings. I’d look carefully if I were you, that’s the person you’ll spend decades working against.”

Taehyung makes a face, tilts his flute to drink the remainder of his champagne. He’ll need more.

You: we're apparently about to see the monster

16-04-2016, 20:22

Min Yoongi: ?

16-04-2016, 20:24

You: that company thats our first competitor, the heir is apparently here this year

16-04-2016, 20:24

The microphone starts resounding to the feminine voice of the hostess, presenting numbers and achievements, and all those things the next company should be praised about. Last but not least, she says, and Taehyung thinks that it’s a mediocre tentative at consolation. In this case, at least.

Min Yoongi: ah

16-04-2016, 20:26

Min Yoongi: the highlight of my night
He hears the chaotic clapping of hands but doesn’t look up from his phone. His father is long gone anyway, there’s no need to pretend anymore. The room goes calmer after a minute or so, but there’s still the faint chattering in the background, that slight buzzing that’s just enough to be annoying to the ear and kind of disrespectful.

Taehyung has seen and heard that man often, so he’s not surprised by his voice, nor by the words he says. The same things they all say, just in a fashion that makes people believe it’s different and thus, sincere.

Taehyung’s thumbs are pressing letters on his screen as the blabbering drags for what seems like forever.

“And tonight,” the man says, finally closing his monologue, “I will proudly receive this honor with my son and heir right here, Park Jimin.”

His thumbs freeze. His head snaps up.

Fucking Park Jimin is standing on stage.

Snuggled in a crisp, blue suit, black dress shirt and hair mussed up just enough for it to look intentional.

Fucking Park Jimin is standing on stage, hands joined in front of him in a formal stance, and he’s the heir of Park Alliances.

You: hyung wtf
16-04-2016, 20:33

Jimin smiles and bows and people clap. Jimin is so bright and pretty. Taehyung feels his stomach turning into a jittery mess. They go down the small set of stairs and disappear into the crowd and Taehyung should probably think about what he’s doing, but he’s too shocked to react properly. He opens his chatroom with Jimin.

You: yo
16-04-2016, 20:34

You: you little fucker
16-04-2016, 20:34

You: we need to talk
16-04-2016, 20:35
He grabs another glass from a passing waiter that he empties in one long swig, fingers tapping impatiently on the side of his phone.

**Park Jimin from class:** first of all, chill
16-04-2016, 20:40

**Park Jimin from class:** second of all, im busy
16-04-2016, 20:40

Taehyung laughs, shakes his head. Jimin doesn’t know he’s here neither, apparently.

**You:** yeah
16-04-2016, 20:41

**You:** very busy talking shit to old business men after coming off that stage uh
16-04-2016, 20:41

**Park Jimin from class:** …what
16-04-2016, 20:43

**You:** thats right
16-04-2016, 20:43

**You:** i’ll wait near the elevators
16-04-2016, 20:43

Taehyung keeps checking his phone.

The elevator’s doors open next to him and the noise it makes takes his irritability to a whole new level.
He sends it and sighs. He doesn’t know why this situation makes him so unnerved and thrilled at the same time. Park Jimin is an enemy. An enemy Taehyung was tempted to kiss the night before, just when he was about to sleep on his couch.

Every minute that passes rips a little more patience from him.

He turns his screen on, turns his screen off.

And then it comes, the vibration.

**Min Yoongi**: what?

16-04-2016, 20:58

He’s about to reply something when he hears rushed steps and he looks up. Park Jimin with even messier hair, buttoning his jacket with furrowed brows.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” His voice is an angry whisper and Taehyung’s lips curl up.

“That’s precisely what I wanted to ask.”

And as Jimin walks the last meters between them, Taehyung reaches in his pocket, at the small and sturdy card holder he threw in there like his father ordered him to, and he pulls a business card out of it. He holds it out and Jimin takes it, and this kind of annoyed expression is something Taehyung had yet to see on him. But he likes it.

“You piece of shit,” Taehyung mutters as Jimin is reading what’s on the piece of cardstock. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Are you done fucking insulting me all the time?” Jimin looks at him, lets the moment stretch, before he smirks and laughs lightly, hand falling at his side. “You know what?” He squints just barely, taking a step closer. Taehyung can feel that there’s a crack in the mirrors he’s made of. Self-defense mechanism. He feels trapped and he’s going to attack to cope. “From what I’ve heard from your father, I’m not really surprised that you’re like that. Same kind of nasty character.”

The comparison with his father kicks him in the gut and slaps his ego.

“You shouldn’t be saying that, Park Jimin.”

“And now that I think about it, this,” and he lifts his hand holding Taehyung’s business card, “this might explain this natural urge I got to punch you in the dick sometimes.”

At this, Taehyung gets closer. So close, that he can hear Jimin’s breathing in all its details, can see how his pupils are dilated, can see the rosy tint to his cheeks. He holds his gaze.

“Well that’s funny, because I think it can be explained by something else.”
Jimin looks at Taehyung’s eyes, then at his mouth. Once, twice. Until he openly stares at lips.

It happens fast, him tiptoeing to reach, and Taehyung grappling at the jacket of his suit to pull him in.

And when they break apart, Taehyung doesn’t release his hold, and Jimin doesn’t back away. Because they don’t want to let go. But Jimin whispers something that makes Taehyung smile.

“We’re fucked, aren’t we?”

Part one - End
2.1 I only wrote this down to make you press rewind

It’s one more shot that he forces down his throat. The first couples burned, but he’s starting to get numb, now. So he doesn’t feel it as much. In fact he doesn’t feel much of anything.

The thoughts he has of his messy, empty apartment, don’t make anxiety boil low in his belly.

This degree he’s just started to please his father doesn’t make him feel as sick right now.

Yoongi who’s been gone for almost 5 months, it doesn’t twist a blade through his insides when he thinks about it. But this, he knows it’s going to catch up with him once alcohol will fade from his system.

The voices too close to his ears are aggressive, the barmaids running behind the counter and flipping bottles are dizzying. Taehyung decides that he’s numb enough to lift his ass from this stool and try to pick someone up.

It’s going well this time, he thinks, it’s going well and I can do it. I can stuff his dick in my mouth no big deal.

On his knees, Taehyung tries to stay focused. His strokes are lazy but the guy seems to appreciate. Probably because he has no idea of what’s going on in Taehyung’s head. He’s the 9th stranger he tries to fuck in a bathroom stall in the last 4 months. It’s fine, he repeats himself, his thought process slowed down from the alcohol travelling his blood, I feel better with this one than the others before.

He looks up and at the man. He’s cute. He seems nice, he’s been a bit pushy but nothing to make him feel roughed up. He looks like he really wants this, his eyes are all bright and expectant, like Taehyung is a wonder or some shit. Taehyung sticks his tongue out, parts his lips, gets closer to the tip.

And then it happens again. It starts from the inside, that feeling of panic and disgust, and it travels through him like a shock, makes his gut squeeze and he almost jerks back.

“Can’t. Can’t. Can’t,” he says, both hands thrown in the air in a surrendering gesture.

And the man, who was so nice for the whole previous hour, stares for a while before he tucks himself back in. “Slut,” he spits, as he forcefully opens the metallic door, and the sound of his footsteps dissipate into the ambient noises as Taehyung keeps looking at the tiles of the floor.

The door creaks, he gets in. He still isn’t used to living alone. To be alone.

He doesn’t like the apartment. It has two bedrooms but he only uses one. The living room isn’t that
big, but it’s stuffed with too many cushions and chairs for a single ass. The kitchen table can accommodate, but no one sits there. Oh, sometimes Taehyung does, but then he feels like he’s sharing a meal with ghosts and the light goes out in his head.

He makes it to his booze stash and grabs his vodka, drinks one, two long swallows from the bottle.

He leans on the counter. His legs are wobbly and his eyes are tired from trying to squint through the veil of alcohol. His gaze falls on the fridge, where is hung a 2015 calendar. He writes stuff there, sometimes, to be an organized student and that kind of bullshit. One square is empty, expectedly.

Sunday May 31st.

Taehyung takes one last swig and drops his bottle onto the surface loudly, goes to his room and fetches something to write with. A thick, black marker.

And on the calendar, on that little teasing square, he writes a 4 that takes all the space. Then he retraces it.

And again.

And again.

Until the glossy paper is wet and it tears under the felt tip.

Only then Taehyung stops and throws the marker through the room, hears it land but doesn’t see where.

He glues his back to a wall and lets himself slide down against it until he’s sitting, stretching his legs after having taken his phone out.

He opens the same conversation that still contains the same message. It won’t change. It won’t. He’s never been able to answer. Never will be.

Taehyung’s throat go tight, his air gets stuck around a sob. And he breaks.

Δ

“Do you understand how confused I am?” Jimin whines, making his voice low but not too much so that Hoseok can hear him.

“Yeah. But no.” Hoseok slouches further against the banquette.

It’s Sunday, and Hoseok is scheduled to be working in less than two hours. Usually, he’ll make use of that time and spend the morning with his girlfriend but for some reason, he was the one texting Jimin right before noon, offering that they meet up. He hasn’t addressed it yet, why he needed to go out. But Jimin knows something’s off. Hoseok is making him talk and talk like everything’s fine, and Jimin does, because he knows that it’s his way of dealing with his own feelings. He’ll ask though, if Hoseok doesn’t tell, and that he keeps it inside like he usually does.

Jimin sighs. The café is quiet, at this time of the day. Maybe he would’ve liked a little more noise for once. Just this once. He’s already feeling weird enough to talk about that kind of stuff, if at least his
voice could be drowned in the conversations of others, he wouldn’t be feeling so suspicious of someone listening to them.

“I mean,” Hoseok continues, when he sees the way Jimin crumples a little more on himself, “I understand what you’re saying and where the confusion comes from, but I don’t understand how it happened.”

“Do you not know how kisses happen, hyung?”

“Don’t look at me like that, you know that’s not what I meant.” Hoseok brings his cup to his lips, his latte must be cold by now. “You kissed them both on the same day, and you don’t generally do whatever when it comes to those kinds of things. So I’m gonna assume,” he drags the last word, putting his cup back on the wooden table, “that you’re attracted to both. In that way. That’s what I don’t get.”

“That’s where I get lost too,” he pauses, pulls on the sleeves of his sweater and closes his fists around the hems. “I don’t know. With Taehyung it kind of came naturally, it’s a weird type of aggressive attraction. And Yoongi’s just a magnet. I don’t know, hyung.”

Silence sets in. It’s heavy with thoughts, from both sides. But Jimin can’t tell if Hoseok is still with him, or if he drifted into himself. He idly watches him scroll through his phone, leaned back on his side of the banquette, hands around the white ceramic cup.

“I got this huge assignment that’s due in a couple weeks,” Hoseok says, eyes empty as he looks at the screen. “And with all the parties coming, it’s a pain in the ass.”

Jimin smiles just barely, looks to the side, away from Hoseok.

Hoseok likes parties. He goes to many, holds some too. And maybe he shouldn’t like them that much, because he’s already working hard enough for his grades, juggling between university and the music store and bills and Eunji. He’s drained. He’s doing too much.

“You don’t have to go, hyung. If you’re tired.”

“I want to.”

That’s where his shy objection is going to stop, because Jimin knows he’s touchy about that matter, too.

“You’re gonna come, right? I was thinking about holding mine next month or something.”

“You know I will.”

Jimin grabs his phone, just to check the time. He’s became nervous since the previous night, about what kind of message he could receive from either Yoongi or Taehyung. And even though Taehyung didn’t make them feel awkward after all the time they spent kissing in that elevator, Jimin still feels like he’s missing some piece of the puzzle. Like some things should have been clarified but haven’t.

And that feeling seeps even deeper in his bones when he sees that he’s got a message waiting, from Yoongi.

Yoongi: should we talk?
“Hyung, what do I do?” And he’s not exactly whiny anymore, but his body is buzzing with unshakable confusion.

Hoseok puts his phone beside himself on the banquette’s cushion, sips on his latte for a few pensive moments before he focusses back on Jimin.

“So you’re that serious.”

“You know I don’t joke around with relationships.”

“I know,” he exhales, his eyes set low, going from the different objects on the table in a pensive way. “Well, would you date Yoongi?”

“Yeah,” he breathe out, easily. Much easier than he thought he would.

“Okay. And would you date Taehyung?”

“Yeah,” and this comes out effortless too.

“And if you absolutely had to choose between the two?”

Jimin runs his fingers through his hair, before he leans forward and rests his head on his crossed forearms on the table. This time, this isn’t as simple to say.

“I can’t.”

Δ

Yoongi huffs, opens the door to his closet. The only part of his room he hasn’t touched since he came back. It’s full of old clothes he has yet to offer to charity, full of toys and boxes he would’ve been fine with never opening again.

He was tempted to tell his mother to go check herself for that photo album she wants so urgently, right now, on this grey Sunday afternoon. But he can’t. Yoongi only has two soft spots. Taehyung, and his mother.

His phone buzzes, and he walks to it right away, leaving the closet behind will only be of temporary relief.

**Park Jimin:** do you feel like we need to?

17-04-2016, 13:59

Jimin is apparently becoming a third one.
**You:** i guess?
17-04-2016, 14:00

**You:** i mean, i kissed you yesterday morning
17-04-2016, 14:00

**You:** and tae told me you're apparently the no.1 enemy
17-04-2016, 14:00

**Park Jimin:** im scary aren't i
17-04-2016, 14:01

Yoongi smiles, walks back to his walk-in as he types.

**You:** very
17-04-2016, 14:02

**You:** so we can hang out this week if you wanna?
17-04-2016, 14:04

**You:** if you're comfortable with that
17-04-2016, 14:04

He puts the device in his pocket, sighs, and starts opening the first box his hands fall on.

Yoongi wasn’t as surprised as Taehyung was when he found out whose son Jimin is. Though maybe he should have been, considering he kissed him a couple of hours prior. But he can’t find in himself to be bothered about it. He always found stupid the stubborn hate his and Taehyung’s father have for the CEOs of other similar companies.

Having to do business against Jimin doesn’t mean they can’t be something else outside of that context.

Yoongi stops, shakes his head. He was so far into his thoughts that he stopped registering what he was doing. He peruses around. He already went through two whole boxes, and he’s halfway through a third.

And of all the ones stacked in here, it’s the one he shouldn’t have opened.
He looks down, his eyes meet that ugly electric-blue book he had to read back in high school and hated, but somehow kept. He lifts it to see what's under, and he doesn’t know why he’s doing this, he knows the album isn’t in here. Appeasement in regrets, maybe.

The light coming from the ceiling catches on something and it makes reflections of bright rainbows. He doesn’t need to clearly see what it is to identify it. He picks it up and his phone buzzes in the background but his brain keeps screaming *nostalgia* to him like it’s a curse.

**Park Jimin:** yeah why not

17-04-2016, 14:15

**Park Jimin:** im free most nights but not fridays

17-04-2016, 14:16

Yoongi sees the messages but doesn’t process them.

His ribcage feels like a bear trap around his lungs, and he spaces out, eyes riveted on the letters written with a black marker, on the old, too-scratched CD in his hand.

**hyung & taetae**

**january 28 2011**

Δ

Taehyung still feels weird, about condoms with Yoongi.

He watches him hurriedly roll it on his length, in the narrow space between their bodies.

It’s at the same time weird and convenient, that they’ve had sex so many times in cars, that even after all this time, they still know how to deal with so little room.

Yoongi’s fingers dig in the meat of Taehyung’s ass after he’s done, urging him forward from where he’s straddling his thighs. The driver seat of Yoongi’s new car doesn’t allow him much to move but he still shifts a little, his knees and calves sticking to the leather.

They’re rushed, they’re parked in this calmer street following lines of tall trees where they used to come not often but not rarely neither, near a golf course. Taehyung is glad he’s stretched himself in the shower before dressing up for the meeting, with the thought of this. Because he knows how those meetings are, for Yoongi and him.

The warmth of Yoongi’s palms disappears, and Taehyung finds purchase on the headrest when his tie is being pulled on until they’re kissing. Yoongi sighs against his lips, readjusts himself and Taehyung knows, he knows he’s waiting, he’s being patient and holding his dick all ready for him to
And normally he could tease, he would roll his hips against his tip just lightly enough to make him growl, would lick his lips but wouldn’t let him kiss back.

But right now it’s been too long, and the thoughts of all those others he fucked in his bourgeois life in New York, all the unspoken things, and the things that have been said too many times without being heard, it all gets lost somewhere in the abyss of his thoughts.

Everything, but Jimin.

Jimin still shines through him when his eyes are closed.

The cockhead slips in and he silently gasps, pushing his hips down in a pace that he should reconsider. The slide is dry and the sting is there, very there through the pleasure, and even if Taehyung throws his head back and frowns in satisfaction, Yoongi still hisses against his neck and grabs at his waist to stop him.

“Take it slow Tae, ah – fuck, wait.”

Taehyung’s eyelids flutter open and he looks down at him. The air is humid, the windows are fogging up, and it creates a kind of haze that Taehyung always liked a lot, tight and heavy, like they only exist in each other’s space. Yoongi’s breath fan over his collarbones and he should know, maybe he does know, that stopping him like that never did anything to help Taehyung’s liking for a bit of pain.

“You’re too tight, give yourself some time.”

Taehyung smiles and dips his head to place a loose kiss on his lips, slow and calculated. He knows how it keeps Yoongi on edge, how it puts him in another mindset, when Taehyung kisses him like that.

“Do you know how much time you already made us lose?” Taehyung breathes, their faces only an inch apart.

The haze falls. Yoongi clicks his tongue.

“Tae,”

And Taehyung presses himself down, and he relishes the frown drawing itself on Yoongi’s face when he moans.

“Shut up, hyung,” his voice goes even more raspy when he bottoms out, “and fuck me like you mean it.”

Yoongi scoffs, makes his fingers glides along Taehyung’s thighs, up his hips until their dig in his waist under his dress shirt, urging him to move.

Taehyung has to do most of the work, and he’s fine with it. He gets his share of control, making them move in the pace he chooses, making it hard and graceless if he wants. He builds Yoongi up before he cuts him off, makes him curse and groan.

Yoongi bites and kisses trails on the expanse of his throat and it feels so good, Taehyung feels like his insides have turned to feathers, light and supple.
He had a lot of mouths slotted on his neck in the past year, palms trying to understand him without ever managing to. Because they weren’t Yoongi’s. And it took a while for him to understand, the difference between a wound and a chain. But he does, now. And he acknowledged it as one of the truths of his life, will bear the chain in him until it gets too rusty and it breaks. If it ever.

Yoongi holds him close like he’s afraid that he’s going to fly away and escape. Probably because he knows he should. They became sick of each other, in between pills and planes and cold hospital beds. He holds Taehyung without gentleness, with rough hands and eager teeth, fucks up into him, forgetting he was too tight just a couple of minutes before.

And amidst of this, between crossed out thoughts and asphyxiating air and sticky skins, every time Yoongi kisses him, Taehyung thinks of Jimin. But it’s not guilt, he does not feel guilty. It’s infatuation, pure and simple and vivid, in the way he remembers that night in the elevator and how the blades of his hipbones felt against his own thumbs when he pulled their bodies together. Yoongi sucks at his bottom lip and Taehyung shudders, his mind doesn’t set. It’s in two places at the same time.

Yoongi’s breathing becomes ragged as his orgasm draws closer, burying his nose in the crook of Taehyung neck and Taehyung shifts, wraps a hand around his own cock and tugs at it in time with their messy thrusts.

And when he comes with as much Yoongi and Jimin plastered across the back of his eyelids, he knows he’s fucked.

“I kissed Jimin,” Taehyung cuts into the silence, when he’s just done squirming on the passenger seat to put his trousers back on. “The night of the gala.”

Yoongi seems to still for a fraction of a second, before he sighs, buckling his own belt.

“Why are you doing that?” he asks as he vainly tries to brush his shirt clean. The mood drifts, and space that felt too warm and thick a moment before, now feels like an icy wind swept everything away.

“Doing what?” Taehyung straightens, the walls are coming up again.

“Why are you starting your relationship with him like that? Fucking me.”

The sensation of Yoongi’s fingers pressing into his skin is only starting to fade, but already he wants to escape. The engine starts purring again, he hears Yoongi’s seatbelt being clasped. He does the same.

“I didn’t say that we’re together, I said that we kissed.”

“Whatever, Tae,” he dismisses, looking through his rear-view mirror before he puts the vehicle in gear and they’re moving along the road. “I don’t know him much, but he doesn’t seem like the type to just kiss anyone.”

Yoongi drives him home in this deadly, frustration-inducing silence that crawls under Taehyung’s skin, but he keeps looking out the window, at the streaming buildings and sparse, naked trees.

He pretends he doesn’t hear Yoongi sigh, or doesn’t see the way he peeks at him from his peripheral
vision. Taehyung keeps his words in his mouth. They would do no good.

“Thanks for giving me a ride,” he says without looking at Yoongi when the car is parked in front of his apartment. He gets out and Yoongi stops him just when he’s about to slam the door closed.

“Tae,”

His hand curls around the edge of the door and he bends so they’re looking at each other. All this space around him but he feels cornered.

“Yeah?”

“I know, okay? I know,” and from the drop of his tone, Taehyung knows what he’s referring to. “But just, don’t fuck it up because of us. Not worth it.”

The words send Taehyung’s thoughts short-circuiting, they hurt and they sound ridiculous and he finds nothing to say, so he just closes the door and watch the Cadillac roll down the street.

Cannelle is rolled up on the couch when he gets in, and her soft-looking fur and motor-like purring seem like the greatest of comforts for now, so Taehyung doesn’t bother taking off his jacket, and he settles down next to her.

It’s only after the onslaught of memories and bitter feelings has died down that his brain catches up, and the words he should have said ten minutes sooner finally slip out.

“I don’t think I can stay away from you.”

Δ

“Are you listening?”

Yoongi’s eyes focus on the cleanly organized folders in front of him, before he brings them up to his interlocutor.

“Yes.” No. But it’s not the man’s fault. He just can’t seem to concentrate on anything today.

“So this,” a file is being slid on the desk towards him, “by Thursday. And those,” a stack of sheets is added on top, “next Monday.”

Yoongi politely acquiesce but the moment he’s left alone, his pencil gets stuck suspended in mid-air. A little like when he was younger and trying to write some kind of song, but was getting his thoughts too far and couldn’t write a single word.

His collar feels uncomfortable today, it feels like two hands around his neck and he can’t stand it. But he has to wear it, here and even when he’ll be home, otherwise the purple and the red spots on his neck will be too visible.

His gaze goes to his computer screen. Tuesday, April 19th, 15:49.

He feels out of place and confused in a way that he never really experienced. Taehyung also kissed Jimin the day of the gala, so they share a kind of attraction too, and it’s not that it doesn’t sit right with him, it’s just that now the situation isn’t as simple anymore.
It’s been over ten minutes and he still can’t do anything. The whole of his desk is a reminder that he’s being useless, the background noises, chattering and typing, feel judgmental against his ear. He doesn’t want to be here. He wants to be away, where everything, except for himself, was better.

**Kim Seokjin:** Are you still coming to the café after work?

19-04-2016, 16:22

**You:** yeah, should be there around 18:30

19-04-2016, 16:22

Until Jimin and Taehyung settle, he’s going to have to keep a low profile. Until this whole episode is forgotten and that there’s no room for misunderstandings, Yoongi will turn his back and pretend he doesn’t see.

**Δ**

**Yoongi hyung:** i won’t be able to make it, for tomorrow

19-04-2016, 16:27

**Yoongi hyung:** i’m sorry

19-04-2016, 16:27

“Yoongi just cancelled on me.”

Jungkook and Hoseok simultaneously turn their heads to Jimin, their conversation interrupted. The three of them are sitting in Hoseok’s kitchen, sharing some food and talking about the new choreography they’ll have to work on. They’re busy and a bit carefree but Jimin couldn’t help but notice how many of the things around them are more Eunji’s and less Hoseok’s.

“Who?”

“For tomorrow?” Hoseok asks, pushing Jungkook’s question aside.

“Yeah, he apologized.”

Hoseok makes a pensive noise when Jimin shows him the conversation, and Jungkook looks between the two in confusion.

“Maybe it’s better this way,” he adds, before he fills his mouth with jajangmyeon and sits back in his chair. “I mean, doesn’t that make things easier for you? You have class with Taehyung tomorrow
“Yeah,” Jimin stares at his screen, until he thinks about something and becomes nervous, his heart kicking in for a few beats. “Do you think Taehyung told him what happened?”

“Maybe.”

“Fuck.”

“Want me to tell you what I think?”

“Mhm.”

Hoseok straightens under Jungkook’s still-lost gaze and he leans towards Jimin, extending an arm and pressing a hand between his shoulder blades.

“I know you, at this point I know you’re not faking it. So let it go. Let things happen on their own.”

“I doubt this is a good idea.”

“It’s not always a bad thing to surrender ourselves to time, Jimin. Sometimes life makes choices for us and they’re good.”

Jimin pushes air out of his lungs, still staring at his phone as the atmosphere in the room gets heavier.

“Jimin hyung?”

“Yeah Jungkookie?”

“‘Sup?”

Jimin breathes out a laugh.

“You blush like mad every time I tell you there’s a girl looking at you, Jeon Jungkook,” Jungkook emits a small sound of protest around his mouthful, “I’m not sure you’re ready to hear me talk about dudes.”

Jungkook stills mid-chew, eyes a little round and dashing from Jimin to Hoseok and back.

“Why not?”

“Hyung, tell him.”

“Nope,” Hoseok stands, picking up his plate and Jimin’s next-to-spotless one. He hasn’t eaten much, once again. “I’m not dealing with that. No sex-ed for me today.”

“I wanna know though?”

“Jungkookie, you know I like dudes, right?”
“Yeah?”

“You know I only date dudes?”

“... Yeah? You're scaring me.”

Hoseok snorts above the sink, his hands diligently working in lather to clean everything up.

“Remember when you said you had a hard time understanding couples? And people liking each other in general?”

“That was like, a year ago.”

“You still said that.”

“I did.”

“Okay, so, I kissed two guys last Saturday.”

“Wow.”

“Right? And I’m liking them both.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. And you know what’s the most interesting part?”

Jungkook stays silent at that, visibly stunned.

“I’m pretty sure they’re fuck buddies.”
2.2 You found me dressed in black

The elevator dings and Taehyung steps out of it, slowly travels down the corridor, as if scared of getting lost. But he knows where he’s going, it’s just that he’s not used to it yet.

February was quick to come, with University starting soon, and on his balcony, snow is crawling up the patio door. It’s cold inside, but it’s hard to tell if it’s because of the weather or because of the general feeling Taehyung has of this apartment.

This whole place is empty and Taehyung can’t fill the gap.

It’s spacious and beautiful in a frigid way that he finds ugly. It’s pale everywhere, pale walls, pale kitchen cabinets, pale furniture. It lacks Yoongi’s balanced darkness. But he couldn’t stand living with his father anymore, all the fights and all the reproaches. Taehyung’s already choking, he doesn’t someone to shovel more water onto his head to make him drown.

He sits at the dining table, scrolls through his phone. No messages.

Just like every day, he does it again. He looks at it.

Min Yoongi: im sorry

31-12-2014, 23:11

It’s numb today. Maybe tomorrow it won’t. It’s unpredictable.

In a moment of frustration, he changed Yoongi’s name in his phone, decided to put it back to something more formal. Less familiar. He laughs at the thought and gets up, gets himself a beer.

Taehyung has been 18 for nearly two months, but he decides that he’s an adult, today. He grabs the tiny bottle next to the sink in the bathroom, looks at the pills it contains. Their sick yellow color has become the tint of his regrets. He’s stopped them. Abruptly. On a Sunday morning when waking up alone had been too hard. Something clicked and he stopped. Now he watches as he spills them in the toilet before he flushes, and they’re gone.

He goes to the sink again to put the bottle back neatly, looks at himself in the mirror. The bottle is empty. One more empty thing to fit the rest.

This whole place is a collection of shells, hollow and dull, that the sun has forgotten into the sand.
Taehyung isn’t clear, or open about it. He and Jimin had class together the day before, and Yoongi knows. But Taehyung won’t address it. 

And it’s fine, it’s not really of Yoongi’s business anyway. 

But he looks, feels lighter to be around. His silences aren’t as harsh, his sighs aren’t just made of annoyance. 

Leaned on the fencing, Yoongi watches him stroll in between the tanks of the refinery. Taehyung sends twirling smoke in the air, his lips shaping it the way he likes to do when he feels playful. That makes Yoongi’s insides stir in a strange way, knowing that the Taehyung he used to know so well is resurfacing, but not because of him. 

It’s weird, how it’s a bit painful but also a bit satisfying, that Taehyung and Jimin are slowly coming together. 

The night is smooth, the air is chilly in just the comfortable way, and he notices how the faintest gusts of wind hitting Taehyung’s nape make him shiver. He offers Yoongi a Marlboro in that same teasing fashion, looks fixedly at his lips when he places it there. 

There’s still this thing in his eyes, the one Yoongi has rarely ever been able to resist but now that he really has to, that seems more tempting than ever. So he keeps his distance, takes a step back when Taehyung takes a step closer, avoids prolonged staring. He looks at the gas flare instead, and at the dark sky that holds only barely visible stars. 

Stars have always been fascinating to him, and he, as a teenager, often found solace in how calm they made him. Sometimes beautiful things can get eclipsed when it’s too bright all around, he once told Taehyung, on one of their lost nights high on his father’s balcony, and they might need a little darkness to shine the brightest. 

It’s still mostly silences, at the exception of their phones singing from time to time. None of them are heavy talkers now, though Yoongi is aware that Taehyung has his inner soliloquies, these things that he should voice but never does. 

Yoongi glances at his phone when he’s done passing through the ripped fence. No new messages. 

Parked behind his car is a white Audi. Jimin’s. 

And if Taehyung noticed it, and he most likely did, he doesn’t mention it. Doesn’t peek at it, doesn’t text anyone. 

Yoongi pulls his car’s door open and Taehyung leans in his space. 

“Good night, Tae,” he whispers, stopping him, they’re so close that Taehyung probably feels the air of his words on his own lips.
He doesn’t return home right away, drives around with the music blasting through his speakers shaking through him whole.

Tomorrow morning, he’ll wake up and wish he could forget again. And tomorrow morning, when he’ll be thinking of Jimin and when he’ll be thinking of Taehyung, he’ll realize that he’s working against his own desires again.

It’s hard, to keep away from Taehyung.

He seems to want to touch even more than he used to, seems to wants to kiss and gravitate in Yoongi’s space. Yoongi thinks the situation is ridiculous, but then he remembers that he’s the one hanging out in Taehyung’s flat and that he’s to blame too.

From across the room, he watches him idly pet Cannelle on the sofa, her soft purring occupying the space between them and Yoongi is glad Taehyung got her. So many times as he child did Taehyung whine about having a pet and never was allowed to. And all the nights Yoongi had to console him because his father wouldn’t let him go into vet school. Taehyung ever only had two passions; animals and music. But he got trampled on so hard and for such a long time, that it all died in the end. It’s still inside of him but it’s dead, a black smudge staining his heart.

Yoongi looks at the time on his phone. Again. It makes him nervous. It’s just past 14:40 and he knows Jimin is going to be here soon, and he lets the minutes tick, waiting for a breach to escape. He still feels bad for backing out on Jimin but more than that, he doesn’t want to see them together. Not yet. And he knows that’s sort of fucked up, because he’s as bitter about Taehyung than he is about Jimin.

He’s scrolling through his Twitter when Taehyung stands and absentmindedly says that they haven’t been to the movies in a while and that they should go soon, and Yoongi hums in dismissive approval. That’s frustrating, how Taehyung acts like everything’s fine and nothing’s changed since the gala. Yoongi hears the door of the bathroom being closed and leaving now should be fine, he supposes.

“I’m leaving, Tae,” he says loudly, walking from his seat to where Cannelle is still peacefully curled up.

“Okay.”

He exhales his annoyance, and he bends just barely, extending a hand towards the cat. He tries to gently pet her head, but every time, her ears flatten and she dips her head lower to avoid his touch.

“Don’t do that, cat,” he whispers, and when his hand finally touches her, she backpedals on the sofa, her claws piercing the material. “Okay. Cool.”

The light in the building’s corridor is dimmer, and he squints to adjust. If Yoongi is to be honest, he doesn’t like this place. Not for Taehyung anyway. It’s probably a place his father has chosen for him, because that’s the kind of architecture he likes, the kind of faux-high-class place he appreciates. Him. Not Taehyung.

The sound of his steps is dulled by the carpeted floor when he goes along the hallway, and when he
just about to turn the corner, he hears someone else and he just knows he’s fucked.

“Ah, hyung,”

“Hey.”

Yoongi feels himself being engulfed by his own feelings of uneasiness and the awkward atmosphere around them that he’s probably the one creating. But then their eyes meet and he slips into that longing again. That need to get closer. Jimin looks so tempting, his clothes lighter because of the warming weather, his backpack over a fitted sweater, with messy hair much darker than he remembered it being. Ebony.

“You’re already leaving?” there’s a hint of disappointment in his tone that Yoongi refuses to acknowledge. This situation is already bad. No need to pretend there’s more to it.

He nods. “Got some things to do. You dyed your hair?” And it’s more an observation than a question. Jimin surely saw him staring.

“Yeah,” he smiles, runs a hand through it like he’s suddenly self-conscious.

“More business-safe?”

“Nah, I just felt like it.”

“It’s pretty, suits you,” he says, sincere, as he slowly walks past him to continue towards the elevators.

“Thanks,” it’s a bit shy and airy, he seems in a good mood, “and hyung?” Yoongi turns to him, hums. There’s little space between them, and he just wants this to be over, he just wants to be out of here and stop thinking about Jimin and Taehyung kissing and not being able to kiss neither of them.

“Are we cool?”

Their gazes won’t leave one another’s and he wants to laugh, lightly, out of discomfort. He wants to be honest with Jimin, Yoongi thinks he’s already carrying along too many splinters, but being honest implies making himself vulnerable.

“I’d tell you that we are, but I feel like this whole thing’s messed up. But let’s just, forget about what happened and it’s gonna be fine.”

“Forget about what happened?”

“Yeah, I mean it’s not—“

“Forget.”

“…Yeah?”

“Is that supposed to be easy to do?”

Jemin’s tone is harsh, and it cuts Yoongi in his impulse.

It’s dead silence, and it’s so potent within the walls of this corridor, Yoongi feels like everything’s closing on him.

It’s dead silence for a painful moment between his hesitation to fight or flight, until Jimin consumes the space between them, and kisses him.
Jimin knocks on the door with his heart still beating in his throat. His hands are unstable, shaking, his breathing coming out uneven, and his brain is still fuzzy from the feeling of Yoongi’s lips on his own.

He swallows, and knocks again.

He feels bad.

He’s not with Taehyung, and he’s not with Yoongi, but he feels bad. Uncomfortable. He’s stuck with the itch of telling them both and to make his feelings clear.

The lack of response makes him jittery and he simply opens the door by himself, gets in.

“Tae?” he drops his backpack on the floor, next to the multiple pairs of shoes.

The shuffling of feet coming his way allow his shoulders to slacken and then Taehyung appears from the corridor leading to his room. He’s seemingly just done putting a white t-shirt on, trying to pull on it to cover the hem of his sweatpants.

“You’re early again,” Taehyung drawls, and the way he makes his way to him is lazy but so perfectly controlled, Jimin’s head wasn’t over the first cloud that he’s going straight into another.

“A bit, yeah, does it bother you?”

“It’s fine.”

And that’s where Taehyung should stop, this is talking distance. But he doesn’t, and both his hands cup around Jimin’s face as he leans down to press their lips together.

Jimin sucks in a surprised breath but he melts right away, sighs and kisses back. His fingers go to Taehyung’s hips, and slip under his too-short t-shirt, meeting warm, soft skin.

“Your hands are cold,” Taehyung whispers, pecking Jimin’s lips one last time before he takes a step back to give him some space. “I was about to go out to smoke, you coming?”

Jimin nods, and when Taehyung disappears in the living room, he allows himself to close his eyes and even out the rise and fall of his chest.

You: am i mixing it up with sexual attraction? idk

23-04-2016, 1:12
Jimin sends this the same night, once dance practice is over and he’s in his bed, unable to sleep.

**Hobi hyung:** is that how you feel?

23-04-2016, 1:15

**You:** not really

23-04-2016, 1:15

It only occurs to him then, that it’s late and that he might have disturbed, or woken him up.

**You:** ah am i bothering you?

23-04-2016, 1:15

**Hobi hyung:** nah dont worry

23-04-2016, 1:15

**Hobi hyung:** we argued again and she wont let me into my room

23-04-2016, 1:16

**Hobi hyung:** so ill still be up for a while, or at least until she agrees to talk to me

23-04-2016, 1:16

**Hobi hyung:** if you dont feel like it’s like that, then why are you even thinking about it like that

23-04-2016, 1:16

Jimin clicks his tongue at the first texts and sighs. Hoseok’s girlfriend seems to fancy doing those kinds of things more often now, locking him out of his room and whatnot. But he’s not going to say anything, because Hoseok is probably tired and he probably already knows that things aren’t right and doesn’t need anyone to remind him constantly.

**You:** idk, met Yoongi and kissed him what, 10 meters from tae’s door

23-04-2016, 1:17
**You:** and then got at tae’s apartment and we kissed too

23-04-2016, 1:17

**You:** am i not like, just being a horny teenager

23-04-2016, 1:18

**Hobi hyung:** have you ever been a horny teenager

23-04-2016, 1:18

**You:** no, thats why im worried

23-04-2016, 1:19

**Hobi hyung:** i dont see why youd be

23-04-2016, 1:19

**You:** where the fuck am i going with that hyung

23-04-2016, 1:21

**Hobi hyung:** well, where do you feel this is going?

23-04-2016, 1:22

**Hobi hyung:** i mean, is a side pulling more than the other?

23-04-2016, 1:22

**You:** for me and how i feel? or like, progress-wise?

23-04-2016, 1:22

**Hobi hyung:** progress-wise

23-04-2016, 1:22

**Hobi hyung:** and your feelings
You: hyung why

You: my feelings are growing sort of equally on both sides

You: progress-wise well, it feels more like im with tae

Hobi hyung: doesn't that decide things for you

You: no

Hobi hyung: why not

You: hyung

Hobi hyung: what

You: my feelings

Hobi hyung: yes im aware
Hobi hyung: but from here what you wanna do

You: yes thanks that's the whole point of me texting you at 1am

Hoseok takes longer to answer this time and Jimin assumes he either fell asleep on his couch, or Eunji has finally let him in.

Hobi hyung: choose, then, if the present outcome doesn't satisfy you

You: you can't say that

You: you know I can't go against my feelings

Hobi hyung: yes I know, and I also know where it led you last time, Park Jimin

Hobi hyung: so choose

Jemin sighs, rolls onto his side. Sometimes he thinks Hoseok might be remembering more things than he does about his past and it scares him.

You: I'll end up messing things up I can feel it
Hobi hyung: messing things up is one thing, but messing yourself up is another
23-04-2016, 1:41

Hobi hyung: im not picking you up with a spoon this time, you hear me
23-04-2016, 1:41

Hobi hyung: im not doing that again
23-04-2016, 1:42

Hobi hyung: so be careful and respect yourself
23-04-2016, 1:42

Hobi hyung: love you dude, good night
23-04-2016, 1:42

You: thanks hyung, lvoe you too
23-04-2016, 1:42

You: night
23-04-2016, 1:43

He fucks up into his hand a little faster, a little rougher, and it’s the thought of Jimin’s lips around him that does it, that has him come all over his fist and lower abdomen with a groan.

Too quickly, the images fade and the haze fall. Yoongi opens his eyes to only meet darkness, and he’s suddenly hyperaware of the loneliness of his rushed breathing being the only thing filling the room, and of how sticky his skin is.

“What the fuck,” he swallows around his parched throat, twisting his body so he can grab a tissue on his nightstand to clean what he can with it. “Fuck,” and says again, before he flops back into his bed.

Yoongi is not going to pretend that he hasn’t done it before, jacking it to fantasies of Jimin. It’s just that after the whole thing with Taehyung, and then Jimin kissing him this afternoon, there’s not much between the three of them that still makes sense and Yoongi has no idea what to do with himself. For the past days he’s been good, he’s been responsible and thoughtful, backing away as to not disturb Taehyung and Jimin. He’s letting them go.

But Taehyung isn’t letting go. And neither does Jimin, apparently.
Yoongi breathes out a laugh.

*That’s fucking messy.*

The patterns on his ceiling are undistinguishable but he stares still, his body feels heavy and limp but he can’t find sleep. He can see the shadow of his cellphone not too far on the covers and it’s tantalizing. He looks at the clock on the small table. 1:57.

Years ago, whenever he would need to talk about something, he would call Taehyung. Day, night, it didn’t matter. But things have changed and that’s not the kind of things he can do anymore. More so if it concerns Jimin. And if he were to text Jimin, it would probably fuel a fire he’s not sure he wants to nurture.

It’s a weird place he’s in. He has the common sense to be aware that he should stay away from that situation and actually try to distance himself. But as soon as it pulls at him a little, as soon as one of them is close, he finds that he doesn’t want to resist the temptation, that he just wants to give in. And have them both.

Δ

Taehyung thanks the cashier and grabs the two coffees he’s just ordered, bringing them where Jimin is sitting and waiting.

“Thanks,” he says as Taehyung put his drink in front of him, but his eyes aren’t leaving his phone. The café is agitated, it’s a late morning and the weather is nice albeit a little cold. “We received a new document to study for our test in two weeks.”

“It’s Saturday, Jimin,” he sits in front of him, takes a sip of his cappuccino.

This feels a lot like a date, with the yellow sunlight filtering in and the kind of atmosphere that floats around them. They kissed a lot and brushed fingers a lot the night before, and Taehyung felt bitter seeing him go through the door when he left for dance practice. It brings back some old feelings of a younger time, but it feels good.

“Yeah, I know, but –“

“Put your phone down.”

Jimin looks up at him.

“But it’s important, that’s new stuff to study and –“

“Put that damn phone down, Jimin.”

Jimin squints.

“Make me.”

Taehyung clicks his tongue, and swiftly reaches to grabs at the other’s phone, easily pulling it out of Jimin’s hands before he places it next to his thigh on the banquette.

“If you’re going to be like this when I take you out on dates, I’ll stay at home and pet Cannelle
“Ah, so this is a date,” Jimin leans over the table, cocks his head to the side. He has an amused smile on but his eyes are tinted with annoyance. “Warn a guy, next time.”

Taehyung scoffs, comes closer and nearly meets him halfway.

“What would you have done, mhm? Wear a bowtie?”

“A necktie,” Jimin whispers, “so I can choke you with it when you talk too much.”

“Kinky,” Taehyung cracks him a smile that Jimin returns before he pulls away and slouches against the banquette. “We’ll study together if you want, I don’t mind. Now just drink your fucking French vanilla before it gets cold.”

Jimin shakes his head in disbelief but reaches for the paper cup anyway.

They still haven’t discussed the father issue. Taehyung doesn’t know if Jimin prefers avoiding it altogether, or if it’s just that he doesn’t feel the need to talk about it. He still didn’t get around to ask about his family, so maybe on his side it isn’t as much of a problem. He wonders, very briefly, how it’d be to introduce him to his father.

“Can I have my phone back, now?” Jimin asks with a flat voice after a while.

Taehyung fumbles around on the cushion to find it, finally grabbing it at an odd angle and pressing on the Home button in the process. And when he gives it to him over the table and that the screen is on, he gets a glimpse of it.

**Yoongi hyung**

2 new messages

He silently observes Jimin reaction when he sees the notification, but he doesn’t seem surprised, like he’s used to texting him, and he types something the next moment.

“What’s my name in your phone?” Taehyung asks, brushing the sensation it just lit in his stomach away from his thoughts.


“That’s boring. You should give me a cute nickname,” Jimin only hums in response, his thumbs still gliding over the screen. “I’ll find one, then. How about, ‘dat ass’?”

Jimin snorts, losing focus, his head falling forward and his cellphone dropping on his thighs.

“As your boyfriend, I th –“

And Jimin freezes up mid-sentence.
Taehyung grins. “Go on,” he urges, warmth spreading through him. He looks at Jimin pulls his sleeves into sweater paws with a calm fondness. He’s cute.

“As your boyfriend, I’ll find you one.”

“Okay,” he says simply, his gaze not leaving Jimin’s. “It better be a nice one though.”

“Do not underestimate me,” his lips curve in this cat-like smile of his, dark strands of soft-looking hair falling into his eyes, and Taehyung didn’t think he could get more attractive that he already was with that orange color. He was wrong.

“I wouldn’t dare,” he adds, letting a few moments of silence tame the tension between them a little before he speaks again. “So we’re boyfriend now? Warn a guy, next time.”

“Shut up, Kim Taehyung.”
It’s not working.

Yoongi grips at his sides roughly, presses him his harder against the cold metal of the tank.

Jimin and he are official now and Taehyung tries to think straight, tries to think about Jimin and how shitty he’s being, but it’s not working. Having Yoongi biting at his lip while images of Jimin are rolling behind his eyelids just riles him up even more. He fists Yoongi’s hoodie, and it’s almost aggressive, it’s possessive and that’s how it used to be when they were young and fed up with life and just needed something to call their own.

And he was feeling it, own reticent Yoongi was over the past week, swiftly dodging his advances and pulling away from their closeness when it was getting too tense. It felt so unnatural, coming from him. Controlling himself. They always flowed together so well, that his attitude made Taehyung feels like he was facing a stranger.

That’s more him, now. That’s more him, nipping under his jaw, slipping a hand under Taehyung’s sweater. That’s more him, but Taehyung supposes it’s also more irresponsible. Yoongi is trying to be a grown-up, after all. Someone who knows what they’re doing, who makes the right decisions.

Taehyung lets his head fall back against the metal, closes his eyes. There’s the warmth of Yoongi’s breath fanning over his neck, the light tickle of his hair on his cheek, but his thoughts have wandered somewhere else. It’s so easy for his brain to twist up things, to imagine him getting fucked, bent over a table of dark oak in a huge dining room, or eating a girl out on in a luxurious bed in a studio with a view over all New York. It’s so ugly, what it does to him. It has him want to be mean and spit out how messed up he feels, how pathetic and worthless.

He rethinks of a week ago, when Yoongi fucked him and had to put a condom on. His insides shrivel up to become a wreck of anxiousness that he’d scream out if he could. But he just laughs instead, a weak and broken sound.

“Did you go?”

Yoongi gives a questioning hum against the skin of his collarbone.

“Did you fucking go get yourself checked, Yoongi?”

He stills, but his lips don’t leave Taehyung’s skin. It dies. Everything around them. Taehyung laughs a little more, and it’s bitter with hurt.

“Did you get your results? How has unprotected sex with strangers been treating you, mhm?”

And now Yoongi whips his head up. His hands under Taehyung’s clothes become stiff and he’s frowning, but Taehyung can see how startled he actually is.

“What the fuck, Tae?”

“Yeah, that’s what I’d like to know,” he pushes Yoongi away dryly, pulls his sweater down and
readjusts it. “I still can’t believe you fucking did that.”

Yoongi is stunned for a few breaths, shaken up, but he stays there and holds his gaze. They’ve been away and they’ve changed, but Taehyung can see that Yoongi knows that he’s not just referring to the people he’s slept with.

“I had to leave, Tae.”

And here it comes, the conversation he never wanted to have. The excuses he never wanted to hear.

“No, you didn’t have to, hyung.”

“You were about to break.”

Taehyung’s smile widens, he rakes his fingers through his hair. Fire is spreading through him, and it revives things that he thought were dead ashes.

“I wasn’t. Stop telling yourself that to feel better, that’s not true. You broke me when you left. That’s what truly happened.”

“I was fucking you up and you know that. I had to go.”

“Shut up, hyung. Shut up. You’re not a martyr, okay? You haven’t been left behind and you haven’t suffered the silence like I did so don’t you –“

“Are you serious?” Yoongi spits. He’s set ablaze too. “How do you think I’ve been feeling this whole time? What do you think I’ve been doing?”

“Well it seems to me like you had your share of fun, no?”

“You’re so fucking wrong.”

Taehyung chuckles. “Right.” But that’s it, for him. He’s closed up again. And no matter what Yoongi will say from here, Taehyung will hear but not register. “Anyway, losing a friend is bad, right?”

“A friend,” Yoongi’s eyes follow Taehyung movements, follow the way he walks past him and towards where their cars are.

“Mhm,” he grabs a cigarette from his pack, lights it. “But you’re back now, and that’s all that should matter.”

“Taehyung,” Yoongi voices, weakly trying to stop him. “Tae, bring your ass back here to we can fucking talk about this.”

“See you around, hyung.”

You: Jimin

24-04-2016, 18:44
He’s not even in his apartment yet when he texts him, he just went through the building’s door. It could look like a rebound kind of thing, what he’s doing. And in all honesty, at first it felt a bit like it. But the more he thinks about it, the more he finds that he really just wants to see him, to have him close. Jimin has this weird soothing effect on him; he doesn’t kill the storm, but he makes it less destructive. It’s such a different dynamic then the one Taehyung has with Yoongi. The page is still blank, with Jimin. And it feels good.

Jimin: yea?

24-04-2016, 18:47

You: can you come over?

24-04-2016, 18:48

It settles stress in his stomach, to ask him so bluntly. But it also makes him bloom with anticipation that he tries to shrug off, fetching Cannelle’s food and pouring her daily portion into her bowl.

Jimin: what

24-04-2016, 18:49

Jimin: like, now?

24-04-2016, 18:49

You: thats sudden, its fine if you cant

24-04-2016, 18:50

He sits on the floor, right between his fridge and where Cannelle is currently eating. She’s warmed up to him, now. After spending days skirting around the places where she was sleeping and avoiding eye contact as to not make her uncomfortable, she comes to him sometimes, when he’s sitting on the couch and silent, or lying in bed. From time to time he’ll wake up, and she’ll be curled up just above his head on his pillow, purring loudly enough to have him confused for a moment.

Jimin: you okay tho?

24-04-2016, 18:52
And for him to ask that, he must be finding this unusual. And even for him, it is.

Jimin: mmm ok
24-04-2016, 18:52

Jimin: then give me 30
24-04-2016, 18:53

Taehyung softens. He runs his hand along Cannelle’s back, following its curve when she slightly lifts her butt, and it makes him smile. He stands and goes to his room to grab some stuff, lost in thoughts of Jimin’s voice when he’s whiny and the way his eyes crinkle when he laughs. And when he’s about to turn on the shower, he hears his phone buzz on the bathroom counter.

Jimin: did you eat?
24-04-2016, 18:59

Jimin: you want me to buy us something?
24-04-2016, 18:59

This is so, so weird, and it feels so, so different. He’s still for a moment, eyes not leaving the screen and his chest aching with a beautiful kind of pain. It hits him harder than he thought it would, the realization that he’s slowly falling for him.

Jimin: ?
24-04-2016, 19:02

You: yes
24-04-2016, 19:02
Jimin: ??

24-04-2016, 19:02

You: buy yourself some patience

24-04-2016, 19:02

You: you impatient child

24-04-2016, 19:02

Jimin: wow

24-04-2016, 19:03

Jimin: fuck you

24-04-2016, 19:03

You: uh huh

24-04-2016, 19:03

You: bring whatever im not picky

24-04-2016, 19:03

And he knows that by giving Jimin the choice, that he’ll have no excuse not to eat. At the exception of the night they ordered takeout after he bought Cannelle, he has yet to see him eat a whole meal and he can feel that there’s something there. A fissure.

Fascinating, truly, how fast one can grow to care for someone else so much.

He’s swiping a dishcloth across the counter when he hears him knock, and it occurs to him then, that Jimin never used the doorbell and he finds that it somehow tells a lot about him.

He washes his hands and dries them on his sweatpants as he walks to the entryway.

“There was this guy at the red light,” Jimin starts as soon as Taehyung opens the door for him, his level of energy slapping him in the face, as usual. He puts the brown paper bags on the small table next to the door, throws his car keys next to them. “He kept gluing his fucking Hyundai an inch away from my ass.” Taehyung raises an eyebrow, stuff his hands in his pockets. He watches him take his boots off, putting them neatly next to his own Conversees. “I swear to God I almost got out of
my car just to spit in his windshield.”

He straightens abruptly, his hair falling on his forehead fluffily, his chest heaving and falling a little faster than necessary.

“Good evening, Jimin. How are you?”

“I am good, life is great. Thanks for asking.”

The bags crinkle under his fingers when he snatches them, headed to the kitchen. And when he finally opens them, the scent of the food fills the air, drawing Taehyung in instantly.

“Your thing was pretty last minute so I just stopped somewhere on the way,” Jimin says, putting the food containers on the countertop, and Taehyung keeps himself in his space.

“Were you busy?”

“Just doing assignments for my economics class,” he opens one of the boxes, licks his finger when he notices he dipped it in the sauce. “So, what’s the plan?”

“Mhm, I don’t know,” Taehyung drawls, truthfully he’s just content with having him here. “Eat something, watch something. I just—”

“Felt like seeing me?” he aims his attention at Taehyung, his lips curving into a teasing grin when he gets silence as an answer. “You’re becoming weird,” he whispers, walking past Taehyung and towards to the cutlery drawer. “You’re becoming soft and squish and that’s weird.”

Taehyung grabs the back of Jimin’s hoodie, pulls on it until he’s back at his level and cups his jaw to have him turn his face to him. And he kisses him. Just light and simple.

“So weird,” Jimin murmurs again as he goes steps away, but Taehyung can see how the glint in his eyes changed.

He takes what he needs from the drawer and comes back to grab two containers, motioning to Taehyung to take the rest.

“Can’t go back too late though, got class at 8:30 tomorrow.” Taehyung hums in approval, leading them to the living room. The smells of stir fried vegetables and sesame oil suddenly occupying too much space in his brain. “You got class too, right?”

“Yeah,” and he does, this week. Because there’s no meeting he needs to attend.

Turns out that they share the same tastes in series, and that they don’t have to bicker for long to find something to watch. And just when Taehyung sits next to Jimin, who’s already chewing on something, he notices the LED of his cellphone is flashing.

**Min Yoongi:** tae

24-04-2016, 19:37
Min Yoongi: we need to talk about this afternoon
24-04-2016, 19:47

Min Yoongi: can you just answer me
24-04-2016, 19:54

He hesititates for a couple of seconds, but sets on putting his phone on mute, placing it face down on the sofa.

Jimin looks at his phone often.

They’re into the third episode, and they’re sitting so close that they’re nearly cuddling, but he looks at his phone sporadically and Taehyung wonders if he’s worried about something.

He says nothing, because this is 2016 and that’s what things have become, and because Jimin’s not annoying about it. Taehyung doesn’t have the feeling that he’s talking alone when he’s commenting on what they’re watching, and his presence still feels warm at his side.

They end up so slouched that Jimin is practically leaning on him, his head coming to rest on Taehyung’s shoulder from time to time.

“Tae?”
“Mhm?”
“Can I ask a weird question?”

Taehyung groans, grabs his remote and lowers the volume of the TV.

“Depends.”
“It’s about Yoongi.”

And just like that, Taehyung grows to realize that Jimin might have been texting Yoongi for the whole evening. And he doesn’t know how he feels about that.

“Go ahead,” his head rolls back against the couch, and he’s reminded of his own cellphone, lost somewhere between the cushions.

“He’s been away for a while, right?” And Taehyung tries really hard not to go stiff, wondering who told him.

“Yeah, for a little over a year.”

He waits for his whys but they don’t come. His gaze gets lost on the TV screen, his brain too busy to really process anything that’s happening on there.

“Where was he?”
“America. New York.”

Jimin hums low in his throat, readjusts himself against Taehyung. And that’s it. He seems satisfied with the response he’s been given. His nonintrusive nature is pleasing.

But for Taehyung, that wakes a lot of things, sends him in whirlwind of thoughts. Particularly about what happened a couple hours before, at the refinery. Something he’s aware he shouldn’t be doing, that somehow weighs on him, but that he’s unsure he’ll be able to get out of.

Jimin will need to know. He’ll have to tell him, about everything.

Netflix is about to automatically start the next episode and Taehyung stretches, Jimin’s frame following his movements.

“She still doesn’t like me,” he hears Jimin say, voice sleepy, and Taehyung looks at Cannelle swiftly going to sit in front of the patio door too look outside.

“That’s because you said she’s ugly.”

Jimin laughs airily, shifts to sit properly. The TV sings again, and he yawns. Taehyung doesn’t know if that’s how all typical relationships start, or if it’s just Jimin that makes it so effortless, but he likes it.

“Last one,” Jimin says, his eyes small, and Taehyung reaches a hand and comb through his hair, appreciating the subtlety with which he leans into the touch. “Because I’m gonna pass out soon.”

“Okay.”

“And I don’t wanna sleep on your stupid couch again.”

“I’d let you take the bed, you know that.”

Jimin stares for a moment, a smile creeping on his face and he shakes his head weakly.

“I’m not serious, Tae. Your couch is more than fine.”

“I’m serious though,” he stands, “I don’t mind.” He bends to peck Jimin’s lips in a way that already feels too natural, and he fetches is cigarette pack in the kitchen.

“Yo you’re missing stuff.”

“It’s fine,” he places a stick between his lips, gets to the living room again and heads straight to the balcony. “Just continue, I’ll be back after that.”

The door slides open easily, and the room goes silent. Taehyung leaves it open, because he knows.

“Your manners suck.” The couch creaks, followed by soft padding on the flooring. “I want some too.”
Fine, fine drizzle, suspended in the air. It makes the halos of the lampposts that much brighter, and their skin glistening with a cold kind of moisture.

Jimin looks strangely eerie, with how much darkness he’s covered with and the smoke dancing between them. His hair is getting heavier on his forehead from the humidity, and he drags his fingers through it.

“I’ll buy you a pack,” Taehyung says, “so you can stop stealing mines.”

The air is tight, the atmosphere tilted. It’s usually like that when he smokes with Yoongi, and now it’s like that with Jimin too. That makes him feel good. They say cigarette is bad, but it gave Taehyung some of his most treasured memories.

“I can buy myself stuff just fine.”

“Of course you can, Park Jimin of Park Alliances.”

Jimin smiles, feline, he looks to the side. He’s leaned back on the railing and he’s smoking in a demeanor that’s so practiced, he looks like he’s done this for years. But Taehyung knows that it’s not the case. He knows Jimin might be picking up the habit because of him.

Taehyung closes his eyes, takes a pull and sets the smoke in his lungs, lets his arm fall to his side and his head roll back before he sighs it out. April went by so fast, he kind of forgot how easily life slips between his fingers when he’s busy. He has this odd sensation that everything kicked in, that everything was put in gear and it’s scary, somehow. Changes are, anyway. He tries not to think about it too much. Another drag, another ashy exhale.

He opens his eyes to find Jimin looking at him, his expression is blank but hidden in his gaze is a kind of desire that Taehyung can grasp, because he’s pretty sure that it’s how he looks at Jimin, too.

“You like it when I smoke, don’t you?” his voice is low, his words careful.

Jimin scoffs, but doesn’t tear his eyes away.

“You’re so confident, Kim Taehyung.”

“Only when I know I’m right.”

He gets closer, he’s challenging, in silence. With Jimin it’s a lot of push and pull, and he’s eager to see the moment they crash into one another. Jimin ducks his head to the side, gauges him. He’s responsive in a different way than Yoongi is. He plays a lot.

“Yeah, you’re hot when you smoke,” he drawls, his tongue slow around the words, “is that what you wanted to hear?”

Taehyung hums. “Not bad.” Their voices are getting lower, but everything else is becoming more potent, intense. Lust is settling in, just like two days ago, just before he had to leave for his dance class and that they were making out on the couch. And he had been so disoriented by the way he was feeling once the door was closed, that less than an hour later he had already texted him to meet him at the café the next morning.

He kisses him, leisurely, and Jimin gives in. He cups his cheek with one hand, keeping his cigarette away with the other. Jimin is a good kisser. Taehyung likes his lips a lot. They feel soft and supple against his own, and it’s like he’s 14 again, with those thoughts that he’ll never tire of this. The problem with saying “never”, is that you won’t know until the day you die. But he wishes, still, that
this slow descent will feel new every day.

It builds up faster, today, like they both know where this is going. Taehyung lets his hand slip until his fingers are pressing into Jimin’s waist, and he squeezes just slightly, making their bodies flush.

They’re still lazy, but the innocence of it is gone, and he licks Jimin’s lips, asking for more. They’re past the line where they were on Friday, but tonight, Jimin doesn’t have to leave. And he doesn’t seem like he wants to, from the way his fingers curl in Taehyung’s t-shirt, just below his neck. Their cigarettes are burning away but it’s so far in the back of his mind, because excitement is starting to pool in his gut, burning, warming him whole. And this intensity, and the urges it gives him, is something he hasn’t experienced in a very, very long time. It goes back to those first times with Yoongi, when he was so willing and too avid to learn, to try, when Yoongi would tell him he was beautiful and that he was doing good.

When he breaks the kiss, he trails his hand down his stomach, their breathings unsynced, and he hooks his forefinger and index just above the button of Jimin’s jeans.

“Want me to suck you off?”

Jimin holds his eyes for a moment, his own grasp on Taehyung’s clothes slackening. Drizzle is starting to become heavier rain, droplets fattening at the ends of Jimin’s strands and running along his neck and Taehyung is half tempted to sink to his knees right here.

“D’you like me?” Jimin brings to his mouth the remainder of his cigarette, breathes in smoke that he keeps in, then blows out to the side.

It’s funny, thinking back about the first time he saw Jimin, red hair and ripped jeans, flirting and laughing in an over-friendly manner at some dude’s joke after class, he wouldn’t have pegged him to be that type. That type that wants to make sure there are some kinds of feelings involved before going third base. Then again, maybe he isn’t, and maybe he just wants Taehyung to talk and Taehyung is just fantasizing about finally settling in something better.

And it takes a while for Taehyung to voice anything, but his eyes never leave his. It’s just that they are words he never found easy to say.

“I like you.”

Jimin exhales, stubbing his stick out on the railing, reaching to take Taehyung’s and doing the same and when he looks back at him, there’s something in there that makes Taehyung shiver.

“Yeah, I’m down for that.”

He feels Jimin’s breath quiver the more he makes his way down his stomach, peppering kisses. Jimin feels amazing, under his lips, under his hands, against his skin. He’s been mostly quiet since they started ripping each other’s clothes down the hallway, but his exhalles, and the haste in the way he moves speak for themselves. And he’s a bit shy, trying to hide certain parts of his body, and Taehyung suspects it has to do with those meals he skips. “You’re beautiful”, he told him, once he was laid on the bed and Taehyung hovering over him. But he won’t force it, and he just lets him do what makes him comfortable.

Taehyung smiles when Jimin’s fingers knot in his hair, not pulling, but trying to find purchase
instead. He has no idea when was the last time he had any kind of sex, but it flatters Taehyung’s ego
to see him on edge with just lips tracing the underside of his cock. He wraps his hand around it and
Jimin’s knees bend reflexively, his hips stuttering up, and he strokes him lazily.

He zones out for a moment, an onslaught of thoughts fogging his brain up. He’s at the point where
he half expects, half dreads it, that churn of his stomach that made him jerk back so often, that made
him unable to go on with any of those other men before. He’s scared because this is Jimin, and he
wants this, with him.

“Tae,” and Taehyung looks up to meet Jimin’s stare, sees his Adam’s apple bob in his throat. His
tone makes it sound a lot like he’s begging and Taehyung pushes his hips into the bed, relishing how
easily Jimin can make him buzz with arousal.

When Jimin’s cock slips past his lips, Taehyung’s moan get drowned by Jimin’s. And when he runs
a hand up Jimin’s side as he hollows his cheeks out and that Jimin shudders bodily, Taehyung
becomes ecstatic. He wants to touch himself, to come to the sound of Jimin’s whines, to the feel of
his dick in his mouth, not as heavy as Yoongi’s, but just the perfect size for him to not to tire out too
quickly.

“I could suck your dick for days,” he says, voice raspy, and Jimin throws his head back, fingers
curling in the sheets.

He could have them climax just like that, with the cockhead in the back of his throat and his own fist
around himself. But now that he’s reached this, now that he’s reached here and that he’s feeling
fucking amazing and that the all the lust coursing through him is making it hard to rein it in, he
becomes greedy.

“I don’t wanna stop here, Jimin,” he tells him, before giving the crown a fat lick. “Do you wanna
stop?”

Jimin’s hand loosens in his hair, and he props himself on his forearms, cheeks flushed and brows
creasing slightly. But Taehyung understands where the confusion comes from, so he lifts himself up
and kisses him.

“Can we fuck?”

The only sliver of light filtering inside the room hits all the curves of Jimin’s body and Taehyung is
entranced. It throws their shadows against the wall opposite to the open window, some cheap version
of shadow art, and he finds a strange satisfaction in observing Jimin’s silhouette sat on top of his.

All of this feels a little surreal, with that soft lighting against the darkness of his room. It’s past 2am
now, and they’ve been lazing around and talking for a while, yet Taehyung doesn’t feel sleepy. At
all. He knows Jimin will have to wake up early, for a lot of things, but he’s not ready to let go of
what’s happening, and from the glint in Jimin’s eyes, he seems to feel the same.

His thighs on each side of Taehyung’s abdomen feel like they’re meant to be there, soft and
addicting, and he can’t stop running his hands along the length of them, from his knees to his hips.
Jimin stopped shying away. Somewhere between the moment he, a little breathless, agreed to them
fucking and when he hastily took the lube from Taehyung’s hand to start prepping himself.
Taehyung stood still, surprised, but watching him only served for even more anticipation to flourish
Jimin blows his smoke towards the ceiling and Taehyung watches the stretch of his neck, the subtle ripple of his muscles and his fingers dance on the expanse of Jimin’ skin again. His black hair is messy, lips still swollen, soft glow of sweat still lingering and at this point, it’s just sinful, how gorgeous he is. Yoongi is beautiful too, in his own way, but Jimin feels under his palms like the diamond he’s spent so long digging for when Yoongi’s departure made him feel like nothing else had worth.

Taehyung is becoming antsy again, needy, and he rolls his hips up against Jimin’s ass. That makes Jimin laugh, airy and light, and he gently lets his head fall back. Taehyung lets out a shivery breath when a breeze seeps in and brushes his side and Jimin looks down at him, gives him that playful smile of his, bringing the cigarette to his mouth once again. That makes Taehyung wonder how it’d be like, to have high sex with him. Wonder if it’d like it used to be with Yoongi. So heightened and sensitive. He’d like to try, if Jimin is willing.

“You wanna go again?” Jimin asks a little too disinterestedly for how quick he’s growing hard again, and he leans forward, placing his cigarette between Taehyung’s lips.

“Do you?” He mumbles around it, and the soft pads of his fingers are replaced by his nails, that he grazes in long stripes across Jimin’s skin. That’s when he realizes, after hearing the doubt in his own voice, that he doesn’t know Jimin at all, when it comes to sex. And that he will have to learn.

Jimin bends, kisses him. “You’re being all careful around me, I like it.”

He’s the one shifting and reaching to the nightstand, grabbing a new condom wrapper and the lube, and as he does, Taehyung gets a glimpse of the time. 2:41am. He just knows tomorrow is going to be hell.

The condom is rolled on Taehyung’s cock with practiced fingers, the view making him groan, and impatience makes it difficult to stay still.

His breath catches when Jimin smoothly sinks onto him, and he lets him find his rhythm, a hand to Jimin’s waist and the other holding the cigarette to his mouth in some semblance of self-control. It shows, that he’s a dancer. He’s so fluid and precise in the way he moves. He doesn’t bounce on him that much because he’s tired, but truthfully, he doesn’t need to, his hips do everything just fine.

“Tell– Tell me what else you like.”

Jimin hums, splaying his hands on Taehyung’s chest, and he takes the cigarette from him, pulling on it as he seems to ponder for a moment. His stomach tenses and he closes his eyes, breathing out a soft moan and Taehyung wants to touch him, to help him come, but Jimin bats his hand away when he tries.

“I like, mhm, lazy sex. I – I like,” he exhales, the smoke thick in the dim lighting of the room. He then holds the cigarette for Taehyung to take the last drag of, before he stretches to kill it in the ashtray on the nightstand. “I like b-blowjobs. Blowjobs are great. I’ve u-uhm, never tried anything—ah, fuck,” his thighs squeeze around Taehyung’s hips reflexively, keeping him in deeper. “I’ve never tried anything too fancy or with a di-different dynamic, like ropes and that kind of stuff. But I’d be willing to try.”

Taehyung registers, making a small noise in the back of his throat, and his thoughts start wandering with all the things he’d want them to try. All the things he could rediscover with him. He thrusts up into him harder then and Jimin lets him, gives him control. He falls forward, their chests sticking
together slightly from the sweat beading their skins, and he levels himself so that he’s looking straight into Taehyung’s eyes.

"D’you know what else I’d like to try?” he whispers, voice sultry.

“Tell me,” the tightness of Jimin around him, the softness of his touches and the slapping sounds of their skins filling his ears have his senses go on overdrive, and he’s already close to coming.

"Being fucked awake."

"Yeah?” his grip on Jimin’s hips tighten.

"Yeah, that seems really nice."

Taehyung finds in himself to give him a teasing smile and he tilts his chin to ask for a kiss, that he’s granted, but inside he’s become a mess. The images he got because of what Jimin just said started a fire in him, tantalizing and ravenous, and he wants to consume everything he can touch.

He pulls Jimin down to meet his thrusts and Jimin’s head falls forward, his nose in the crook of his neck and silky, wet lips to his collarbones.

The pace isn’t fast but he’s making sure that he’s going balls deep every time, and when he sees Jimin slipping a hand between their bodies to stroke his own cock, he finally allows himself to chase his orgasm. He fucks up into him until he comes with a low moan, his thrusts dropping to a slow, self-indulgent rocking. And when his body loosens up and that his brain goes foggy, he buries a hand in Jimin’s hair and still focusses on moving inside him for just a bit longer, just enough for him to orgasm. And when he does, it’s with open-mouthed moan that he pours against Taehyung’s throat and weak hips rolls, his come feeling warm on his stomach.

Taehyung breathes in, breathes out, his lungs stretching around the same air as Jimin. He feels a bit heavy atop of him, pressing on his ribcage, but Taehyung wouldn’t want it any other way. He strokes his back, up and down, again and again, drowning in post-orgasm haze. His head falls to the side, Jimin shifts, wrapping his body around his a little tighter, and Taehyung smiles.

It’s 3:07. But it’s doesn’t matter.

For once, hell will be worth it.
He’s just done putting a t-shirt on when he hears the bathroom door being unlocked and opened.

“Bad idea,” Jimin grumbles, returning to the kitchen to grab something. “Twice the same night after so long. Very bad idea.”

Taehyung grins. He’s somehow bothered by Jimin being more diligent than he is about school and that he actually cares about missing too many classes. He wouldn’t have let him go otherwise, because he knows too well how the soreness feels.

“Sitting through class is going to be amazing.”

It’s too early to even be alive, but Jimin needed to get up to go back home for a change of clothes, and Taehyung got dragged along.

“You should eat something,” Taehyung says, entering the kitchen.

“I’ll grab something on the way.”

Taehyung doesn’t argue, but he doubts he will.

Jimin is now making round trips in between rooms. It’s morning. He’s late. He’s dizzying.

“But, text me.”

Taehyung freezes halfway through opening the fridge.

“Why?”

“I can’t find my phone.”

“Your sound wasn’t on, you won’t find it with a single vibration,” he says, already making his way back to his room.

“Call me then.”

“Yes, yeah.”

0531. Taehyung unlocks his phone and dials Jimin’s number, and that’s only then that he remembers Yoongi’s messages. His call ends up on Jimin’s voicemail.

“You found it?”

“Nope.”

Taehyung dials again, walks to the living room, scrolling through his stuff.

“What the fuck is it doing there?”

Taehyung cuts the call, selects his chatroom with Yoongi.
“Where?”

“Under the coffee table. I suspect your cat.”

“She’s gonna seek revenge for the bad things you said about her.”

“Cannelle, come here, we need to talk.”

“As if she was gonna listen to you,” Taehyung stares at the keyboard blankly, the sound of Jimin putting his boots on in the background making it hard for him to focus.

“I’ll steal her from you, she’s gonna listen then.”

“I’d like to see you try, fucker.”

Jimin snickers, his keys chiming when he grabs them. He rushes some goodbye words and goes through the door, its sharp sound making everything painful silent afterwards.

Taehyung sighs. He still needs to take a shower and walk to school.

You: what
25-04-2016, 7:23

Min Yoongi: what the fuck took you so long
25-04-2016, 7:29

You: i was busy
25-04-2016, 7:31

Min Yoongi: well you were busy for a long ass time tae
25-04-2016, 7:31

You: i was with jimin
25-04-2016, 7:32

Yoongi takes longer to reply, this time. And he smiles to himself, because he knows.

You: so what did you want, hyung?
For the first time in over a year, Taehyung decides to grab a coffee on his way to university. It’s a pretty day, he notices, through his foggy thoughts. The sky is grey and the ground is still wet in patches, but it’s a pretty day.

He slips into a seat as quietly as he can, being a couple of minutes late.

**Min Yoongi**: we have to talk about yesterday

25-04-2016, 7:59

**You**: its fine, forget about it

25-04-2016, 8:38

**Min Yoongi**: its not fine tae

25-04-2016, 8:40

**Min Yoongi**: i know you damn well and i know its not fine

25-04-2016, 8:40

**You**: you knew me

25-04-2016, 8:41

**Min Yoongi**: cut the bullshit

25-04-2016, 8:41

**Min Yoongi**: im not just anyone and you know that

25-04-2016, 8:42

Taehyung sighs from where he is at the back of the classroom, takes a sip from the paper cup and starts typing something but quickly stops when messages keep popping in.
Min Yoongi: remind me what age you were when you first saw me?
25-04-2016, 8:42

Min Yoongi: thats right, a fucking week old
25-04-2016, 8:43

Min Yoongi: now stop pretending i dont know you because i was in new york for a year
25-04-2016, 8:43

Min Yoongi: and just because it pleases you to think that
25-04-2016, 8:44

You: youre digressing, hyung
25-04-2016, 8:45

Min Yoongi: stfu
25-04-2016, 8:45

Min Yoongi: i’ll fucking digress if i want to
25-04-2016, 8:46

That makes Taehyung let out a breathy laugh, and the girl beside him gives him a look, eyeing his phone with amusement.

You: sure
25-04-2016, 8:47

He doesn’t text back for a while after that, and Taehyung assumes he’s on the road to work. That’s still so weird to him, that Yoongi would wake up every morning and put a suit on, slick his hair back when he never liked that, and go higher up the sky but in an elevator instead of with the words and the melodies he wanted to share.
You: tae
25-04-2016, 8:59

Taehyung: mhm
25-04-2016, 9:00

You: stop texting in class
25-04-2016, 9:00

Taehyung: you texted me first, dick
25-04-2016, 9:01

Jimin smiles, lays his head on his arm on the desk. He’s so, so blissed out. His body aches in too many places, but he feels like he’s feathers, to be easily scattered to the wind.

You: you're still texting
25-04-2016, 9:03

Taehyung: what is it that you want from me
25-04-2016, 9:04

You: i wanted to ask you something
25-04-2016, 9:05

Taehyung: yes
25-04-2016, 9:05

Taehyung: yes jimin
25-04-2016, 9:08
**Taehyung**: still waiting in case you’re wondering

25-04-2016, 9:13

**You**: wow

25-04-2016, 9:16

**You**: don’t ever sermonize me again for my lack of patience

25-04-2016, 9:16

**You**: I left early this morning, like, without kissing you

25-04-2016, 9:17

**Taehyung**: you did

25-04-2016, 9:17

**Jimin**: did it bother you

25-04-2016, 9:18

**Taehyung**: no

25-04-2016, 9:19

**Taehyung**: you were late, I’m not stupid

25-04-2016, 9:20

He sighs, Taehyung so easily switches to defensive mode.

**Jimin**: what does it have to do with being stupid or not

25-04-2016, 9:21

**Jimin**: I’m asking this to know what you like

25-04-2016, 9:21
Jimin muffles his breathy laugh in his sleeve, cheeks warming up at the thoughts of the previous night, and he’s grateful that it’s break time and that the students around are, for most, talking.

You: stop
25-04-2016, 9:23

You: i hate you
25-04-2016, 9:23

You: im still in class you cant
25-04-2016, 9:23

Taehyung: uh huh
25-04-2016, 9:24

You: do you get me at least?
25-04-2016, 9:25

Taehyung: yeah
25-04-2016, 9:25

Taehyung: goodbye kisses are nice
25-04-2016, 9:26

Taehyung: but we shouldnt feel burdened by them
25-04-2016, 9:27

Jimin gives a low hum in agreement. His wool sweater is soft and just comfortable enough to make him even drowsier. And he’d go home, after this. But he told Hoseok he’d drop by his workplace to cure his boredom.
Taehyung: thats old people talk, why are you like this
25-04-2016, 9:27

Jimin: im trying to be a good boyfriend
25-04-2016, 9:28

Taehyung: youve been my boyfriend for only 2 days
25-04-2016, 9:28

Taehyung: i think you can take a chill pill
25-04-2016, 9:28

You: let me live
25-04-2016, 9:29

Taehyung is not wrong, and Jimin knows that. But he feels like he has to do this, has to make sure he’s doing things the right way. He doubts himself. Probably another ghost of his relationship of his shitty ex.

You: i wanted to ask smt else
25-04-2016, 9:40

Taehyung: mhm
25-04-2016, 9:42

You: whats in that other bedroom
25-04-2016, 9:42

You: the one with the door always closed, yknow
25-04-2016, 9:43
**Taehyung**: 3 corpses and a kettle

25-04-2016, 9:44

**You**: what the fuck

25-04-2016, 9:44

**You**: why a kettle

25-04-2016, 9:44

**Taehyung**: im glad youre not worrying about the corpses

25-04-2016, 9:45

**Taehyung**: i wouldve had a hard time explaining the costumes

25-04-2016, 9:45

**You**: jesus

25-04-2016, 9:46

**Taehyung**: theres nothing in there, its empty

25-04-2016, 9:48

**You**: like, some random stuff? or literally empty?

25-04-2016, 9:49

**Taehyung**: literally empty

25-04-2016, 9:50

His brows crease. There’s no reason for Taehyung to live somewhere with two bedrooms if he only uses one.

**You**: did you have a roommate?
And here’s this feeling again, that he’s stepped into a ground Taehyung seems reticent about. He drops it.

His phone chirps loudly in the console of his car and Jimin jumps, cursing, willing himself not to look at the text he’s just received. The ride to the shopping mall isn’t especially long, but today, it’s excruciating. It chirps again and he clicks his tongue, regretting not muting his notifications.

He yawns, slam the door of his car closed.

You: what
25-04-2016, 12:07

Kookie: good morning
25-04-2016, 12:09

You: good morning
25-04-2016, 12:09

Kookie: how are you today hyung
You: what do you need, satan

25-04-2016, 12:10

Kookie: come with me, i wanna spend some money

25-04-2016, 12:11

Kookie: your class is over for the day right?

25-04-2016, 12:11

Kookie: so come with me

25-04-2016, 12:12

He shakes his head. Jungkook, the typical nouveau riche.

His family got wealthy in his teen years and he isn’t getting used to having so much money. So he spends it when he gets bored. And he seems to be bored often, these past few months.

You: go bother the hyungs

25-04-2016, 12:13

You: im not spending another afternoon shopping for white tees

25-04-2016, 12:13

He strolls into the record store, eyes still riveted on his phone, but he can already hear Hoseok laughing with someone in the background.

Kookie: theyre all working

25-04-2016, 12:14

Kookie: so that only leaves u

25-04-2016, 12:14

Kookie: ure stuck with me
25-04-2016, 12:14

Kookie: where u at

25-04-2016, 12:15

You: im flattered

25-04-2016, 12:15

You: im at the mall, with hoseok hyung

25-04-2016, 12:15

Kookie: aight ill be there in 15

25-04-2016, 12:17

He reads the message, turns his screen off and puts his phone in his pocket. He walks through the store with a practiced gait, perusing around curiously for new items, and when Hoseok notices him, he abandons his conversation with his colleague and he goes to meet him, arms open.

Jimin accepts the hug, always does, when it’s Hoseok. It’s not bone crushing, today, but it’s longer than it usually is and almost shy, demanding reassurance.

“You okay?” he asks, careful.

“M’yeah,” he mumbles, before he lets Jimin go. “I’m just tired.”

Jimin nods, pats his back warmly. He’s pretty sure it’s not the same kind of tired as usual.

“Glad you came though,” he adds, leading them closer to the back of the store while his colleague goes to assist the client that just came in. “You stopped texting me abruptly yesterday, so I wasn’t sure if you’d come.”

“Yeah, sorry about that. I’ll tell you why later, just, not here.”

“Oh,” Hoseok grins, “and did Yoongi continue texting you for the whole evening?”

“He didn’t text me for that long,” the way Hoseok just started emptying some delivery boxes makes him feel like he’s not listening, and he wonders if he should stop talking about it. If he’s annoying. “It looks like he just wanted to chat a bit, and know how I’m doing."

“That’s kind of nice of him.”

“Yeah, but I was feeling guilty? Because Tae was right next to me,” Hoseok hums and Jimin suddenly feels so bad and so uncared for, that he mentally recoils. “Anyway, Jungkook’s coming.”

And at this Hoseok perks up, gives him a questioning look.
“Why?”

“He wants to go shopping.”

“Yeah, but doesn’t he have school?”

Jimin freezes up, closes his eyes and sighs.

“That little shit.”

Δ

Yoongi really isn’t fond of clubs.

People are wobbly and annoying most of the time, the music really isn’t his type, and the watered-down drinks give him a twisted feeling of emptiness.

But he figured, after Seokjin invited him, that with how fucked his current situation is, that he might as well try what he can to get them out of his head.

It’s not working though, it’s just not.

And he watches the crowd dance with mild fascination, very mild but with a lot of criticism, because no one in this place can even compare to Jimin when he dances. It’s his third drink, after the two shots they’ve had as soon as they got here. And he’s not even feeling them. He used to get drunk so often that his tolerance is stupidly high and he has to drink liquors straight to get a little fuzzy.

He clutches his hand tighter around his glass, and looks around. To his right, Seokjin and Namjoon seem to have fun talking with the waitress. They’re weird, the both of them. So drastically different. He’s only known Namjoon for a week, but he sees how he is, rough around the edges and closed tight. Yet they look so comfortable around each other, the rich student and the broke kid. Yoongi is glad Seokjin found a friend like him. He knows just how lonely he became when he came back from China.

Seokjin leans in Namjoon’s space, tells him something before goes to Yoongi, sits next to him on a stool.

“You looked bored. Or preoccupied,” he starts, and he’s not wrong. “We can go, if you want.”

Yoongi shakes his head. “I don’t wanna ruin the fun.”

Seokjin laughs, lightly. He was a cute kid, and he grew up even prettier.

“Tuesdays are usually boring, Yoongi. Don’t worry about it. Namjoon just wanted to grab a beer after work, and we somehow ended here instead. I don’t think he wants to stay for long either. Something’s telling me it’s not just this place though, that makes you like that.”

Yoongi sighs, goes through the rest of his glass in one long swallow. His brain reruns the messages Taehyung and he have been sending each other yesterday and even earlier today. Messages that were so subtly about Jimin that it kept screaming to Yoongi’s face how much sex they’ve had. And the images are stuck there, and they flash in vivid colors whenever he thinks of either one of them. It doesn’t hurt. It’s just, torture.
“If it’s still about the doubt thing you talked about last week, then I think that with how you’re acting today, you should have your answer.”

He turns to Seokjin, waiting for what’s after. He slowly sips on his own drink, like he’s unsure. He doesn’t really know what Yoongi is doubting about, because he hasn’t been told the whole story. But Yoongi wouldn’t be surprised if he’d have a feeling about it. He’s highly perceptive, always been.

“You’ll forget easily about something you don’t truly want, Yoongi. That’s all I can say.”

Δ

People give them a weird look when, after the first break, Jimin takes his stuff and goes to sit next to Taehyung.

And truthfully, Taehyung gives him a weird look, too.

“What are you doing?” he asks him, when he drops his backpack on the desk. Jimin stares him down, grabs his things and tries to go back. “What the fuck.” Taehyung manages to snatch the back of his bag, forcing him to stop.

“So you want me to go or not?”

“Moody morning, I see. Sit your ass.”

“I can go if you want.”

“Jimin, sit your ass on this chair.”

Taehyung is being looked at with narrowed eyes for a little longer, before Jimin finally sets on settling next to him, immediately dropping his head on the desk.

“I didn’t fucking sleep,” he mutters.

Taehyung sits back, pen gliding on his sheet in confused patterns.

“Why? What were you doing?”

“Hoseok and his girlfriend,” he starts, turning his head towards Taehyung and pausing, like he’s weighing the words he’s about to say. “They have this annoying tendency to pick fights at fucking midnight.” Taehyung hums, still half focused on his scribbling. “And then, most of the time she’ll lock herself up in his room and they’ll be ridiculous for an hour or so, but yesterday, she fucking locked him outside his apartment when he went for a walk to calm things down.”

“She seems nice.”

“She is nice, and really smart, but I don’t know why she does that. Then he kept me on my phone to text me how things were going, and when at 3am she still wouldn’t let him in, I just told him to come at home.”

Taehyung shakes his head in disbelief. He’s heard of Jimin’s best friend, more than once. He can vaguely pinpoint the type of character he has, but this, this doesn’t make sense at all for him.
“And obviously when he got home he wanted to scream and punch every painting in the corridors, so we stayed up so he could talk it out. So I slept like, an hour.”

“Mhm. Why is he still with her?”

“He loves her.”

*Love has people make weird decisions.* But from Jimin’s tone, he doesn’t seem to think it’s healthy at all neither. The professor slowly takes his place back in front of the class, and Jimin straightens, rubbing his eyes with the heels of his palms that he covered with his sleeves. The turtleneck he’s wearing is giving him such a soft, peaceful vibe and without thinking too much, Taehyung reaches to run a hand from the back on his head to the space between his shoulder blades.

“That was nice of you, to help him like that.” Jimin groans in response, but the tension he was carrying around seems to dissipate, and he calmly flips the pages of his notebook.

“You said you were gonna study with me for next week’s test.”

“When do you wanna do that?”

“Tomorrow? I can’t tonight, and my father needs me for some stuff this weekend.”

Taehyung agrees, and when he gets home, after he’s changed and petted Cannelle on the balcony with a Marlboro tight between his lips, he starts studying. Because he knows very well they might not end up doing that tomorrow.

Δ

He lightly taps on the keypad, the four digits unlocking the house’s door with a click.

He’s given up.

Seokjin’s words kept replaying in his head until he cracked, until he accepted them as true. Because they are.

The jitters mixed with the longing he feels whenever he thinks of Jimin would’ve faded, even just the slightest, after having kept his distance for over a week. But it didn’t. His thoughts wouldn’t still wander to him so often, if it was just the novelty of the feeling that kept him hooked.

And Taehyung, Taehyung never fades. No matter how hard he tries to look away.

“Yoongi?” she asks from further in the house, she’s probably reading, sitting near the bay window.

“Yes, mom.”

“You’ll be here for dinner tonight, right?”

He places his shoes carefully in the shoe rack. Everything is so immaculate in here and he doesn’t like it, and it’s not just because he’s constantly scared of dirtying something, but because he knows that it’s his mother’s way of coping with boredom and loneliness.

“Yes, but I’m probably going out after that.”
“Okay!” she chirps, and it rings something bad in his ears.

“I’ll go take a shower and then I’ll come back down. I’ll help you cook if you want.”

She answers with the same broken, joyful tone and he takes his things, slackens his tie and goes up the stairs. And when he empties his pockets on his nightstand, that he drops on there his car keys and a few crumpled sticky notes with bribes of sentences scribbled on them and that the view of his wallet reminds him of Jimin in an almost brutal way, he doesn’t think about it, he just does it.

You: can we meet later?

27-04-2016, 18:52

It’s fine, if that makes of him an irresponsible piece of shit. It’s fine, because right now, that’s the only thing he wants. See Jimin.

Δ

Jimin bends, hands on his knees, chest heaving fast. His hair is starting to get just a little sticky, and he wasn’t here for this.

“Why are you making me sweat like that?” he pants and Jungkook snickers in the background.

“Why did you even come with the thought that you wouldn’t sweat, hyung?”

“Because you told me you just needed help with little details, not the whole thing, fucking fuck.”

Jungkook unscrews his bottle cap and Jimin doesn’t see him, but he knows his grin is taking half his face.

“I should have asked Jinyoung to stay,” Jimin grumbles.

“Jinyoung hyung isn’t as good a teacher as you are.”

Jimin straightens, squints at Jungkook through the mirror.

“My turtleneck, Jungkook. I can’t take it off. It’s fucking hot in this.”

“No one’s stopping you from practicing naked.”

Oh. Jimin can’t help but smile back when Jungkook grins at him, turning to him and slowly walking his way.

“Yeah?” and he grabs the bottom hem of his sweater, slowly pulling it upwards.

Jungkook averts his eyes, and takes another sip. “Never mind. Hyung stop.”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought.”
He drops the fabric, drags a hand through his hair and goes through the room to take a look at his phone.

**Yoongi hyung:** can we meet later?

27-04-2016, 18:52

He stills, surprised. Jitters fill his stomach and his heart, that was finally calming down, kicks up in pace again. *Why today of all days.*

**You:** ah, im at the studio

27-04-2016, 19:22

**You:** i’ll still be here for while

27-04-2016, 19:22

He puts his phone back on the wooden floor and it vibrates nearly immediately, making an absurd amount of noise in the quiet room.

“What the fuck,” Jungkook mutters, getting closer to the stereo.

**Yoongi hyung:** it’s fine, i can meet you there if you want

27-04-2016, 19:22

His chest gets a little tighter with nervousness. But it’s a good kind. It’s different than the one he feels with Taehyung, but it’s just as good. The pull is just as strong.

**You:** sure, if youre down for it

27-04-2016, 19:23

And now, weirdly, Jimin is kind of grateful that Hoseok had to work later than usual and that Jungkook and he have been left alone. Things might not be as awkward, if it’s just him around.

**Yoongi hyung:** let me know when you’re ready
Jimin really tried not to let it get to him. Really tried to stop looking at the clock that’s perched above the doorframe. But as Drake’s song loops for the umpteenth time and that Jungkook gets into position, he’s too full of apprehension and adrenalin to even try to stop his thoughts from rolling about Yoongi seeing him dance on it.

He barely hears it, the click of the door. But it’s like something has gripped his gut and his skin is suddenly prickling, blood rushing and making him even hotter. Jungkook has noticed him in the doorframe but he doesn’t stop. Jimin has also noticed but he doesn’t stop either, and they let him watch as they go through the routine.

And even after they’re done, and that Jimin is flushed all over, his breathing a little too dry in his throat, he’s still on such a high, that all he can do is walk in small circles to try to center himself.

He only manages to look at Yoongi once Jungkook is busy with the stereo, unplugging his phone and turning it off, and the sound of Yoongi juggling his keys as he walks into the room has him wired all over again.

“Hyung, I’m leaving it to you to lock?”

“Yeah,” Jimin breathes, and he likes the way Jungkook’s voice tells just how intimated he feels. Yoongi has this aura, most of the time, when he oozes dominance. And Jimin likes it.

The door clicks shut behind Jungkook.

“It’s been a while,” Yoongi says, voice low. And really, it’s only been a couple of days and they never really stopped texting, but it felt longer than that to Jimin, too. “Jungkook seems to have left in a rush, did I get here too early?”

Jimin glances at the clock. It takes him an abnormally long time to finally read it. 8:49. It’s a little early, granted. Ten minutes. But he couldn’t care less. The only thing on his mind, is kissing Yoongi. So he does just that.

Yoongi always deals well with how much eagerness he puts on him, and when Jimin’s arm latch around his neck, his hands find their way to his waist. Easy. No hesitation.

He’s been craving this without even realizing it, Yoongi’s palms on his body, his skin, his lips. When
their tongues brush, he shivers, and he brings himself even closer, wants no space to be left between
them. Yoongi speaks through his gestures more than with his words, and the way he rushes his air
out and the way his fingers tighten into the fabric of his turtle neck tell Jimin a lot. Of course he had
doubts for a while, wondered if he was reading too much into everything, into Yoongi’s eyes and the
way he acted. But it’s all gone now, reassurance lies in this. It lies into the air they share and into the
way they ignite each other.

Inside his chest, it’s a mess, and his brain is not much better but through this he understands,
somehow, why Yoongi and Taehyung fit so well. And he worries if there’s a place for him in this.

Because he wants it.

He lets his fingers trail down Yoongi’s chest and stomach, until they reach his jeans, where he starts
fiddling with the button. It sounds silly, here, in the studio. But he wants this, too.

Yoongi’s hand wraps around his, stopping him.

“Hyung,”

“As much as I want this, I really just meant for us to go somewhere tonight.”

Jimin swallows, tries to regulate his breathing. He’s surprised but not vexed, he can’t feel any biting
rejection in the way Yoongi is acting.

“Where?” he asks, looking down at his hand that Yoongi won’t let go.

“Wherever you want. I just want us to spend time together.”

“I thought a bar was too much, so I hope you like coffee,” Jimin pushes the door of the café, holding
it for Yoongi to come in.

“I do,” Yoongi gives him a soft smile, he looks tired.

“Even past nine?”

“Even at 3am.”

Jimin chose a place he likes a lot, where he can’t come as often as he’d like, because it’s fancier,
more expensive, and Hoseok doesn’t like when Jimin pays for him.

Yoongi orders an americano, Jimin a decaf latte, because there’s class tomorrow, and he doesn’t
want to bounce up the walls until 2am. He adds a bit of sugar, and he doesn’t know why he’s so
scared of things turning awkward, he’s apprehensive of hollow silences and small talk black holes, of
the Taehyung conversation they seem to avoid so much. After all, they’ve only had slivers of time
just the two of them.

But there’re no gaps. And the clumsiness of first conversations is there, but the warmth around them
compensates.

“You seem to be at the studio often,” Yoongi comments, leaned on the small, round table, hand loose
around his cup.
“Once or twice a week, it depends. I just went today because Jungkook needed help.”

“Mhm. He looks like a nice kid.”

“He’s a spoiled brat,” Jimin smiles and Yoongi does, too. He’s always been secretly jealous of Jungkook’s ability at charming literally anyone by doing absolutely nothing.

And the more Yoongi shows interests in his dancing, and in him in general, the more confident Jimin becomes. About everything. And the more the kind of guilt he had facing Taehyung becomes something close to hope.

Jimin keeps glancing at Yoongi’s hand that’s resting on the table. He wants to reach, have their fingers laced together. But Yoongi shows no tendencies for affectionate gestures in public, and he understands. He’ll have to wait a bit longer, for them to grow comfortable enough.

And he’s fine with that.

“Yeah, I’m closing tonight, so I should be there before 11,” Hoseok says, phone tight in his palm. Jimin makes eye contact with Namjoon, and he can see that he, too, feels that something isn’t right. “I love you,” Hoseok adds before hanging up and Jimin nearly flinches.

There’s something in his tone, the words seem so painful to say. Namjoon clears his throat, pushes himself away from the tank and walks around calmly, lighting a cigarette and lazily placing it between his lips.

Eunji still making sure about Hoseok’s working schedule is weird, when he’s had the same for over a year and that even Namjoon and Jungkook know it by heart.

“You want one?” Namjoon presents the whole pack to him, and he knows Hoseok has been trying to stop for months, but that’s probably his way to try to soothe him. Hoseok takes one without much hesitation.

Tae: when will you be here

28-04-2016, 13:39

Tae: cannelle cant wait to see you

28-04-2016, 13:41

You: thats mean

28-04-2016, 13:43
“Thanks,” Hoseok gives him a smile, fingers closing around it nimbly, an old habit. Jimin wants to be upset about that easy relapse, but he guesses, as he exhales his own smoke, that he should just shut it. “I wanna hold that party soon. I was thinking about late May, maybe.”

**Tae:** wheres my answer in that

28-04-2016, 13:44

**You:** wheres your politeness

28-04-2016, 13:44

**You:** hyung works at 3 so a little after that

28-04-2016, 13:44

“Namjoon, you’ll come, right?”

Jimin looks at Namjoon take a long pull, his blond hair falling in his eyes, his hood heavy on his head. He’s most of the time quiet, but Jimin knows that he hides in there an acute intelligence of the people and his surroundings. And solely for that, Jimin trusts him, and his way of handling things.

“Sure, yeah. Just tell me when.”

**Tae:** aight, i’ll cook something

28-04-2016, 13:45

“You too?” Hoseok turns to Jimin, hopeful, but he’s not really looking for an answer. He’s either filling space he feels like he needs to fill, or trying to find safety in confirmation. So Jimin tells him he will, once again. “You can bring Taehyung too, if you want. Or Yoongi. Or both. Yeah about that, we never got to talk about why you stopped answering me Sunday night.”

Namjoon swiftly turns to them, looking between the two, and Jimin’s stomach flips, his chest suddenly feeling so full and he feels stupid for wanting to smile so wide.

Hoseok stares at him until he cracks up and laugh, appeasing the atmosphere.

“Ah,” he sighs, “you’re so cute. Tell me.”

“Tell us,” Namjoon adds, “I don’t know what this is about, but tell us.”

Jimin does, without covering every little detail, but he does. And when he’s done, they fall in a thought-filled silence that he finds comforting. Validating.

“It’s been a fucking while since I’ve had sex with a dude,” Hoseok whispers, throwing his cigarette
butt on the ground. “It’s been a while since I’ve had sex, period. But that’s beside the point.”

Namjoon laughs lightly at this, head falling forward, and Hoseok stares, affronted. But he complies, when Namjoon reaches for a fist bump.

“What was that for?” he asks when Namjoon walks away, pulling on his second cigarette.

“Nothing, it’s all good. I love you, man. Don’t forget that.”

Jimin is pretty sure he knows what Namjoon meant. But he’s not going to be the one telling Hoseok.

Not yet.
They’re late,” Yoongi mutters, looking at his phone again.

He feels sort of ridiculous, standing here, right in front of this club he wanted so badly to leave a few days ago. But Seokjin managed to convince him again, saying it might help him take his mind off things, although Yoongi doesn’t need it anymore. He knows what he wants.

He decided to follow along because he knows that Jimin and Taehyung are busy on their own, and that he, all things considered, appreciates Seokjin and Namjoon’s company.

You: hyung where are you
29-04-2016, 23:11

Seokjin hyung: He’s driving, it’s Namjoon.
29-04-2016, 23:12

Seokjin hyung: Sorry it’s taking us longer, we had to make a quick stop somewhere.
29-04-2016, 23:12

Seokjin hyung: We should be there in like, max. 10 minutes.
29-04-2016, 23:12

He closes his eyes and seriously considers going back to wait in his car.

He lights up a cigarette, freezes mid-drag when a guy screams on his left, and he breathes out a frustrated sigh. He hopes that this time, they’ll be able to find seated places that aren’t as close to the bar and to the dancefloor, so that they can actually talk and hear each other properly.

Yoongi looks around, observes people, and remembers, yet again, why he never cared for them all that much. They’re mostly duplicates, generic with sometimes blond hair, sometimes a fake nose, often the same behaviors. And it’s a little ironic, that he used to pride himself in being different, but that tonight, after he’s traded his trousers for his ripped jeans, he can’t really say that anymore. He jumped right into the mold, when he left for America. The schedule, the paperwork. He never liked them, probably never will. Commitment. It’s what has him going still.

“Hey,”” Seokjin’s warm voice comes first, behind him.
Then a firm pat on his shoulder. Namjoon.

“Hey,” comes another voice, and Yoongi hasn’t fully turned yet but his gut squeezes when he hears it.

Jimin, looking as sinful as ever, is somehow with them. Yoongi doubts that this is a good idea. There’s a dancefloor in there.

“I offered him to come last minute, I hope you don’t mind?” Seokjin says, visibly aware of the tension.

Yoongi takes a drag, shakes his head, and takes a couple of steps to throw his butt in the trashcan. Of course he doesn’t.

And when Namjoon leads them inside, Yoongi keeps Jimin at his side, a little behind.

“Weren’t you busy on Fridays?” Jimin looks at him, lips curved up at the corners. And he must know, how good he looks. It’s not even May yet but he’s foregone the jacket, wearing his loose black shirt with a too-wide collar that bares his collarbones and a part of his shoulder and Yoongi can’t stop peeking, can’t stop thinking about how soft his skin looks. “Dance practice?”

“Yeah, but it’s almost midnight, hyung, the thing is over.”

Yoongi should have known better. He should have known and prepared himself for what he knew was bound to happen the moment he saw Jimin with Seokjin, but decided to assume it wasn’t going to be too bad.

He was wrong.

Seokjin and Namjoon, after the first drink, fled. He can still see them in the back of the club, talking to some dude. But they left him with Jimin. And Jimin loves dancing, Jimin wanted to go dance. He didn’t care for a drink. And Yoongi just can’t dance.

So he’s sitting on this fucking stool, sipping on his second bland drink, watching Jimin on the dancefloor. And Jimin and he have been pretty tamed until now, even that night at the studio. Jimin has always been careful around him, in a way he isn’t with Taehyung. He’s more self-conscious and blinded with a kind of fascination that blinds Yoongi too. But right now, he’s being far from vigilant.

He’s got his hands on this girl’s hips, but he’s not fooling Yoongi. Yes, she dances well. Yes, she’s pretty and seems nice.

But it’s Yoongi he’s looking at, when their hips roll together.

It’s Yoongi he’s looking at, when the girl talks close to his ear, the flashing light making them move in chopped motions.

And it’s Yoongi he’s looking at, when she tries to slip a hand up his shirt and that he grabs her wrist to stop her.

Yoongi doesn’t look away. There’s no need to. They both know what game they’re playing. The thing is that, right now, Yoongi doesn’t think of losing to Jimin as failure.
Eventually, the girl grows bored of Jimin’s lack of response and she finds someone else to dance with. But she’s quickly replaced, and again, and even when he’s on his own, eyes closed and focused on the bass shaking the place, it shows, that he knows exactly what he’s doing.

Yoongi watches, like hypnotized, and the whole crowd around him is forgotten. That girl sitting next to him that tried initiating a conversation, and that shooter girl who keeps coming to him. He watches, he’s patient.

Until when another song rolls in, that’s a guy that grabs Jimin’s hips, instead. And it has nothing to do with his dance partner being a guy, it has to do with how pliant Jimin becomes when someone takes the lead, how he responds to it. It has Yoongi groaning, fingers tightening around his glass.

The man, much taller, guides him and Jimin follows, no matter how different it is from his usual rhythm. It’s like he so easily switches, so easily accommodates.

The snap happens when Jimin, lip-syncing the song’s lyrics, rolls his head back against the guy’s shoulder, and gives his back just the slightest arch. And the way he looks at him, hooded eyes behind dark strands, makes Yoongi chug down his drink and stand up, diving in the crowd.

The way Jimin reacts almost makes him delirious, how his gaze won’t leave him, even when he’s dancing with someone else, even if he’s being touched by someone else. He stares at him the whole time Yoongi snakes through the bodies, sweat matting his hair, smudging his eyeliner. He anticipates him, waiting. Yoongi likes it.

When Yoongi gets to him, he doesn’t stop walking, but his hand tries to reach for Jimin’s. And when Jimin steps away from the other guy like he’s stopped existing in this space between the two of them, when he laces his fingers with Yoongi’s and follows, Yoongi decides that it’s worth it, to try.

He’s failed, and it’s satisfying.

This place, this situation, they make memories of Taehyung resurface, and Yoongi doesn’t know if he’s supposed to let them flow, or if he’s supposed to push them away.

A bathroom stall in a club is not the place he would have chosen to make out with Jimin, but here they are, the metallic door closing behind them, and being locked. Jimin doesn’t seem to mind, doesn’t seem fazed by how things are turning, like he was expecting the them to end up like that.

There’s nothing said, just Yoongi’s hands cupping Jimin’s face and he kisses him, backing him up against the surface. Jimin gives a content sigh against his lips, his skin warm under his. Yoongi doesn’t remember the last time it felt so good to surrender.

There’s a lot of movement outside the stall, people coming and going, loud laughs and the echo of the music that’s still blasting for everyone on the dancefloor. They got lucky enough that no one seemed to have noticed or minded them getting in this cramped space together.

Jimin’s fingers knot in the fabric of his shirt and he pulls him closer, enough that he can feel his body moving with every stretch of his lungs. Yoongi’s traces his jaw, glides his palms down his throat, to rest just lightly on his shoulders. He’d want to map his body, and commit it to memory like he knows he should. Jimin is a new part of his life, one that he wants to keep, and he wants to do things properly. Here, is not the place for that.
Jimin lets out a weak whine when Yoongi deepens the kiss, and it’s easy to see, how he’s letting himself slip into this, how he started a fire that he knows he’s now stuck in, and that he’s willing to feel its burn. The first roll of his hips, just on the edge of shy, makes Yoongi’s breath catch, and his thoughts stall.

He pulls back, and his eyes fall into his. The poor lighting of the room doesn’t allow him to take in as much as he’d like to, but what he can see, is enough to have him prickle with lust.

The colors on Jimin’s cheek, his soft lips.
The way his irises are drowning in pupils, and how wanting he looks, while still exuding such softness.
The column of his throat, unmarred and inviting, and that stupid t-shirt that sinks so low on his chest.

And really, it comes out effortlessly.

“I think I really like you.”

Given the circumstances, it probably wasn’t the best idea to throw those words just like that. But he felt them wanting to rush out, so he said them. And he expects no answer. He knows that Jimin is swaying between him and Taehyung, he doesn’t want to push or pull him somewhere he doesn’t want to go.

Jimin’s gaze searches him, gauges him. He stares, his fists still full of his shirt, until he looks down at Yoongi’s lips, then up again.

They come crashing violently, with more teeth and less breathing. The metal of the door complains a bit under their weight but they’re probably the only ones hearing it, everything is still too loud, for the rest of the world. He encloses Jimin in the space between his two forearms that he has resting on the surface beside his head, breaking the kiss and opting for nipping just under his jaw, and down his neck. Jimin gives him an appreciative noise and tilts his head to the side, his hands making a slow descent to the button of Yoongi’s jeans.

That unsettles him but he lets him, lets him open them up just to switch to his own after that. His brain catches on, then, where Jimin is taking them. But by the time he reacts, Jimin is already shifting against him and fiddling to fish something that’s in his pocket.

He just barely hears the crinkle of the wrapper but his body responds, hips pushing against Jimin.

“Is here really okay?” he asks him when the wrapper is being held against his chest for him to take. And he’s doubting. He wants this. But that’s just not how he was imagining it would go.

“Yeah,”

“I mean—”

“I’ve got a plug in, hyung, I want this.”

And that cuts him off.

“Did you plan this?” he almost croaks it out. His body feels hot, the air is becoming hard to breathe.

Jimin smirks.

“Do you think that I don’t know what I’m doing?”
He’s fucking dangerous.

Yoongi growls, pressing their lips together again as he fiddles blindly with the wrapper to tear it open, his palms too sweaty, frustratingly ineffective. Jimin’s hands find their way to his jeans again, and he lets him drag them lower on his hips, just enough to free him. Jimin is doing the same with his own jeans, bringing them just under the curve of his ass as Yoongi rolls the condom on.

He makes him turn, flattens Jimin front to the back of the door. Images of Taehyung come back again, images of that time at the meeting, the first time they saw each other after he came back. But he doesn’t try to suppress them, instead he uses them to fuel himself.

He nuzzles his nose just behind his ear, litters small kisses and Jimin arches against him, pushing his ass against Yoongi’s cock.

There’s a flicker inside of him, that makes him want to go fast, that makes him want to grip and take and take and take. Anticipation that’s hard to manage, in a place where sex is usually rushed.

“Hyung,” Jimin breathes, quiet, and that makes Yoongi snap out of it.

“Yeah?” he whispers against his throat, both his hands kneading at the skin of his waist.

“Take it out.”

Yoongi smiles, licks a stripe from his shoulder to his jaw. He wants to suckle the skin, make it bloom with colors, but he’s not ready to put Jimin in trouble for that. So he refrains himself.

“Let me take my time, will you?”

He feels Jimin shiver against him, his head falling back. Yoongi wants to learn him whole. It’s been years since he’s felt like this, and he’s going to cherish it. He cant his hips against him, and Jimin pushes back, wanting more and he’s so responsive when Yoongi rubs his palm up his chest until it brushes his nipple, he must be so fun to tease.

“Hyung,”

“Mhm?”

Jimin reaches back, probably out of impatience, and he pulls the plug out, slowly, carefully, his breathing becoming more labored and Yoongi follows his moves of his eyes. The view of the blue toy being pulled out when he’s waiting, heavy, right next to it, makes his skin afire and he wraps a hand around himself.

When Jimin is done, Yoongi glues his front to his back, snaking an arm around him and holding him close, pausing to appreciate the warmth of Jimin’s skin against his, the perfect fit of their bodies, the smell of his cologne, subtle now, but so him. He breathes him in, teasing his cock around Jimin’s slick hole, fingers splayed on his stomach.

He lets Jimin whine and whimper for a little longer, teasing, and when he starts pushing inside, Jimin nearly drops against the door. Yoongi can feel more lube gushing out the deeper he goes, knows it dribbles down Jimin’s thighs and he chokes on a moan, forehead falling on Jimin’s shoulder. He stills, readjusts himself so he can move with more ease without having Jimin keep an uncomfortable position, and when he sees his hand scrambling on the dark surface, he envelops them with his, threading their fingers.

Jimin’s breath quivers when he moves, shallow thrusts at first, then slow and deep. The restroom is
still buzzing with noises, drunk people and abused faucets and movements against the walls that makes them tense, but even with that, Yoongi knows he can’t go as hard as he would like, the sound of their skin slapping together too characteristic to go unnoticed. He pulls Jimin hips to his, keeping them away from the door so that it won’t squeak too much when they move and Jimin lets him, lets himself be guided and placed as Yoongi pleases. He brings their attached hands to his mouth, muffling his moans when Yoongi finds their rhythm.

Yoongi smiles when, after the slightest change of angle, Jimín’s body tenses, tightening around him.

“I—fuck, hyung,”

Yoongi makes him turn his head to the side, kissing him, having his hand not tangled with Jimin’s going to dance on his stomach, then near the jut of his hip, digging in his pants to graze at the fleshy part of his thigh.

“How do you wanna come?” he breathes on Jimin’s neck, when he feels like his release is drawing closer.

Jimin pushes back against him weakly, struggling to keep his balance and Yoongi slows down, wondering for the briefest of moment if Jimin is thinking of Taehyung. He sees one of Jimin’s hands dropping in front of him to stroke his cock, and he stiffens momentarily, his lips parting around a moan Yoongi doesn’t hear.

“Are you close?” he asks, and Jimin nods, his hair plastered on his forehead with sweat, his ribcage moving jerkily when Yoongi picks up the pace.

He builds him up, thrusting into him faster and giving wet moans against his bared shoulder, and when Jimin comes, Yoongi lets him move on his own, fucking forward into his fist and then back onto him.

Yoongi expects to have to pull out, but Jimin, still in the haze of his orgasm, takes Yoongi’s index and makes it slip between his lips, sucking on it, hips rolling back in a silent way to ask him to go on. Arousal spreads through Yoongi like wildfire, urgent and ferocious and hot, just with the view of his lips stretching around his finger, coating them of his saliva. And it pushes him to fuck into him again until he comes, hips stuttering, brain fuzzy, eyes zeroed on Jimin’s mouth.

Yoongi swallows around his parched throat, breathing erratic, encircling his arm around Jimin to keep him up.

“You know, don’t you?” Jimin asks after a while, cheek resting on the surface. “About Taehyung.”

It doesn’t grip at Yoongi’s insides the way he thought it would. This is a weird place to talk about this, but he’ll take it. He owes Jimin that.

“I do,” he says, simply, carefully pulling out before he makes Jimin turn to him.

“Yet you still did that,” he leans back against the door, tucking himself back in, the dark blue silicone of the plug peeking out of his pocket.

“You still did that, too,” Yoongi throws the condom in the toilet before he flushes it, imitating Jimin and readjusting his pants. “Do you regret it?”

Jimin stares at him for a moment, gaze absent, and he reaches to Yoongi’s face, presses their lips together.
“No, I don’t.”

Yoongi nods, kisses him again. “Is there someone else?” And he, a little selfishly, hope there isn’t.

“Just you and him.”

Yoongi threads his fingers through Jimin’s hair. The air around them is still so dense and moist, and he feels warm inside, but it’s not because of that.

“Do you regret it? I mean, Taehyung and you seem—”

“No, Jimin, I don’t. I meant it when I said I like you.” Jimin smiles, it’s a sleepy smile, and it has fondness wrap around Yoongi’s heart like a blanket. “I’m not letting you go tonight, by the way. So I hope you know of a place where we can crash.”

Δ

The first thing Taehyung does when he opens his eyes is squint.

The ceiling above is white, a too-bright white with too-harsh lights, and that sends a sharp pain at the back of his eyeballs. He groans. His skull feels like it weighs a ton.

His head falls to the side and his blurry vision gradually becomes clearer, until he can distinguish the generic paintings on the wall and the dark coat that his father is wearing, as he’s talking on the phone and sitting in a chair next to the bed.

A hospital bed.

It sends fear to rise and run along his ribs, take him over and he sits up too quickly, making the monitor next to his bed beep more quickly. His mouth drops in a silent yelp when a sharp pain burns the hollow of his elbow; there’s a needle there, nestled into his arm and connected to a tube carrying clear liquid.

“Lay back, son.”

His father’s gravelly voice makes him go stiff, and he tries looking around, scrutinizing the room for someone. But except for his father and himself, it’s empty. He must be somewhere around, he assumes.

He looks at his father again, and stares, because he’s too tired to talk and his mouth feels like paper mashed in water.

“It’s January 2nd,” and Taehyung frowns at that, because he’s pretty sure that last time he was up, it was still his birthday. “Thank you for having me spend the New Year in a hospital with your stupidities.”

Taehyung swallows, and it feels like a thousand needle in his throat. He’s dizzy. He drops his head between his shoulders and closes his eyes, tries to breathe in deeply.

“He made you drink until you passed out, are you proud?” His father stands, stuffs his hands in the pockets of his trench-coat. “You’re always so eager to follow him around and do the stuff he does
and ruin your life like he does, are you proud, Taehyung?”

Taehyung keeps his head down and his eyelids shut. Not because the words hurt. They stopped hurting a long time ago. But because he’s tired of hearing them and he just wants this to be over, just wants Yoongi to get in here and twine their fingers together.

“And he left now. True to his useless self.”

Taehyung’s body jerks then, and air jumps out of his lungs in an airy laugh. Sure, dad.

His father takes a step and Taehyung remains unmoving, only lifting his head when his phone has been thrown beside his leg on the thin sheet and that the click of the door has been heard. He reaches with his arm that’s not attached to a machine, pressing lengthily on the power button when he realizes it’s off.

He’ll text Yoongi, and he’ll come find him.

That’s always how it is. They gravitate around each other like stars and planets, and Taehyung feels lost, disconnected, when they’re too far apart. And in their chatroom, a new message. A single one. Sent almost two days ago.

Hyung : im sorry

31-12-2014, 23:11
2.6 Our empty space and the way you fit right in

“Don’t know how I feel, hyung,” Jimin huffs, eyes fixated on the ceiling of his room.

“Fucked out, probably.”

Jimin lets his head fall to the side, looking at Hoseok who’s sitting not too far from him on the bed. He’s lying on his back, arms folded under his head, his pencil still in one of his hands. They were trying to study, using the little time they have before Jimin has to drive to another city to attend a dinner for the company. But he, expectedly, can’t focus.

“Are you angry?”

“Why would I be angry, Jimin?”

“Don’t know, you sound pissed.”

“I’m not pissed, I’m just,” Hoseok drops his own pen on his open notebook, drags a hand through his dark hair. “I’m lost, okay?”

Jimin swallows. Guilt creeps up his chest, makes his throat feel tight.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry, Jiminnie, that’s not what I meant. I know that you like them both, but the whole thing seems messed up to me, and like, I can’t even give proper advice because I never saw you with any of them in that kind of context. The only cue I have is you being confused as fuck.”

Jimin tears his gaze away, sets it on the white ceiling again. When he squints, he can still see some of the glow-in-the-dark star stickers his mother put there when he was a kid.

“I know.”

“Seems to me that it became much more complicated than it should have been. Honestly.”

Jimin lets the conversation float, he knows Hoseok is not done talking. But he can’t find in himself the will to give any kind of acknowledgment of what he’s just said. He’s been lacking sleep a lot this week, and when they both are tired, they can start arguing for the stupidest things.

“Jimin,”

He doesn’t answer. He feels so out of place. He wants this conversation to be over.

“Jimin, look at me,” and he does. Hoseok’s expression has softened. “If,” and he pauses, searching for proper words. “If you feel like this is genuine, if you feel that both relationships are genuine and that you feel good in all of that, no matter how much I don’t like this whole thing, you should do what makes you happy. Don’t ask yourself too many questions. It’ll come together eventually,
okay?”

“But that’s cheating, right? I’m cheating on Taehyung.”

Hoseok sighs, leans back on the heels of his palms.

“Did you guys talk about it? Exclusivity and all that stuff.”

“No, we haven’t. But that’s how couples normally go.”

“Maybe that’s where your mistake is.”

Δ

Taehyung: hyung can you come over
30-04-2016, 16:32

Taehyung: i need to see you
30-04-2016, 16:34

It’s Cannelle that welcomes him this time, peeking out curiously from behind a wall when he opens the front door. Taehyung placed a key in Yoongi’s hand, one night. And they’ve stopped bothering about familiarities since then.

He finds him on the balcony, leaned on the railing and smoking, the last rays of the sun hitting his tired form. He slips next to him quietly, as not to disrupt anything. It’s been a while since they’ve had this kind of time together, silent, but filled with a sense of understanding.

Taehyung used to catch the quiet sometimes, when they were younger, just like this. Through his bubbliness, he had short episodes when he would only exist inside of himself, and Yoongi would hold his hand, would let him go wherever he wanted provided that he’d come back.

So today he does that, again. For the sake of the past, maybe. But he does lace their fingers together, and Taehyung responds like he used to, gaze consumed in the horizon, but his hand closing around his still.

Yoongi doesn’t know what happened for him to feel the need to escape in his monologues, and he doesn’t feel like he has the right to ask.

“I’ve stopped them,” Taehyung speaks, eventually. And somehow, Yoongi knows what he’s talking about. He saw the empty bottle on the shelf, in the bathroom. “I flushed them, one night. Never went to get them again.”

Yoongi hums. “Your father was okay with that?”
“Hyung,” Taehyung lets out a bitter laugh, one of those that he means like venom, like acid if he could spit it. “My father never genuinely cared about whatever I was doing, you know that. He stopped giving a fuck the moment I moved here, because pills or not, I wasn’t in his way anymore.”

His chest feels tight with something he can’t shake off. He wishes he knew how to take half of Taehyung’s invisible scars, and plaster them across himself instead. But that’d be something hypocrite to do, considering he carved him with one, with his own hands and his own absence.

Yoongi supposes that he deserves how misplaced he feels, right now. That he deserves the torture of wanting to come clean but being muted by the knowledge of how much damage it’d make.

_I left because I felt that it was the best I could do for you._

_I had sex with your boyfriend last night. I like him a lot._

_And I’m not over what we used to be._

When Taehyung kisses him, it’s startlingly sweet. But he knows it won’t last.

\[\Delta\]

**You:** what you doing

03-05-2016, 19:07

“I can leave, if you want to just, chill with him.”

“Hyung, I was the one calling you and asking you to come over.”

Yoongi doesn’t answer, stares a little when Taehyung grabs a beer in the fridge.

“Besides,” Taehyung continues, “my boyfriend and my best friend, they have to get along, right?”

Yoongi hums, sets his eyes back on his phone. Taehyung wonders how long he’ll have to pretend he doesn’t know that something is going on. Yoongi had such a different attitude, such a different energy, that day, on the balcony. And even that night, when they fucked.

**Jin:** im just out the shower, why

03-05-2016, 19:10

**You:** come here

03-05-2016, 19:10

**You:** we can watch stuff and you can sleep here
You: and we can wake up early tomorrow and study before class

Jimin: do you think im stupid

03-05-2016, 19:13

Jimin: “study before class” my ass

03-05-2016, 19:13

You: an amazing ass

03-05-2016, 19:13

You: now come here

03-05-2016, 19:14

“Are you telling him I’m here?” Yoongi asks, tone low, sitting at the dinner table. Taehyung still finds it weird, to see people there.

“No but I don’t think he’ll mind,” Taehyung takes a sip from his beer.

Jimin: did you eat

03-05-2016, 19:15

Jimin: because i did

03-05-2016, 19:15

You: its fine, just bring your stuff

03-05-2016, 19:15

Jimin is not surprised to see Yoongi, when he gets to the living room. Taehyung supposes that he
shouldn’t be surprised neither, that Yoongi has probably been fast enough to text Jimin, to warn him.

“Hey,” Jimin greets, and when Yoongi greets him back, Taehyung sees it again, the way they look at each other. “Can I go put that in your room?”

Taehyung nods, watching Jimin walking up the corridor and pulling his backpack off his shoulders.

They settle fairly easily on what to watch. Jimin takes place next to him, Yoongi on the other extremity when he could have taken the chair, like he usually does. The three of them on the same couch, this also tells Taehyung a lot. But it isn’t as awkward as he would’ve thought. Jimin doesn’t avoid his touch, Yoongi doesn’t avoid his eyes. And if he’s honest, it even feels good. It’s a sense of group he hadn’t felt in years, since Seokjin left, in fact.

He likes the way Jimin snickers to Yoongi’s passive aggressive comments on the series, likes the way he shrivels onto himself when he’s laughing too hard.

He likes how comfortable Yoongi seems to be, slouched in the cushions, likes the way he looks at he and Jimin when they’re talking to each other.

It’s peaceful. In this still frame of them, in those small moments, Taehyung doesn’t feel at war. He doesn’t feel stuck in those wide-awake nightmares he’s been walking through for a year now. And he thinks that Jimin makes Yoongi and him this way. Like he’s a dreamcatcher, his feathers like pendulums that put them to rest.

Taehyung drapes an arm around Jimin’s shoulder and Jimin lets himself being pulled in, just a little closer. It feels good.

But somehow, Taehyung wishes he was sitting in the middle.

He goes out to smoke, welcoming the warmer winds of May. He can hear them talk through the mesh door and through the low buzzing of the streets around.

The way they interact with each other is soft, not totally relaxed, but certainly not as reserved as it used to be. It’s interesting how calm Yoongi is, like he puts his defenses down around him. Jimin looks down often when he smiles, Yoongi makes him blush.

And they make Taehyung curious.

“Hyung, do you want something to drink?” Jimin asks from the kitchen, when Yoongi is already standing and slowly gathering his belongings.

“Thanks, Jimin, but I gotta go,” and he passes in front of Taehyung who’s still sitting, bending and grabbing his collar, pulling him in for a quiet kiss and Taehyung melts into it. “It’s getting late.”

“Tae?”

“Whatever you drink, I’ll drink,” he answers, following Yoongi to the front door.
“It’s your fridge, Tae.”

“Still doesn’t change my answer.”

Yoongi smiles, it’s a little mischievous. Jimin peeks from the kitchen, an empty glass in hand, and the look he gives Yoongi has Taehyung’s chest tightening.

“Good night, hyung.”

“Good night.”

The door is closed and Taehyung feels confused. They’re going to meet a wall, and he’s scared of the way it will all collapse.

“So beer or juice?”

“So Vodka. Vodka would be great.”

Δ

You: im sorry if it was awkward
03-05-2016, 23:33

Jimin hears Taehyung coo at Cannelle in the background, the maracas-like sound of her food container resounding in the apartment. He chuckles fondly.

Yoongi hyung: it wasnt, dont worry
03-05-2016, 23:35

Yoongi hyung: you did great
03-05-2016, 23:35

Jimin stares at the message for a while, unsure what to say. He’s feeling stuck.

Yoongi hyung: im sorry for putting you through that
03-05-2016, 23:39

You: youre not putting me through anything
“Jimin?”
“Yeah?”
“I’m going to take a shower.”
“Okay.”

Yoongi hyung: still, its kind of a shitty situation

You: complicated

You: would be more it

“Jimin?”
“Mhm?”
“Are you taking a shower with me?”

He breathes out a laugh. He stands from the couch, put his phone in his pocket.

“Yeah, I’m coming.”

He wakes up to a weight on his stomach, and the warmth of skin against the inside of his thighs.

“Good morning, babe.”

Jimin frowns, lifts his head to meet Taehyung’s sleepy eyes.

“So, in what year did the first paid advertising appear on American commercial television?”
He cocks his head to the side, propping himself up on his elbows.

“What?”

“In *what year* did the first paid advertising appear on American commercial television?”

He stares for a bit, until he finally notices the sheets that Taehyung is holding.

“Kim Taehyung.”

“Wrong answer.”

“Kim Taehyung, you can’t just be resting between my legs like that at,” he turns his head to the side, looks at the clock on the nightstand, “7:34 to ask me school-related stuff.”

“I said we’d study, class is in three hours.”

“You weren’t serious.”

“I apparently was. Okay, come on, I’m still waiting for that answer.”

Jimin remains stock still, confused, his brain too foggy.

“1941.”

“Good,” Taehyung gives him a tired smile, and dips in to press a moist kiss, near the jut of his hipbone and Jimin shivers.

“Ah—What the fuck, Tae.”

“Are you good enough to tell me the exact date?”

He swallows.

“July 1rst.”

“Good,” and he dips in again, pressing his lips a little lower, a little longer, with just a soft press of tongue.

Jimin groans, cant his hips up on reflex. He was already hard when he woke up, but this, this doesn’t help him focus at all.

“How the fuck do you expect me to study when you do that?”

Taehyung hums playfully, kisses his way up to his navel.

“I didn’t say we’d just study.”

“That’s wild.”

Jimin makes a low noise at the back of his throat. He knows he’s a bit flushed, can feel the heat in his
cheeks, but it’s a little hard to react otherwise, with what he just retold Hoseok. He seems to be better, these last couple of days.

The bell of the café’s door rings as it opens, and they both turn to it instinctively.

“Hyung,” Hoseok beams when Seokjin lazily walks to them with a soft smile. They exchange a brief hug, Jimin thinks they don’t see each other often enough. “Is it noon already?”

“Minus ten, because I’m a good employee,” he winks, and Jimin melts.

They talk for a few minutes, trying to catch up, and Jimin zones out, looking around. This is a nice place. The dark walls, dim lighting, solid wood chairs and tables. The place isn’t small, but it’s intimate.

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**You**: hyung
05-05-2016, 11:47

**You**: there’s a place I like a lot
05-05-2016, 11:47

**You**: we should come together some time
05-05-2016, 11:48

**Yoongi hyung**: yeah? where is it
05-05-2016, 11:51

**You**: the café where Seokjin hyung works
05-05-2016, 11:51

**Yoongi hyung**: ah yes
05-05-2016, 11:51

**Yoongi hyung**: i already went
05-05-2016, 11:52

**Yoongi hyung**: it’s a nice place, coffee’s not bad
05-05-2016, 11:52

**Yoongi hyung**: we can go soon, if you wanna
“I need to go,” Seokjin announces, “but you’ll still be here for a while, right?”

“We should, I’m working in like, three hours.”

“Good,” he stuffs his hands in the pockets of his jeans, takes the first couple steps towards the counter. “Then I’ll see you later.”

You: yeah

05-05-2016, 11:54

You: maybe tomorrow night after dance practice?

05-05-2016, 11:54

“We don’t see each other often enough,” Hoseok sighs, wrapping a hand around his cup.

“You’re both busy with uni and work, I think it’s normal.”

Yoongi hyung: deal

05-05-2016, 11:55

“Maybe. Still can’t wait for summer break.” And Jimin is reminded that it’s a thing, summer break. But he, weirdly, can’t think that far. “So anyway, back to your mess.”

“Mhm.”

“What makes you think that?”

“Think what?”

“That they’re fucking.”

It’s hard to put into words, really. But he’s been acutely aware of it since the beginning, of that possibility. And no matter their official “best friends” status, Jimin sees it, the glint in Taehyung’s eyes when he looks at Yoongi, the dancing flame that Yoongi returns, and that despite the warmth, makes Jimin shiver with desire.

“They just, ooze it,” he breathes, pensive in the way he talks. “It’s hard to explain, I guess. But when I stand between them, I feel it, that there’s a lot of self-control around me. I don’t know if that makes sense.”

“More or less.”
“There’s tension, between them. And it’s … strong. I doubt it’s just friendship.”

“So fuck buddies.”

“Probably.”

“Fuck buddies even to this day.”

“Probably.”

A loud laugh erupts from the kitchen, followed by sounds of rushed steps and Seokjin yelling *Namjoon-ah* and startling the whole café. Hoseok watches over with a fond smile, and swallowing a little of his drink.

“And it doesn’t bother you?” he continues.

Jimin takes longer, this time. But it’s not because he doubts his answer, he just gets lost in the meaning of it.

“No, it doesn’t. It doesn’t feel intrusive to me.” Hoseok nods, waiting. Jimin is grateful that he’s so open, today. “It feels more like something I wanna see, to be honest.”

“Mhm, I see where you’re going with that, Park Jimin. Don’t hurt yourself.”

“I know, hyung.”

“And Taehyung will have to know.”

“I know.”

“Like, soon.”

“I know. Fucking hell.”

“Now,” he hovers over the table, getting closer, his voice dropping in volume. “Tell me.”

“That’s scary.”

“Who’s a better fuck?”

“Hyung,” he tries to look horrified, but he can’t stop his lips from curving up.

“For science.”

“What the fuck?”

“I’m curious.”

“Hyung,” he leans forward too, making their faces only inches apart. “Do you plan on stealing one of my boyfriends?”

“As if. Come on, I’ll have you tell me one way or another.”

And Jimin knows that it’s not really the case, that he’d leave it alone if Jimin truly was reluctant to tell him. But somehow, the way he acts reminds Jimin of his younger self, when they were more carefree, and that they’d tell each other absolutely everything, without censuring anything.
“Mhm,” he smiles, cocks his head to the side. “I can’t really answer that. They’re both good.”

“Boring.”

“I can tell you this though. Yoongi has the girth, Taehyung has the hips.”

Hoseok straightens abruptly, ready to say something when Namjoon plops down next to him, making him jump.

“I heard girth and hips and I don’t wanna know.“

Δ

The back of Yoongi’s calves hit the edge of his bed, and he finds purchase on Taehyung’s t-shirt, trying to keep himself from falling, his air getting stuck in his throat when his chin is tilted up a little roughly.

“You’re still going on there, hyung.”

And Taehyung throws him on the bed.

Yoongi wants to click his tongue, wants to retort, but the way Taehyung looks at him, ablaze and pupils drowned in lust, makes him shut up.

It’s not going to be gentle.

Taehyung passes his shirt over his head, throws it to the ground, keeps Yoongi hooked to his gaze as he undoes his pants, slowly sliding them off. Yoongi does the same, hastily shrugging all his clothes off, growing impatient.

Taehyung takes his time though, crawling over him, biting the skin of his thighs, up to his hips, his stomach, licking a nipple before he kisses him. Yoongi rakes his nails down his back, almost clawing when Taehyung bites his lip harshly, and he tightens his thighs around his waist, pulling him down.

Taehyung rolls his hips down and Yoongi thrusts up against the warmth of his cock, and just when he slips a hand between their bodies, Yoongi’s cellphone vibrates where it landed on the sheets. He freezes up, the haze around them fissuring, and Taehyung pulls back, eyes diving in his.

Yoongi looks at him stretch, reaching for the device, sitting on his haunches and looking at it. The thought of it being Jimin sending him something Taehyung shouldn’t see has him hold his breath.

“Caitlyn texted you. Twice. Do you wanna know?”

He sighs, flooded with relief.

“No,” he breathes, “come back here.”
Yoongi likes being with the two of them. They bicker and swear at each other, but these glances they share means the complete opposite, it’s soft, caring. He likes the smiles they give each other. It’s appeasing, in some way.

He pads through the corridor, reaching Taehyung’s room, where he collects his keys. Taehyung and Yoongi have been together for the most part of 24 hours now, splitting only for Taehyung’s morning class. The feeling of coziness is starting to grow back between them, and it feels good, like things are taking back their original places.

And then there’s Jimin, and the way he makes him feel, and all those moments when he wonders if he’s the only one knowing the whole extent of the situation. If Jimin knows for him and Taehyung.

It will either unfold or collapse.

He pushes the thought away, feeling tight inside and uncomfortable, hand grasping at the keyring. He needs to leave, needs to get some things done for work before his date with Jimin, and it’s already getting late.

“I’m not letting you go to dance practice before you’ve eaten, young man,” Taehyung singsongs in the kitchen.

“I’m older than you.”

“With how you’re acting right now, I believe not.”

“I’m not hungry, Tae, it’s fine.”

Yoongi frowns. He never noticed that kind of speech from Jimin before.

“It’s currently,” and Taehyung pauses, probably looking at his phone, “7:03 and I know how much time it is from here to the studio. So don’t try telling me you’ll grab something on the way, I don’t believe you.”

“Tae,”

“And you told me you didn’t have lunch before coming, and refused to let me prepare you any kind of snack.”

Yoongi walks up the corridor, carefully, until he can see Taehyung’s back and Jimin glancing at him over Taehyung’s shoulder. His eyes are shiny, too shiny, his jaw looks tight.

“I don’t know who told you to that you were eating too much, Park Jimin, but I’ll personally shove food down your throat if I need to.”

Yoongi sees it, the exact moment when Jimin cracks.

“My ex-boyfriend told me that,” he spits, and the tone of his voice goes flat. “He thought I was eating too much. He also told me to stick to admin because my singing voice was shit, told me to stop talking about dance because it was useless and I was getting annoying, and made me feel bad when I used to go to the gym and would skip a day. Because he thought I was getting too soft in some places.”

The air in the room becomes glacial, frigid, Taehyung is frozen onto place, Yoongi can almost hear the way his heart sinks.
“Happy now? Is this what you wanted to hear?” And he’s not crying, he doesn’t really sound angry, he’s just standing there, open for everyone to see, fragile. “You want me to eat so bad all the fucking time, are you satisfied now?”

Taehyung is to him in a single stride, wraps his arms around his shoulders, pulling him in. Jimin lets himself being enfolded, hands going to his waist, eyelids falling shut.

And Yoongi can only watch, stunned and confused, at how tight and securely Taehyung holds him, and can only hear Jimin’s breathing slowly evening out. It’s painful, that he can’t touch him too, that he can’t reassure him, that he has to keep so many things inside.

Jimin’s eyes flutter open and they fall into his, filled with a million stars of sadness, and Yoongi hopes that he understands his lack of intervention. He takes a silent step towards them, holds his hand out for Jimin to take, and Jimin carefully, subtly, takes it. Yoongi squeezes, wants to kiss his knuckles, but assumes it’d be too risky, so he just runs this thumb over them.

Without a word, he goes through the door, stilling a few meters into the corridor, throwing his head back with a sigh.

He’s angry. He’s sorry. He feels helpless.

Δ

You: i’m sorry hyung
06-05-2016, 19:21

You: i’ll be a little late for practice tonight
06-05-2016, 19:21

When Jimin finally enters the building, he’s so emotionally drained, that the way Hoseok practically runs to him when they make eye contact nearly makes him tear up again.

“Hey, you okay?”

There’s no way he could lie the puffiness of his eyes away. But he nods, still.

“I’ll be,” he accepts Hoseok’s hug, returning it, holding onto him a little longer than usual.

Hoseok cups his face, looks at him, worried.

“It’s … Youngjae. I kind of exploded at Tae.” Hoseok frowns, his lips in a thin line. “Then he, uh, asked if I wanted to tell him the whole story, and I did.”

“I’m happy he cares,” Hoseok whispers, so low that it’s barely audible through the music that’s still
blasting in the room where the others are. He pulls him in again, his embrace warm. “I’m also happy that this asshole is out of your life.”

Jimin nods against his shoulder.

“Come at mine’s tonight, if you want.”

“Okay,” Jimin attempts a smile, he does poorly.

He agrees, because he knows he’s supposed to meet with Yoongi right after this, but he feels like he too-suddenly overflowed, and he highly doubt Yoongi will want to deal with his shit.

His nose stings, eyes watering, when he sees him leaning on his car, when all the others are already leaving, and Hoseok is waiting for him in his own car.

“Hyung,”

The corners of Yoongi’s mouth curve up, just slightly. Jimin thinks he likes it best when he wears his snapbacks backwards like that.

“Come on, we have a coffee to drink,” Jimin stares, swallowing around the lump in his throat. “And you can tell me about it, if you want.”

And the way Yoongi kisses him when they reach his bedroom after that coffee, and the way he undresses him, the way he takes care of him, Jimin feels like he’s apologizing for someone else’s mistakes.

He licks his lips, the coiling of his stomach becoming hard to bear.

He’s never the first one to get here, when they meet. Jimin is rarely early. But for some reason, today, he is. He’s waiting for Namjoon and Seokjin to bring Jungkook back from school, which seems to be taking longer than usual, and he was strolling around since he had gotten in from a different place than he normally does, when he saw them.

Taehyung fucking Yoongi, against a tank.

And over the violent shock of arousal it sent through him, Jimin found himself to be relieved. He’s not surprised, he doesn’t feel betrayed. Because deep down, he never really expected them to choose. He didn’t choose, neither. He always accepted them as something he shouldn’t be pulling apart, like something that’s not to be touched. It just comes as a realization, gradual and warming, that he was right all along.

Taehyung gives a harsh thrust, presses Yoongi’s front harder against the metal and Jimin’s exhale quivers out. Their dynamic is so different, so foreign to him. He stuffs his hands in his pockets. It’s getting to him, obviously. But meeting with the others while sporting a boner might not be his best idea. So he tries to look away, wills himself to calm down.
But the metal resounds and his eyes are drawn to them again, groaning when he sees Taehyung spinning Yoongi around, lifting him up and securing his thighs around his own waist, fucking into him again. Yoongi throws his head back, hands scrambling down Taehyung’s back and Jimin crouches to the ground, trying to resist.

His phone vibrates against his palm and his chest constricts with surprise, air getting stuck in his windpipe.

“What the fuck,” he mutters to no one. He guesses the others are near.

**Kookie**: hyunnng we’re here
09-05-2016, 18:51

**Kookie**: i saw ur car, where u at
09-05-2016, 18:51

**Kookie**: ill go find u
09-05-2016, 18:51

He curses under his breath. He takes another quick look at them, at Taehyung sucking at Yoongi’s neck as his hips moves between his thighs and Jimin sighs. It’s a weird feeling, not wanting to leave, and stay here to watch them, and he feels it coldly crawl under his skin like some kind of guilty pleasure. But he can’t let Jungkook getting near and taking the risk of him witnessing Yoongi and Taehyung fucking, or worse, him being so loud when he talks that they’d be heard and caught watching.

He retreats, cautious of the sound of his feet scraping the gravel on the ground.

He wonders, as his thumbs glide over the screen, how long the situation will be kept untouched.

**You**: im cheating on my boyfriend
06-05-2016, 23:15

**You**: with the dude hes cheating on me with
06-05-2016, 23:15

**Hobi hyung**: what
06-05-2016, 23:16
You: hows that
06-05-2016, 23:16

Hobi hyung: kinda weird
06-05-2016, 23:17

You: right
06-05-2016, 23:17

Hobi hyung: but also kind of interesting
06-05-2016, 23:17

You: i suppose
06-05-2016, 23:19

Hobi hyung: you okay? how you feeling about that
06-05-2016, 23:20

Hobi hyung: i mean, you pretty much knew
06-05-2016, 23:20

You: well after having seen them fuck
06-05-2016, 23:21

Hobi hyung: what you literally saw them?
06-05-2016, 23:21

You: im wondering if i shouldn’t let them be
You: yeah

Hobi hyung: how did that even happen

You: at the refinery

Hobi hyung: … do i wanna know

You: they dont know i saw them

Hobi hyung: well aight

Hobi hyung: im a bit confused here but

Hobi hyung: why did it make you insecure, if you already knew

You: theyre… a whole

Hobi hyung: did you mean hole or whole

You: hyung
Hobi hyung: hohoh sorry sorry
06-05-2016, 23:26

Hobi hyung: the most hilarious best friend, i tell ya
06-05-2016, 23:26

Hobi hyung: please do continue
06-05-2016, 23:26

You: idk theyre… they look like a thing
06-05-2016, 23:27

You: im questioning why theyre not together
06-05-2016, 23:27

Hobi hyung: so that kinda vibe uh
06-05-2016, 23:28

Hobi hyung: did you ask them?
06-05-2016, 23:29

Hobi hyung: like, when they met and all that
06-05-2016, 23:29

You: mine field
06-05-2016, 23:30

Hobi hyung: myea, i guess
06-05-2016, 23:31

Hobi hyung: but you’re not doubting their feelings for you
06-05-2016, 23:31
You: is that a question

06-05-2016, 23:32

Hobi hyung: yes

06-05-2016, 23:32

You: no im not

06-05-2016, 23:32

Hobi hyung: then i dont see why you’d leave them alone

06-05-2016, 23:33

Hobi hyung: since no matter whats going on between them

06-05-2016, 23:33

Hobi hyung: they wanna be with you too

06-05-2016, 23:34

Jimin sighs, his cheeks resting on his fist. His assignment is sprawled in front of him on his desk, but he hasn’t written more than a sentence over the last hour.

You: thanks hyung

06-05-2016, 23:36

You: love you hyung

06-05-2016, 23:36

Hobi hyung: love you too

06-05-2016, 23:36

Hobi hyung: since im off work tomorrow

06-05-2016, 23:37
Hobi hyung: and that eunji and i are celebrating our 5 months this saturday

06-05-2016, 23:37

Hobi hyung: wanna help me look for a gift?

06-05-2016, 23:38

He groans. Truthfully, he doesn’t want to. Something about Eunji is starting to rub him the wrong way, though he can hardly explain what. But it’s Hoseok, he can’t really refuse.

You: yeah

06-05-2016, 23:40

You: just text me after your class is over and we’ll go

06-05-2016, 23:40

He really doesn’t want to. But Hoseok has been there for him so often and in his worst moments, so Jimin will be there too, even if he knows it’s about to turn ugly.

Chapter End Notes

that chapter is very jumpy, isn’t it
2.7-F Serendipity

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It’s messy.

It’s a huge web of avoidance and stolen moments.

And for the most part of the following week, Yoongi stops thinking rationally about where this is going. They find a way to juggle, in between work and classes and the time they spend the three of them together.

He can’t say it’s comfortable, because it’s not. Not really.

It’s kisses he wants to press to their lips but can’t. It’s skin he wants to feel but can’t.

He gets satisfaction from the times they’re together, when Jimin seems to play pendulum between them on the couch, or that they’re eating, in the kitchen. “We need to make use of it”, Taehyung told them, a Tuesday night with bloodshot eyes and visibly high but he had cooked for them a whole meal and dressed the table. And so they do that, now. They share dinners, often. Lunches, sometimes. But never breakfasts.

Yoongi also has these moments, when he just wants to say everything. To admit to Taehyung, and to admit to Jimin. They’re bathing in their weird friendship, in their secrets and desires and it’s hard to look at, it’s heavy to bear.

The worst part is witnessing when one of them lights up, when Taehyung’s eyes become hungry, or when Jimin bites his lip more often, and that Yoongi knows he has to leave, that he has to go through that door and pretend he doesn’t want to stay. He leaves so bitter one evening, that he masturbates in his car, right in front of the building, to the thoughts of Jimin and Taehyung fucking on the couch.

Yoongi doesn’t want to let Jimin go. He doesn’t want to let Taehyung go. He can’t. But it’s slowly starting to eat at him.

He awakes brutally, the alarm of Jimin’s phone probably loud enough to even wake the neighbors.

He squints at how bright the room is, warm sun against cream walls, and he brings his forearm over his eyes.

“Jimin,”

Jimin groans at his side, shifting under the covers to curl up at his side.
“Jimin, your phone.”

He hears a something between a whine and a noise of protestation, he feels it vibrate against his ribcage.

“I’ll throw it out the window if you don’t make this murderous sound stop.”

This time Jimin actually chuckles, stretches over him and reaches the nightstand, where he snoozes.

“Happy?” he says, voice raspy and hair mussed with sleep. He half lies on Yoongi, his skin so warm and beautiful in broad daylight. It makes Yoongi’s heart feel full.

“Very,” he wraps him of his arms, breathes him in. “How much time before you have to leave?”

“Mhm, class is at 11:30,” Jimin hand draws lines along the ridges of his ribcage, soft presses of fingertips. “So maybe 30 minutes. 45 top.”

“Is that long enough for a shower?”

Jimin hums again, dragging his body up against his to plant a kiss in the crook of his neck.

“That’s long enough for a shower.”

Yoongi is happy that Jimin’s house is big enough for him to have his own bathroom.

Jimin whines, in the mornings. He whines and he whimpers for more, arches his back more easily, builds up faster. Yoongi bites at the skin of his shoulder, wet and supple as he holds his body close to his, fucking into him tightly.

Jimin’s fingers make a squeaky sound as they trail down the wall of the shower, water dribbling down his neck and the smooth lines of his back and Yoongi groans at the sight, fingers searching for any patch of skin to touch. It’s suffocating, around them. The air is thick and hot and it makes him heady, like everything is in slow motion.

He has to clasp his hand on Jimin’s mouth to kill some of his moans, because he’s scared that they’re being too loud. “My parents don’t care who I see,” Jimin told him the first time he brought him home, but Yoongi, being the son of the competitor, is still skeptical and prefers not to stir things too much.

“You’re so loud,” he whispers close to Jimin’s ear, words rough through his labored breathing.

Jimin just whines against his palm, licking at it until he manages to suck a finger in. So little time and yet he already knows how much it gets to Yoongi, how it spurs him on.

“F-Fuck, Jimin,” he lets his forehead fall on his shoulder, the familiar burn starting to creep in his lower abdomen.

“Let me be loud for you, hyung,” Jimin mutters around his finger and Yoongi hisses, unsure, before he slowly takes his hand away to settle it around his waist.

And Jimin doesn’t disappoint, he sings his name and dirty words like they’re virtuous, and Yoongi finds that he doesn’t care that much if someone hears.
Taehyung: you're still coming right

13-05-2016, 11:05

Yoongi is just out of Jimin’s house when he sees it. They kiss one last time before Jimin takes the road to school, and after the sex they’ve just had, Yoongi finds the parting harsher than usual.

He sits in his car, pondering whether he has the time to go change clothes or not.

You: around noon, like every friday

13-05-2016, 11:12

It settles weirdly in his stomach, the urgency behind Taehyung’s text.

He understands within the first steps he takes in his apartment.

Taehyung nearly hurls at him, a fist in his collar, bringing their lips together. Yoongi always loses to him so quickly. Always gets swept up and carried away.

Taehyung somehow leads them to his bedroom, shedding their clothes, throwing them haphazardly on the floor of the corridor.

“That’s the only thing I’ve been thinking about all morning,” he breathes against Yoongi’s lips, and Yoongi is already growing hotter, his chest rushing air in.

“About what?”

“Eating you out,” and Taehyung can probably feel the way he shudders because he grins at him.

He’s always had mixed feelings about this, about Taehyung laving his tongue over his ass hole. But right now, it feels too good to complain.

He tries to jerk away from the sensation when it gets too intense, but Taehyung is keeping him right there, front to the bed, hips pinned down. The wet sounds are so obscene, the low grunting coming from Taehyung’s throat even more and Yoongi knows he’s flushed all over, half embarrassed and
half aroused out of his mind.

“Fu-fucking— Tae, stop,”

Taehyung licks a stripe from his perineum all the way up to his rim, circling it with his tongue.

“I know how you sound when you really want me to stop,” he growls, parting his asscheeks for better access, “and it’s not like that. Don’t lie to me, hyung.”

Yoongi groans into the pillow, his belly tensing and releasing from the sensations, fingers clawing at the sheets. Taehyung slowly eases his tongue in and he chokes on his air, brain drowning in static for a couple of seconds. His hips buck into the bed and he moans, the friction easing a little of the tension built in the entirety of his limbs.

“T-Tae,” his voice comes out shaky despite himself.

“I won’t let you come though,” Taehyung says, the wetness of his mouth lathering his hole with warmth, working him open. “Not yet.”

Yoongi bites back a whine, breathing harshly in the material, the thin layer of sweat on his skin making staying still even more tortuous.

“Do you wanna know why?”

He grunts as a response, teased and on the edge, and he can already tell that Taehyung is not done with him.

“Because I want you to fuck me real good, hyung.”

It’s nearly week later and it doesn’t get any easier.

It’s nearly a week later, and the moments, as he lives them, are warm. But the stress is becoming electric. The longing becomes scorching.

Leaving Taehyung in the mornings becomes harder.

Letting go of Jimin’s hand becomes harder.

He spaces out often, at work. And his colleagues tell him. He isn’t as productive and they noticed. It’s hard to find excuses when he really just gets lost in thoughts of the three of them, of ways to entangle everything.

It’s Friday, Jimin should be there soon, and Taehyung is in one of those moods when nothing seems to matter. He’s put his music loud in the apartment, a confused mix of genres, so loud that he sometimes needs to focus to understand when he talks. He used to do this a lot when they were younger, blasting hip-hop at maximum volume in his room, without caring who could hear. There was no one else but him and Yoongi in the house most of the time anyway.

“I’m glad Jimin is more comfortable eating around me now,” he says, and Yoongi watches him take out vegetables and meat and pans, and he doubts Jimin and him will even take the time to work on
their school project.

“That’s a good thing,” he says, and it is. It truly is.

They don’t even hear Jimin getting in, and soon he’s entering the kitchen with a surprised expression.

“What the fuck?”

Taehyung smiles like he used to smile, bright and light, and he’s crosses the room, cupping Jimin’s face and placing a kiss on his lips. Yoongi’s chest tightens, then flares up with fondness.

Taehyung’s mood is questionable, Yoongi is aware that for him to be like that, it’s most of the time the calm before the storm. But for now, as the atmosphere settles comfortably, he’ll enjoy it while it lasts.

“Do I need chicken broth to do that?” Taehyung asks to no one and to everyone. He went still in front of the cutting board, staring at his chopped onions.

“You do,” Jimin says, loud enough to cover the music, “Do I really need chicken broth to do that?”

“If you use water it’ll taste like shit.”

“Fuck.”

“Want me to go get some?” Yoongi lifts his eyes from his phone, settles them on the deep blue of Taehyung’s t-shirt.

They hear the knife being dropped, and the sound of Taehyung licking his fingers clean.

“Nah, I’ll go,” and he dashes through the kitchen, Jimin and Yoongi’s gazes on him. “Just make sure Cannelle doesn’t jump on the counter. Onions are poisonous for cats.”

And he disappears in the corridor, with just the prolonged absence of his voice to indicate that he’s gone.

The bass still vibrates against the walls, confining them in the ambience it builds, and the shift in tension is so fast that guilt crawls under Yoongi’s skin.

“How far is it?” Jimin says, turning his tablet off.

“Where he’s going?” Jimin nods, stands, and Yoongi can feel himself slipping. “If he’s going by foot like he usually does, round-trip should take 20 minutes.”

“Good.”

And Jimin pounces.

They stumble their way down the corridor, with hungry hands and hungrier lips, until they reach Taehyung’s bedroom. Yoongi presses Jimin against the wall opposite to the door, and he’d take him
right here, but he knows that they’d need more time than what they have, so he just drops to his knees, working Jimin hard through his jeans, before he pulls the zipper open.

This will have to suffice for now.

Δ

Taehyung jogged to the first street corner, lungs accommodating to the fresher air. As he was waiting his light to turn green, hand stuffed in his pocket and fishing for his phone, he realized that he had brought his phone, but not his wallet. He closed his eyes, cursed.

There’s a slow, languid beat filling the apartment when he gets in. One he often imagines Jimin dancing to. He doesn’t take the time to take his shoes off, goes straight to his room for his wallet, but the moment he notices that nor Jimin or Yoongi are still in the kitchen, he understands.

He gets there, and his heart loops between his ribs, his skin tingling, prickling with a new kind of excitement. Seeing Yoongi kneeling in front of Jimin, his head bobbing as he sucks his dick makes him buzz with arousal, in a way that’s almost violent.

Jimin sees him first, his chest trembling around a surprised gasp and a shaky moan, loud enough for Taehyung to hear. His body tenses, fingers going to Yoongi’s hair as a mean of warning, but Taehyung is faster.

“Don’t you fucking dare move, Min Yoongi.”

And the three of them still, the music lower in here but the room filled with labored breathings instead. Jimin holds his gaze, lips shiny and wet, flushed all the way down his neck. He’s just been caught like that, his jeans barely pulled down his hips, fucking Yoongi’s mouth and yet there’s no fear in his eyes. There’s surprise, confusion, but no apprehension.

Taehyung takes slow steps, observes the way Yoongi is supporting himself on Jimin’s thighs and it makes him smile, because it doesn’t look unpracticed at all.

He settles right behind Yoongi, close enough that his hips can press on the back of his head, and that he’s breathing in Jimin’s air.

“Come on,” he growls, canting them forwards to push Yoongi to Jimin’s cock, still heavy despite what’s unfolding. “Take him in.”

Jimin’s eyes get rounder, lips parted and unsure expression, but when Yoongi sucks his tip in with a shuddery breath, he chokes on a whine.

“F-Fuck,” his voice quivers, eyes fluttering closed.

“Are you okay with this, Jimin?” Taehyung asks, because from the way Yoongi breathes, and the low moans he gives around Jimin’s cock, he knows he’s fine. But Jimin is a different story. He doesn’t know him in and out like he knows Yoongi, so he wants to make sure.

Jimin nods jerkily, and it’s unsatisfying. Taehyung lifts Jimin’s chin with his index so that he looks at him in the eye, and he repeats the question.
“Are you okay with this?”

“Yes,” Jimin breathes, his eyelids are heavy with lust, and it sends electricity down Taehyung’s spine.

Taehyung gets even closer, reduces the space between Jimin’s body and his, forcing Yoongi forward on his cock. And he builds them up like that, pushing against Yoongi’s head, and pulling away to let him breathe, adjust. When Jimin’s hands reach to cup his face, he humors him, kisses and licks his lips as his own fingers slips between the both of them to comb through Yoongi’s hair.

And Yoongi trusts him, his inhales are harsh and his knees are probably hurting but he doesn’t even move on his own, waits for Taehyung to guide him. He’s got one hand still anchored on Jimin’s thigh, and this other is out of Taehyung’s sight, probably trying to get himself off.

The view is so satisfying, so sinful, need takes over and his hands becomes rougher, wherever they touch. Taehyung grunts against Jimin’s lips, his hips thrusting forward more forcefully, and Yoongi inhales sharply through his nose, Jimin’s dick hitting the back of his throat. Jimin whimpers, keen and pitiful, slowly rocking into Yoongi’s mouth and he whispers his name, head falling on Taehyung’s shoulder.

“Hy-Hyung, fu-uck,” Jimin’s chest heaves faster, and Taehyung draws back, looks down at Yoongi and drags his fingers through his hair affectionately.

“You’re doing good, hyung,” he says, and Yoongi grunts in half protest, but he hollows his cheeks a little more, and takes a little more of Jimin, his fist stroking on what he can’t quite reach. “Make him come, come on.”

“Fuck,” Jimin moans, a palm resting gently on the back of Yoongi’s head, the other like claws in Taehyung’s shirt. “I’m cl-close, I’m close hyung,” his breathing quickens, hips rolling in jerky motions.

Taehyung alternates between gently scraping his nails on Yoongi’s scalp and giving the strands a light tug, he likes the reaction it pulls from him, he can see him thrusting forward every time he does so. “Swallow,” he orders him, voice hoarse with want.

And those words send Jimin tipping off the edge, his mouth dropping open in a silent gasp and he throws his head back to rest against the wall, his body shuddering through his orgasm and Yoongi keeps at it, suckles on the tip until Jimin whimpers a plea to stop and only then, he lets his forehead drop on his thigh.

“Are you gonna come?” Taehyung rasps, when he can still hear the slick sounds of Yoongi stroking himself. “Is me having you choke on his cock exciting you that much? Mhm?”

And Yoongi stills, stifles his moan in the fabric of Jimin’s jeans as he climaxes, and Jimin’s eyes don’t leave him through it, he looks fucked out and dazed and disoriented.

Taehyung takes a step back to watch them fall into their haze, rakes his fingers through his hair. He’s still hard and he’s stiff with tension, but he doesn’t want the satisfaction to come.
It drops like a stone, heavy, solid, the realization of what just happened. They fall and shatter, they crash and go cold as easily as they came together.

Yoongi’s breath is still warming his thigh, making it moist even through his pants. There’s an upbeat song with booming bass in the background but their silence is louder.

Taehyung is standing a meter from them but it feels like a fucking kilometer. He looks at them, and it’s so hard to decipher, to read into his expression, but Jimin feels like the ceiling is gradually descending to crash on them, along with the rest.

“Yoongi, I’ll need you to leave,” he says eventually, once everyone is calmer, but that the atmosphere is becoming too heavy. His voice is firm, tone not to be discussed, but it’s not harsh.

Looking at Yoongi stand up the way he does is painful, and it’s even more when he helps Jimin dragging his pants up before he kisses him, a kiss that says too much under Taehyung’s silent stare. They hear the tap of the bathroom running, and then nothing. Not even the click of the front door. Just the emptiness of the lack of closure creeping in.

Taehyung’s eyes bore holes in Jimin’s shell, and he’s fully clothed now, but he still feels naked.

“Are you gonna tell me? Or do you want me to get it from him?” Taehyung doesn’t sound mad, he just looks blank, impassive.

“You guys have feelings for each other, don’t you?”

“Answering a question with a question, we’re not gonna go anywhere like that,” Taehyung shakes his head. “Okay, then. Let’s go your way. So did you fuck him to try and make me realize some hypothetical feelings?”

“No,” Jimin says, face morphing into an expression of hurt, “you’re twisting stuff. I fucked him because I wanted to, Tae. Because I like him a lot, just like I like you a lot, and just like you like him too.” Taehyung sighs loudly as he sits on the bed, and now it’s on the edge of irritated. “And I know you guys are fucking.”

“He told you?” Jimin would want to be mad at how calm Taehyung is as he says that, but he can’t bring himself to. He spent weeks thinking he was alone in this shitty situation, but they’ve been three all along.

“No, he didn’t tell me,” but if Jimin had asked, he doubts Yoongi would have lied. He pushes away the idea of telling him about what he saw at the refinery. “There’s just nothing subtle between the both of you. Thanks for confirming, by the way.”

Taehyung offers him silence. It’s understandable. It’s like everything is happening too fast, between their unstable status quo and the sex, and the conversation they’re having at this very moment, there’re lost shreds they couldn’t hold onto.

“But you know what?” Jimin swallows, feeling the pinch of nervousness in his gut. He’s tiptoeing into something that’s not only foreign, but also sorts of taboo. Cheating is a thing, this, is another. “It doesn’t bother me. You and him. I’m fine. I’m good with it, even. Does it bother you? Deep down, does it?”

“You and him?”

“Yeah.”
Taehyungs takes a while, quiet, and Jimin is scared he’s forcing him to open dusty drawers he wanted to keep closed. His eyes are searching his, seeking reassurance, understanding, anything to tell him he’s not the only with those kinds of thoughts.

“No, it doesn’t,” his voice drops, in tone and in volume. The gears are turning.

“Do you feel betrayed?”

“No.”

Jimin nods to himself, closes his eyes to collect his thoughts. He inhales, patient.

It’s here, that it either unfolds, or it collapses.

“Is it because you don’t have feelings for me?”

“No,” it comes quick, with no hesitation, but the briefness of the word makes the response seem incomplete. That’s the answer Jimin wanted, and he should be feeling better, but it really didn’t do much. He puts the blame on how raw he feels all over and inside out.

“It doesn’t bother me neither, and I do have feelings for you, too. I want—” and he cuts himself off, struggling to push the words out. Taehyung’s eyes are still riveted on him, intense and attentive, and it makes it harder. “That’s stuff that should be discussed with the three of us, Tae, but I want you guys to be together, and I wanna be with him, and I wanna be with you. I’d want to try it, I’d want it to work and—“

“Your wishful thinking is nice, but I never said I wanted to be with him, or even that I had feelings for him. And he didn’t say that neither.” There’s something cold veiling his eyes the more he talks, and Jimin doesn’t like it. “Don’t get confused here, Jimin.”

“… Never said that you wanted to be with him? What the fuck, Tae, it’s so obvious— Are you seriously going to pretend that—“

“Jimin.”

“Let’s break up then, let’s do that,” his chest constricts around the words as he says them, his cheeks warming with anger, his throat like chafed with sandpaper. He rakes a hand through his hair, heading to the door. The weight of Taehyung’s gaze following his moves is painful, it makes old scars bleed again. “Let’s end it here,” he repeats. “Because I think there’s something you’re not being honest about anyway, and you’re not gonna make me choose between the both of you. So let’s break up.”

Part two - End
Chapter End Notes

*Just a quick reminder to take the cheating tag seriously!*

So part 2 of 4 is done.
Part 3 is, as of right now, longer than part 1 and 2 together and I'm not nearly done with it so I mean, we're in for the long ride? Love you guys, see you soon ♡
3.1 Severance

Taehyung wakes to the warmth of the sun kissing his skin, to its glow hurting his eyes. He squints on reflex, fills his lungs, and when he twists his body to reach for his phone on the nightstand, it all comes back to him, and he groans. His head. His head feels like a ton of rocks, his stomach churning, burning with acidity.

Looking at his phone makes it worse, but he sees “4 new messages” on the tiny screen and he gets worried.

**Dad:** Call me.
25-05-2016, 7:33

He sighs, press the back button on his device.

**Jimin:** thanks for missing class
25-05-2016, 10:51

**Jimin:** theres important stuff for the project
25-05-2016, 10:56

**Jimin:** thanks really
25-05-2016, 11:14

He looks at the digits at the top of his screen. They’re blurry, but he eventually manages to read them.

13:07.

“What the fuck.”

He passed out for over 12 hours. Blood drowning in alcohol, brain fucking with too many things. The last few days felt like being roped onto a carousel, spinning and spinning, the same thoughts, same memories, looping until he got nauseous. And yesterday, banal Tuesday night, trying to wrap his focus around his assignments, he broke. Again.

The wet on his cheeks felt like such failure, like dirty, dirty stuff that kept coming back even when he wiped it off. He just had to lay a single glance on his bottle of expensive vodka, and he knew he had
lost, he knew he had been saved.

You: what is it
25-05-2016, 13:08

You: you can show me on friday
25-05-2016, 13:09

He sits up, inch by inch, his body protesting, his gut sending threats in acidic waves. It would be naïve to hope he won’t be throwing up when he’ll stand up.

Jimin: its fine
25-05-2016, 13:11

Jimin: i’ll do that part
25-05-2016, 13:11

Jimin: just do yours and we’ll put them together after
25-05-2016, 13:12

Jimin: no need to meet for that
25-05-2016, 13:12

Jimin: we could have done that from the start
25-05-2016, 13:13

Jimin: idk why we even bothered doing it the way we did
25-05-2016, 13:13

Taehyung feels bile rise in his throat.

“He do even like him?” Taehyung asks, looking at Yoongi adjusting his tie through the mirror. He’s waiting for him to be done dressing up so they can leave.
Yoongi stills, stares him down.

“What gives you the right to doubt it?”

It’s the first time they touch the topic since last week. First time they see each other since then. And if it wasn’t for their parents wanting to gather for a fancy meal and some announcement, they probably would have avoided each other for a little longer.

“Mhm, I don’t know,” Taehyung purses his lips, frowns like he’s deep in thought, “maybe the fact that he was my fucking boyfriend before you fucked everything up?”

Yoongi chuckles, fucking chuckles and shakes his head.

“The funny thing is that I actually made a move on him before you did. I kissed him before the gala.” Taehyung’s thoughts go grey, fuzzy like an old VHS. That makes him kind of blank, kind of empty. “How’s that for your cocky attitude, huh? Are you hap—”

“Did you see him since?”

Taehyung isn’t really surprised. He’d seen it from the start, how attracted they were to each other. Their lingering glances and Jimin’s nervous laughters.

Yoongi sighs, puts his focus back on his lapels.

“No, Tae. We’re all in the same shit hole.”

He can’t counter that.

He still thinks it’s amusing though, how they’re working. Yoongi and him. They’ve had their fights, and they still do. But they’re like two pieces of the same puzzle, fitting perfectly most of the time, but just a slight angle, a little to the left or to the right, and they’re not piecing together anymore. Sometimes they just don’t want to see each other, but being apart feels worse, so they endure, alongside, until the storm passes.

“He told me he likes you,” Taehyung says, lower, like it’s something shameful when it’s really not.

“I like him too,” Yoongi’s voice drops to the same registers as his, and all around them, calmness seems to fall, weighty and engulfing. “A lot.”

Yoongi’s words settle inside of him, and they smolder within with a mix of tell me more and I don’t wanna hear it.

“He also said that he thinks we have feelings for each other,” he adds, and Yoongi’s eyes find his through the mirror.

He sees thoughts glinting in his irises, little lanterns of words he might not say, and Taehyung, this time, can’t understand him. He sees him blink, slow, softening guilt, and his lips part around his next sentence.

Then the obnoxious chirping of Yoongi’s phone saws between them and he looks away.

“It’s Seokjin hyung,” he says, once his hand is wrapped around the device. “They’re already on their way, so we should get going.”
Taehyung sits in the vacant space next to his father, Yoongi next to his. He looks at Seokjin from across the round table, watches him unfold his napkin and place it neatly in his lap. His lips curve up in a compassionate smile. *I know you never liked those dinners but it’s gonna be fine,* is probably what he would tell him. They fell out of touch a while ago, but he doesn’t really change. He still has this calming aura around him, like a hot drink on a cold night, or a warm hand on a shoulder.

It’s only when all the parents and the sons are sitting and making small talk, that Taehyung realizes there’s still an empty seat, between Seokjin’s brother and Taehyung’s father. He shimmies his hand in his pocket to grab his phone, starts typing a message to Yoongi from under the table asking if he knows who they’re still expecting, but then his father glares, *hard,* and Taehyung, tonight, is not up for any kind of fight. So he puts it away.

“What is making the poor thing so late?” Yoongi’s mother asks, and Taehyung is pretty sure this is already her second glass of wine.

“Traffic, perhaps?” her husband offers.

“I hope she’s not too nervous to meet us?”

And at this, Taehyung’s gaze shoots up, and it collides with Yoongi’s.

“She probably is, but who wouldn’t?” his father says before he chuckles fatly, and it sounds disgustingly haughty.

Taehyung is quick to make the connection, and by the time the guest arrives, and that his father stands up to welcome her, his jaw is already tight, fingers clasped around the stem of his wine glass.

“I’m so sorry for being late,” she hurries, and her voice is honey and butter, her speech practiced and polite.

His father excuses her, and Taehyung sees, from his peripheral vision, the palm he places on the small of her back.

“I’m very happy to have you all here tonight,” he says, it’s warm and gentle and unusual. “This is Gayoung, my fiancée.”

Taehyung feels sick.

The colognes, strong and pungent in the air. The fancy meals, *delicacies* they say, look pitiful in such large plates. The conversations are futile, the smiles are too wide, Yoongi’s mother is getting loud from her fourth glass, the wine is too easy to drink, Taehyung can’t stand it.

Gayoung is so good at this, a social butterfly, she’s tiny and pretty and young, and Taehyung hates how the whole table started revolving around her. Seokjin looks pleased, enchanted. Even Yoongi, though checking on Taehyung constantly, get immersed in whatever she’s talking about.

She’s 27. They met through friends a couple of months ago. She’s a photographer. And Taehyung couldn’t care less about all the blabbering, the only thing that keeps spinning in his brain is that she’s another artistic mind. It’s another flower his father will let wither away. His mother. Him. Now her.
He takes two bites of his filet mignon, and can’t touch the rest.

It all tastes bland. It all looks grey and pale. He’s nauseous and all the water he’s drinking does nothing to alleviate how low his stomach feels in his entrails. He’s silent, he knows. He should be talking, she’s his new step mother after all, and he knows. But he can’t care. He’s just staring at the table, refuses everything the waitress proposes, avoids conversation starters.

Yoongi’s glances become more insistent, he can feel them on his skin. He’s trying to reach out in his own silent way, because he knows just what’s happening in Taehyung’s thoughts, but with two persons sitting between them, there isn’t much he can do.

He endures the whole thing, from first service to last, through a round of tea, and an encore. When they all part, he manages a small smile, so ridiculous next to the brightness of the one Gayoung offers him. But it’s fine. He’s made it.

It’s Saturday, still early in the evening. His father is getting remarried, and he misses Jimin.

He doesn’t feel bad, he feels justified when he stops in a store to buy vodka.

Δ

Jimin: he just texted me to ask if we could meet
28-05-2016, 21:36

Yoongi sits back in his chair, abandons his laptop altogether. He’s been worried about Taehyung since they left the restaurant.

You: he’s had a rough night
28-05-2016, 21:36

You: and i think he misses you
28-05-2016, 21:36

You: what did you say
28-05-2016, 21:37

Jimin: i miss him too
28-05-2016, 21:37

Jimin: but i told you i wasnt going to see you
Jimin: so i wont see him neither

Jimin: wouldnt feel right

You: you know i wouldn’t mind

Jimin: i know, still wouldnt feel right to me

Jimin: so i said no, again

You: we did see each tonight but it was for a family dinner

Yoongi makes an understanding sound in the back of his throat, alone in his room. In this whole thing, actions weren’t all honest, but feelings always were.

Jimin is tiptoeing around it, but it’s Yoongi who should. That’s the part he still feels bad about, hiding what kept happening with Taehyung. And he still remembers the way he felt when Jimin boldly texted him that he knew, the day after Taehyung caught them.

Sorry. Like guilt wrapped a hand around his throat and squeezed. And it hasn’t left since.
It crawls under his skin, the cold fear that Jimin would feel set aside because of his and Taehyung’s fucked up relationship.

**Jemin:** i have so many questions, hyung

28-05-2016, 21:55

**You:** i know

28-05-2016, 21:55

**You:** i promise i’ll answer them when you’re comfortable enough to see us again

28-05-2016, 21:56

**You:** and when you’ll want to talk about it

28-05-2016, 21:56

He starts typing a fourth message when his phone vibrates with a new message.

**Taehyung:** open teh door hyung

28-05-2016, 21:57

**Taehyung:** i dnt want to wake anyone

28-05-2016, 21:57

Yoongi frowns, drops his phone onto his desk and quickly goes down the stairs.

And when he opens the door, it’s only to find Taehyung staring at him, unmoving and expression devoid of emotions.

“What the fuck, Tae?”

He looks limp and unstable, he gapes but says nothing. That’s when Yoongi catches it, the drift of strong alcohol and cigarette stinking the air around him, so powerful that it makes him scrunch his nose.

“Are you drunk?”
And he obviously is, because just then he staggers a bit to the side and threatens to fall on the concrete of the doorstep. Yoongi makes a noise of frustration that hides more concern than anything else, and he hopes, he prays that when he’ll look past his shoulder, he won’t see his car in the parking.

But he does see it. His fucking grey Audi is right there, perfectly aligned behind his Cadillac.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” It bubbles fast, anger mixed with bad memories and he can feel their burn spreading through him, making his limbs tense. “You drove here? This drunk?” Taehyung’s lack of reaction is making things even worse, he’s just there and looking at him like he couldn’t care less. “What the fuck is wrong with you? Are you doing that again? Are you doing stupid stuff just like before I left? Huh?” He lets silence weigh them down, settle on Taehyung. He wishes he could shake him up, force a reaction out of him, but his eyes are glassy, his lips parted, unresponsive. “You didn’t learn shit, did you? Is it amus—“

And then it comes out of Taehyung’s chest, a sound that’s like a repressed sob and that wracks through him.

Yoongi closes his eyes, worries his bottom lip.

“Get in,” he whispers, hardly dealing with how frustration and sadness are mingling inside of him. “Get the fuck in before I change my mind.”

Taehyung stumbles in, head low. The view is painful.

“Who’s there?” Yoongi’s mother asks from the living room as Taehyung struggles to take his shoes off.

“It’s Taehyung,” he answers flatly. She’s still tipsy from the wine she had at the restaurant and he hopes she won’t make a scene.

“Oh! Hi again, sweetheart!”

Yoongi’s eyes don’t leave Taehyung’s bent figure, and he lightly taps his bicep with the back of his hand when he takes too long to answer.

“Good evening,” Taehyung forces out. His voice is hoarse like someone who screamed too much.

Yoongi is glad when his mother doesn’t come to greet him in the entryway, he knows she’s not aware of their whole history, but seeing Taehyung like that would probably have been enough to alarm her.

“Oh, Yoongi,” she continues, “I forgot to tell you, a letter came in for you this week, it’s in your father’s office.”

“Okay, thanks mom.”

He drags Taehyung to his room, careful, and the moment the door clicks behind them, Taehyung is wrapping both arms around him and pulling him in. Yoongi takes a surprised breath but is quick to slacken in his hold, enfolding him and sighing with a mix of emotions that are too hard to detangle for now.

It’s been so long since Taehyung just hugged him like that, tight and peaceful and his even breathing brings Yoongi back to calmness, makes his eyelids flutter shut, and his nose slowly going to rest in the crook of his neck.
“You gotta take a shower,” he says, eventually, and he feels Taehyung nodding.

“The change of clothes I used to leave here,” he murmurs, “do you still have it?”

“Of course.”

And he lets Taehyung go into the bathroom connected to his room, alone. Because he wants to hear him. Just for tonight. He hopes he’s drunk enough for it.

He sits on his bed, gaze riveted on the door, as Taehyung turns the shower on.

There’re a few beats when he just waits, a little stupidly maybe. As if it could make anything better.

But then the first notes come, and his throat go tight and his chest collapses around his heart, leaving him breathless. His head falls forward and his nose starts stinging, it’s hard to even swallow. His fingers twist in the fabric of his pajama pants when Taehyung hits higher notes, perfectly, as always. He closes his eyes again, so he can focus on his voice, so he can store everything and cherish it, locking it away in this part of his heart he had to surrender. He drags a palm through his hair and leaves it tangled there. With every note Taehyung sings he could make a thousand lullabies, rebuild the thousand pieces of their dream that withered away. It starts low in his stomach and it burns its way up, regret.

Regret.

Regret.

He stands, quickly, makes his laptop come out of sleep, and he goes to his trash folder that’s he’s never had the courage to empty. He restores everything, the audio files, the programs, and when the shower is being turned off, he’s face to face with what he’s been avoiding for so long.

And he goes blank.

Until Taehyung opens the door and he minimizes the program’s window, straightening in an unnatural manner. If he’s having such a hard time handling this, he can’t imagine how Taehyung would react.

That night, Taehyung lies against his side like he used to, drapes an arm over his torso and a leg over his like he used to. It’s almost shy, it’s wordless, and it feels as good as it feels wrong. And they watch Netflix until they’re lulled to sleep.

And he wakes when his clock indicates a little after 4am, when Taehyung is silently gathering his belongings and preparing to sneak out.

Yoongi pretends he’s still sleeping.

Δ

Yoongi forces a smile one last time. Or at least he hopes it’s going to be the last.
They were fast to bring him to the office, in this place he doesn’t know, where they speak a language that’s he’s struggling to understand and use.

His uncle has been dragging him around the whole day, introducing him to everyone like Yoongi is some gift fallen from the sky. Yoongi feels like he’s six feet under ground and in hell. He can’t stay focused, and he doesn’t even care if they notice or if they don’t. His head and his heart are somewhere else. They’re fucking kilometers away, across the ocean. He’s fine with never getting them back. They’re safer, there.

He’s been a pile of lost thoughts from the moment he stepped in the airport, his father rushing him on. “I’m proud of you, son, despite everything,” he told Yoongi, and Yoongi let it glide on his regret-coated carapace like he didn’t want to hear. He didn’t. He really didn’t.

Someone extends a hand for him to shake and he does, on reflex. It’s a girl, this time.

“I’m Caitlyn, it’s nice to meet you,” she says, and Yoongi has to force some politeness out of himself.

“She’s a really important someone,” his uncle speaks in his ear, in Korean. “You’ll need to get along with her.”

Yoongi’s eyes slip closed, his jaw tightens. He nods.

The taxi driver leaves him in front of a tall building, one of the tallest he’s ever seen. It’s frigid in colors, luminous but dull and the ride in the elevator to get to his floor is ridiculously long.

He unlocks the door to a loft, clean and entirely furnished but saturated with emptiness. The windows give on the city, skyscrapers and towers all around, the neons of Fifth avenue shining bright even from where he is. But they’re not the stars he wants to see.

Yoongi has taken his shoes off, but left his baggage near the door. It makes it less real if he leaves them untouched.

He lights himself a cigarette, smokes it whole in front of the bay window. The smoke twirls around and stays heavy in the room and Yoongi feels like he’s dirtying the place. He likes it.

You : Hi, Mr. Kim. It’s Yoongi. Has he woken up? How is he?

02-01-2015, 18:50

He brushes his fingers on the silk of the covers, sits on the edge of the bed and he stares at the wall. The television is off, the lights are off. He’s drowning in darkness and in silence and it’s the safest he’s felt in days.

Tae’s dad : He’s woken up. It’s a good thing that you’re out of the country. Please refrain from
talking to him for now.

02-01-2015, 20:07

Yoongi stares at the words, hardly processes them. He realizes the time difference. He realizes that it’s already the third of January, where Taehyung is. He realizes how far he is.

His hands start shaking. Suddenly his phone is unstable and the lettering is unclear and he can feel the waves of cold sweat taking him over.

You : How is he?

02-01-2015, 20:09

Tae’s dad : Don’t talk to him.

02-01-2015, 20:10

His chest tightens, and tightens and tightens until there’s no air and he has to run to the bathroom to throw up everything he hasn’t been able to eat because he was too jetlagged.

Yoongi’s body seizes, again and again, getting nothing out. Nothing but his own disgusting self. It does it until Yoongi is trembling head to toe and weighted by a pressure headache.

And Yoongi, he goes back to the living room, his tie crooked, his dress shirt ruined. He stops in the middle of the room like his brain left him, breathes for a while. And then the wave of pain surges and eats, compresses him whole and he bites his own teeth.

He grabs the first thing he can find, throws it to the floor. The lamp makes a sharp sound, it’s copper base still held to the wall by the cord, but the glass lampshade has flared in thousands of little shiny shards and Yoongi stares, chest heaving fast despite how empty his lungs feel.

Then everything else, everything else that can be crashed and destroyed, he destroys. He needs the place to be a little more like him. He doesn’t even feel it when he steps in the broken glass, he just laughs when he sees that he’s stained the whole place with his blood. It’s a bit hysteric and a bit lost, but it’s mostly pain that he doesn’t want to accept. He laughs at the mess he’s made, the TV flat on the floor, all the lamps thrown around, the bed he messed up, all the wall decorations lying pitifully in random places.

His back hits the wall, the furthest one from the door. He pants around the ache in his ribcage, until everything goes blurry, and that Min Yoongi fissures like the rest. He slides down against the surface, until he’s sitting, knees close to his chest. All the things he didn’t want to feel, they all come back to him in a single breathless moment.

He curls up in pain.

And he cries.
Until he’s tired and numb and blanked out.

Taehyung is awake. He’s at least okay. And it’s all that matters.

Yoongi stands, approaches the door. He takes the first bag to the bed and unzips it.

He starts taking his clothes out.

Δ

Taehyung stares a little longer at his phone, wakes the screen as soon as it goes black. He’s been doing this for too long now, for someone who has so much stuff to study. But he feels too out of it, his thoughts are saturated with something else and his attention span is ridiculously short.

There isn’t much he can do about it, he knows. He was in a similar state the previous year. He guesses that it’s part of the grief. If he’s even allowed to call it that.

He stands from his desk, strolls lazily to the living room, grabbing his pack on one of the tables, opens the patio door, and waits for Cannelle to also come out before he closes it. And he sits on the ground, as always.

There’s a light wind, just cool enough to make him shiver when it ruffles his hair. He inhales deeply, reaching to pet Cannelle’s head with she headbutts his thigh. He lights his cigarette, takes a controlled drag before he pulls his phone out of his pocket.

You: hyung
31-05-2016, 18:55

Min Yoongi: yeah?
31-05-2016, 18:57

You: today is the 31rst
31-05-2016, 18:57

The answer takes a while to come, long enough for him to burn through his cigarette and light up a second. And he, weirdly, isn’t upset about it. Sometimes thoughts are heavier than time, and he understands.

Min Yoongi: i know
He sighs his smoke out, leans back so that his back is resting on the door. There’s a diffuse wave of pain crawling up his stomach and settling in his chest. And he accepts it. He lets it come and go.

It’s fine. It’s all fine now.
He hates it, the feeling it rouses in him. Jimin ignoring him like that makes him feel like a child again, fussy, temperamental, but it’s more than just that. It’s a silent slap in the face, it’s another bucket of acid spilled on his thoughts to make him feel ever more bitter.

The professor’s voice is making him so sleepy this morning, low in tone and words slow when they roll off his tongue, and he knows he’ll have to fight to keep his ass on this chair and hold on through the whole class.

Jemin: theres probably a good reason if i don’ fucking answer you mhm

He sighs, puts his hood over his head and lies on his desk.

You: if you feel like im harrassing you or smt
And he would, no matter how stupid the idea of letting Jimin go is to him. He looks at him from over the rows of desks, his eyes landing on his nape and the birth of his spine. He longs to feel the suppleness of his hair when he threads his fingers through it, wants to feel the heat of his skin then they lie together and talk about nothing and everything. He wants to look into his eyes, wants to see them crinkle as his lips curve up. It’s only been a little over ten days since they broke up but he misses it. Taehyung thinks he might be falling in love again and he wants to reach, hold Jimin’s hand and kiss him, but he can’t.

Jimin: that's not it

You: what is it then

Jimin: you know what it is

You: well we weren't exactly done talking when you left

Jimin: yeah?

Jimin: what was there left to say, mhm?

Jimin: how else could it have gone

Jimin: tell me, im curious
Taehyung lifts his gaze, lets it rest on the professor, still calmly passing the slides. He doesn’t know how to answer this. He doesn’t know how to explain that his and Yoongi’s relationship isn’t that simple, that it can’t be settled that easily.

Jemin: you’re the kind of guy that runs away from important conversations
01-06-2016, 10:59

Jemin: aren’t you
01-06-2016, 10:59

You: often, yeah
01-06-2016, 11:00

And as he types this, there’s the dark veil of realization that falls over him. He wasn’t like that before.

Jemin: thanks for your honesty
01-06-2016, 11:00

Taehyung drops his head on his forearms for a few breaths. He feels compressed, like he’s been squeezed in a too-small box and unable to breathe properly.
There are two monsters inside of him.

The first keeps screaming at him to turn his back and let it go, to make his heart cold for anyone trying to touch it. And the other, the other claws at him from in between his ribs, it’s clawing with the fear of being left again, of having yet another person slip through his fingers like sand, it claws with as much desperation as the first one screams with conviction.

**You:** look

01-06-2016, 11:01

**You:** i just know that we shouldn't let this end like that

01-06-2016, 11:02

He sees Jimin comb his hair back with his hand, he’s as unfocused as Taehyung is. He’s as hesitant as Taehyung is. It’s reassuring and then it’s not.

Taehyung stopped fighting a long time ago. Even before Yoongi left. He spent so much time fighting for what he loved, justifying his choices in front of his father to end up being disapproved of, trying to get acknowledged again, trying to be understood and respected and in the end, he got tired and shrunk up.

Taehyung hasn’t fought in a long time, but for this, for what he has with Jimin, he’s willing to try.

△

**Seokjin hyung:** Yoongi-yah

02-06-2016, 14:18

**You:** yes hyung

02-06-2016, 14:27

**Seokjin hyung:** You’re at work right now, right?

02-06-2016, 14:30

**You:** yes, why?

02-06-2016, 14:31
Seokjin hyung: Wanted to make sure
02-06-2016, 14:31

Yoongi frowns at his phone, gives it an skeptical smile and drops it back on his desk, only for it to vibrate again two seconds later.

Seokjin hyung: So what’s up Saturday?
02-06-2016, 14:31

This is fishy.

You: uh
02-06-2016, 14:32

You: nothing planned, why?
02-06-2016, 14:32

Seokjin hyung: There’s this party that I think would do you some good
02-06-2016, 14:34

Seokjin hyung: My friend’s throwing it
02-06-2016, 14:35

Seokjin hyung: He’s a really nice guy, his partys are usually pretty chill
02-06-2016, 14:35

Seokjin hyung: So bring Tae
02-06-2016, 14:36

Seokjin hyung: He seemed down at the dinner
02-06-2016, 14:36

Yoongi’s eyes narrow into tight little slits, doubting, but the buzzing of the office around him making
it hard for him to think properly. He sees no reason to refuse, if Seokjin invites him, the guy must really be a good friend. And Yoon gi likes Namjoon, so he doesn’t see why he wouldn’t like his other friends. It’s just that, obviously, bringing Taehyung along might add a bit of a challenge.

You: tae
02-06-2016, 14:38

Taehyung: mhm
02-06-2016, 14:44

You: seokjin hyung is inviting us to a party
02-06-2016, 14:44

Taehyung: when?
02-06-2016, 14:46

You: saturday
02-06-2016, 14:46
You: you down?
02-06-2016, 14:46

Taehyung: sure
02-06-2016, 14:47

Yoongi cocks his head to the side, unsure. He takes a little more time, when he goes through some documents, scribbles notes on some and reorganizes some others.

You: okay hyung, we’ll come
02-06-2016, 15:03
Yoongi brings his Cadillac to a stop when they’re passing in front of the address Seokjin gave him, the pair of them staring out the window.

“So he said a chill party,” Taehyung mutters from the passenger seat.

“Mhm,” the sound coming from Yoongi’s throat is raspy, a hint of annoyance and a hint of bewilderment.

“Well you got fucked, because I’m pretty sure half of the city is in there right now.”

“It looks like a tiny apartment, Tae.”

“Half the city.”

Yoongi grunts, it’s supposed to sound angry when he’s mostly amused.

He’s mostly amused, when they get out the car and enter the building, and that the music can already be heard from the first floor.

He’s mostly amused, when they get to the door and that a very drunk someone opens and greets them in, someone who’s probably not the host.

He’s still mostly amused when he sees how many people there is, how agitated the place is despite it being so crammed, how the music serves of vortex for any tentative of conversation, and that Taehyung practically disappears three minutes after they’re in.

He stops being amused when he enters the kitchen area, looking for Seokjin, and that he sees Jimin leaning on the counter, beer in hand.

And then he thinks it’s going to go to shit when Jimin catches sight of him and that his expression is one of surprise, yes, but also sadness, and that he makes a beeline for the other room, passing by him.

“Fuck,” he spits, heart still beating too fast in his chest.

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**You:** hyung

04-06-2016, 22:53

**You:** you know we’re not exactly on good terms with jimin, right?

04-06-2016, 22:54

He looks around, goes to the entryway and back, eyes searching for Taehyung among the bodies undulating in the living room. The alcohol he brought is still in his hand, sealed and if he can, he’ll keep it that way and just get out of here.
Seokjin hyung: Oh
04-06-2016, 22:57

Seokjin hyung: No, I didn’t, I’m sorry
04-06-2016, 22:57

Yoongi clicks his tongue when he reads the messages, vaguely thinking that there’s no way he wouldn’t know about something like that. Jimin and him are close, Yoongi knows that much. Then he remembers how weird the conversation was when Seokjin invited them over text, and he sighs.

And when he finally finds Taehyung, sipping from his already half-emptied solo cup and talking with Namjoon, Yoongi shakes his head, and gives up.

His hype died so fast, that he just spends the whole evening observing everyone who’s present and avoiding Jimin the best he can. He doesn’t even want to text him, doesn’t want to initiate anything. If Jimin wants, then he’ll do it.

He cocks his head to the side when he sees the kid, the underage kid, Jungkook, being dragged apart and towards the balcony by Namjoon, curiosity making him frown. And when their shapes are out of sight, Yoongi’s gaze lands on someone who’s dancing, the guy who’s apparently the host, and Seokjin’s friend.

Yoongi mainly saw him talking to people during the night, but right now he’s dancing with a small, pretty girl, their bodies close, their mouths even more. His hands are on her hips, swaying softly, and they both look a drunk kind of happy, their eyes not leaving each other’s. Sickeningly cute.

And the more Yoongi stares at the guy, the more familiar he seems. He just can’t put his finger on where he saw him.

There’s no use in denying he’s hot, with his lean but solid frame, his mischievous eyes, the glow in his features when he laughs, the flirtatious smiles he throws at everyone but that he probably only means as friendly and –

Oh.

He's the disc shop dude.

He’s the one who gave him his specially ordered album the night Jimin started calling Yoongi ‘hyung’. He lets the memory play over and over with a certain fondness, watching them dance for a little more, until he feels a little like a creep and forces his eyes away.

He’s lost Taehyung for a while now, he tried texting him but he has yet to answer. The idea of leaving Taehyung with so much alcohol around is unpleasant to him, but he knows that it’s a cycle he needs to break. He also knows it’s fueled by remorse, and that it can’t lead to anything good.
“Yoongi-yah,” he nearly flinches at how loud Seokjin’s voice is even over the music, and he barely has the time to turn that Seokjin’s arms are coming around his shoulders and pulling him in a hug. “I’ve been looking for you the whole night, where were you?”

“Uh, here,” he smiles, his words muffled in the baby blue fabric of Seokjin’s shirt.

“You were standing in this corner of the living room the whole time?” he asks, releasing his hold, but his body still very close to Yoongi’s so they can hear each other.

“More or less, yeah,” and it’s not exactly true, he did walk around the apartment, he did go out for a smoke, made a couple round trips to his car just for a breather.

“Oh, Yoongi, come on,” one of his hands comes to squeezes at Yoongi’s bicep. “Did you at least drink something?”

“Earlier, but I’m slacking off since I’m driving.”

“Ah, you’re doing good then,” and Yoongi doesn’t think Seokjin is drunk himself, but his eyes are smaller, softer. Tipsy, maybe. “I saw Taehyung in the kitchen two minutes ago? With some girl. If you were wondering where he was.”

“Thanks, hyung,” and he receives a firm pat on the shoulder.

“Now, did you see Namjoon? Or like, Jungkook? They disappeared and I’m scared of what he’s gonna make the kid try. Jungkook’s too curious about alcohol.”

“Saw them go on the balcony together but it’s been a while.”

Seokjin nods then winks at him, making his way through the bodies and headed to the patio door. There’s less people now, the night slowing down, and the atmosphere, though still very active, is getting tired.

He indeed finds Taehyung in the kitchen, making conversation with two girls, and what’s jumping to Yoongi’s eyes is not how close they’re all standing. It’s the bottle of vodka in Taehyung’s right hand. He’s drinking from the bottle.

“Taehyung-ah,” he calls, and Taehyung looks at him over his shoulder. And he can’t help it, he hates it, he hates how scared he is of him drinking too much. So he silently glares at the bottle so that Taehyung understands.

And he does.

And he, very deliberately, raises the bottle and fits his lips around the mouth of it, tilts it up, swallowing once, twice.

And Yoongi snaps.

He curses, and gets to him, snatches Taehyung’s wrist and drags him away. He hears the glassy noise of the bottle on the countertop, and Taehyung lettings out a loose See you on Tuesday Mina! before they’re out the room and he’s tugging him in a quieter area. He wants Taehyung to understand how upset it makes him, wants to tell him that it hurts him to see him act like that.
But Taehyung understands something completely different instead, and the moment they’re alone in the corridor leading to the bedroom and the bathroom, he rams him against one of the walls. Yoongi is so surprised, that he doesn’t even react when his arms are being pinned next to his head, doesn’t even react when Taehyung’s chest collides with his. But he doesn’t resist when Taehyung’s lips press onto his.

Taehyung loves how easy it is for him to make Yoongi melt. All those years of practice, Yoongi taught him well. There’s still people around them and he knows, he can hear their voices and the music without clearly distinguishing anything, Yoongi’s mouth against his, right now, is the only thing he can think of. He slips one of his thighs in between Yoongi’s, savors the sudden jump in breath it earns him. It’s been over two weeks since they last had sex and Taehyung misses it. Misses Yoongi that way, and in some others too.

The kiss breaks when Taehyung rests his forehead against his, lets go of one of Yoongi’s wrist in favor of cupping his cheek. Alcohol is making his head spin when he closes his eyes for too long, and has his heart twist around weird, old feelings he doesn’t want of.

“It’s Jimin I’m in love with, hyung,” Taehyung says, pressing Yoongi a little harder against the wall. He drags his thumb over his lip, slowly, measured, thinking he wants to have it swell under his own. “Don’t misunderstand.”

Yoongi scoffs, and surely he’s about to say something, but Taehyung doesn’t want to hear. So he shuts him up with a kiss, one that he wants rough and that he hopes Yoongi feels as such, his fingers tightening around his wrist that’s still held against the surface. Yoongi lets him take as much as he wants, lets him suck bruises onto his neck and bite wherever he pleases, but Taehyung senses him gradually becoming more tense, half fighting his hold, breathing heavy into the kiss, until he manages to free both his hands and harshly pushes Taehyung away.

Taehyung collides with the opposite wall and he guesses he deserved it, that’s it’s a weak retaliation for whatever kind of shit he’s just said. And when his mouth drops open to say something, he notices how Yoongi is looking away and to his right.

He’s looking at Jimin.

“Jimin,” Yoongi says, his ribcage still moving frantically.

“It’s fine,” Jimin shakes his head as he says this, and Taehyung sighs like he knows he just fucked up. “I just wanted to, you know, bathroom.”

And he passes right between them, Yoongi calling his name to stop him as he does. But Taehyung is different, Taehyung just won’t let things go like that, and he follows him, prevents him from closing the door and gets in, before he locks them both in.

“What the fuck Tae?” Jimin frowns, moving further, to the other side of the small room.

“We need to talk.”

“Yeah, no, that’s not exactly the right moment.”
“Then when is it?” he leans his weight on the door, there’s still the low buzz of arousal making his skin tingle, and he takes in a lungful of air to try to clear his mind. “Because you said you didn’t want to talk about it over text, but you’ve been avoiding me all night.”

“I wasn’t.”

“Yeah you were, don’t lie.”

Jimin clicks his tongue, he’s pissed. But Taehyung isn’t sure if it’s because he saw him leeching at Yoongi’s throat in the corridor or because Taehyung followed him in here.

“Okay, listen,” he looks so good when he’s angry, his eyes sharp and his jaw tight around his words. “Our fathers they’re – they’re enemies okay? We can’t be together.”

Taehyung can’t help but snort, and Jimin glares at him through messy strands of black hair.

“What kind of shitty excuse is that?” He stares at Jimin expectantly but no answer comes and he’s just standing there, having missed him and just wanting to hold him and his insides coil with affection and lust. “Are we like, roleplaying Romeo and Juliet or something and you didn’t tell me? Because I’m pretty sure that since I fucked you deep and slow on my balcony the other day, we’re a little over that.”

Jimin doesn’t even react, barely blinks, his fists balled up at his sides, but he sees his throat bobbing.

“Fuck off, Tae,” he rasps, and Taehyung’s eyebrows shoot up in surprise. “It’s fine, for you and hyung. I don’t care. I just want peace. So get the fuck out of here or I’ll fucking get out myself.”

And Taehyung doesn’t object. If that’s what Jimin wants, then so be it. He doesn’t want to be the one leaving though, it’d feel too much like surrendering, so he steps to the side, frees the door so that Jimin has more than enough space to open it and exit, and he makes it clear that he’s free to go.

Jimin holds his eyes, darker in the artificial lighting and he starts walking in Taehyung’s direction, and Taehyung thinks he’s aiming for the door, until he feels his weight against his torso, kissing him so hard that his back makes a loud thud when it hits the wall.

Jimin’s hands are quick so squeeze around his waist, holding their bodies close as their lips move together, rushed and wanting. For a few moments, they just taste each other, reminiscing or catching up, Taehyung isn’t sure. Jimin rolls his hips tentatively, and Taehyung has no intention to oppose.

There’s a lot of confusion still, untouched, or maybe uncared for, and Taehyung pushes it further into the messed up drawers of his drunken mind.

And when Jimin undoes his pants, Taehyung reaches to undo his.

Δ

“Where are your keys?” Yoongi whispers, the silence of the corridor forcing quietness onto him.

Taehyung awkwardly searches his pockets until he finds them, and hands them over to Yoongi. He was sleeping for most of the ride back, and even right now he’s not entirely awake, he’s still a bit drunk and he reeks of sex and Yoongi just wants to throw him in a bath and get back home.
He manages to have him take a shower, of which he doubts the efficacy given his state, makes him
down a tall glass of water and brush his teeth. He guides him to his bed, glancing at the clock on his
nightstand to see 3:39 and he groans, his sober brain feeling stuffed with too many things.

“Hyung,” Taehyung says when he’s lying on his back and that Yoongi is preparing to leave. His
voice so low, so breathy, Yoongi likes when he talks like that. “Stay?”

Yoongi considers, looks down at his leather jacket that he hasn’t taken off since they got here, at his
worn out Converses.

“I can’t, Tae. Text me when you wake up, yeah?”

“Hyung,” and he makes a grabby hand at him, Yoongi hates how soft he becomes when Taehyung
is like that, how easily he’s forgotten about what happened a few hours before.

Yoongi does take his hand.

“Sleep, okay?”

Taehyung hums and pulls him down, makes him bend until he can press their lips together. It’s
gentle. It’s genuine. It hurts.

“Can you stay? Just for t’night. Please?”

Yoongi swallows, fights the lump in his throat.

“Yeah, okay.”

He’s floating between sleep and consciousness when his phone vibrates on his chest, nearly making
him jump.

Jimin: hyung
05-06-2016, 3:59

Jimin: tae and i
05-06-2016, 4:00

Jimin: we kindof hooked up at the party
05-06-2016, 4:00

Jimin: im sorry
05-06-2016, 4:01

You: why are you sorry
He sighs, looks down at Taehyung sleeping against his side, an arm thrown over his hips, his head resting just under his ribcage, on his stomach. Things didn’t exactly go well for everybody, but he means it.

Jimin: i didn't really mean it to happen

Jimin: no no

Jimin: it's just, i was trying to stay away

You: did it go bad or

You: yeah, i understand

You: but i don’t think you should feel bad for it

Jimin: mhm

Jimin: but hyung
You: yeah

05-06-2016, 4:08

Jimin: that means we can see each other now

05-06-2016, 4:09

Yoongi smiles, his eyelids are drooping closed, and fighting sleep is becoming harder.

You: yeah but we’ll need to talk it out

05-06-2016, 4:09

Jimin: i know

05-06-2016, 4:11

Jimin: gnight hyung

05-06-2016, 4:14

He takes a deep breath, his hand going to play with Taehyung’s hair when he stirs against him.

You: good night

05-06-2016, 4:14

Δ

Jimin closes the shower door behind him, reaches for a towel that he wraps around his hips. The hot stream of water was feeling so good on his skin and his somehow aching muscles, washing the remainder of his hangover away, along with the mess of thoughts about what happened the previous night. But his phone started buzzing loudly on the marble, once, then twice, and again, until he groaned in annoyance and decided to get out.
Kookie: hyung
05-06-2016, 16:04

Kookie: hyung
05-06-2016, 16:07

Kookie: hyung did u survive
05-06-2016, 16:09

Kookie: ill call the police if u dont answer in the next 2 mins
05-06-2016, 16:10

You: jeon jungkook what the fuck
05-06-2016, 16:11

Kookie: woah dude
05-06-2016, 16:11

Kookie: i was so about to dial that number
05-06-2016, 16:12

Kookie: how ar eyou hyung
05-06-2016, 16:12

You: youre fucking scary
05-06-2016, 16:13

Kookie: we’re coming over btw
05-06-2016, 16:13

You: who
05-06-2016, 16:14
“Little fucker,” Jimin groans, and he barely has the time to tousle his hair with the towel, put on some boxers and sweatpants that the doorbell is chiming.

“You’re naked,” Jungkook says when Jimin lets them in.

“Yeah, well, I told you that.”

And Jimin is not entirely sure what’s happening, in all honesty he just wanted to try to study for the upcoming exams and his finals while trying really hard to ignore his phone and how bad he’s been wanting to text Yoongi and Taehyung the whole day. It’s Sunday, they’re probably together, and he has this aching need to just reach to them, and talk things out.

But he rolls with it, even offers them tea, that Namjoon gladly accepts but that Jungkook doesn’t.

“It’s good for hangovers, Kookie,” Jimin tells him, pouring the steaming liquid into tiny cups.

“I didn’t drink that much, I’m fine,” Jungkook assures, slipping in the stool next to Namjoon’s around the kitchen isle.

“You were with Namjoon hyung all night, you can’t not have – wait.” In his peripheral vision, there’s his phone lighting up but he forces his gaze away. He turns to them, the warm drink still sitting on the counter, and he squints. “You were together yesterday too, no?”

“To help Seokjin hyung with his uni project, yeah,” Jungkook says disinterestedly, absorbed by something Namjoon is showing him on his phone.

“You slept at Namjoon hyung’s place after the party. And now you’re still together.”
“Yeah. His sister is real nice, hyung, she lent me her phone charger because I – ”

“So you’ve been hanging out for over 24 hours?”

“Yeah.”

“What the fuck? Jungkook, don’t you have homeworks to do? A room to clean? What are you even doing here?”

“Chilling?”

“Can’t you go chill elsewhere?”

Namjoon laughs airily then, little dimples digging in his cheeks.

“Don’t be mean, Jimin. The kid was just curious to know about the two dudes.”

“More like Seokjin hyung wanted to know, but he’s working so he can’t ask,” Jimin corrects with a bitter undertone. He doesn’t want to assume that Seokjin did it on purpose, to invite Yoongi and Taehyung when he knew that Jimin was there, but even after Seokjin’s apologies and with alcohol buzzing in his system, he kept thinking that it was too much of a coincidence.

“M’yeah, that’s about right,” and that makes Jimin shake his head. “So?”

He throws Jungkook a glare for his boldness, goes back to his tea, but then his phone rings. And he becomes worried. Because barely anyone ever calls him, excepts for very important matters. Seeing Hoseok’s caller ID when Hoseok is supposed to be at work does nothing to alleviate how he feels and he picks up, the sudden silence in the kitchen validating him.

“Hyung?”

“What are you?”

Jimin’s heart sinks at the tone of his voice. Low. Frail. Tired.

“Home? What’s up?”

“Can I come over?”

“Of course, yeah. Namjoon hyung and Jungkook are here though, is it o—“

“S’fine. I just wanna get out of here.”

He swallows, can feel Jungkook’s and Namjoon’s eyes on his back, as his fingers start playing with the edge of the counter with nervous tension.

“You okay, hyung?”

“I’ll bring some stuff, is it fine?”

“You know it is. The front door will be unlocked, my parents are away for the week.”

“Ye-Yeah, okay. I’ll be there.”

He hears the click on the other line and he sets his cellphone down, an unpleasant shiver running down his spine.
“It’s Eunji, isn’t it?” Namjoon’s voice comes out assured, and Jimin can’t blame him for jumping to those conclusions, because he’s jumping to them too.

“I think.”

“He knows it’s his flat, right? He shouldn’t have to leave.”

Jimin shrugs, cards slightly shaky fingers through his still damp hair.

“I dunno, hyung. But I prefer him here with me instead of there and alone.”

Namjoon sighs, loud and annoyed and he stretches, patting Jungkook’s head affectionately when he brings his arms down.

Jimin runs upstairs to finally put a t-shirt on, and when he comes back down, he gets another cup from the cupboard.

Hoseok always told him he loved his hot cocoas.

The three of them perk up at the sound of the front door opening. It’s a shy noise, like he doesn’t want to disturb anyone and that makes Jimin’s chest feel tight, because from Hoseok, that alone screams a lot of things.

Jimins goes to meet him in the entryway, and Hoseok avoids looking at him, but with the artificial lighting, Jimin can see that his eyes are rimmed red and puffy.

Is this how you felt when I came to find you every time Youngjae made me cry, hyung? Awkward and helpless? Is this how uncomfortable you were, not knowing which step to take first?

“Hyung,” he whispers, and it’s a plea, it’s a please don’t put up walls around yourself.

But Hoseok knows, and Hoseok understands, so for now he drops that façade, lets his chest seizes around a sob, and goes to find a little love in Jimin’s embrace, his boots still in his feet.

“Why am I not even surprised?” Hoseok’s voice breaks around the words and Jimin’s heart follows in the fall.

“Do you want to tell me what happened?” he soothes his hands down his back, doesn’t think about how hard it is to breathe when Hoseok holds him tight like that.

He hears Namjoon and Jungkook’s footfalls coming to them and he hopes that it won’t make Hoseok close up like an oyster.

“I don’t know, Jimin-ah, I don’t get it, I don’t—“

“Do you wanna go sit in the living room?” He cuts him, because he prepared hot cocoa, and he could have him settle comfortably in the cushions, play with his hair just how he likes it, if he lets him.
“It was supposed to be a surprise, for our six months anniversary, you know,” he’s calmer now, he stopped hiccupping around every syllable and the doesn’t ooze anger anymore. But around him bleeds a quiet type of sadness, resigned, accepting, his voice barely more than a murmur, unsure.

Jimin is sitting right there next to him, his fingers gentle in the hair at his nape, and Namjoon and Jungkook are on the two-seater sofa facing theirs. Hoseok knows they’re there, all of them, but when he talks, it’s like he’s retelling to himself. “I called in sick at work without telling her, because I know she always waits for me at home, and I, I went to buy some food for us too. That fried chicken I know she likes.”

He makes a pause here, like things start to roll again, like the images are coming right back and squeezing his throat so nothing comes out.

“And,” he swallows, “when I got in, I heard her— moan, I guess,” and Jimin bites down on his own teeth, there’s anger bubbling up, like a treacherous wave when his fingers are still delicate in Hoseok’s dark strands. “I should have known, from there. It should have been obvious and I should have just, went back out. I’ve been stupid.”

“Don’t say that, hyung, that wasn’t stupid,” Jungkook slides in, but Jimin doubts Hoseok really hears him.

“So uh, I – got curious, wondered what she was doing, but when I looked down to take my shoes off, I saw them. There were other shoes there. And obviously they weren’t mine and they weren’t hers and I mean—I don’t know. Why didn’t I go back, I should have,” he presses the heel of his palms on his closed eyes. “He’s someone from uni, y’know. Someone who was there, yesterday at the party, because I invited him. He saw me dance with her and hold her close and kiss her hair and I just—”

And his voice dies.

It’s only later that night, once Jungkook and Namjoon are gone and that Hoseok comes out of the shower with irritated eyes that Jimin dares to reach, to let himself in his space a little more, to do what Hoseok used to do for him.

He has to work harder than usual to convince Hoseok not to go sleep in the guest’s room, because he never really did, so why start today, but his heart is more at ease when he finally slips under the covers and huffs.

Jimin left the window open, because Hoseok is a furnace, even more so than Taehyung, and the cool breeze has him ensconce himself further in the soft material of his sheets as he listens to him talk and talk and talk, about Eunji and then not. It feels like it’s been too long since they’ve done something like this, and that they need to catch up, even if they never stopped hanging out. Because work and school are accomplishments, praised and valued and valuable, but sometimes they kill everything else around, friends and family and passions, and through the sense of success, there’s a sense of loss. And that’s where they are, lying face to face in Jimin’s bed, like kids sharing secrets, like how they used to do a decade ago. Trying to fill up the gaps of their relationship that once was so much more close-knitted.

“What’s up with those two now?” and Jimin’s feels a pinch in his belly when Hoseok asks this, he knows who he’s referring to and he’s not sure he really wants to dive into this now.

“We can talk about it later, hyung, you –“
“No, I wanna know,” his voice is not as clouded, and he does sound interested. “I know it did upset you that hyung invited them without telling anyone. And I would’ve asked them myself, but you told me not to talk to them.”

Jimin exhales loudly, his thoughts that he had managed to deaden are starting to rush again.

“I did… stuff with Tae last night.”

Hoseok’s eyes go a little rounder, expression mildly shocked.

“You guys fucked in my apartment?”

“N-No, but we did stuff. And I drunk texted Yoongi hyung about it after Seokjin hyung brought me back home.”

“Oh.”

“Mhm. So now I don’t know where we’re at. You know that I was trying to get over them, but now I’m just kind of mad at myself.”

Jimin sees how Hoseok’s eyelids seem to be heavier now as he shifts deeper under the blankets, the soft hum he does when he thinks helping Jimin relax, as it always did.

“Did they call you today? Or texted you?”

“Tae texted me but I didn’t answer because I was with you”

“What did he say?”

“He wanted to know how I’m doing. He knows I was drunk.”

“And nothing from Yoongi?”

“No, but he’s not that much of a talker, so I’m not taking it personal or anything. We honestly didn’t really stop talking since then, unlike with Taehyung.”

Hoseok rolls onto his back, stares at the star stickers on the ceiling, barely visible even in the darkness. He remains quiet for a moment, but Jimin feels the shift in his emotions, from lighthearted to something greyer, and then he feels guilty all over again, for talking about himself.

“We can stop talking about it, hyung, I know that it’s not really a good —“

“You miss them a lot,” Hoseok breathes.

Jimin looks at Hoseok’s profile, it’s an affirmation that he, stupidly, wants to argue against.

“It’s only been two weeks, hyung, I can’t really say that I’m missing them.”

“You miss them, I know you.” The silence that follows is crushing, it squeezes around Jimin’s chest tightly. He knows. There’s just nothing positive about being aware of it. “I think you’re falling in love, Park Jimin. And that’s a good thing.”

Jimin knows that, too. Has for a while.

Jimin sees the light coming in from the window catch in the sudden wetness of Hoseok’s eyes before he even hears the first sob. And his brain cuts any further thought.
“Hyung,"

“It’s fine, just keep talking. Just talk about anyt-thing and it’s gonna be fine.”

Jimin clicks his tongue.

“It’s not fine,” he wiggles closer, drapes an arm over Hoseok’s chest to urge him to roll back on his side. “Come here.”

Hoseok starts shaking then, finally shifting and allowing sobs to break through his chest, to come out as pitiful sounds that ricochet on the surfaces all around, and into Jimin’s t-shirt when he buries his face in it.

“And it’s fine if it’s not fine, hyung,” Jimin whispers, voice wavering and throat tight, as he wraps himself around Hoseok, a hand in his hair, the other secure around his shoulders. “It’s fine if don’t pretend that you are.”

Δ

Yoongi rolls off, the sensation of the sheets on his back suddenly too cold in comparison to the warmth of Taehyung’s skin. He’s still panting, and Taehyung is still panting and it’s all they can hear in this silence they nurture between them. Days pass, and with each of them, Yoongi thinks he’ll never get the chance to explain himself.

“Why did you have to choose him?” Taehyung asks, hoarse and tired and eyes lost in the emptiness around them.

And the question is just like a knife, a side sharp, the other harmless. Yoongi swallows, his post-orgasmic haze too quick to fade.

“I didn’t choose him,” he says, there’s guilt trying to crawl under his skin, but it shouldn’t be there. He shouldn’t be feeling guilty for liking Jimin that much. “You know that it’s not how it works. I already had feelings for him before I found out that there was something between you two. I didn’t mean to steal him from you.”

The walls echo his honesty right back to him, meeting nothing but quietness. And it lasts for a while, in which they don’t move, just breathe, and breathe and breathe.

“You had a choice,” Taehyung sighs, sitting up. “You could have chosen differently.”

“Did you?” and he sits up too, hastily rolling of the condom off himself and discarding it in the bin. “Did you choose, Taehyung? Because if I remember well, you cheated on him. And I didn’t make you.”

Taehyung laughs then, head tilted back and shoulders rounded. Yoongi does nothing to stop him when he stands, barely wipes his stomach clean and grabs his clothes, dressing on his way out, knowing they’re alone in the house. But he does look at him from the window, the anger in his steps when he follows the narrow stone road to the driveway, the strength he uses to slam his car door closed.
Taehyung: what else was i supposed to do

05-06-2016, 22:51

He receives this a little later, when he’s out the shower with a brain that can’t stop running things over and over.

They’re in a maze with no way out.
3.3 Cold rush

Jimin pushes open the heavy door leading outside, eyes riveted on his phone.

**You**: hyung, class got cancelled
06-06-2016, 8:43

**You**: i know you're working at noon
06-06-2016, 8:43

**You**: but i can fetch you and we can go to this café on campus
06-06-2016, 8:44

**You**: yknow, the one near the petshop
06-06-2016, 8:44

And as he types this, carefully going down the concrete stairs amongst late and hurried students, he rethinks of that day he and Taehyung bought Cannelle. It’s been less than two months, but it feels like so long ago.

**Hobi hyung**: namjoon texted me to hang out
06-06-2016, 8:47

**You**: … at 8 am
06-06-2016, 8:47

**Hobi hyung**: right?
06-06-2016, 8:47

**Hobi hyung**: but he said smt about having to drive kookie to school early
06-06-2016, 8:47
Jimin’s brows crease at that, and he stops walking right in the middle of the sidewalk.

You: im confused
06-06-2016, 8:48

You: anyway, invite him?
06-06-2016, 8:48

Hobi hyung: them, seokjin hyung is with him too
06-06-2016, 8:49

“What the fuck,” he snorts out a laugh, settling in the driver seat and gently closing the door.

You: them, then
06-06-2016, 8:51

Jimin feels sorts of bad, because that’s precious time he could be using to study, but he doesn’t feel like it. He’s just glad he did a little of it the days before Hoseok’s party.

He browses through his social medias for the time Hoseok is silent, stopping his scrolling to look at a black and white picture Yoongi posted the day before. It takes him some time to figure out what it is, the angle a bit weird over a squarish machine with multiple flat buttons and little knobs, and while the exact name doesn’t come to his mind right now, he knows the purpose of the thing is to make beats. He tilts his head, thumb hovering his screen, somehow surprised Yoongi would have an interest in making music. The picture has no caption, and the longer he looks at it, the more uncomfortable he becomes, though he can’t tell why.

Hoseok’s answer lashes him out of his trance, and he grins when he reads the message, setting his phone aside and bringing the car to life, heading back home.

Human behaviors are weird, sometimes.
Jimin heard Hoseok sniffle through the bigger part of the night, saw his swollen eyes before leaving for school. He saw him fixating his phone with an empty expression, saw him soften and hover the call button of his finger, felt the vestiges of an earthquake shaking through him as he hugged him on the doorstep, promising he’d be back after class.

And right this moment, in this small yet busy coffee shop, with all lights on and a little from the sun filtering inside, Hoseok is loud and excited. He’s with Seokjin and Namjoon and he’s talking, he’s laughing. Not that Jimin wants to complain, he’s just scared of the relapse, and of how fast darkness can worm its way back in a fragile mind.

But for now, Jimin is grateful. Because Hoseok is smiling, as he should be.

“I just feel ridiculous,” Jimin admits, when Seokjin drags them into talking about the party, despite Jimin’s attempts at dodging the subject altogether.

He lets his gaze wander outside, on the passing cars, then around the lively room, until it settles on the table where Hoseok currently is, chatting with a group of people. Classmates, apparently. He hopes it does him good.

“Why?” Seokjin asks after taking a sip of coffee, and after Jimin have let the pause stretch for too long. Namjoon is sitting beside him, quietly reading a book, but Jimin knows he’s still half listening.

“Is it even a normal thing to get attached to people so quickly?”

“Well,” Seokjin leans back in his chair, thinking.

“Time means nothing, Jimin-ah,” and here comes Namjoon, deep voice and dark eyes and levelheaded reasoning. “It only has the value you’re giving it.”

Jimin’s eyes flicker to him, the words reverberating through him a little painfully. He doesn’t miss the fond smile Seokjin gives then, and how he readjusts his fingers around his cup.

“Time, age, norms. They don’t matter, is what I’m trying to say. So don’t be bothered by them.”

“Thanks, hyung,” Jimin whispers, and he’d hug him, if he didn’t feel like it’d be crossing some sort of line. He hopes his tone is enough to convey that. Namjoon doesn’t say anything, just nods politely, visibly uncomfortable with the affection. “But you—” he continues, looking at Seokjin again, “you know them well, don’t you?”

“Mhm, I wouldn’t say that. We were friends when we were younger but—”

There’s the loud screeching of a chair and Jimin winces. In front of him, Seokjin frowns for the fraction of a second before his eyes go soft again, bright and expecting.

“Jiminnie!” Jimin turns to the sound of Hoseok’s voice, loud still among the crowd as he zigzags in between tables to reach them. “Fucking shit, I didn’t see time pass? Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Since when am I your personal clock?”

He half-sits in the chair next to Jimin, on the edge of it, nervous energy radiating off of him.

“Since we have to go back to your house for me to get my car?”
Jimin gives him a suspicious look, eyes the clock on his phone. 11:19.

“Ah,” and he chuckles, “Fuck. Just take my car then, hyung.”

He spends the next minutes batting away all the excuses Hoseok tries to feed him about why this is a bad idea, because he knows that deep down, he always liked driving his Audi. He’s seen, more than once, the expression he wears when he does, that extra layer of confidence he gets boosted with. And for today, it’s probably better for him to get that kind of energy, than to go back to get his Kia, that holds memories of Eunji.

“It’s fine, I trust you,” he says for the fourth time.

“I’ll drive Jimin home,” Seokjin adds, “if that’s what you’re worried about.”

Hoseok goes silent. But it’s a good kind, the one that hides excitement. He nods when Jimin hands him the key, slowly enfolds if of his palm like it’s the most precious of items.

“Just text me to tell me what’s up after you’re off work, mhm?”

“Thanks, Jiminie,” he gives Jimin’s shoulder an affectionate pat.

“You’re very welcome. Now go, before you’re late and Nami gets angry again.”

“She’s always angry,” he sighs through his smile, standing.

“That’s what I’m saying.”

The table gets awfully quiet and tranquil once he goes through the door, Namjoon still absorbed in his book, glasses low on his nose, and Seokjin bathing in the café’s atmosphere. The three of them are of calmer natures, so he doesn’t mind them not talking. At all. It allows him to get lost in thought, but having something to cling onto if he feels like he’s derailing.

The month of June is beautiful, so far. Blooming season has passed, but the warm wind of it remains, rustling through green leaves and whistling through half-opened windows. The sun is violent when it reflects on the hood of passing cars and Jimin squints just barely, eyes following the flashes of blues, reds, silvers and blacks, transporting families or lonelier people. He has a pinch of sonder then, like a tiny flame that burns anxiety in the depth of his insides and he forces himself to look away, further than the street. At the small grocery store across, then at the pet shop, where he sees him.

He’s wearing a long-sleeved shirt that’s, as usual, too big for him, hanging loosely under his backpack, dark skinny jeans and his light brown hair mussed with spring wind, hands in his pockets. Jimin can only see his back, but the way Taehyung is looking so fixedly through the window, still when everything around is running fast, gives such a lonely vibe that Jimin feels it within himself, tightening around his heart.

He watches him for a few moments like that. Hesitating, maybe. Unsure. He’s known for a while that Taehyung has those kinds of moods, self-isolating, closed up, and perhaps a little more of something Jimin doesn’t want to think about too much. He’s known since the day Taehyung has been sick and that Jimin tried cooking him soup from a kitchen he didn’t know, and that he had on his fingers something Yoongi later confirmed were cigarette burns.

There’s the hint of something that feels a little like pity unpleasantly flickering in the back of his mind, but all there is in the foreground is I’m here, look at me, I’m by your side. And it’s sort of weird and complicated, because they jacked each other off in Hoseok’s bathroom two days ago but they’re not together anymore, but he still wants to go to him, doesn’t want to let him sink in those
moods. Taehyung is good, no matter how many walls he draws up in front of him and how many secrets he’s hiding.

“Hyung,” and both Namjoon and Seokjin turn to him. “I’m just gonna go outside for two minutes, don’t leave without me, yeah?”

He takes a deep breath once the coffee shop’s door closes behind him, the contrast with the air-conditioning from inside taking him by surprise. He crosses the street a little recklessly, enjoying the way the air slips in his low collar as he jogs his way to Taehyung’s side.

He goes to stand right beside him, silent and imitating his pose, eyeing through the glass, until Taehyung leisurely turns his head to look at him for a few beats to acknowledge his presence. Jimin finds a serene kind of sadness in his eyes when they meet his, but even then, he looks beautiful, under the sun. He glows from it. Jimin realizes that he hates this hole between them, these two weeks of not knowing what happened with him, in his life, the reason why he’s under the weather right now.

“D’you think I should get another one?” Taehyung lets his voice drag deep, but it’s fluid like a song, and it, once again, reminds Jimin of that night he was sick and so, so soft. There’s a tightening in his chest.

“No, Tae. You shouldn’t.”

“Why not?” And his gaze is still lost somewhere on the other side of the window.

“One cat is enough. Cats can’t fill empty spaces, no matter how much you want them to.”

Taehyung says nothing. Jimin doesn’t remember of a time when Taehyung has let himself being read so easily. They both watch the kittens play in the tall cage, tiny paws and tiny claws, round, shiny eyes and fluff all around. Jimin isn’t as fond as cats as Taehyung is, but he can understand, the longing to take care of something, someone. Because he’s full of that feeling, at this very moment.

“How are you?” Taehyung asks, eventually, and Jimin looks at him, wants to slink his hand in his pocket to lace their fingers.

There’s no proper way to answer this, Jimin thinks, because Taehyung is the one who looks sad. Jimin is the one standing awkwardly to the side, heavy with context-imposed lines and rules.

Wanting to comfort an ex always sounded stupid even in his own book.

“Tae,” and Taehyung hums. “Right now, do you have time?”

“Class is over for today.” That’ll have to be a sufficient answer.

“I can… go tell the hyungs I’m leaving and we can hang out, if you want.”

And then Taehyung finally makes eye contact, his eyes tender with an emotion Jimin can’t pinpoint, his perfect nose and his perfect lips and tanned skin, and Jimin is being swept up all over again.

“Yeah, I’d like that.”

Jimin had almost forgotten about it, the pull. How familiar it feels to be around him. Yoongi makes
him jittery and shy, sometimes, but with Taehyung, it’s a little like they’ve been close for longer than they’ve actually been. It’s so natural, so easy, that they’re just walking side by side, and Jimin keeps thinking about taking his hand, slotting them, like Taehyung did once or twice when they exited their class together.

They grab lunch somewhere first, lazily strolling inside the mall for the following hour. It’s a bit unsettling, with him. Jimin is used to those things with Yoongi, going out, shopping, grabbing a coffee at a cute place. But not with Taehyung. Not really. They mostly developed in the confines of his apartment, or in the rigid chairs of their classroom.

But he likes it.

And he also likes the way people look at Taehyung like he’s a work of art. Because he is.

“You should take it,” Taehyung says, when he notices Jimin considering a t-shirt in a fancier store.

“Nah, the cut is probably too tight,” and that’s how he feels. It’s the kind that doesn’t look too good when it’s looser than intended, and while Jimin can’t take his eyes off of it, he doubts he has the self-confidence to wear something closer to his body. He used to, but not anymore. Now he prefers baggier things and layers.

“Try it,” Taehyung insists, but it’s gentle. “That way you’ll see.”

Jimin levels the piece of clothing to his eyes, stuck between dodging and actually doing it. The material feels so smooth under his fingertips, and the color, and lines of the seams–

It fits. It’s comfortable. But Jimin isn’t sure he likes his reflection with it on.

That’s a lie, he kind of does.

It’s just that he’s afraid of people staring, whatever the reason.

“How is it?” Taehyung questions, from the other side of the fitting room’s door.

“It’s weird.”

“Why? Show me?”

“I don’t know, it just is. I’ll take it off.”

“Don’t, come out here first.”

“I doesn’t look good on me.”

“I doubt it, come on out.”

Jimin closes his eyes, leans back against the dark blue wall.

“It’s fine, Tae.”

“It’s not fine, I know you.”

“Tae,”

“Park Jimin, if you don’t come out this instant, I’ll jump over that damn door. And you know I can.”
Jimin clicks his tongue, loudly, to make sure Taehyung can sense his annoyance through it. He undoes the lock, steps out to fall under Taehyung’s gaze, intense and observant. Jimin feels small. Ridiculous. He felt like that too many times before and it makes his heart thunder in his chest from the bad memories. He combs his hair back.

“It looks good,” Taehyung says, voice low for the other customers around them. And Jimin can see his expression softening.

He sighs. The words are pleasant, but he doesn’t feel as reassured by them as he should be.

“Come here,” Taehyung gestures him closer, and Jimin complies. “Look at that one instead.” He points to him another mirror, taller, further, when he can see their reflections from head to feet. “It looks good on you, it really does.”

He stares for a moment, at Taehyung’s image hovering behind him, then at his own. And the longer he does, the lighter he feels. Because it’s true. It’s not skin tight, but it’s tight still, it hugs his chest, this stomach that he spent too much time hating, and it’s true. It does look good.

He swallows tightly. And he smiles.

The ride in Taehyung’s car to the refinery is animated. It’s arguments over music, and arguments over the best model of Audi. It’s fun and it’s thoughtless, and he thinks that they’ve never really been friends, but that maybe, he could learn to be.

Taehyung shows him his favorite spots there, most of them places Jimin never got to explore, but he flushes deeply when they reach the place where he saw Yoongi and him having sex. It’s still too vivid, from the way Taehyung moved between his thighs to the way Yoongi kept throwing his head back and grappling at Taehyung’s shoulders.

They smoke there, quietly. It’s almost dinner time but the sky is still so vibrant and so clear, summer solstice being two weeks away.

They go to a few more places, chatting about so many things but so carefully avoiding what really should be addressed. And it’s fine. Jimin supposes that he’s too tired, or that he has no intention to wander back in that territory, them, because he’s made no move to touch him at all.

Until they reach his apartment, where Jimin barely has the time to take his shoes off that Taehyung’s palms are tenderly cupping his cheeks, leaning in for a kiss.

It’s almost shy, it’s more a question than anything else.

Jimin’s lungs feel wrung out, his gut twisting. He’s doesn’t know what, or how to answer, so when Taehyung reaches for his lips again, he lets him, he meets him halfway. Taehyung doesn’t ask and doesn’t take too much, he’s tiptoeing and Jimin knows. He’s tiptoeing too.

He leaves him stunned in the entryway, headed to the kitchen and he snaps out of it when he hears Cannelle’s little bell ringing from the living room. So he follows the sound, because the memory is
fond, especially today. But the moment she sees him, she scrambles out, her claws making an awful
sounds on the laminate flooring. And Jimin, affronted, can’t have that.

“Are you coming?” Taehyung asks loudly after a few moments, his voice bouncing against the walls
of his apartment.

“She still doesn’t like me,” Jimin is somewhere between vexed and disappointed.

“I could’ve told you that before you started chasing her through the whole apartment.”

He tells him to fuck off and Taehyung laughs a little. Jimin wonders if it was really all it took for the
cycle to take back its place. If it was a good idea for them to kiss, per se.

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**Hobi hyung**: jimin-ah

06-06-2016, 20:52

**You**: yea?

06-06-2016, 20:53

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Jimin gets in the living room a little blindly, eyes on his phone. He’s full, stomach nearly hurting
from it, but he feels good. Taehyung is already trying to find them something to watch, and he
freezes in front of the couch, edges on shins, finding it weird that Hoseok is taking so long to answer.

Then there’s a noise at the door, the stirring of a key in the keyhole.

Taehyung’s eyes widen just slightly, standing from his seat in an almost panicky way and he rushes
to the door.

Jimin’s insides are coiled tight, his breathing on a nervous pause at the fear that it could be
Taehyung’s father, because he doesn’t think of anyone else who could have a key.

“You’re usually here on Mondays, so I thought I’d come,” and Yoongi’s voice makes his system
pick up again, filling him with relief as much as it makes a kind of irritation flare up under his skin.

There’s the quiet rustling of clothes, and Jimin imagines Yoongi trying to reach up to press his lips
onto Taehyung’s and he just, hurts.

“What? What is it?” and their footsteps get closer. Jimin is still there, standing, fixating the wall
behind the couch, phone loose in his hand. “Oh. Hey, Jimin.”

“Hey, hyung.” And him not turning to greet Yoongi probably hints them that something’s not right,
because the room slowly starts crushing under their quietness. Jimin can’t help it, the way he feels. It
has nothing to do with Yoongi and Taehyung seeing each other. He knows that. He’s fine with that.
It has to do with how obvious the situation is, and with how sharp Taehyung’s words were back in
his room, the day they broke up.

“Jimin,” comes Taehyung’s voice, and he tries containing it, but with the tone he uses, prudent, and how he feels them staring at his back, he just can’t. Suddenly he’s snappy, angry.

“I don’t wanna be that asshole,” he turns, meets Taehyung’s eyes, “but he’s got a spare key, and you’re gonna tell me he’s just a casual fuck buddy?”

He sees in his peripheral the way Yoongi’s eyes drop shut, like he knows he’s just triggered something bad.

“He’s my friend, that’s why he has it.”

“Your friend.”

“My childhood friend, yes, my best friend, I thought you already knew that,” and the expression Taehyung gives him tells Jimin that he has no idea where he’s trying to go. And truthfully, Jimin’s thoughts are so tangled up, so ugly and messy and hostile, that he does know what it is that he wants to say, he just doesn’t know how to get it out properly. Coherently. He doesn’t know where to start.

“He’s the childhood friend I cheated on you with, Tae. Doesn’t that piss you off? Don’t you have some insults to throw at me?”

Taehyung has confusion written all over his features, impatience in all his gestures.

“No?” His voice has raised in volume, and it clashes weirdly with the tension in the room. “What the fuck is that, Jimin? Do you really expect me to treat you like that when I cheated too? What kind of piece of shit do you think I am?”

“Yeah well, that’s my fucking point. Why would you cheat on me with a fuck buddy who’s also your best friend? It can’t be because of all the ass you didn’t get because let’s be real. So why, if it isn’t that you have something for each other?”

“I don’t have feelings for him,” and it makes Jimin want to run out, to try to forget everything once again. “And he doesn’t have any feelings for me neither.”

His gaze meets Yoongi’s, whose hand is still wrapped around his keys. He perceives in it such discomfort that it starts to weigh on him, blowing out that scorching blue flame that was running up and down his spine.

Jemin sighs, licks his lips nervously.

“Then how is this supposed to work? I’m with you and I’m with him but you guys have no feelings but you fuck on the side? Like, I’m a bit lost here.”

He waits, and waits. Yoongi is still silent beside Taehyung, staring out the window, and Taehyung is glaring right back at him but he’s saying nothing. He’s letting it slip again, and Jimin feels like he’s working this out alone.

“Let’s make it easier, then. Let’s just stop all this relationship bullshit and fuck and see whoever we want, yeah? Let’s be all fuck buddies, if that’s how you like to call it.”

He walks past them, quick to grab his things and put his shoes on. So much for this nice day they’ve had.
“You drained me,” he says, making sure his voice reaches them. “Straight up drained me. Good night.”

He takes in lungfuls of air when he gets outside, long and calculated. To calm himself. He goes down the stairs, can feel his body buzzing with an energy that he doesn’t like, and he doesn’t really think about the technicalities of how he’s going to get home. He just knows that there’s a bus stop around here and that once he finds it, he’s going to be fine.

“Jimin,” comes Yoongi’s voice behind him, when he hasn’t made it further than a block away.

Jimin thinks he should just ignore him, because he’s tired and he doesn’t want to even think about all this fuckery anymore. But he stops. He stops because he’s aching with how much he’s missed him, with the want to make things work, to solve everything.

Jimin isn’t one for confrontation. He, naturally, will try to mediate every conflict, if he can’t avoid them altogether. And he also has this weakness of trying too hard, of being unable to let go, until he’s met the bottom, raw and fragile.

“I didn’t see your car when I got here,” Yoongi continues, once he’s at Jimin’s side. “I wouldn’t have came in if I knew. I’m sorry.”

“Well what’s done is done, right?”

Yoongi exhales, heavy and dragged out, his expression falling.

“Your car’s not here, is it?”

“No, it’s not.”

“Want a ride?”

“I know how to take the bus, thank you very much.”

“Don’t go all hissy on me, Jimin. There’s no point. You’re upset and he’s upset.”

“Because you’re not?” and it’s bubbling up again, steady.

“You know I am too, stop that.”

He runs a hand down Jimin’s arm, a soft touch, affectionate, and Jimin sees he’d want to do more, kiss his lips or reach for his fingers. But Yoongi, on Taehyung’s contrary, doesn’t seem to be fond of public displays of affection.

“Let’s go?”

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**Hobi hyung:** is it fine if i dont spend the night at yours tonight?

06-06-2016, 21:01

**Hobi hyung:** id go back to trade your car for mine tho, dont worry
Jimin gives the messages a suspicious glare. Hoseok is 21, Hoseok is an adult, but Jimin is protective and the idea of him returning to Eunji is making his jaw tight.

**You**: of course its fine

06-06-2016, 21:17

**You**: whats uup

06-06-2016, 21:17

The phone twists in his hand weirdly, he’s never been good at texting single-handedly. But his fingers are loosely tangled with Yoongi’s on the gearstick, and he doesn’t want to let go.

“My parents are gone for the week,” Yoongi says, barely audible over the music and the purring of the car, “if you ever wanted to come home.”

Jimin doesn’t think this would be a good idea, doesn’t think that even being in the same vehicle as Yoongi is something he should be doing after what happened.

“Mines are away too,” he admits.

“Gwangju?”

Jimin glances over at him, a tint of surprise and amusement in his eyes.

“Yeah.”

And they both smile because it’s a little ridiculous, that their families are perpetually at each other’s throats, but that they are attending the same convention.

“But uh, I’m not sure that’s a good idea, honestly.”

Yoongi only hums as he looks at his wing mirror to change tracks, but Jimin knows he understands and that maybe, he even agrees.

**Hobi hyung**: actually uh

06-06-2016, 21:20

**Hobi hyung**: i told nami about what happened

06-06-2016, 21:20

**Hobi hyung**: and she offered to hang out at hers
Hobi hyung: and i might stay there for the night

Jimin groans, and Yoongi gives him a questioning glance, black hair curtaining his eyes.

Hobi hyung: and i said yes?

“Well obviously,” he says to no one.

“Mhm?” and Jimin shakes his head.

He’s not feeling this whole thing, it settles uncomfortably in his stomach. But he wills himself to trust Hoseok, his best friend, the person who held him when he was going through so much.

You: mmmmmkay

Hobi hyung: so i’ll take your car back and take mine to go there

Yoongi turns right on the street where Jimin’s house is, and Jimin already mourns the warmth of his hand, the low rumble of his syllables, the sharpness of his eyes that, somehow, turn into something more tender when he sets them on him.

And when he stops the car in front of the broad, white building, with the wide expense of green grass extending before it, he still doesn’t want to disentangle their fingers. Not tonight. Not after having spent two weeks missing him and wanting to hear him and feel him and nuzzle his neck,
where his cologne smells the sweetest.

“Does – Does the offer still stand?” he hesitates, but there’s no reason to. He knows he’s going to spend the evening alone and regretting parting if he chooses to do so.

Yoongi holds his eyes and blinks, like he’s been asked some stupid question, before he leans over the console and softly presses his lips to Jimin’s.

“Of course it does,” he whispers and Jimin just nods, fuzzy with fondness and with something a little more demanding that will have to wait.

“I’ll go get my things then.” His fingers blindly reach for the door handle, fumbling. “And” he smiles, teasing, “you’ll have to drive me to Uni tomorrow since--“

“Didn’t you just tell me that you knew how to take the bus?”

Jimin gawks, and Yoongi gives his thigh one, two light pats to encourage him to go out, but the corners of his mouth are too crooked for him to be serious.

He’s quick to grab what he needs and to hide the key in this hideout only Hoseok knows about, and he’s going down the stairs from the porch when he grabs his phone again, the darkness around him making him squint at the brightness of his screen.

You: i’ll be out for the night too
06-06-2016, 21:46

You: so i left the key for you at the usual place
06-06-2016, 21:46

Hobi hyung: ??
06-06-2016, 21:46

Hobi hyung: oh, cool, thanks
06-06-2016, 21:46

You: and hyung?
06-06-2016, 21:47

Hobi hyung: yeah?
Yoongi is fascinated by how, sometimes, a single person is all it takes to change everything.

Jimin fell asleep on his bed with his clothes on still, curled into a ball like a kitten. They’re not talking, they’re not touching, yet Yoongi can feel the warmth of his presence in the room and it’s appeasing. Comforting. Like a balm on a rash, on something that’s been itching and pinching and prickling at him for two weeks and that he had to fight against. He’s glad he’s able to be with him tonight. Because tomorrow might be different.

He’s slouched back in his chair, the plush cushion hugging his back and he keeps rethinking of that moment, a little earlier, when Jimin asked him if there was something between Taehyung and him, like he needed to know so badly. His words were shy and water from the showerhead was glistening on his golden skin and tracing the curves of his body, and Yoongi, despite his heart fluttering in his chest, had to say no. There’s nothing. That’s the truth. Taehyung and he are nothing. Just a pile of sex and confusion and regrets.

His vision is blurry, unfocused on his laptop screen and he’s tired, he just wants to go to bed. Sometimes he can faintly hear Jimin’s phone buzzing on the comforter and he supposes it’s Taehyung. He doesn’t try to confirm. He shuts everything off, opens the drawer when he often hides his muted phone as to not get distracted, and he sees that he’s got an unread message waiting, that he doesn’t have the time to open before the doorbell rings and has his chest seize up.

“What the fuck.”

His phone indicates 0:12.

Jimin inhales deeply, stirring and Yoongi swivels towards him on his seat.

“Hyung?” his eyes are narrow with sleep, his voice raspy. “What time is it?”

Yoongi sighs, his arms dropping on his thighs, his head on the headrest.

“Late. Past midnight.” He watches Jimin sit up, run the heel of his palm over his eye. “I don’t know
a lot of people who’d do something like this. It’s probably Tae.”

“Mhm,” it’s a low, absent sound, and Yoongi doesn’t know what to make of it when Jimin passes his t-shirt over his head and tugs on his lounge pants to take them off, reaching to slip under the covers.

“If it’s him, are you okay with me letting him in?”

“How am I supposed to say no,” he mutters, hair flopping onto his forehead when his head hits the pillow.

“You can say no if you’re uncomfortable with him being here.”

“I still have feelings for him, hyung, so I can’t say no.”

“Jimin,”

“I wanna see him, with you. You and him and me. I want that. Even if it’s just five or twenty minutes, I don’t know what he’s here for, but I’ll take it.”

“Jimin’s upstairs,” he says, sternly, when the door opens on a visibly down Taehyung.

The younger doesn’t make a move to come in, hardly even reacts.

“Do you want me to leave?”

“He’s okay with you being here,” the doorknob is getting a little sweaty under his palm. Taehyung is in front of him but Jimin is in his bed, and this situation would need so little perturbation to go wrong again.

“And are you?”

Yoongi just steps to the side, lets his actions speak louder than his words.

It’s a very strange thing for him, to remove his clothes to go to bed in the corridor leading to his room when he knows Taehyung’s is following, when he knows that he’s simply going to set his alarm clock, then settle at Jimin’s side. It’s a strange thing to have Taehyung, Taehyung, staring at Jimin and him like everything else just went still. It’s not uncomfortable or unpleasant, the silence is just putting him on edge. There’s wait in the air, when Taehyung keeps immobile at foot of the bed, when he looks at Jimin and that Jimin looks back at him.

Taehyung oozes a weird kind of shyness, arms limp but gaze unwavering. He’s asking forgiveness the way a kid does and while Yoongi aches from it on the inside, the outcome isn’t in his hands.

He continues staring for what seems like a stupidly long time, unsure, as Yoongi rolls onto his side, facing Jimin, and nestling closer to him. And only then does Jimin shift, meeting Yoongi halfway and making obvious the place he makes for Taehyung to fit in.

And when Taehyung has bent and surrendered and that he’s cuddling Jimin from the opposite side of the bed, Jimin allows himself to huff heavily, it sounds satisfied with still the slightest hint of confusion.
“I’m not gonna choose,” he whispers, and the quiet that they let hang makes clear more things than words could have.

Yoongi knows that they all know, and that at this point, they don’t expect any choice to be made.

He rouses to suffocating heat around him, dense, thick, even in this king size bed.

His eyelids flutter open, focusing on the expanse of Jimin’s chest, the plane of smooth, soft skin and he blinks a few times, vaguely considering changing his position as to not feel so cramped, his ribs a little sore against Jimin’s arm.

But then as the fog in his vision dissipates, he sees them. Taehyung’s chestnut orbs, awake and bright and beautiful. Their positions are ridiculously similar, on their sides, as close to Jimin as they could manage, one of Taehyung’s hands even on the lowest part of his ribcage.

“Good morning, hyung,” he mouths, his hair a disarray but he looks peaceful.

He hears rain giving a concerto on the glass of his windows, a steady sound, an ambience maker. And there’s this twisting in his stomach, the low flame of arousal prickling at him, and he’s aware that it would’ve been difficult to avoid, with both Jimin and Taehyung in his own bed.

Instead, when Taehyung shifts and places himself so that he’s half hovering over Jimin, Yoongi meets him, and they kiss with lazy lips, nothing rushed or overbearing, and he sighs contentedly.

The strident sound of the alarm makes them part, and he’s hard and his boxers are straining a little, but as Jimin rolls over and buries his face deeper in the pillow and closer to his chest with a soft hum, Yoongi doesn’t care about it. He doesn’t care at all.

He feels deprived when, from his window, he sees them walk to Taehyung’s car and getting in. They’re not fine, not exactly, but it’s something he can’t intrude in. They have to figure out their own balance together. But they will. They care for each other a lot, and it might be more than enough.

He drags himself to the bathroom when he takes a quick shower to get rid of how sticky his skin feels, then reluctantly puts on his work suit, tightens the knot of his tie, meticulously, neatly combing his hair like he hates to have it.

It’s only when he’s sitting in the office, unwilling to start his day, that he grabs his phone, and remembers the unopened message he dismissed the day before. Said message that makes him lose all focus for the day, that makes him excuse himself and leave early.

Caitlyn: Since you won’t answer me, maybe this will make you. I’m 15 weeks pregnant, and I think the baby might be yours.

06-06-2016, 23:36
“Can’t you leave tomorrow really early instead?”

Yoongi looks to the side to meet Taehyung’s eyes, where he’s snuggled up in the soft sheets. He’s naked and still a little high, blooms of purples and red peppering his skin, eyelids heavy and his lips plush around the words. Yoongi wills himself to focus back on his screen, on this beat he’s been trying to put together for too long.

“If I could’ve, I would’ve, Tae. Believe me.”

“But it’s just a meeting, hyung.”

“Don’t pout,” he extends an arm that he trails along the length of Taehyung’s bare side, with a pressure that he wants reassuring. “Tae, babe, please. Don’t pout. It’s just a meeting, but it’s in another city and I missed too many of them already.”

“Bring me with you then.”

“You’ll be at school.”

“I’ll skip.”

“No you won’t.”

“Hyung,”

Yoongi clicks his tongue in an irritated noise but that just makes Taehyung give a teasing smile, crooked and playful. His lavender hair is splaying beautifully on his forehead, falling over his eyes and he looks feline, starting to crawl closer, propping himself on his elbows and asking for a kiss. And Yoongi gives, of course. He always gives Taehyung what he wants.

He goes down the stairs that night, when it’s well over 1am, smelling a little like weed and sex, hoping that the chilled November air will help it fade.

He’s surprised when he notices that the light of the dining room is still on, and he’s tempted to walk faster to the door when he hears someone turning a page from what seems to be a newspaper.

“You know he’s brilliant, Yoongi,” and he stops in his tracks. Taehyung’s father’s voice is deep, and he feels in it something like a threat. “Best grades in all subjects. He’s got a bright future, so why are you ruining him for me?”

Yoongi is quiet and aching with something dull for a moment, gaze lost in one of those stupid prestigious paintings adorning the walls.

“Good night, Mr. Kim,” is all he manages to answer.
The following day, when he’s feeling tight and itchy in his suit, that his ruby hair is plastered neatly on his head and that he’s in his family’s car and on the way home, his father breaks the quiet there’s been between them for the past hours.

“Taehyung’s father called me early this morning. Think about what I offered you, mhm?”

“I won’t, dad. There’s no point in me thinking about it.”

But the disgusting, frightening thought is there. And it continues to spiral.

Δ

The first finals week has rolled in and it’s chaotic.

It’s Hoseok being nervous and impatient and irritated and unable to hold a proper conversation. It’s feeling overwhelmed and feeling anxious and struggling to focus. It’s too-long hours spent studying, and that weird internal conflict about feeling either like a sponge or a rock.

It’s only the fourth day, and Jimin already has darker lines under his eyes, and it’s hectic inside, and it’s hectic all around, except when it comes to Yoongi and Taehyung.

When it comes to them, it’s became a slow and understanding sway, where lacks too many words still, but where they accept the holes left unfilled. For now, at least, they do.

Yoongi is quieter than usual, silent, even, but his touch is still affectionate and he does pick up the phone Wednesday at 3am when Jimin needs to rant about The Psychology of Money Making, and that he’s too scared to wake Taehyung, who’s as drained as he is. Yoongi listens and hums, offers soothing words and encouragements and Jimin melts and evens out, goes to bed alone, but not feeling like he is.

Δ

It’s Friday, and he tries to breathe a little, enjoying Hoseok’s mercy of cancelling dance practice for this week. It’s the last day Taehyung and he have to work on their paper and turn it in, until 23:59 to be exact, and maybe he should be worried, because they spent so much time dicking around and arguing and procrastinating that he feels like they haven’t done shit.

But Taehyung, being the somewhat assiduous student that he is, with good grades and the spectacular ability to succeed in everything school-related, has done much more in the time they were apart than Jimin could have hoped for.

And so they manage, in between cigarette breaks and stolen kisses, to have it done just after the sun is done retreating behind the horizon. Jimin is sprawled on the floor, blank but satisfied, when Taehyung is clicking the send button on his laptop. Their presentation is next week and they’re not ready at all, but for tonight, they can let it go.
They take a shower with something so intimate hanging around them, that Jimin has to remind himself of their mere fuck buddy status more than once. They’re both exhausted but there’s patience in the way Taehyung moves around him in the cramped glass-enclosed space, and the steam and the feel of his skin traps Jimin in, makes him, no matter how tame he wanted to be, reach around Taehyung’s waist from behind and trail kisses down his back once they reach his bedroom.

Post-orgasm comatose sets in and it’s comfortable, their still bare bodies atop of the sheets, enjoying the fresh summer night air coming from the window and lazy presses of lips.

“Your phone,” Jimin drawls, when he sees a feeble light coming from the nightstand.

Taehyung groans, unmoving from his current position as Jimin’s pillow, doesn’t make any sort of move to get it. And Jimin relates, because really, right now, the less energy spent, the better, but it’s probably Yoongi’s answer to a question Taehyung asked him over two hours ago.

“You could probably just, extend your arm and reach with your giant hand and you’d be fine.”

The sound Taehyung makes is one of protestation but he still shifts to get it, huffing in the process.

“I can’t, I’m sorry,” he reads from the screen, “too much stuff to do for a meeting tomorrow.”

Jimin gives an acknowledging hum, slightly moving from where he’s pressed against Taehyung’s side and he tries not to let it ruin his mood, but since what happened earlier this week, he’s become greedy. Waking up to their presences had been so fulfilling in a way that he doesn’t think he could ever get enough of.

He wants to spend time when they’re the three of them, wants to revel in their dynamics, wants to be able to see and appreciate how ridiculously close Taehyung and Yoongi are, the little things they do out of habit, no matter what they call it, because it makes him feel all warm inside.

Yoongi said they were nothing, but Jimin has eyes and an acute sensibility for those things and he knows they’re lying. Maybe they just aren’t aware of it. He wants to sleep with them again, have their skins against his and too many hands to reach for and not enough space to move freely. He wants to have sex with them. Share that kind of intimacy, even if he knows they’re probably far from it for now.

“I had him suck my dick in your room,” Jimin breathes, “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry about what?”

“The fact that we were in here.”

“Not about him sucking your dick?”

“M’no. That part was great.”

Jimin thinks, from the playful tone they’re using, that Taehyung is going to laugh or at least smile, but he doesn’t.
“Mhm.” He’s silent for a while, the even rise and fall of his chest lulling Jimin into something deep and loose, relaxed. “It’s fine. Hottest thing I’ve seen, so it’s fine.”

“Was it?”

“Yeah.”

He’s bashful enough to blush, memories and images from that moment all coming back when he hides his face in the crook of Taehyung’s neck for a few beats, willing himself not to get horny again. And amidst of this, as he retraces Taehyung in his mind, as he rethinks of that day with Yoongi, then the party when he saw them argue in the corridor, he falls on a very vivid flash of him standing in front of the pet shop, with an aura of dark clouds. His shy smile fades.

“Tae,”

“Mhm?”

“You know, Monday. When I went to find you.”

“Mhm.”

“Why were you like this?” Follows a confused silence. “I mean, you looked sad.”

Taehyung sighs, his frame moving under his, like he’s grazing an unpleasant topic. But he doesn’t try to extricate himself from Jimin’s hold or from his proximity, like he would’ve done before.

“I wasn’t really sad. I was just thinking too much.”

“About what?” He waits, patient, can count a dozen of breathings from Taehyung’s lungs before it dawns on him that he’s probably stepped in the wrong place again and he makes a move to pull away. “Don’t tell me if you don’t wanna, I don’t mean to force it.”

It’s impressive, how little he knows about Taehyung when he thinks about it.

“Come back here,” Taehyung wraps an arm around Jimin’s shoulder to bring him in. “That’s just touchy to word, is all. Hyung told me something, about the past. And it threw me off a little.”

Jimin gives a soft okay, but he’s keeping in everything he’d want to ask because those words, were nothing detailed but they ignited something in him, strong enough to keep looping, insistent and demanding attention. Those words were the little push he needed to do what he’s been wanting to do for a few weeks now.

“You hummed in the shower,” Taehyung observes, and that makes Jimin snap out of it.

“I do that often. Does it annoy you?”

“No it doesn’t,” he has them roll onto their sides, so they’re facing each other. “I’d like to hear you sing.”

Jimin looks down, eyes meeting the supple skin of Taehyung’s torso. This is dangerous territory. This is something he’s choked himself with been choked with so often, that he’s built a stigma with singing in front of anyone.

You’re not that good, you know that?

*Shut the fuck up, Jimin, you’re annoying. I’m trying to study here.*
“I prefer not.”

He feels a palm cup his cheek, making him look up.

“You know what your ex said was bullshit, and that it was part of his abusive pattern, right?”

“I know,” and he knows.

“If you like to sing, you should do it. He’s an asshole.”

“I know,” he really does.

It’s just that some things carved themselves more easily into a brain than some others. He swallows around the growing tightness of his throat, attempts to shy away, but Taehyung stops him.

“I know words leave worst scars than blades, Jimin. I know that. So when you’ll feel comfortable, do it? And I’ll sing with you, yeah?”

Taehyung always had the right words, the right way of saying things, the right spots that he knows are hurting, the right way to help it heal. Jimin feels cared for. Important.

“Yeah,” is all he manages, shifting closer and pressing a soft kiss to Taehyung’s lips.

“I’m sure your voice is amazing.”

He giggles. “It’s really nothing special.”

“Let me decide that for myself, mhm?”

The next morning, Jimin wakes up with Taehyung’s arm around his waist, a boner snug against his ass and a growling stomach.

He stares at the naked wall for some time, thoughts caught deep in a morning fog.

This is not going to go anywhere. This. Them. There’s no balance. And for now the fuck buddy status seems to accommodate everyone, but someday it won’t. This is not going to go anywhere.

That’s stupid.

He extricates himself from Taehyung’s embrace as carefully as he can, making him stir.

You: hyung

11-06-2016, 9:33

You: are you free somewhen soon?

11-06-2016, 9:33
He feels bad. He really does. But what Taehyung said the previous last night got under his skin, and he can’t shake off the tone of his voice and the words he used.

He presses his phone face down on the sheets and Taehyung sits up next to him, drags dry lips on his bare shoulder.

“‘morning,’” he croaks, and that makes Jimin crack up a sleepy smile.

“Hi.”

“What’s up today?”

“I got some stuff to catch up with. Later.”

“Good. Let’s get breakfast somewhere?”

“Ah,” he breathes out a small laugh, feels his hair bouncing a little weirdly from where they’re probably sticking out in a very unattractive way. “Too early to be active. What’s with you?”

“I feel lazy as fuck.”

“Why do you want to go out then?”

“Because I don’t wanna cook,” he singsongs, dragging his ass on the bed until he’s sitting on the edge of it.

“We can’t really afford wasting time over a fancy breakfast, Tae,” he’s feeling soft and pliant and agreeable as he says this, a weak objection. It’s one of those moods that would make him willing to follow Yoongi or Taehyung or both, anywhere. “I need to study. We’re not all as brilliant as you are, sir.”

Taehyung looks at him over his shoulder, eyes darker, sharper. Jimin’s skin tingles a little.

“Calling me sir is asking for trouble, Park Jimin. And it’s not a matter of being brilliant or not.”

“It is though.”

“Nope. Besides, it doesn’t have to be fancy. We can just find someplace where we can study and chill with food.”

Taehyung’s eyebrows rise expectantly, and Jimin can’t say no. He can’t say no so he grins, and internally curses Taehyung for being so perfect.

“Sounds good?”

“Sounds good.”

“Great.”

And as Taehyung stands, cooing at the dark furry ball trotting on the floor and following it to the
kitchen, Jimin takes his phone out again.

**Seokjin hyung**: Yes, sure
11-06-2016, 9:39

**Seokjin hyung**: What’s the matter?
11-06-2016, 9:47

“Okay, and what did you do?”

“I let her in.”

“Hyung,” Jimin sighs, irritated. He drops his eyes to his bowl, he barely touched his food. He’s not hungry anymore.

“What did you want me to do? Her stuff is everywhere in there.”

“That’s what she told you, right? For you to let her in.”

“Yeah, well, it wasn’t untrue.”

He shakes his head. Sometimes he can’t believe how gullible Hoseok is.

“You know very well that you could have thrown her shit in boxes and gave them to her without letting her in. But you didn’t because you knew she’d come back, and you were okay with that.”

“Don’t –“

“So you fucked Nami and what? It made you realize how deep in love you were?”

“What the fuck is wrong with you?”

Jimin lets his spoon drop, the sound strident in his large dining room. It’s Sunday and Hoseok has work a little later, and it was supposed to be some nice catch up time, over a coffee and some notebooks, but Jimin feels like his nerves are frayed today. The littlest of things make him snap. Fatigue, probably.

“I’m mad at her, hyung. That’s what’s wrong with me. You can’t blame me for that.”

“Yeah I got that part, but I’m also an adult, and old enough to take care of my own ass.”

“You’ll hurt yourself,” he says, firm, and somewhere deep inside, he feels like he’s talking to himself, that he’s mad about Hoseok’s situation, but also at his own.

“She apologized.”
“I don’t care. I really don’t.”

“So is this how it is with your relationship with Taehyung and Yoongi?” and his voice pitches higher, getting as unnerved as Jimin.

“We’re just fuck buddies, hyung, it has nothing to do with an actual serious relationship.”

“Of course.”

“You know she’ll do it again, right?”

“Okay, I’m good,” Hoseok says around a mouthful, pushing his chair back to stand. “We’re done with this. My head feels especially nice on my shoulders today, and I’d like to keep it there.”

And he disappears in the kitchen, the sound of tableware in the sink ringing a little louder than it should.

They go upstairs and in Jimin’s room, mutually and silently deciding to settle on another topic. They both know nothing good will come out of it when they’re in so deep into finals and that their brains are too tired.

Jimin straightens his back with a groan, before he lifts his arms above his head, stretching. They’ve been in a good focus zone for nearly half an hour now, Hoseok sitting crossed legged on the floor, surrounded by papers on child’s psychology and how to be a good pedagogue. A little dazed, he thinks that this is something Taehyung could have liked. Teaching kids.

Then he remembers their presentation, the little knot of stress squeezing his gut. He reaches for his phone.

**You**: tomorrow and tuesday

12-06-2016, 11:08

**You**: we’ll have to spend a lot of time together

12-06-2016, 11:08

Hoseok starts gathering his things calmly, as to not cut into the productive atmosphere too much, but Jimin is already giving himself a study break, watching his best friend move, his thoughts visibly busy elsewhere.

**Tae**: like im gonna complain

12-06-2016, 11:10

**You**: for the presentation
Tae: yes
12-06-2016, 11:10

Tae: of course
12-06-2016, 11:11

Jimin grins a little stupidly, and he shakes his head. The butterflies in his stomach are still there when he knows they shouldn't. But he’s never been good at this, pretending.

“I’m off, Jimin-ah,” Hoseok says, velvety, as he heads to the door, “and put your phone down and study, mhm? This is the last week but it’s a rough one, so you need every bit of time of study you can squeeze in.”

Jimin hums, obedient, and he lets Hoseok go with a promise on grabbing a coffee somewhere in the next few days.

But when the door is closed, and when his space is missing the sound of Hoseok’s deep breathing, Jimin finds himself unable to focus again. And his eyes trace the lines on his notebook, one after another, but he can’t grasp at anything. So he rereads them again, and again, and without fail, his mind wanders to the same thing again. Taehyung and Yoongi. And that night the three of them spent together. And how elusive Yoongi has been, since then.

“Fuck,” he mutters as he unlocks his phone. There’s guilt simmering in a corner of his brain and god does he hate finals.

You: are you avoiding it?
12-06-2016, 11:35

He goes through a page. Takes a couple of notes in the margins.

Yoongi hyung: avoiding what?
12-06-2016, 11:47

You: the 3 of us, spending time together
12-06-2016, 11:48

Yoongi hyung: i am, it makes me uncomfortable
He groans, the drop of his pencil makes a dull sound on the paper.

**You**: i thought you were fine with me and him

12-06-2016, 11:49

**Yoongi hyung**: i am, thats not the issue

12-06-2016, 11:51

There’s the sharp hint of a headache pulsing at his temple, and he sets on going to get some water and some pills in his personal bathroom before sits on his bed again. Right now probably wasn’t the best moment for that talk and he sorts of regrets bringing it on the table.

**You**: what is, then?

12-06-2016, 11:56

**Yoongi hyung**: im just uncomfortable with the 3 of us being together

12-06-2016, 11:58

**You**: it was fine before, no?

12-06-2016, 11:59

**Yoongi hyung**: because he didnt know about us

12-06-2016, 11:59

**You**: im confused hyung

12-06-2016, 11:59
Yoongi hyung: he didn’t know about us and you didn’t know about me and him

12-06-2016, 12:02

Jimin doesn’t know how to tell him that he’s known for a while. Way before he broke up with Taehyung.

Yoongi hyung: i wouldn’t want you to have expectations for him and me

12-06-2016, 12:04

Yoongi hyung: because except for the sex thing, there’s nothing

12-06-2016, 12:05

You: what if i don’t believe you

12-06-2016, 12:06

Yoongi hyung: then you’ll get hurt

12-06-2016, 12:07

Jimin looks up from the screen, and out the window. The summer birds are chirping outside, it’s a bright day, beautiful, a little cool and a little windy.

He’s not sure what he’s supposed to say. He’s already hurting anyway.

Yoongi hyung: jimin ah

12-06-2016, 12:10

You: mhm

12-06-2016, 12:11

Yoongi hyung: can i go get you you after work?

12-06-2016, 12:11
Yoongi hyung: i want to see you

12-06-2016, 12:12

He lets himself soak in it for a moment, the blissful feeling that Yoongi’s awkward way of saying *I miss you* makes bloom in him, stirred in with the bitterness of the gap he senses between the three of them.

You: just tell me when and i’ll go wait outside

12-06-2016, 12:16

“I’m surprised your parents aren’t back?” he says, once they’ve eaten and that they’re installed in his bedroom, Jimin with his books in the center of the bed, Yoongi at his desk, working on something he can’t quite see. “I mean, mine had to leave for Jeju this morning but they came back from Gwangju on Friday?”

“Probably—,” Yoongi lowers the volume of the music coming out of his speakers, so that Jimin doesn’t have to talk too loud, before he reaches to look at a compact calendar on his desk. “M’yeah, it’s June, probably has to do with their wedding anniversary.”

“Ah, I see. How long?”

“Last year was their 25th.”

“Christ,” he breathes out a laugh. “That’s a long ass time.”

“Yeah,” Jimin barely hears him, but something in Yoongi’s smile, and the hint of sadness he perceives in his eyes in the brief moment he turns to look at him, has Jimin swallow back his next sentence and nurture the comfort of the quiet around them.

Often, through the evening, he lifts his eyes to meet Yoongi’s back, and he lets all the questions he’d want to ask roll to the tip of his tongue until they drown in his silence. *What happened that made you both like that? Why is the space between you two so startlingly warm but so emotionally cold?* Yoongi told him he could ask when he’d be ready, but he doesn’t think he’ll ever be.

It’s a little past midnight when Yoongi abandons his computer. Jimin’s brain is overstuffed with dates and statistics when he hears him shuffle around, opening a drawer, closing it, fetching something in his walk-in, turning off the harsh ceiling light in favor of the small lamp with a more tender glow.

And when he feels his weight digging in the mattress and that his gaze goes from his notes to
Yoongi’s, who’s way closer than he expected him to be and crawling on the bed, with soft eyes and pretty lips and too much affection in the way he looks at him, fatigue gets the best of him and Jimin slightly jerks back.

“Hyung, I really need to study, okay?”

It comes out dry and irritated but Jimin is not, he’s really not. He’s just stressed and exhausted and feeling rushed, but it has nothing to do with Yoongi and whatever he was intending to do and the moment Jimin sees him freeze and retract the slightest, guilt floods him and he drops his pencil, shoulder slackening.

"Come back," he asks, and Yoongi stares, unsure. But he doesn’t seem offended, or upset. “I didn’t mean to sound this rude, hyung, I’m sorry.”

And Yoongi does as little as reaching to cup his face with a hand and placing a kiss on his forehead, but it’s all it takes for Jimin to be light again, peaceful and reassured.

“It’s fine, I was just gonna tell you that I’ll be in the shower,” Yoongi breathes, and Jimin nods, his gentle tone making his insides raw in the most beautiful way.

After that, he’s only vaguely aware of Yoongi’s presence around him, too deeply focused and it happens so very rarely, that he allows himself to roll with it. He has an exam in less than seven hours but the one on Tuesday is even scarier, so he takes what he can when can, he can’t be picky.

He slips out of his trance when his vision is blurry and his mouth too dry for comfort. He takes his glasses off, gracelessly lets them flop on the books and he stretches, tilting his head from side to side to alleviate the strain in his neck. He rubs at his eyeballs too roughly, before he takes in the space around him, Yoongi under the covers, mouth slack and breathing even, hair fanning over his forehead. And then the clock.

4:12.

“What the fuck,” he whines, and he fights a wave of self-pity.

He puts his papers away as neatly as he can, careful not wake Yoongi in the process, then he half-asses his bed routine, as a proper student in urgent need of sleep would. And when he gets to the nightstand on his side of the bed, small palm around the lamp to switch it off, he sees it.

The cup of tea. His favorite one. Waiting, full. And cold.

His throat closes up, his nose stings, his eyes well up.

That’s ridiculous. He should be touched, and he is, but instead of making him happy it makes him feel bad and unworthy of such attention, and he's just overall overwhelmed and drained and on edge.

Jimin sits on the bed, next to his supposed fuck buddy and drinks, slowly, eyes closed. It’s cold and bitter, but he appreciates every sip of it.

“Hyung,” he nudges him, so very gently, once he’s under the cool silken material. Yoongi eventually hums, stirring out of sleep, and when he does, Jimin drags himself closer, until he finds the heat, the safety of his arms. “Hold me?”

And Yoongi does.
Jimin gets to Taehyung’s apartment when the sky is still lined with lighter blues and oranges and pinks.

“Would be great if we could not have sex tonight,” he says with a tired voice once he’s met Taehyung on the balcony. He steals the cigarette that’s caught between his lips, placing it tight between his own. “We didn’t even do half the job yesterday and—“

“—and the presentation is tomorrow, yes, I know,” Taehyung completes, irritation underlining his words. What he won’t say, is how good it feels to finally have Jimin here after his nightmare-filled night, his shitty morning, and his inability to study for the whole afternoon after his father called him to remind him of their meeting on Monday.

“Then act like it.”

“What,” he scoffs. “You’re the one who so innocently rested your head on my thigh yesterday, just to end up mouthing at my crotch and tugging my pants off.”

“Be stronger.”

“Nuh huh. Learn to behave first.”

Jimin side eyes him, smiling teasingly around the smoke he breathes out.

“How did it go?” he asks, and Taehyung leans over the railing. He knows he’s referring to the exam he had earlier.

“You should know, you had it yesterday.”

“Yeah, that’s why I’m asking.”

“Was fine,” he shrugs, because there’s nothing more to say. “Mina asked for my number so we could hang out somewhen during summer break.”

“Nice dodge of the subject.”

“Thanks.”

“I’m sure it went fine.”

“Did you eat?” he snakes out once again, settling on lighting another stick for himself when Jimin doesn’t share.

“It’s past nine, of course I’ve eaten.”

“Properly?”

Jimin stills for a second, his gaze heavy on Taehyung’s profile, but Taehyung still can’t help but worry. And care. Even if Jimin is just a casual fuck. I doesn’t feel like that at all. But that’s what they
For a student in finals season without parents at home, yes.”

Taehyung slowly nods, as he pulls in the smoke, holding it in. He makes sure, as he blows it out, to keep in the words he’d want to say to Jimin, but that don’t have a place between them anymore.

“Should we add another slide there?”

“M’no, we can just talk about that part, no need for visuals. So after that, Cannelle decided to make the corridor of the entryway her personal racetrack so—“

“Tae,”

“Mhm?”

“Stop that.”

Taehyung turns to Jimin, to his sprawled form on the floor of the living room and his tablet too close to his face, his expression deeply uninterested and prominent bags under his eyes.

“Stop what?”

“Your cat. Stop that.”

Willing his crossed legs not to jump and his fingers not to drum on the keyboard of his laptop, Taehyung stares.

“So yeah, the racetrack. For ten minutes, from the kitchen to the front door non-stop and I just wanted to scream because it was 3am and I had to wake up—“

Jimin lets out a distressed noise, straightens and reaches to Taehyung’s cup that’s sitting on the coffee table.

“No more coffee for you,” he grunts, placing it further and out of Taehyung’s reach.

“I need it though?”

“You don’t,” he sits next to him then, tilting his screen up so they can look at it together. “You really don’t.”

“And so I was fucking boiling in my bed because I couldn’t sleep—“

The next second there’s Jimin’s tiny finger flat on his lips, shutting him up.

“I’ll tape your mouth I swear to fucking —“ and Taehyung licks the whole length of Jimin’s digit, before he lets it slip between his lips. “Kim Taehyung.”

But Jimin doesn’t move, he lets him gently suckle on it, dazed, and Taehyung doesn’t miss his quivering exhale and the darker veil quickly covering his eyes. The finger experimentally presses on his tongue, a light pressure, before he takes it out and pushes at Taehyung’s chest with his hand, hard enough to nearly make him flop backwards.
“What the fuck is your problem,” Jimin whines, but that just makes Taehyung grin.

“You like that,” he says, feeling impish, and it’s past midnight and they normally should be done but they aren’t and he’s pretty sure he drank over a gallon of coffee.

“Of course I like that what d’you think? But I said no sex so why are you like this?” he sounds discouraged and aroused and bothered and Taehyung cracks into a fit of giggles, bending on himself.

Jimin watches him for a few seconds, his brows are creased in the middle, his mouth in a cute pout and he’s almost pitiful and Taehyung is delighted for no reason.

“Are you high? ‘the fuck?’

Taehyung tries to recover but fails every time, his laptop dangerously shaking in his lap.

“We need to work, I’m serious.”

“I know,” he wheezes, “I know, I’m sorry, it’s just –“ he takes a deep breath, keeps his eyes closed. “Not enough sleep. Too much coffee.”

It takes him a while to center himself, to tame this urge he has to run a kilometer or ten, and this ticklish sensation in his belly. It takes him a while, but he manages. And when he forces his eyelids open, Jimin is still staring at him with the same hurt expression and he’s done for, it all goes to waste in an ugly snort.

“I hate you, I’m gonna cry.”

“No, no, no, I’m sorry, okay? God, my cheeks hurt. Just,” he exhales loudly, “don’t look at me like that, let’s – continue talking and I’ll get over it eventually. I’m s-sorry, baby –“

And that nickname, that slipped out too easily, acts like a cold shower and Taehyung calms down unnaturally fast. He doesn’t apologize, he doesn’t feel the need to, and while Jimin does seem a bit affected by it, he doesn’t seem upset. So he doesn’t.

But two hours later, when they’re about done with their presentation and that he’s still thinking about it, he realizes that he might not be as content with their status quo as he thought he was.

Δ

Caitlyn: What else am I supposed to tell you?

15-06-2016, 2:13

Caitlyn: The dates match.

15-06-2016, 2:13

Yoongi wonders if he’s ever felt this numb in his life. His eyelids are heavy, the brightness of his screen in the darkness scraping at his retina, but his brain is so wildly awake, buzzing with impatience and anger and things he thought he left on the other side of the fucking ocean.
His bed feels too big and uncomfortable, no matter what position he’s in.

You: Why am I not surprised?

15-06-2016, 2:13

Caitlyn: About what?

15-06-2016, 2:14

You: About you being unsure of the father’s identity.

15-06-2016, 2:14

Caitlyn: Fuck you, alright?

15-06-2016, 2:14

He can’t help but smile, reading this. Her thin, pretty lips breaking her so perfect mannerism and cursing like that.

Caitlyn: You’re the one who told me to feel free to have sex with other people.

15-06-2016, 2:15

Caitlyn: You wouldn’t even touch me, what did you expect?

15-06-2016, 2:16

Caitlyn: We were official for over 6 months, and you’d fuck around all the time, yet I can count the times we had actual full-on sex on a single hand.

15-06-2016, 2:16

Caitlyn: So don’t talk to me like you’re so much better.

15-06-2016, 2:16

Yoongi scoffs. He wonders how many lies he’s told her to cover up how shitty he was feeling inside. How even though he agreed on meeting her, the top contributor’s daughter of the American branch of the company, and how pliant he acted towards the whole deal, there hadn’t been a day where he thought it could last.
Yoongi was splotched black inside, metastasis of memories that kept spreading more, never healing away.

He stares at the darkness in his room for a while, strangled with invisible things, unsure which step to take. His phone vibrates to life, and he looks at it, the black and white picture of his lock screen seemingly mocking him.

But he sees the name, and he sighs, the warmth that expends through him unknowingly wanted, needed.

**Jimin**: we’re finally done
15-06-2016, 2:23

**Jimin**: what the fuck its so late
15-06-2016, 2:23

**You**: get some rest, you deserve it
15-06-2016, 2:23

**You**: both of you
15-06-2016, 2:24

**Jimin**: ah, didnt think youd still be up
15-06-2016, 2:24

**Jimin**: hope i didnt wake you
15-06-2016, 2:24

**You**: you didnt
15-06-2016, 2:25

**Jimin**: tae has been so weird the whole evening
15-06-2016, 2:25

**Jimin**: im scared hes gonna pass out in the shower
15-06-2016, 2:25
You: go with him, then, safer
15-06-2016, 2:26

Jimin: i should
15-06-2016, 2:27

Jimin: goodnight hyung
15-06-2016, 2:27

You: good night jimin-ah
15-06-2016, 2:27

You: good luck for tomorrow
15-06-2016, 2:28

His head falls back against the bedhead for a few cleansing breaths, before he makes his thumb work on his device.

You: What do you need me to do?
15-06-2016, 2:30

Caitlyn: A DNA test.
15-06-2016, 2:31

Caitlyn: And take responsibility if it’s yours.
15-06-2016, 2:31

Δ

Jimin lets music guide him, he flows with it instead of concentrating too much on the moves.

It feels like an eternity since he’s been able to dance like this, and just, let go properly. He closes his
eyes and appreciates, for the rest of the routine, aware that he might be fucking up their sync but not
caring.

The song comes to an end and his muscles ache so sweetly, his chest heaving and falling fast. He’s
feeling so good, even the sensation of his clothes sticking to his skin isn’t bothering him. Dancing is
now the only thing he’s got to push all his energy out, since that night Hoseok told him *you hate
going to the gym, Jiminie, don’t force yourself* and that Jimin agreed and gradually stopped going. So
he needs this, needs this time when he can exist to be only himself, so that he can feel physically, and
mentally stable.

He takes long swigs of water, slightly bitter that it’s already over and that two hours have passed so
fast, contemplating staying for longer since the semester is over, but Hoseok’s pat on his shoulder
brings him back to reality and he’s reminded that Taehyung must already be waiting in the parking
lot. The first time he actually comes to get him here.

He screws the bottle cap back on, wipes his towel across his face hastily, watching Jungkook
entertaining a conversation with the other dancers with an absent mind.

When he comes back after having changed clothes, over half the people are already gone, and he
apologizes to Hoseok for not staying to help with cleaning.

“I’ll stay,” Jungkook offers, surprising them. His tone is deep, serious, and it hits Jimin like a sack of
brick then, how he’s grown up. He’s taller than him, now. Broader. The shy kid he met years ago is
subsiding a little more with every passing day.

He’s overcome with the urge to hug him, but Hoseok is faster, looming onto Jungkook and cooing
and making screeching noises at him as his arms snakes around his frame.

Jimin looks at them, fond, blindly gathering his belongings before he heads to the door.

“Tell hyung I’ll be a little late,” Jungkook asks him, actively fighting Hoseok’s octopus behavior.

“Hyung?”

“Namjoon hyung, he’s waiting for me.”

Jimin gives a thumbs up over his shoulder that Jungkook probably can’t see, too busy, and pushes
the door leading outside, welcomed by a strong gust of wind that he squints through.

Namjoon is indeed waiting, leaned on the hood of his car, reading to the last bits of sunlight. It’s
cute. He’s all though and rough around the edges, selling drugs and enjoying the nightlife a little too
much, but like this, the way Jimin usually sees him, he’s just really balanced and centered and
undeniably cute.

“Kookie’s gonna be a bit late,” he announces, and Namjoon shoots his head up, his glasses falling
low on his nose. He pushes them back in place.

“Oh, okay,” he closes his book on one of his fingers, his weird temporary bookmarking habits.

“Uni’s over?”

“M’yeah, fucking finally.”

Namjoon smiles, something like regret flickering in his eyes.

“You going home?”
“Tae’s waiting for me in here somewhere.”

“Ah, aight. Good night, then.”

“Take care of Jungkookie, mhm?”

Namjoon’s lips crook up a little, settling his dimple deeper in his cheeks.

“Always.”

He spends the next minutes looking around, awkwardly searching for Taehyung’s grey Audi, but he stops dead in his tracks when he spots Yoongi’s black Cadillac instead.

He stops and he just watches, partly because he’s surprised, but also because he just wants to.

The ceiling lamp is turned on above them. Yoongi is behind the wheel, Taehyung in the passenger seat, and there’s something around them, something he’s never seen before. They seem to feel good around each other, for once. They’re just there and talking.

They look close. Very close.

Then Taehyung mouths something Jimin doesn’t catch that makes Yoongi’s head snap towards the passenger seat, fisting the younger’s t-shirt, just below his collar.

And Taehyung shrivels up on himself just a little, just barely, just enough to show acceptance of Yoongi’s age, his shoulders shaking with laughter, until Yoongi ends up cracking up too, smile wider than Jimin has ever seen.

What invades him then is something that’s hard to describe. It’s fuzzy and tender. Excited. The slightest hint of pain. A knot that’s stuck between his heart and his throat. Happiness, is what he’d call it, if he had to give it a name.

He doesn’t know why Yoongi decided on coming, tonight. Why he’s not avoiding them. But Jimin is glad. Grateful.

Semester is finally over, summer is taking roots, and he knows most students are out and drinking and partying. But for him, for them, it translates to lazy smokes on Taehyung’s balcony, one or two glasses of vodka mixed with whatever juice they find in the fridge, Cannelle sucking up Taehyung’s attention too often and the weirdest movies they can find on Netflix. But Jimin’s more than fine with that.

They don’t kiss. Jimin would want to, but they don’t.

They settle under the sheets together for a second time, Jimin in the center. Nothing happens, no curious hand, or tentative lips, he’s just lulled to sleep by the sound of their breathings and he’s more than fine with that, too.

He feels good.

It feels good.

It feels right.
“Yoongi, you have to understand,” his father’s voice grows gentler, more careful, he means well. But even if Yoongi tried, he couldn’t understand. “This can’t go on like this.”

They’re still having this conversation he’s sick of having. Yoongi feels so far away from that, from the cold numbers and unwrinkled suits. He’s burning for something else, with someone else. He’s alive when he creates, when Taehyung sings for him the notes they’ve aligned together. He’s all feathery inside when, in the dark, he builds melodies, his eyes fighting the harsh glow of his laptop. It’s like he’s walking straight and towards something, when Taehyung beams as he hears the final results, the headphones a little crooked on his head.

He knows what he’s about to hear and he’d go through the door if he could.

“You’re doing terribly at school.”

Yoongi sighs. “I know.” There’s no use in denying it. But his father probably doesn’t know the reasons behind that.

If he knew how often he curses when he raps, how high or drunk he often is, and how much time he spends fucking Taehyung, the sermon he’s getting right now would feel like a love song compared to the one he’d get.

“You’re failing most of your classes, and we can’t have that.”

Yoongi answers nothing. Merely hums. He looks around from his armchair, the walls, the ceiling, the carpet. It’s still how it’s always been. He remembers playing hide-and-seek with Taehyung in this room that looked exactly the same over a decade ago.

“Our uncle could take you under his wing, if you want.”

He aims his father a nervous look. “That’s in New York, dad.”

“Yes, but you could learn the job instead of studying it. That would be easier for you, that branch is smaller.”

“Yeah, I know that, but it’s in New York. I’m not going to New York.”

“I think that could be a great opportunity,” the man says, uncrossing his legs before crossing them again.

“Tae is not done with high school.”

“It’s never been a question of Taehyung, son. Even if he’s your future associate, he has his own path and you’ve got yours.”

Yoongi scoffs. His father can’t understand.

“I’m not going to New York,” he says, affirms, standing and walking to the door.

“Think about it.”
“I won’t.”

The heavy, wooden door closes behind him.

---

You: I'll be there in 10

2014-09-27, 18:55

Tae: okay! im leaving the front door unlocked!

2014-09-27, 18:56

When he gets there, Yoongi doesn’t tell Taehyung about the offer. There’s no use. He’s not going anyway.

He just takes his shoes off, greets the maid and runs up the stairs, lets Taehyung’s smile wash everything away.

Δ

It’s Jimin, who has Taehyung stirring awake. It’s Jimin with his little, muffled gasps, and his pleased panting moans.

Taehyung opens his eyes and everything is blurry, the room bright with sunlight, but it doesn’t take him much more than a couple heavings of his chest to grow stupidly aroused.

He drops his head to the side to find Jimin eyes closed, pink lips dropped open and wet, hair a sleepy mess. Both his hands are hidden under the covers where his hips are undulating, and where, from the sloppy sounds and the occasional upwards movements, Taehyung knows Yoongi is sucking him off.

“Did you think it wouldn’t wake me up?” he rasps, and Jimin gives him a startled look, orbs veiled with lust, elated. Yoongi also seems to freeze under the skin-warmed satin.

“T-Tae,”

“So you really thought it wouldn’t,” Jimin shifts under his gaze, squirms and Taehyung twists a bit and slips a hand along his body, his sternum, his abdomen, until his fingers are tangling in Yoongi’s hair and he pulls. “Too fucking bad. Suck it, hyung.”

Jimin and Yoongi whine in unison, Jimin’s back arching off the mattress and Taehyung hisses, barely dragging his pajama pants down and wrapping his other hand around himself and stroking his flesh slowly, skin ablae and sensitive.

Jimin reaches to touch Taehyung, grappling at his chest, silently begging Taehyung to come close so they can kiss, lips sliding together messily and small whimpers getting lost between the brushes of their tongue. For a while they do just that, Jimin’s breathing getting heavier, sweat beading their
skins, their three bodies falling in a rhythm. Then Taehyung tightens his hold in Yoongi’s strands, earning him a breathless gasp and the view of his hips kicking down in the mattress.

“Do better,” he growls and the reaction is instant, Jimin choking on a sob, fingers tangling in Taehyung’s to have Yoongi taking more of his cock.

“Hy-Hyung, ah—fuck,” Jimin throws his head back, blissed, and Taehyung marvels at the view, tugging at his dick a little faster, in time with the wet noises and breathy moans Yoongi makes.

Then there’s a hand replacing his own and he shudders, control slipping out of his hold. Yoongi always had skills for handjobs, four years ago and today, there’s barely any difference in the way he touches him but it’s just as good, practiced, tighter on the upstroke, the firmness of his whole palm around him making Taehyung want to fuck up in his fist. And he does, stomach tensing, bottom lip worried between his teeth.

“I’m close,” Jimin breathes and there’s a scorching shiver going up Taehyung spine, because fuck if that’s not the hottest thing ever.

“Come on, hyung, make him come, he’s pretty when he comes, isn’t he?” he strains, barely holding himself in when he hears Yoongi inhaling sharply. “So fu-fuckin—“

Jemin shuts him up with his lips, eager and messy just before his whole chest shudders and he’s coming in a strangled cry, Taehyung removing his hand from Yoongi’s head to let him move freely, instead bringing it up to hold Jimin’s, who’s melting the sheets, breathless.

“Did he swallow? Mhm? Did you swallow, hyung?” the only answer he gets is Yoongi shifting to settle between his legs, mouthing at his cock the next moment. “Yes, fuck— ah, so fucking good—“

“That’s so hot, what the fuck,” Jimin whispers, his voice shaky as he drapes himself over Taehyung to suckle at the spot under his jaw.

Taehyung’s hips cant up on contact, an arm hooking around Jimin’s body and the other at the Yoongi’s nape, and then Yoongi hollows his cheeks, makes the suction that much more intense and Taehyung is gone. The wave burns through him, so violent that his thighs nearly squeeze closed around Yoongi’s head, flexing and shaking and he scrapes his nails in Jimin’s side, a broken sound coming out of his parched throat.

He goes lax, breathing trembling with every lazy pump of Yoongi’s fist on his softening cock. Jimin’s nose is buried in the crook of his neck and he tips his chin down to kiss his shoulder, feeling soft and boneless.

“Hyung,” he murmurs, hardly managing anything else.

“Mhm?” Yoongi finally comes out from under the sheets, resting his moist forehead on Taehyung’s lower abdomen, strands sticky with sweat.

“Did you come?”

Yoongi laughs breathily, silently pressing of lips just under Taehyung’s navel.

“A while back.”

“We need,” Jimin croaks, barely audible as he talks against Taehyung’s skin. “We need a shower.”

Taehyung swallows, fog falling over him and clouding his mind. But it’s the good kind. Peaceful
and sated and happy.

He doesn’t let Jimin go after that.
He doesn’t really let Yoongi go neither.

There’s this tension hanging around them, and he can certainly feel it. But it’s nothing unpleasant, or awkward. More akin to the clumsiness of novelty, maybe.

It’s nice, to have them at home. His best friend and this classmate he’s learned to love. So he keeps them close, even if it’s just for today. Because he doesn’t know if it’s going to last.

They eat breakfast, their first the three of them together, he realizes, and Jimin eats everything that’s on his plate, and it settles a balm over the itch of Taehyung’s worry. And when they stand up to wash the dishes and that he’s busy cleaning the table, he sees Jimin place the lightest peck to Yoongi’s lips in his peripheral vision.

And when Yoongi’s eyes meet his, Taehyung smiles. Because they look good together. It’s cute. They’re cute.

They’re not together, but they’re cute.
3.6 Surely we’re bright enough to outshine the stars

Chapter Notes

There’s a brief scene of overdose in this, so please be careful if that's something that makes you uncomfortable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Their afternoon is lazy, just like their morning was, in the post-sex haze and without the underlining thought of exams and assignments. It’s so uncalculated, with those places they decide to go on a whim. Walking, mostly. There’s a cloudy ceiling above them that lets slivers of sunlight warm their skin from time to time, a delightful contrast to the shivers that run up their arms when the wind blows.

It feels so great and so free with the two of them, that Jimin meets an invisible wall when he has to leave them to meet Seokjin.

It’s past 10pm when he’s dropped in front of his house, the absence of proper parting lingering when he swings the door of Taehyung’s car closed. He still doesn’t dare openly kissing them when they’re together. Something inside of him is pushing him to still be discreet about it, though he’s not sure why he’d feel like this in the first place. It’s not a secret. They know. But perhaps this, along with the blur around Taehyung and Yoongi’s relationship, stops him from throwing himself all in.

He stands there until they’re turning the next corner, hands in his pockets, a little nervous. He twists his phone in his hand, decides to look at the messages he’s ignored for hours.

**Seokjin hyung**: Are we still meeting tonight?

18-06-2016, 17:03

**Seokjin hyung**: You haven’t texted me since last week, so I’m wondering

18-06-2016, 18:57

Jimin doesn’t feel good about what he’s about to do.

**You**: yes hyung, im sorry for not answering earlier

18-06-2016, 22:14
Deep within, it makes him sorts of nauseous.

Seokjin hyung: Good
18-06-2016, 22:16

He rushes through his shower, puts on fresh clothes.

Seokjin hyung: Do you want me to take a place near the bar?
18-06-2016, 22:37

Seokjin hyung: Or would you like something more intimate
18-06-2016, 22:40

He looks at himself in the mirror, at his damp hair that he barely untangled with his fingers, to his own eyes that he meets, that he notices are haggard.

He feels bad. So bad.

But, sickeningly, he also feels excited.

You: a place just for the two of us
18-06-2016, 22:49

Taehyung slips his fingers in Yoongi’s hair at his nape, and he gives a light pull, just enough to have him groan, to have him crave his skin a little more.

They didn’t make it far into the apartment. They were walking to the kitchen when Yoongi tugged at his Taehyung’s arm, backing him up against the wall.
It’s not the first time that it happens. Jimin igniting them. Making them want to touch and feel and hold even when he does as little as laugh this high-pitched laugh of his, or just when he calls hyung and that Taehyung still turns to him just to see that sparkle in his eyes when he looks at Yoongi. Taehyung would kiss him then, and would also kiss that soft smile that it spells on Yoongi’s lips.

And the thought of this, of them, of this thing they have, the thought of something that maybe could work but doesn’t, the thought of a happiness that he might lose just like he lost the first one, makes Taehyung stiffen under Yoongi’s hands.

It all so easily comes back to the surface. The things he wants to forget, get over. They grow and wrap around him as effortlessly as they always did, with tight vines and thorns.

He’s still bleeding. It’s 17 months later and Taehyung is still pearling blood from the cracks Yoongi keeps open with the gentle of his hands and that gaze he lays on him sometimes.

I remember, it says.

I remember.

There’s no use in trying.

Yoongi and him, it can’t work.

Δ

Jimin thanks the girl holding the door open for him.

It’s a noisy place. He knew that. Maybe it wasn’t his wiser choice. But he probably hoped, unconsciously, that being in such an active and nervous place would drown the jitters in his own stomach.

It doesn’t.

It’s one of Jimin’s favorite song that’s shaking the dancefloor when he arrives at the bar, but he doesn’t feel like dancing. He’d just shrivel up and disappear if he could, the physical proximity he shares with those strangers too much, scorching at his nerves and making him anxious.

He glances around, searching for his anchor amongst all the movements, the flashing lights and the messy tables, until he finds him, Seokjin, sitting in a banquette and a hand up to draw his attention. His brown hair falls softly over his face, his navy collarless shirt is simple and adjusted and there is, as usual, this charm and this class around him that makes him clash with the rest around, like he doesn’t belong there. Jimin acknowledges him a bit dazedly, wondering if he ever heard of Seokjin having someone in his life, and he leans over the bar and orders to that waitress he always finds smiling when he visits this place.

It’s here, tonight. The thing that’s making everything edible repulsive, that’s making the simple idea of choosing and ordering food anxiety-inducing. So he chooses something light and alcohol-free.

He sits facing Seokjin on the plush, dark cushion, a plate of snacks already between them and his stomach coils with discomfort.
“Hey,” Seokjin says with his voice of honey, and Jimin is glad he’s chosen a seat where the noise around won’t be too much of a problem.

“Sorry I’m a little late,” he places his glass on the table, tries to sit in a way that’s comfortable.

Seokjin waves a hand in dismissal.

“It’s fine,” he says, checking one last thing on his phone before he flips it face down as to not get distracted.

And that’s when Jimin feels it at full intensity, like a rush of adrenaline flooding him, overpowering. The guilt. His guilt fueled by his curiosity.

“So, what did you need to talk about?”

Δ

“Did you think of me? While fucking them.”

He spits the words like venom, because it’s the only shape the hurt inside of him will take. It’s pain that’s so sharp and crushing, it can’t come out as anything else than violence.

Yoongi stills, his nose hovering the tender flesh of Taehyung’s throat.

“This again,” he breathes, and it fans something warm, but covers Taehyung in shivers.

“Answer me.”

Yoongi levels himself with Taehyung, eyes piercing through his with an unabashed glint, their hastened breathing mingling between their lips. He doesn’t back away.

“What are you trying to do, Tae?”

“I’m trying to find out if you were feeling good with a cock up your ass knowing it wasn’t mine.”

Yoongi squints, his head giving the slightest tilt to the side. Taehyung feels him, feels his anger and it soothes him, in a way. Makes him feel better. If he’s scorched and abraded, then Yoongi needs to be, too.

“Stop that,” Yoongi warns and Taehyung smiles.

“It must have felt great, right? You wouldn’t have stayed that long if it wasn’t fun.” He’s given no answer, except from the visible tightening of Yoongi’s jaw. “Must have been relieving,” he purses his lips, gives a nod of approval. “And America is a great place, too. Did you feel free?”

“I’d shut the fuck up if I were you.”

Taehyung takes a step forward, his frame broader and taller than Yoongi’s, a hand to his chest to force him backwards.

Yoongi used to be the moon in his nights, now he’s the darkness all around it.
Yoongi and him, it can’t work.

“I knew it would come,” Seokjin laughs gently, taking a sip through his neon-colored straw. The lights draw his features in blues and greens.

Jimin’s lips stretch shyly, he still has the decency to flush. He wishes it could alleviate that sensation that’s squeezing his gut, knowing that’s not doing anything surprising or shocking. But he just feels disgusting for asking Seokjin about things that Yoongi and Taehyung don’t seem to want to talk about. But through his heartache, he’s selfish. And he needs to know.

His fingers go to wrap around his glass, the surface cold and wet. But it’s reassuring.

“And what part do you want to hear about?” Seokjin continues, patient. Jimin folds his leg over the other. **Everything**, he would say. **Everything, because I know it’s none of my business, and I know we’re not committed or anything, but I’m sure they’re lying and I hate it.** “The childhood part? The high school part? Or the one after Yoongi suddenly left for New York and completely destroyed Taehyung?”

Jimin frowns.

“What?”

“Must have felt so good,” he whispers in hoarse sounds, “to opens your thighs and your arms to people knowing I wasn’t there to slow you down anymore.” Yoongi bats at Taehyung’s hand, fists his in his t-shirt instead. Taehyung wants to break it, that gold vase Yoongi keeps everything in. He wants to see it shattered in cutting shreds of beautiful, spilling out everything that’s ugly inside of him, everything he’s yet to tell. Taehyung wants to break **Yoongi**, just like Yoongi broke him, he wants to let him feel how it is, to have the past wrapped around his throat and choking him. “How many cocks did you taste, mhm? How many girls did you—“

Yoongi pushes at him so hard that the wall shakes when he bounces against it, and he plants both his palms on either side of Taehyung’s head in a loud thud.

They’re bleeding in harmony. Taehyung is satisfied.

His head rolls back against the surface, eyelids dropping shut, his heart in his ears like a drum. He lets Yoongi’s heavy gaze set him ablaze, burn him in places, until he collapses from the inside.

“Tae.”

It’s Yoongi’s tone that makes him realize he’s teared up. Just a silent trail cutting his cheek in half.

He breathes through his nose, like he’s been taught to when he was a kid, when he was getting too excited at school and they had to calm him down. He breathes deep, but the pain that’s spread
through his chest won’t go away.

He slowly, blindly grabbles up with his hands, reaching for Yoongi’s forearm. And when his cold fingers meet warmer skin, he gently wraps Yoongi’s wrist of his fingers and leans to press his mouth to the inside of it, his lips just under the birth of his thumb.

“Why did you leave me?”

Yoongi’s silence is more painful than the frailty there is in between his ribs but he endures it, this and all those days before when he was feeling hopeless and worthless and lost, he can put up with this for a little longer if it means he’s going to get his answer.

“I—Because I was stupid and I thought this was the only way I wouldn’t be ruining you,” it doesn’t sound practiced, but it sounds overthought, like something that steeped inside for a long time. Like he asked himself that too often. “I left because I loved you too much and I was scared I was being bad for you.”

“If you loved me so much,” he moves Yoongi’s arm to hold it closer to his heart, like a lifeline, “then how could you go and fuck those people?”

He can hear Yoongi swallow through the soft sounds of his breathing.

“I was trying to forget.”

Taehyung caves in.

He’d want to trash the pain out of his core but his back won’t leave the wall. He’d want to scream, make his throat sore and raw for days, but nothing comes out. Just more tears.

“Why would you want to fo-forget about us? Hyung I don’t understand – Did you grow tired of me? Did I – “

“No, Tae, that’s not—“ his other hand goes to cup his jaw, in this way that Taehyung always found reassuring. There’s something tight in his voice. “That doesn’t mean I didn’t love you, okay?”

Taehyung rushes air in and out of his lungs, his body, his brain, he’s overwhelmed, hazed, on the line of spaced out.

He wishes he could hear those words a thousand more times, so that they permeate him whole and maybe, maybe it could soothe the him from the past, sitting in this hospital bed, with no tears left to cry.

But he also wishes he didn’t have to hear them. He wishes Yoongi wouldn’t cut him open again, wouldn’t step into the black hole that’s settled around his heart, where the light have disappeared, along with the moon, and the promises they made years and years ago under shooting stars.

“That doesn’t mean I didn’t love you, please Taehyung don’t think that.”

Because Yoongi and him, it can’t work anymore.
“What d’you mean ‘completely destroyed Taehyung’? I mean, how could he not know that his best friend was to go to New York?” And saying this, it more than gives him the vertigo of falling off a cliff, it starts lighting up every little thing, one by one. “Didn’t hyung tell him?”

Seokjin stares at him with mild curiosity, and perhaps a little suspicion. He puts his glass back on the table.

“His best friend? Jimin-ah, didn’t they tell you? They were together for over three years.”

Δ

You : im leaving the house
29-12-2014, 23:35

Tae : okay, the whole place will be ours
29-12-2014, 23:37

Tae : as usual
29-12-2014, 23:37

Yoongi shakes his head, wonders how many years it’s been since Taehyung’s father spent his birthday with him.

He climbs in the car, exhales his frustration, and hopes he makes it on time.

He takes a last look at his phone, indicating him he has a little under a minute left. He jogs the narrow path leading to the door, swinging it open as carelessly as he shuts it.

He runs up the stairs two by two, shoes still on, and his body collides with Taehyung’s in the doorway of his room a few heartbeats later, palms on cheeks, lips on lips.

“Happy birthday, baby,” he whispers, and Taehyung’s eyes go tender.

“Your timing is always on point,” he says, and his breath is raspberry and alcohol and tobacco, his skin heated, his clothes loose and comfortable.

“Always,” he kisses him again, wetter this time, with more intent, and it doesn’t get lost on Taehyung.

Taehyung chuckles against him, a warm sound Yoongi never gets tired of, twining nimble fingers in Yoongi’s woolen scarf and he helps him remove it, then his jacket, and then the rest.
Yoongi glances at Taehyung’s form near the bed, bending to pick up the shirt he had on when he got here and slipping it over his head. That makes him smile, wrists twisting to open the bottle of vodka that’s resting heavy in his hand. Taehyung has a wardrobe to make anyone jealous, but he steals Yoongi’s oversized t-shirts and hoodies whenever he can. And it’s fine. Yoongi likes how his cologne lingers in the material.

Yoongi’s hair is still wet and flat on his head from the shower they’re just out of, beads of water rolling off his skin, along his neck and across his torso. There’s a clink when the mouth touches the first shot glass, and he pours two of them.

“Come here,” he drawls, and Taehyung perks up from his phone, shaking his fringe away from his face before he walks to him and takes the alcohol he’s offered.

Their eyes touch for a moment, talking sweet in silence, and Taehyung’s lips pull up, eyelids heavy, he looks tired.

“I love you,” Yoongi whispers.

“I love you,” Taehyung answers.

And to this they drink, motions in sync, like everything else, like they’ve always been.

They’re sitting on the wide expense of marble that is the kitchen island, cross legged, half naked, a huge bowl of candies between them, along with their cold ashtray and the vodka they’re well into. There’s this music in the background, some old stuff they’ve recorded together that sounds crappy, but that, even years after, still makes him swell from the inside.

He’s tipsy. Brain a fuzzy mess. Content.

Yoongi looks at Taehyung popping yet another gummy in his mouth, looks at his hand, at his fingers.

“You’re 18,” he says, raspy, the clock indicates 2:39 on the wall behind Taehyung.

“Mhm.”

“Taehyung-ah,”

“Mhm?”

“Taehyung-ah, in some countries, you can get married now.”

Taehyung looks at him then, eyes a little round, the bottle in his grasp suspended in mid-air. Yoongi holds his gaze, thinks of this place he’s planned on bringing him the following afternoon, where they can buy one of those shiny things. Yoongi feels his skin flush more than the alcohol already makes it, feels his heart thundering, hammering against his ribs. But it’s a beautiful song.

“Hyung,”
“What do you say?”

Taehyung grins, worrying his bottom lip, and eats up the space between them to press his lips to Yoongi’s.

He wonders if Taehyung can hear this song, too.

He laughs softly when Taehyung brings the bottle to his mouth and drinks straight from it and that he sees that he’s smiling still.

It’s warm, inside, out, all around. His thoughts are scattered and unfocused, the only thing he sees is Taehyung.

Yoongi feels full. Sated. Happy.

And without thinking, he puts his index fingers under the bottle when Taehyung tries to put it down, he very gently tilts it up for him to take just another gulp. And Taehyung does. He does and he laughs through his nose, takes another one even after Yoongi has removed his finger.

And then another one.

And another. Until Yoongi has to take the bottle from him, giggling.

He’s feeling Taehyung’s excitement radiate over him in waves, pure, unaltered joy, and he thinks it’s cute.

He watches Taehyung lie on the surface, then, resting his head in Yoongi’s lap, and he indulges him, pets his lavender hair.

Yoongi is in love. Against what their parents say, and how they keep telling him how bad he is for Taehyung, Yoongi is in love. And this choice he’s made, and those plane tickets he’s bought for the two of them, he’s not going to regret them.

It’s after a couple of minutes spent in silence that Yoongi notices. The weirdness in Taehyung’s breathing. Too shallow, irregular. For a moment, he thinks he fell asleep.

But when he doesn’t budge when Yoongi slightly shakes him, and that he sees, when he bends over him, that his lips are a sick tinge of blue, he panics.

“Tae,” he pushes at his shoulder, to have him roll onto his back. “Tae, hey, wake up?”

Then the first spasm comes, violent and startling and Yoongi freezes up.

“Tae?” he looks around, distressed, trying to see where he left his phone. “No, no, fuck,” his eyes land on the small, transparent bottle of the pills Taehyung’s father wants him to stuff himself with every day. Taehyung shakes in his arms. Yoongi should’ve thought about it before he let him drink that much. “Shit, shit, Taehyung—”

It’s Taehyung’s phone that he finds first, on the table of the dining room, and he unlocks it with the date of their anniversary. 0531.

He can hear Taehyung wheeze in the background, can hear the abnormal sounds he’s making and Yoongi is choking on his own tears, trembling and feeling useless when he composes the emergency number.

He should have thought about it.
He should have known.

He should have done better.

Taehyung. He’s ruined Taehyung.

Δ

“I’m really sorry, I thought you knew.”

“It’s fine, hyung,” Jimin assures, and while it’s not entirely the truth, he can’t complain. After all, he asked for it. “Don’t worry. It’s not like I didn’t have my doubts anyway.”

His gaze drops to the table, where his hand is still clutched around his glass. It’s a weird sensation, to finally understand everything, but then wishing he didn’t know. It all became so clear, but also that much more cloudy.

Seokjin remains silent for a while, giving Jimin’s thoughts their space but Jimin can sense his eyes on him, weighty and knowing.

“Are you mad?” he eventually asks.

Jimin considers, for a fleeting moment. Then chuckles dryly.

“No, I’m not. In fact that explains a lot.”

“I’m really surprised they didn’t tell you about it, I mean—“

“They probably had their reasons,” there’s a pinch, vicious, in his gut, it has him thinking that he was unworthy of their trust.

“Well it didn’t end prettily,” Seokjin says and his tone has shifted to something more aggravated, darker. Jimin doesn’t like it. “I’m even surprised Yoongi came back.”

Jimin sips at his drink, blank. The thought of never meeting Yoongi rouses in him something bitter and unpleasant and he pushes it away, doesn’t to let himself become more anxious than he already is.

“Jimin-ah, I’m really sorry,” Jimin believes him.

“Don’t be. Our relationship being fucked is nowhere near your fault.”

Seokjin reaches over the long table, gently squeezes Jimin’s forearm.

“Wants us to leave? We can do something else if you’d like.”

Jimin shakes his head in weak motions.

“I’m fine,” he’s not. “Since we’re here, might as well hear the whole story?”

Seokjin gives him a doubtful expression, but he’s gentle, and understanding and he nods, sitting back in the banquette.

“You know I don’t know the full story though, right? I mean, if you really want to know, you’ll have
to ask them about it.”

“I know.”

Seokjin sighs, long, thoughtful, fixes the plate in front of him for a moment.

“To be honest, there’s a long part I don’t know about. Like how they got together. You probably know we were childhood friends?” Jimin acquiesces. “Then when I was 15 I moved to China with my brother, and when I came back, they had already been together for over a year. It’s like they had melded together, it was a bit weird at first. But I wasn’t surprised. They had always been the closest pair.”

Seokjin’s smile is full of nostalgia, velvet under the stroboscopes. Jimin softens at the sight. He drinks when Seokjin does. He’s tired, suddenly.

“Mhm, well. We weren’t as close, after that. We barely talked, in fact. I think they were knitted too tight, and I felt like there was no space left for me. But it’s fine, I mean, I can’t blame them. They had this kind of relationship that often made people jealous, you know. Free, inseparable, a little wild. They were so natural together, you couldn’t miss it.”

Jimin stares at the people sitting at another table, further into the darkness. His throat is tight. He strangely feels like he’s being retold someone’s death.

But he can imagine them, younger, embraced and happy, like they, years later, should still be.

“But I personally know it wasn’t all nice and fun times. Both their families were trying to break them apart, they had dreams they couldn’t fulfill because of the company and ended up involved with a lot of alcohol and drugs and it just… all went to shit the night of Taehyung’s 18th anniversary.”

There’s a pregnant pause. Jimin thinks Seokjin might be trying to make sense of what he’s about to say.

“I still don’t know the details, but Taehyung went into coma. For a day. Two, maybe. I’m not sure. But Yoongi left before he woke up.”

Jimin frowns.

“W-Why?”

Seokjin shrugs, helpless.

“I wish I could answer you. But I’ve only witnessed the aftershocks. Of how destroyed and pathetic Taehyung was after he left. Especially the first months. God, Jimin, he was so—” Jimin looks away. At anything but the sadness in Seokjin’s eyes. “I tried getting closer to him but he was just so out of it, flipped inside out, and he wouldn’t let me. Overtime he isolated himself so much that—“

Someone flops into the banquette in front of him and Jimin jumps, oversensible, and his lungs compensate the sudden stress.

“Seokjin-ah!”

Jimin flinches at the grating sound, violent against the grey of the atmosphere. They talk excitedly, about school and their last exams and the summer break, the stranger blabbering drunk, disgusting comments about a girl in their class.
He gets impatient when he sees Seokjin’s growing discomfort, his trials at ending the conversation only to hit himself to the other’s obliviousness.

“I’ll be back,” Jimin says, abrasive, grabbing his phone and spotting the closest restrooms.

When he gets there, he spatters his face with cold water, doesn’t wipe it dry and locks himself in a bathroom stall, where he sits on the toilet and drops his head in his hands.

There’s so much noise outside, people and music and taps, perfect cacophony matching with his own internal chaos.

After a few minutes, he takes a look at his phone, at the absence of new messages. There’s this growing insecurity in him that he doesn’t understand. Seokjin hasn’t written history, he’s just retold the past. A past that was already existing when Jimin decided he was liking them enough to try to be with them. It shouldn’t invalidate the memories he has with them, or the feelings, or anything. But it does. It’s fucked up, he knows, but it does.

Seokjin pats the space next to him when Jimin comes back. He’s alone, the plate of snacks is gone, his glass too. Jimin slips in, unsure but needing the proximity.

“You okay?”

Jimin nods, bends over the table to grab his own drink and bring it closer, before he leans back in the crimson cushion. He laughs airily then, drained, confused.

“What does that make of me,” he mutters, more to himself than anything but Seokjin hears, he hears and he orients his body toward Jimin’s, hooking a leg on the seat. The warmth of his hand is comforting on Jimin’s arm, gentle in the way it wants to show Seokjin’s presence without intruding.

“Don’t think of it like that, Jimin-ah,” and Jimin laughs again. “Do they make you feel like you’re standing between them?”

And they don’t. Jimin did reflect on that in the past. What he has with Taehyung and what he has with Yoongi, and that sort of symbiosis they have when they’re all together. He feels that if they were to try, he could find a comfortable nest in the affection they offer him.

“No.”

“Then you shouldn’t feel of it any differently now that you know they’ve been together.”

“They haven’t just been together, hyung. They’re still fucking on the regular.”

Seokjin hums gently, head lolling against the seat, hair splayed on his forehead.

“I’m not surprised. Their relationship was always very physical but if they tell you they like you, then I think you should believe them. They’re… special but they wouldn’t lie about that kind of stuff. If you feel cared for when you’re with them, I think that’s what matters.”

He thinks of the affection in Yoongi’s touches, the warmth of his gaze when they spend lazy times naked in bed just looking at each other and talking about nothing and everything, his willingness and understanding.
He thinks of Taehyung’s worry when he doesn’t eat enough, of the extra mile he takes to make him laugh sometimes, to the soft squeeze of his palm around his when they walk hand in hand, to the whispered praises he places in his ear when they have sex.

Jimin feels cared for. He does. He feels more than that, if he’s to be perfectly honest.

But all the things he’s noticed about them, the lingering hands, the sentences they finish for each other, the tender thirstiness when they stare at one another, they all make sense now.

It’s not that he wasn’t expecting it. But it seems huge, now.

Jimin has been living around a ghost for a while, but now, just now can he see it for what it is.

He gapes once, twice, wanting to get words out but unable to.

“You don’t have to answer me, just answer yourself,” Seokjin says when Jimin’s struggle becomes too palpable. “And don’t try to fix the past. Don’t.” Jimin swallows around his parched throat. His stomach is empty and growling. He feels hollow. “If you want to be with them, help them build something new instead.”

Δ

For once, Yoongi wishes Cannelle was to come out.

He wishes she would walk in with that dancing gait of hers, her tail high and curving prettily, her purring easy reassurance.

She does Taehyung good, while the only thing Yoongi seems capable of doing is hurt him. He held him for as long as he was permitted to, until Taehyung’s whole being pushed his with a silent violence, an immobile anger, and Yoongi understood that what he could do for him had reached its limit.

So he wishes Cannelle were there, that the tiny bell around her neck was to sing with every rub of Taehyung’s hand, because she comforts him.

But she hid under the coffee table in the living room a while ago, when Taehyung’s voice was raised and that Yoongi’s followed, that they shoved each other against the walls and bruised their hearts.

They’re sitting in the kitchen now, next to each other on the floor, backs to cabinets. It’s a petrified stillness around them, pregnant with all sorts of regrets and it runs shivers under Yoongi’s skin. Like tiny little icebergs were to grow inside. He deserves it. The pinch in his chest whenever Taehyung sniffs, he deserves it. It’s been delayed for too long anyway.

Yoongi found no solace in the honesty he offered Taehyung. No pardon. The shadow that follows him will always be part regret, part guilt. And he’s fine with that, too. Their love was the only thing he should never have fucked up, yet he managed to.

Taehyung’s exhale shudders its way out and Yoongi tenses. He sounds exhausted. In his peripheral vision he sees that he’s trembling, hands in his lap, his fingers tangling and detangling like he’s nervous.
Yoongi stands, the jingle of the keys he’s holding in his fist too strident, bouncing against the pale walls. He can sense Taehyung’s gaze follow him until he disappears in the corridor and he kneels once he’s in the living room, in search of emerald orbs.

Cannelle still doesn’t like him. She sees him often, but she still hisses sometimes, when he’s too quick in trying to scratch her head. But today she lets him lift her, securing herself with her claws in his arm. And Yoongi, he brings her back to the kitchen, and he offers her to Taehyung like he used to bring him plushies when he was four and crying for a scratch on the knee. Taehyung accepts her, like he always accepted everything else and he cradles her close to his chest, where she melts and, not long after, starts whirring her pleasant sound.

Yoongi rolls his keychain in his hand, he knows he has to leave now. Taehyung’s eyes are stripping him naked, and he bets he looks ugly. Like murder makes someone ugly.

“I don’t love you anymore, hyung,” Taehyung whispers with a broken voice, yet it cuts through Yoongi like merciless blades.

He swallows. Nods.

“I didn’t expect you to.”

Chapter End Notes

If there is anything, I can be found [here](#)

Love you guys! 🔮
Jimin doesn’t sleep well that night. In fact he doesn’t sleep at all.

Seokjin did his best, brought him back to Namjoon’s apartment where they spent a while talking with his younger sister, but the moment he stepped into his own room, he deflated. Everything caught up, mixed and tangled inside. Suffocating.

The thoughts he has, they’re growing like weeds. And they don’t make much sense and he hates them but they’re there, still. Will be until they clarify things out and talk. Really talk.

He’s been at it for hours now, tossing and turning in his sheets, staring at the star stickers, and out the window. He watches the sun as it rouses the sky, vivid colors piercing through the shadow of branches, he listens to the early birds sing until it all blooms into something bright, and he sits up. His eyes burn, his mouth is dry. It’s just past 6am, and he decides to do a thing he hasn’t done in a while.

Jimin goes for a run. Just to have air chilling his lungs and to bathe in this sensation of being the only one awake, the only one alive.

He’s more at peace when he comes back, takes his shoes off and walks to the dining room to place a light peck to his mother’s cheek. She offers a tender smile that he returns, and together they drink coffee that he finds bitter, speaking with soft voices in the still early morning glow.

After he’s showered and dressed, that his room is clean and his bed made, he texts Yoongi.

You: hyung, can we meet later?
19-06-2016, 13:12

You: the 3 of us
19-06-2016, 13:12

Δ

Yoongi is sitting in his car when he receives Jimin’s message.

He’s been parked in front of the building where Taehyung lives for close to 30 minutes. His texts and his calls have been left unanswered since morning, and he’s hesitating to go up, and get in with his spare key.

The previous night, he went down those same stairs he’s currently looking at with words still stuck inside and wanting to be said without having the opportunity to do so. And now there’s a need to push them out, but he’s scared of having already done too much damage.
He sighs when he rereads it, gnawing at his bottom lip. This sounds off, coming from Jimin.

**You:** if i can get a hold of tae, then probably  
19-06-2016, 13:20

**Jimin:** why, whats happening  
19-06-2016, 13:23

He starts typing words to tell him not to worry, that he’ll keep him updated, but he receives another text before he can send his own.

**Jimin:** hes replying to me?  
19-06-2016, 13:26

Hurt surges through him and he feels stupid. *Of course he would.*

**Jimin:** he says hes at home  
19-06-2016, 13:26

He stares at the street, brain numbly processing the cars rolling past him, then he looks up at the building, at the windows of Taehyung’s place.

**Jimin:** i still need to do some stuff  
19-06-2016, 13:29

**Jimin:** but if i drop by at his at around 3, is it fine?  
19-06-2016, 13:30

He lets his screen turn black, wondering if it’s really a good idea. Wondering why Taehyung would have agreed to it in the first place.
He puts the device in a slot in the console, pressing on the clutch and getting ready to start the car when it vibrates loudly against the surface.

**Taehyung:** you've been parked there for an hour

19-06-2016, 13:35

**Taehyung:** you can stop being a wimp and come up

19-06-2016, 13:35

And Yoongi, as he should, still hesitates. He hesitates because in this remaining hour they have alone, it could all turn to shit. And he doesn’t want Jimin to be caught up in that.

But it’s Taehyung.

And he’s never been able to gravitate too far.

Δ

They’re already together when Jimin gets in, keys tight in his fist without leaving his shoes in the entryway, mind floating between anger and apprehension. They’re sitting on the couch, with a whole city and then some between them. What’s around them is light but Jimin can see in their eyes that it’s just for show.

“Hey,” he says, planting himself in the middle of the living room. Taehyung answers in the same fashion but Yoongi frowns, and just from this, Jimin knows that Yoongi knows, too. “So.”

“So,” Taehyung repeats, shifting.

“So. Apparently you guys didn’t consider important to tell me I was fucking around with ex boyfriends.” It all withers. The air he breathes, Yoongi’s stance, Taehyung’s softer expression. “Serious ex boyfriends, on top of that.”

Jimin waits for something, anything, but it doesn’t come. Words they won’t say and things they won’t share. They’re not giving them. Yoongi tries to hold his gaze, and Taehyung escapes somewhere else, just blankly stares at the wall behind Jimin.

“We –“, Yoongi starts, glancing over at Taehyung, “I personally didn’t think it was necessary to specify since it’s been over for a while.”

Jimin gives them a bitter laugh.
“Ah, yes. So very over that you still have sex and can hardly spend a couple days apart. So very over.”

And at this Taehyung stands, avoids eye contact and storms past Jimin and out the living room. Jimin knows he’s going to put his shoes on, that he’s going to go through the door but he lets him. He’s learned this, that Taehyung needs his space when he's stressed. And he’ll catch up with him soon enough anyway. So when the click of the door is heard and that Yoongi makes a move to follow him, he breathes against the pressure in his chest.

“You fucking stay sit, we need to talk.”

Yoongi’s eyes dart away, brows furrowing slightly, annoyed at Jimin’s tone.

“Did you go to Seokjin hyung to sneak up?”

“Yeah, I did.”

“Why the fuck would you do that?”

“Because you both seem to think that I’m stupid.”

“That’s not true, Jimin.”

“You both seem to think that I’m stupid, that I haven’t noticed shit and that I’d eat up anything you’d say.”

“You’re wrong. And you shouldn’t have gone to him,” Yoongi shakes his head slowly. His jaw is tight.

“You have no right to try and make me feel bad after having omitted something as important as a three years long relationship.”

“Three years and a half,” he whispers, and Jimin barely discerns the words.

“What?”

“I said, three years and a half.”

“Thanks for correcting me, that just proves how over it you are.”

“Can I leave now?”

“Nope.”

“Taehyung can’t—”

“I know. And we’ll go get him together. After you’re done.”

Yoongi stares him down, and for the first time, Jimin feels small under his scrutiny.

“Done with what? Didn’t you get what you wanted?”

“I want your side of the story, because the one I have right now makes you look like an asshole. And I know that it’s not what you are. So tell me why you left.”

For a while it’s just that almost sacred quietness, with Jimin still standing and immobile, and Yoongi
on the couch, elsewhere. There’s the gentle sound of the wind coming in from the open patio door, the low buzzing of cars and people on the street.

Jimin uses them as an anchor. Uses them to remind himself why he likes this place so much, the too-big rooms, the furniture, the old cat, those persons he meets with, in here. Especially those persons.

Jimin would run out the door if it weren’t for those thoughts. His skin feels too tight to live in.

But he likes Yoongi and he likes Taehyung and he doesn’t want to give up trying.

“Do you mind sitting?” Yoongi asks eventually, and Jimin finds himself disoriented by how vulnerable he sounds. So he sits. In the armchair on the opposite side of the coffee table.

Yoongi doesn’t get emotional, as he retells. He doesn’t cry. His voice doesn’t crack.

But something tells Jimin that it’s just because he spent too much time turning over the memories to really feel their ache anymore.

He doesn’t go into details for the most part, vaguely talks about the things Jimin already knows.

“We were just,” he licks his lips, transfixed by something on the balcony, “too much. Drink and smoke and record stuff and make love, that’s all we’d ever do.” Jimin kicks his shoes off, brings his knees closer to his chest. “And the parents, they were doing this thing, y’know, where they know but pretend they don’t? Yeah, that. They were doing that. Especially Taehyung’s dad. He was so persuaded, so deeply convinced that I was corrupting his son. In the end I believed him.”

Yoongi spaces out again. His shoulders have hunched with his sentences, his hands are tangled limply on his thighs. He looks like he’s just had the world dropped on him. And Jimin imagines it’s a bit of that.

“What happened, hyung?” It’s shy, it’s light and careful and open, it’s the gentlest push he can manage.

“Taehyung was on risperidone. For years. His dad thought he was too turbulent and too excited all the time. And you know, some parents find it easier to feed their kids meds instead of just talking to them. His dad was like that. And a week or so before Taehyung’s birthday, he asked for the dose to be increased. Again. Apparently he thought his son was regressing because they had more and more arguments about the company.” He shifts, closes his eyes. “It happened so fast, Jimin, so fucking fast, it still doesn’t make sense in my head, it’s all twisted up. Him taking the bottle and drinking. Me tipping the bottle for him to drink more. And more. And then he crashed. Because I didn’t think about the new dosage and I made him drink too much.” He pauses, sucks his lips between his teeth. “You should have seen the glare his dad gave me when he arrived at the hospital, nearly five hours later. He didn’t say anything, but I understood every word.”

Jimin swallows. His vision is filled with cloud, wet smudges of color.

All the anger contorted around his heart, all the doubts, they melted away somewhere between Yoongi’s first choked breath and he moment he himself realized it was an accident, and that Yoongi bears it like a cross.

He goes to share the couch with Yoongi. Not so long ago he wanted to desert this whole situation, and now he can’t stand too much distance separating their bodies.

“And I honestly, genuinely thought it was gonna be dead when I’d come back. That we’d go each
our own way and that it’d be over.” Jimin nods. He wants to believe him. “I’ve been an asshole.”

“Hyung,” he breathes, sighs.

“No matter what reason I use to justify myself before you, don’t ever think I haven’t been an asshole. Because that’s exactly what I’ve been. And abandoning him is my deepest regret.”

Δ

Taehyung is crossing a street when his cellphone rings, an excited vibration against his thigh.

“Yeah?” he answers before he breathes out the smoke of his half-consumed cigarette.

“Taehyung-ah,”

And as expected, Jimin’s voice hurts. He doesn’t sound angry or on the defensive, but it hurts still. In fact, every thought and every little thing does and he feels like he’s about to break.

“Mhm.”

“Where are you?”

Taehyung looks around, to the shops and the constructions. The wind is insistent but it’s a pretty day. The flowers have bloomed, everywhere. There’re baskets of them hanging from the windows and lining the buildings, beautiful colors against dull stone-grey.

“Tae?” Jimin asks after he’s been silent for too long, and Taehyung considers lying.

“It’s fine, Jimin,” he brings the stick to his lips, inhales.

“Don’t say that, it’s not fine. We need to talk?”

“No, we don’t need to.”

“What?”

“I said we don’t need to.”

“Tae, I can’t hear you well, just tell me where you are, yeah?”

“Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Yeah, tomorrow we can talk,” he says and he sounds confident, but today or tomorrow, he doesn’t think he’ll ever want to face this.

Jimin’s side of the line is quiet for a moment, but he can hear a door closing in the background, and his breathing as he walks.

“Yeah, okay,” he concedes and it convinces no one.

Taehyung feels heavy, when he hangs up. He feels heavy but hollow and empty. It’s as though
everything he had, he threw it out of his system the night before, when Yoongi had him caged against that wall.

It would be a lie to say that he doesn’t want to see Jimin. Heave out this fear he has in the warmth of his embrace, have his voice lull him into something calmer. But with Jimin comes the discussion he doesn’t want to have. He can’t. He’s been trying to suppress it for so long, if Jimin wants to hear the words, if Jimin wants to understand, the whole of last year will have been a waste. The nights at the bars, the alcohol, the stuff he bought from Namjoon. He can’t.

You: did you tell him
19-06-2016, 16:01

He drops his cigarette butt on the sidewalk, lights up another.

Min Yoongi: that’s funny, i knew you’d think that
19-06-2016, 16:03

Min Yoongi: didn’t you see my fucking face
19-06-2016, 16:03

Min Yoongi: of course i didn’t tell him
19-06-2016, 16:03

Taehyung didn’t notice. The moment Jimin mentioned them being exes, his brain shut everything off.

Min Yoongi: that’s not exactly the kind of story that makes me look good, taehyung
19-06-2016, 16:04

Min Yoongi: i don’t understand why you think i would’ve told him without you being there
19-06-2016, 16:04

You: so you were planning on telling him
19-06-2016, 16:05
Min Yoongi: obviously
19-06-2016, 16:05

Min Yoongi: taehyung wtf
19-06-2016, 16:05

Min Yoongi: why? you wanted to keep hiding it forever?
19-06-2016, 16:05

Min Yoongi: in case you couldn’t tell, jimin is important to me
19-06-2016, 16:06

Min Yoongi: and yes i wanted to tell him, but i didn’t know how
19-06-2016, 16:06

Min Yoongi: because it’s complicated and you’re complicated
19-06-2016, 16:07

Taehyung lifts his gaze from his screen, settles it on the straight lines of the buildings around, fighting the tightness of his throat. For a while he’s known that Jimin would need to hear about all of that. He’d be reminded of it every day they would spend time together. But he, just like Yoongi, didn’t know how or where to start.

Min Yoongi: jimin called you, didn’t he
19-06-2016, 16:09

He shuts his phone off.

Taehyung takes the next street, one that leads to a place he doesn’t know.

And he hopes they will have left his place when he will come back with the rising of the moon.

Yoongi’s eyes are on him, they’re boring holes in the pretense he’s trying to shield himself with. For the most part of the meeting, he’s acutely aware of the way he’s trying to communicate, but Taehyung, who spent the night out and met with his bed at around 4am, doesn’t want to have anything to do with this.
Jimin and Yoongi, surely, have talked. Surely Jimin has been told the whole story. Maybe Taehyung can be spared. He doesn’t have anything to do with this.

When the men around the table finally stand, Taehyung casts his eyes down and does the same. Yoongi will wait for him, he senses it.

Taehyung goes through the door and he doesn’t look back. He ignores the calls of his name when he hears them.

He sits, the humid grass bending under his weight, the expanse of the refinery sprawled before him and it’s soothing. The sky is splotched steel and titanium, the clouds are still full. It rained for most of the day, and he thinks it might rain all night. He likes rain a lot. If he’s lucky, lightning will run through the darkness, and it will give him a song to sing along to.

He fumbles for his pack in his pocket, a new one, and once he’s got his lungs going, he turns his phone on. His phone that’s been off for over a day. He places it face down in the green carpet, knows it might vibrate a couple of times from all the notifications and messages.

He’s been lethargic since morning. Sat home and had Netflix rolling without really watching, petting Cannelle with automatism whenever she was asking for affection. Cats can’t really love, he’s learned. They appreciate and they trust, but they don’t really get attached. Taehyung somehow wishes he was like that, too.

He burns through a first stick, then picks up his phone again.

Min Yoongi: ?
19-06-2016, 16:15

Min Yoongi: tell me whre you are?
19-06-2016, 16:22

Min Yoongi: or at least answer me?
19-06-2016, 17:07

Min Yoongi: tae
19-06-2016, 18:12

Min Yoongi: fuck i hate when you do that
19-06-2016, 19:55

Min Yoongi: can you just tell me if you’re okay?
19-06-2016, 21:33

Min Yoongi: if you dont wanna talk to me it's fine but can you at least text jimin?
19-06-2016, 21:51

Min Yoongi: why the fuck did you run off

20-06-2016, 10:37

Min Yoongi: really now?

20-06-2016, 10:59

Jimin: tae can you call me?

19-06-2016, 18:19

Jimin: hyung keeps texting me

19-06-2016, 18:20

Jimin: and we’re worried?

19-06-2016, 18:20

Jimin: i tried calling you and your phone is off

19-06-2016, 23:33

Jimin: dont do anything stupid, i’ll wait for you to call back

20-06-2016, 00:38

Unknown number: Hi, Taehyung! I hope you’re doing well! It’s Gayoung, your father’s girlfriend. He gave me your number, hopefully you don’t mind? We are organizing a small dinner this Saturday, would you like to come? I would love to learn more about you! Please let me know, I will be waiting for your response!

20-06-2016, 15:53

He stares at the last message. A long time. Until he can’t see properly anymore, and that his lungs are wrung out. He stares, and he breaks.

The bottle is already a fourth through when he walks back to his previous spot. It’s cheap alcohol, the only one he could get his hands on in the closest corner store, and it’s supposed to be rum but it doesn’t exactly taste like it. It burns his throat the bad way, had him cough the first few swallows, but he doesn’t really care.

He sits in the same place he was, that little slope that lines a side of the refinery, and nothing has changed, it’s just a little darker. The smoke of the refinery and from his cigarette contrast more prettily with everything around, he likes it.

He spends a while losing himself in the scenery, metal, orange lights and tall, tall lines guiding his
eyes up to a starless sky. He drinks until his ache is lulled to numbness, until his fingers feel weird around his cigarette, that turning his head too fast forces him to close his eyes, until he loses control on those parts of him that he keeps so tightly reigned in.

You: i dontneed a subsyitute mother thanks
20-06-2016, 22:27

He laughs lightly though he can’t tell why, but it’s there, this envy to crack up and laugh until everything is washed away. The stress and the sadness and the anger. He lets his body fall back heavily, the grass feeling plush and comfortable. He lies and he watches the sky move with the wind, the clouds like on a highway, a skyway, and he breathes deep.

He thinks that perhaps he should just stop this, stop everything, stop pretending that he’s going to graduate in that field and take the company over. Stop pretending he doesn’t spit on his dreams every fucking day to avoid conflicts. A part of him likes it, that he’s being ruled by a line someone else has drawn. Here, this is your line, just follow it and it’s going to be fine and easy. And the other part tries not to think about it too much.

He thinks that perhaps, he should burn the bridges, leave Yoongi and Jimin to be happy together. Thinks that it might be too much for everyone, all those feelings and those stories and those fingers to tangle with at night. They would work. Those two. Taehyung is the problem, and he knows. It’s engraved deep in the crevasses of his mind. He’s fucking everything up, because he can’t forget. He can’t forgive.

So maybe, Taehyung thinks, he should be going away. For a while, a couple of months, years, in another city or another country. Or to that beach house his mother once told him he was welcome to use whenever he felt the need to. If he could escape his father and his pitiful fiancée, his studies, the person he’s just learned to trust and love, and the person who used to mean so much to him.

Taehyung thinks this is a good idea.

His arms straight at each side of his torso like a cross, all above him it’s emptiness, and his drowsy mind is at ease with it. And then the first raindrops hit his cheeks, his nose, his forehead. They wet the palms of his hands, his neck, force his eyes closed. Tiny cool pinches. He feels them like needles littering his body, pinning him down, holding him still. His throat closes up.

His hand searches about for his cellphone, unlocks it. 0531.

And he calls the only person he feels like he can trust, right now, amidst all of this.

It rings once.

Twice.

“Taehyung?”

“Jimin-ah, c-come get me?”
“It’s fucking thunder-storming outside, what the fuck is he doing?”

“I don’t know, hyung,” Jimin says with a tone that’s dangerously close to impatience, hopping in the passenger seat of Yoongi’s car. One of them will have to bring Taehyung’s Audi back. “But he didn’t seem okay. At all.”

When they finally catch sight of him, Taehyung is drenched. His t-shirt is glued to his skin, his hair is flat on his head, arms like a cross, fingernails dirty with mud and grass he seems to have dug in.

“Tae,” Jimin tries, pulling his hood over his head. It’s hard to even see, through how thick of a curtain the rain makes. He gets no answer.

“Taehyung-ah,” Yoongi calls, a little louder, from behind him.

Jemin clicks his tongue when they still get nothing, sets on jogging his way to him, meets slippery ground as he climbs to him.

“Taehyung,” he’s closer now, enough to see the rapid movements of his ribcage, and he slows down, his voice softens, “hey, Taehyung.”

He only sees the bottle, empty and the cap off when he’s hovering over him, the soaked cigarette pack lying dead next to it.

“Taehyung, wake up?” he urges, crouching, his gut feeling tight.

The faint rustling of Yoongi’s feet in the grass tells him he’s nearing as well, though he doesn’t get as close. Jimin presses a calm hand to Taehyung’s torso, very light shakes him and – Taehyung gives a harsh jerk and yelps like he’s been burnt with acid and Jimin startles, struggles to keep his balance in his current position.

“I don’t wanna talk,” Taehyung says and it’s pleading, begging and his eyes are still squeezed shut, scared.

“What?” Jimin places his hand over his own heart, feels it thundering even under his wet clothes.

“I don’t wanna talk,” he repeats.

“Talk about what?”

“I don’t wanna talk, Jimin, I don’t –“

“Hey, it’s fine,” he attempts another contact, to his arm this time, he wants it soft and comforting.

“You don’t have to.”

“I don’t want to,” Taehyung’s voice cracks, and Jimin can’t see, but he knows he’s crying. It hits Jimin more than he thought it could, the despair in the sounds Taehyung makes, the fear twisting his features, it hits him in the chest, where pain blooms in the most loving of ways.
“I know, Tae it’s okay,” Jimin looks over at Yoongi, who’s just a safe distance behind, his brows are knitted and his eyes, fixated on Taehyung’s lying form, are so full of messy things that they seem empty. “We’ll bring you back to your apartment, mhm?”

“Jiminnie,”

“You don’t have to talk about it, you don’t have to say anything, Taehyung, I promise.” Taehyung nods, he looks like a scared child. “Hyung,” Yoongi sets his gaze on him in a mechanical way, its intensity running a shiver between Jimin’s shoulders. “I might need you for a bit.”

Taehyung is sick, once they make it to his place.

He keeps his head in the toilet and makes horrible retching sounds that Jimin, even with all his good intentions, cannot stand. So he stays on the other side of the door, sitting with his knees close his chest, nausea caught between his stomach and his throat, and listens, keeps track of Yoongi taking care of him.

At some point, Yoongi turns the ventilation in the bathroom on and comes close to the door to talk to him.

“Go change your clothes, Jimin-ah.”

“I’m fine, hyung.”

“I need to get out to get a glass in the kitchen and you’ll puke in the hallway if the smell gets to you.”

Jimin’s head makes a dull sound when it rolls back against the wall, his stomach protesting the sole idea. He hates it, getting sick when people get sick. It makes him feel like he can’t take care of others properly.

“I can take it,” he convinces himself, fingers fiddling with the frayed cuffs of his jeans.

He hears Yoongi make an annoyed sound even through the noise the fan makes.

“Jimin-ah,”

“I don’t have spare clothes?”

“Take his, you know he won’t mind.”

And Jimin does know. So even if he feels stubborn, he listens, and he begrudgingly walks his way to Taehyung’s room. He takes his clothes off, wincing at how unpleasant it feels when they leave his skin, puts them in the laundry basket thinking he’ll get to wash them later.

Yoongi comes and goes from the bathroom a couple of times and Jimin listens to him, to the deepness and kindness in the tone he uses to talk with Taehyung, and he, for the first time, remembers that they’ve been together before. He remembers their fight and his conversation with Yoongi, and his waves of insecurity and he sighs.

“It doesn’t matter,” he tells himself, pulling open Taehyung’s t-shirt drawer. He doesn’t know why he’s so surprised to find them all neatly folded, but that makes him smile. “It really doesn’t.”
He tries to reach for one that’s at the bottom, one that’s older, but as he pulls it out, the light catches on objects he hadn’t noticed before. And he should know, curiosity killed the cat, but it still drives him and he takes those out instead. They’re CDs, old ones. Two from artists Jimin recognizes, the last one a burned one, with messy hand writing on it.

**hyung and tae no.11**

**july 27 2014**

Jimin stares at Taehyung’s writing idly, hot pain blazing alive again, memories of Yoongi referring to those things they’ve recorded together still vivid.

He puts the CDs back, takes the t-shirt and slides the drawer closed.

“I think he’s gonna be fine, now,” Yoongi whispers, entering the room as Jimin is tying the strings of the lounge pants he’s borrowed.

He hums, distracted, and when he looks up, he finds Yoongi staring.

“Can I kiss you?” he asks and Jimin shrivels from the inside.

He’s the one kissing Yoongi instead, with a hand on his neck and tender lips, feeling him sigh contentedly.

He’s being wrapped in a hug after that, a long and tight one, one that soothes the anxiety in his belly and the too-fast train of his thoughts, and he nuzzles Yoongi’s neck, closes his eyes.

“We still need to talk,” he says, muffled in his hoodie.

“I know.”

“Also you’re gross and wet and you need to change.”

“I know,” Yoongi drawls. Jimin grins and pecks the skin under his jaw before he breaks the embrace. “I should. But I think he needs me to go.”

“Hyung,”

“It’s fine, I think I need some time too.”

Jimin doesn’t argue further than that. It’s not his place to. So he lets Yoongi kiss him goodbye, his lips leaving onto Jimin’s something that feels apologetic, his hand on his wrist squeezing affectionately.

Taehyung is lying on his side on the bath mat when Jimin gets in, heaving in deep motions, eyelids half-closed.

“You need to shower,” Jimin says, getting to his level and dragging his palm along his ribcage. His shirt, his pants, everything he wears is still soaked. They hear the front door being closed.

“Hyung?” Taehyung calls, loud enough to resound to the other rooms.
“He just left.”

He makes a pitiful sound, sits up, angles his body towards the corridor.

“Hey, no,” Jimin gently stops his impulse to stand, “tell me what you need and I’ll do it.”

“I want hyung back,” he says, and it clamps around Jimin’s emotions weirdly.

“Okay, I’ll go call him. D’you want to be alone with him?” It hurts to ask, but he feels like he has to.

“N-No,” Taehyung stammers, but he doesn’t hesitate. He shifts a little, cups Jimin’s neck with a shaky hand, letting it glide along his arm until he can twine their fingers. “No, I w-want you to stay.”

Jimin nods, locks their fingers a little tighter for a few breathings.

“Okay.”

He leaves him leaning on the bathtub, his thoughts a whirlwind as he makes his way to the kitchen and grabs his phone.

“What’s up?”

“He asked for you to come back.”

Jimin feels Taehyung’s ribcage expand where it touches his, his breathing slowly deepening. He’s falling asleep. His body is warm, lax, like he’s calmer, at peace. But Jimin knows it’s not really the case. It’s circumstantial. For now, this, this is okay.

“D’you wanna go to bed?” he asks him, gentle. And Taehyung, after a moment, shakes his head, settles deeper in the couch instead.

Jimin glances over at Yoongi, who’s at the opposite side of it, and Yoongi shrugs tiredly. “I’m doing this because he’s my best friend,” he told Jimin earlier, when they wrapped Taehyung in towels after his shower, “there’s nothing else to it.” Jimin kept his words on his tongue.

They still ended up the three of them, watching whatever was on TV, Yoongi still stayed even when Taehyung curled up against Jimin’s side, that he let himself be wrapped of his arm around his shoulder. He’s glad he did.

The situation isn’t good, but that’s a sliver of time that Jimin appreciates nonetheless.

And a little later, when Taehyung shifts to lie down with his head in Yoongi’s lap, and that Yoongi doesn’t look at him but starts playing with the strands of his hair like it’s the most natural thing to do, Jimin says nothing. He just takes a small, square cushion, and settles behind Taehyung, and pulls his body flush against his.
That’s the first thing Yoongi sees when he wakes up, in his own bed. He rolls over, his head like in a vise, feeling hangover from alcohol he didn’t drink.

**You:** because i thought it would be best if i wasnt there when he’d wake up

21-06-2016, 9:58

**Jimin:** wtf why

21-06-2016, 10:00

He groans, wishing he could avoid that conversation altogether. But he owes Jimin honesty. He owes him a lot of things, but honesty, foremost.

**You:** better if we grow some distance

21-06-2016, 10:02

**You:** he clearly told me he had nothing left for me

21-06-2016, 10:03

**Jimin:** like you believed him

21-06-2016, 10:03
Jimin: hyung  
21-06-2016, 10:03

Jimin: cant you see that its a blatant lie  
21-06-2016, 10:04

He sits, shakes his hair out of his face. Outside it’s dark, like the sun has never went up the horizon.

He puts pajama pants on, goes down to the solarium. Rain is making its soothing pitter patter in the windows and he opens them all, so that fresh air can come in. He takes place around the round, glass table.

If it’s a lie, Yoongi doesn’t really know. He hopes it is. He hopes it’s not.

You: i think its better if we let the dust settle  
21-06-2016, 10:10

You: for now  
21-06-2016, 10:10

You: he probably wouldve been better off if i didnt come back at all  
21-06-2016, 10:11

Jimin: hyung come on  
21-06-2016, 10:11

You: i understand him, jimin-ah, you know i do  
21-06-2016, 10:11

Jimin: you know thats not true  
21-06-2016, 10:11

You: but i still wanna see you, and you can still see him  
21-06-2016, 10:11
He can almost sense how upset Jimin is just from his response and he lets his eyes get lost in the trees outside, rustled by the wind, in the fine lines the water draws as it dribbles down the glass.

He purposefully forgets his phone on the table when he goes to the kitchen to make an expresso. His mother’s voice resounds calm in the background, the way his father converses is soft. They seem closer, since they came back. Seeing them like that first threw Yoongi in a spiral of childhood memories, not all of them pleasant, but it’s fine, now. And when he looks at them he wants to believe that they will get better, that she will slack on all those glasses of wine she drinks every night, and that he’ll look at her properly, like she deserves.

The door of the study is being opened and the sound reminds him of it again, that letter he received almost a month ago, that he’s left sealed when he saw its provenance. He went and got those tests done a little after that day with Taehyung when they almost forgot to put a condom on, and the results came in long ago. But he’s avoided it since then. He dreads this as much as he dreads his amiable conversations with Caitlyn, and the possibility of being her child’s father.

But Yoongi grabs his tiny cup, carries with him the rich aroma of his expresso upstairs, doesn’t think. If he thinks, he won’t do it.

“Dad,” he peeks in the room where his father is sitting, behind that dark wood desk.

“Yes?” his glasses are low on his nose, like when he’s reading, his tie already tight around his neck, his hair slicked back. Yoongi knows he’s headed out soon.

“Thank you for allowing me to take Mondays and Tuesdays off for the summer.”

“You’re welcome. Just know that it can’t be like that every year. And that you still have to attend every meeting.”

“Of course. Mhm, there’s a uh, letter with my name in one of your drawers, I think.”

“Which one?” he straightens, meets his eyes.

“The bottom one, at your right.”

There’s the soft sound of the rubbing of wood, muted rustling of paper.

“From the clinic?”

“Yes, that one,” he finally enters, the plush carpet giving under his feet, the familiar atmosphere enveloping him.

“How’s work?” he asks when Yoongi takes the envelope from his hand.
And Yoongi lies. Because his relationship with his father is better now, and he’s happy about it. He doesn’t want to ruin it. *I hate it, dad. I’ve killed everything else for it, for the easy way out and I hate it.* He can’t tell him that.

Back in the chair in the solarium, he contemplates ripping the letter in half. He can’t pinpoint why he’s so apprehensive of what’s inside. Maybe it’s the memories it brings back to the surface, that panic he felt when he woke up next to her, naked and hungover and his memory of the previous night wiped out.

He tears an extremity, pulls the paper out and unfolds it before he can change his mind. He shouldn’t be this scared. But he is. The text is short and messy, inked with doctor calligraphy.

In the haste, his eyes catch on the words *no abnormalities* and *perfectly healthy* and that’s all he needs to drop his hands in his lap, shut his eyelids and breathe out a long, relieved sigh. And for a while he stays there, enjoying the calm and the sound of the rain.

So this, at least, is settled.

The DNA test for Caitlyn’s pregnancy, though, still can’t be done until mid-July.

**You:** are you still with him

21-06-2016, 10:39

The first sip of his expresso is scorching and bitter. He likes it.

He feels better, lighter.

He doesn’t feel white again, but the grey is a little less black.

Δ

**You:** yes

21-06-2016, 10:43

**Yoongi hyung:** is he ok

21-06-2016, 10:43
Jimin glances up and at Taehyung’s back where he’s sitting on the balcony, watches him smoke with a fuzzy brain. He’s drained. He didn’t sleep enough. Surely none of them did.

You: sort of
21-06-2016, 10:45

Taehyung has been quiet for most of the time they’ve been awake, but he hasn’t been harsh in his ways, or made him feel like he should’ve left. Jimin is at least thankful for that. He hasn’t tried to kiss him, or touch him, not a single lingering hand on his back, or gentle press of lips to his hair. Jimin wonders if he’s right to feel hurt by that, but he can’t say he doesn’t understand why he’s acting like he is.

Yoongi hyung: ok
21-06-2016, 10:46

Yoongi hyung: i trust you to take care of him
21-06-2016, 10:46

You: as long as he lets me, you know i will
21-06-2016, 10:47

He stands from the couch, slides open the mesh door when he reaches it. He’s still in Taehyung’s clothes, his t-shirt and his lounge pants, and the fresh, rainy morning air makes his skin rise in goosebumps. It’s not unpleasant. He’s starting to understand why Taehyung likes smoking outside better.

He sits next to him, their thighs against one another’s. Taehyung shifts a little, takes his pack and slides a stick between his fingers, offers it to Jimin.

Three months later, Jimin heart still flutters whenever he does that.

“Now what?” Taehyung asks, flicking the flint wheel to light Jimin’s cigarette.

“Now what, what?”

“Now that you know.”

Jimin smiles, tinged with bitterness, and meets Taehyung’s eyes.

“Do you think I didn’t have my doubts?” he says, and Taehyung looks away, exhales a grey cloud against a grey sky, taps his ash off. “I just would’ve wanted you guys to tell me. Nothing changes. Nothing happens.” We’re fuck buddies, remember?
But that last part, Jimin doesn’t say it.

When Jimin brings his car to a stop, water starts dotting his windshield. He takes his sunglasses off, that he wears despite the sun already under the horizon, peeks over Hoseok’s apartment building with his window rolled down.

Just in front the glassy door of the entrance, he sees their silhouettes. Hoseok bending to kiss Eunji.

Jumin cringes. Looks away.

Hoseok knows he’s there, Jimin is pretty sure, but he still keeps him waiting for painful awkward-filled minutes. It used to be different. Eunji could cuddle Hoseok on the couch while the three of them would watch a movie and it would be fine. He could walk with them and never feel like the third wheel, could hear them kiss and giggle and it would be fine. Now he can barely stand the thought of her.

Maybe Hoseok thinks he’s a great comedian, but he’s not fooling Jimin. That night he caught her cheating, there’s a light that died out in his eyes that never went back on, when he talks about her.

His phone chirps wildly in the console and he frowns at it.

**Kookie:** hoseok hyung stopped answering me

22-06-2016, 20:54

**Kookie:** i know ure with him

22-06-2016, 20:54

**Kookie:** answer me

22-06-2016, 20:54

**You:** youre a menace

22-06-2016, 20:54

**Kookie:** yes

22-06-2016, 20:54

**Kookie:** can i come too?

22-06-2016, 20:55
Jimin shakes his head with a smile, distantly wondering how Jungkook manages to type so fast.

**You:** its the pool, isnt it
22-06-2016, 20:55

**You:** you only like me for my pool
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** my pool is nicer than yours
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** so tahts not exactly……
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** no.
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** hyung
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** can
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** i
22-06-2016, 20:56

**Kookie:** come
22-06-2016, 20:57

He snorts, acknowledges Hoseok when he gets in the passenger seat.

“Who’s that?” he asks, pulling the seatbelt over his chest.

“Jungkookie.”
“He has school tomorrow,” Hoseok adds, clicking it locked.

“M’yeah.”

Kookie: and
22-06-2016, 20:57

You: do your homework
22-06-2016, 20:58

Kookie: good thatts settled then
22-06-2016, 20:58

Kookie: ill be waiting on the porch
22-06-2016, 20:58

Kookie: swimsuit is on and all that
22-06-2016, 20:58

“Why is it that I can never refuse him anything,” Jimin complains, deadpanning at his screen.

You: i hate you
22-06-2016, 20:59

Kookie: me too hyung
22-06-2016, 20:59

Kookie: cant wait to see u
22-06-2016, 20:59
“That’s because you’re a good hyung.”

Jimin feels stupid for waiting so long to come out for a swim.

He likes it. Especially at night.

But finals and Yoongi and Taehyung, well. Kept his brain and his hands busy.

He’s sitting in one of the extremities of the long inground pool, warm water reaching his waist, watches Hoseok sipping at his drink with a dash of envy. He’s sleeping over, but Jungkook isn’t, and he’ll have to drive him home. The wind blows with a cool breath that makes shivers run up his back and he hears Jungkook shriek, hears him complain and leave Hoseok’s side to dive in.

“I’m still waiting for the story,” Hoseok says, rolling himself further into plush towels, his wet hair still plastered on his forehead.

“Which one?” Jimin asks, eyes following Jungkook as he comes closer to the surface and emerges.

“You said you had a rough weekend.”

“Mhm.”

“So I’m waiting for that.”

Jimin isn’t exactly sure why he thought it was a good idea to give Hoseok that hint, or why he’s hesitating to talk about what happened. But it’s true, the last couple of days were exhausting, in plenty of ways.

Now Yoongi is quieter than he used to be, and when Jimin left Taehyung’s side earlier, his skin still looked pale and his eyes cloudy, his voice still scratchy. But they didn’t talk about it. Not really. Jimin knows they will, but he’s giving Taehyung the time he needs.

He leaves the silence to hang for maybe longer than he should, spaced out and lost in the way the glow from the pool lights dance from underwater.

“Jimin?”

“Yeah, I’m just trying to put my thoughts together. Also, Jungkook-ah, you sure you wanna hear that?”

Jungkook swims until he’s closer to Jimin in the slanted area, and able to sit on the bottom with his head still above the surface.

“I’m a big boy now, hyung.”

“Sure,” Jimin laughs airily, though the words make a tiny bell ring inside, one he’s too confused to pay attention to. “We had, sex. The three of us. Saturday in the morning.”

“What?” Hoseok straightens, his alcohol shaking in his glass as he does. “Again?”
“Yeah,” he glances over at Jungkook, expects to find him with his nose scrunched up, or stiff with embarrassment. But he’s completely calm instead, looking at his hands and how they move in the water. So Jimin guesses it’s fine, that it won’t make him uncomfortable if he adds to it. “Hyung started sucking me off while Taehyung was still sleeping and he told me to be quiet so we wouldn’t wake him, but it… didn’t really work.”

“Yeah, no shit.”

“So that happened,” he shifts, bringing his knees to his chest. “And then that night, I met with Seokjin hyung at that bar I like, to talk. About them.” He meets Jungkook’s gaze then, finds him attentive. “Because he knows them since they’re young. And I got curious and sneaked behind their backs to ask hyung what was their deal.”

“Okay?”

“And it turns out, that they’ve been together before. For over three years.”

“Oh.”

“And that something bad happened and Yoongi flew the fuck out of the country without a word and that’s how they broke up.”

“What the fuck?”

“And that’s why they’re so weird together. And also so perfect together. Then on Monday, Taehyung decided to get shitfaced and we took care of him and,” he sighs, sets his eyes on the faraway line of bushes that lines his yard, “I don’t know, that was just… a lot in little time.”

The deck chair screeches over the concrete, the wet padding of Hoseok’s feet coming next. He comes by his side, dips half his body in the pool once again.

“How you feeling?” he asks, their proximity allowing him to whisper.

“How am I supposed to compete with that?” is what slips out, sensing the shift in the way Jungkook and Hoseok look at him.

In the darkness around them, Jimin blushes. He shouldn’t have said that. He knows. Because he himself is aware of the answer, he knows what they’re going to say, and he knows they’re going to be right. He guesses that’s just part of his own course, to feel like that, a little betrayed and misplaced, for the time he’ll need to adjust. It’s work he has to do on himself.

“If that’s how they make you feel, then you should get out of there.”

“That’s not—“

“I know you like them a lot, but if you feel uncomfortable in this whole thing, just remember that you don’t owe them this and you can leave.”

Jungkook swims the rest of the way to them, quietly taking place at Jimin’s other side, and he sees him shiver from the colder air, jaw clenching.

“I don’t wanna leave,” Jimin says, after a while.

“I know you don’t. I just need you to understand that you don’t have to do any of this if you don’t want to.”
“They make me feel good, hyung. Yoongi makes me feel good, Tae makes me feel good, and they make me feel good together, too. That’s not it. I feel cared for and I believe them when they say they like me it’s just,” he pauses, realizing he’s half-retelling Seokjin’s words, and he fights a wave of tense emotion, willing his body not to stiffen up so badly. “Their background is heavy, so of course I’d feel a bit weird in there. But I think it’s more than that? Like, they say things, but then act some type of way? So I’m fucking lost and I feel like this, our situation, all of this is incomplete.”

“What makes you feel like that?”

Jungkook asking surprises Jimin so much, that he finally stops looking at the trees and bushes, and turns to him instead.

“They still… feel like something. They’re together a lot, I mean, they’re best friends. But what’s in their eyes when they’re talking to each other, or how they often reach for even the smallest of contacts. They probably think that I didn’t notice. Or maybe they don’t notice it themselves. But that tells me a lot. And they do have sex when I’m not there, which doesn’t bother me at all, it’s just that they can’t stay away from one another. Emotionally or physically. They can’t. It’s fucking palpable. I’m there and I feel it. So when they tell me there’s nothing between them, to me, it’s straight up lies. They’re lying to me and that part of the situation is dishonest and I can’t deal with that.”

“So you think they still love each other.”

“It’s like someone’s poking my eyes with it every time I’m with them, hyung. You’d see them and you’d understand.”

“Isn’t that a bit complicated for a fuck buddies status?”

Jimin laughs. Those words are poisonous.

Deep down he knows that they’re far beyond that, the three of them, no matter what they say. It’s human nature to want to put words onto things, to define them. But he can’t.

“We’re nothing, but I still feel like hyung’s boyfriend, and I still feel like Taehyung’s boyfriend,” he lets his eyelids fall closed, inhales deeply. “I’m committed to something with no name.”

Jungkook does stay overnight.

“I’ll go to bed soon mom, I promise,” he tells his mother over the phone when it’s just before midnight, eyes glimmering something mischievous. Jimin wonders how many things Jungkook hides from everyone, with how easily he pretends.

Hoseok is 21 and Jimin is 19 and Jungkook is 17 but they lay out the living room like they’re ten again, with cushions and blankets everywhere. And sprawled on their fronts with their retinas fighting the light of the huge flat screen, they play games until they’re too afraid to look at the time, to see how bad they’re fucking up their sleep schedule.

They talk after that, low voices and confessions, and Jimin smiles when his question for Jungkook remains unanswered, finding him asleep, hands clutched around his phone, resting on his stomach.

“He’s cute,” he says, and Hoseok hums quietly in approval. “He’s growing fast, isn’t he.”
“Soon he’ll be a whole head taller than you.”

“Shut up,” he gives a weak slap to Hoseok’s chest, grinning when he giggles. “You know that’s not what I meant.”

“He’s spending a lot of time with Seokjin hyung and Namjoon,” Hoseok says, huffing and rolling onto his side, eyes puffy with fatigue. “They’re older. And they’re not exactly hollow people. So I mean, I’m not surprised.”

“Yeah, about that,” Jimin shifts to face him, meets the wall of Hoseok’s closed eyelids. “They’ve been hanging out a lot in the past month?”

Hoseok doesn’t move, doesn’t make a sound.

“Hyung.”

Just the tranquility of his breathing filling the room.

Jimin laughs tiredly, reaches for his phone to set their alarm. He still has to drive Jungkook to school. He doesn’t bother going back to his room, to the comfort of his bed. He stays right where he is, expecting the soreness of his limbs in a few hours, but it’s fine, because they let him talk and they listened and they made him laugh, they gave him new air to breathe.

Jimin is just grateful he has them.
Jimin jolts awake to his phone blasting some obnoxious sound, a generic song expressly made to scorch his ears.

He fumbles around sleepily until his palm wraps around it. He snoozes.

“Jungkook-ah,”

“I’m already up, hyung,” he hears coming from his bedroom and his brows knit together.

“What, how,”

His other arm flails in Hoseok’s direction, meets warm skin and Hoseok groans.

“Hyung, wake up.”

“S’my face,”

Jimin smiles stupidly, rubs the back of his palm on him some more. Hoseok makes a high, distressed sound in the back of his throat and bats him away, sits up abruptly.

“Rude.”

“Wake up, hyung.”

“Yes.”

“Hyung, wake up,” Jungkook calls playfully from the other room.

“Fuck you guys.”

Jimin snorts, finally decides on cracking his eyelids open. It’s bright, already, even through the dark curtains, and he questions how much time they have to actually eat breakfast.

They stay unmoving for longer than they should, in half comatose, listening to Jungkook come and go between his bedroom and his bathroom, until Jimin’s cellphone chants his text message ringtone and they startle.

“Fucking,” Hoseok hisses, eyes suddenly wide, “phone.”

Jimin levels his phone to his eyes, squinting to look at what’s on the screen.

Yoongi hyung

1 new message

Tae
His lips curve softly when he reads Yoongi’s, something simple to wish him a good day that he sent an hour prior, and Jimin replies with the same affection. They’ve yet to be okay, but he dares hope they will.

**Tae:** good morning

23-06-2016, 7:47

**Tae:** ive washed your clothes from monday

23-06-2016, 8:09

**You:** thanks

23-06-2016, 8:10

**Tae:** are you still upset

23-06-2016, 8:11

**You:** yes

23-06-2016, 8:11

**You:** are you still upset

23-06-2016, 8:11

**Tae:** yes

23-06-2016, 8:11

**You:** great

23-06-2016, 8:12

Jimin gets to his room with sleep still lingering like a cloud around his brain, to find Jungkook shirtless in his connected bathroom, hair wet, trying to tame it with nimble fingers.
He stares for a moment, to the broadness of his shoulders, his straight posture, the muscles softly rippling under the skin of his back and he frowns, some weird sort of pride and fatherly feeling bubbling up.

“You okay there, hyung?” Jungkook asks, looking at him through the mirror.

“Good morning.”

Jungkook laughs and gives him a curious smile.

“Good morning?”

Jimin pulls his shirt over his head, throws it on his bed where he sees his phone glowing with a notification. He, again, waits for Jungkook to say something witty or to whine about how naked he is, and it’s not that he doesn’t notice Jimin. Because their eyes meet, Jungkook giving him a quick once over. Perplexing.

“Hyung,” Jungkook calls to Hoseok before Jimin can address any of this. “We gotta go soon.”

“No.” Hoseok groans in the living room. Jimin hears the shift of the blankets.

He skirts around his bed, opens his drawer right when Jungkook comes out of the bathroom and Hoseok enters the room.

Hoseok looks at them in turns, silently, eyes eventually dropping to their chests.

“No.”

He goes out the room.

“I was less dressed than that in the pool yesterday,” Jungkook says, grabbing his t-shirt and slipping it on.

“Too early,” they hear and Jimin calculates that he’s almost halfway down the stairs.

“Looks good on you,” Jungkook tells Jimin when he puts on the shirt he bought with Taehyung. The more adjusted one.

Jimin is stunned for a few breaths, eyes heavy on Jungkook’s back as he fiddles with the strings of his sweats, unused to compliments coming from him.

“Jeon Jungkook, is there something you’re not telling me?”

“I don’t know? Is there something I should be telling you that I don’t know I should be telling you?” He tugs his shirt over the hem of his pants, grabs his wallet on Jimin’s desk and goes through the door. “You keep receiving texts, by the way.”

“He’s getting weird,” he mutters to himself, reaching to his favorite snapback, placing it backwards after pushing his hair under.

Tae: i’ll explain

23-06-2016, 8:22
There’s a pinch in Jimin’s chest as he gets images of Taehyung lying in the wet grass, the mantra he kept singing, his expression when he asked for Yoongi to come back, of him curled on the couch, Jimin molded to his back.

You: im not here to force you to do anything, tae

You: please dont feel like that

Tae: i know

Tae: can i see you today?

He looks at the message and something heavy settles in him, it’s a bit of a heartache, and a bit of butterflies.

“Hyung we have to go,” Jungkook singsongs from downstairs.

“But I’m not even dressed?” Hoseok shrieks. He sounds very awake now.

Jimin gives a soft laugh and sends “again?” before he puts the device in his back pocket and heads to the kitchen.
He sees this when they’re parked in the street facing Jungkook’s high school, which was Jimin’s, too, a couple of years ago. Jungkook thanks him, gets out noisily, and Jimin tries not to look too much.

The expanse of grass, the sparse trees. The building, its architecture and the way it screams money, the colors, the buzzing around it. It brings him back to a younger, rougher time, when he spent over two years building his life around someone who kept removing the blocks as he was trying to put them. One after the other. Youngjae became his everything, but he reduced Jimin to nothing.

“You okay?” Hoseok asks from the passenger seat when he notices that Jimin is stalling, eyes on his phone but doing nothing.

“Mhm.”

“You don’t like this place, do you?”

“No.”

“Youngjae?” Jimin gives a weak nod. “Let’s just go, then. Fuck. Sometimes I can’t believe an asshole like him is still enjoying a peaceful life.”

“He wasn’t that bad, hyung, let’s not—“

“You’re kidding, right? Maybe you don’t remember how fucking terrible he was, but I do.”

“Hyung,” he pleads. He doesn’t want to remember. He’s better now. He doesn’t need to remember.

“Yeah, I’m sorry, he pisses me off even over a year later. Want me to drive?”

Jimin shakes him head, hands him his phone.

“You’ll be my designed texter though,” he places the gearstick in first, gets them rolling again. “Can you tell Tae that I’m hanging out with you today? Like, most of the day. Tell him that maybe he can come over after that.”

He senses Hoseok’s confused look land on him.

“I thought you were gonna send me back home? I told Eunji I’d be back for noon at the latest?”

“And?”

“Well she’s gonna wait for me?”

“Do I look like I care right now, hyung? I miss spending time with you so we’re gonna get breakfast somewhere nice.”
“Jimin-ah, you know I don’t have that kind of money, I’m –“

“I’m inviting, so you have nothing to worry about.”

“Jimin,” he sounds torn between arguing some more and giving up.

“Just text Taehyung that, yeah?”

And when Hoseok does, Jimin smiles.

“He asks if it’s fine to go at yours because of your parents,” Hoseok retells, after a few minutes of comfortable silence with the music playing low, the bass just a nice vibration.

“Yeah, they’re gone for a couple days.”

Then Hoseok snorts uglily, bringing a hand over his mouth like he so often does when he laughs. And Jimin, as if they’re connected, can’t contain a grin.

“What? What did he say?”

“You write weird?”

Jemin breathes out a laugh. It’s warm, affectionate.

“Am I that bad?”

“Nah, I think I’m worse than you are. He probably finds it too well written.”

“What do I say?”

“Tell him it’s you.”

A few moments pass as they get closer to the building, the traffic dense at that time of the day. Jimin is tempted to regret his route choice.

“He’s really hot though,” Hoseok says, the screen closer to his face, squinting.

Sometimes, most of the time, Jimin forgets they haven’t known each other for that long. The three of them. With everything that happened, with how serious things got on some days, Jimin feels like he’s been part of that story for longer than he has.

Sometimes, too often, he forgets how infatuated he is with them. How beautiful they are, how much he likes the sound of their voices, the feeling of their skins, the smell of their colognes.

Jemin sighs with resignation. Or acceptance, he isn’t sure. “Yeah,” he breathes out as he puts his signal light and changes tracks, “yeah, he is.”

“Can I go through your stuff?”

“Suit yourself. Can’t guarantee what you’ll find though.”

“Dick pics?”

“Tae is good at those.”

“Oh my god.”
“They both are.”

“You’re fucking with me.”

“Just about the risk to find them on there.”

“Wow, bummer.”

“Is Tae being a savage?”

“At all. We’re chatting, actually. He seems chill?”

“Don’t steal my fuck buddy.”

“I think it’s the second time you’ve said that.”

“Well. Doesn’t that say something about you?”

“What?” Hoseok gives him an offended look. “And for your information, I wouldn’t go for Taehyung. I’d go for Yoongi.”

“That’s some reassuring statement right there.”

“What do you think Eunji would say about having a threesome?”

“I think you’d end up balls pinned to the wall. With thumb tacks. At minimum.”

“That’s mild,” he says, pensive, scrolling through Jimin’s picture folder. “Taehyung’s really, really hot.”

“Hyung, stop that.”

There are times like these, when Jimin just wants to listen. He wants to stay silent, giving slow acquiescence minutely, just sharing eye contact and absorbing everything he’s told like a sponge.

That’s how he feels, right now.

Hoseok was touchy to set off, but when he opened up, he started pouring and pouring and Jimin is gladly taking it, picking at the food in his plate. He made sure Hoseok was comfortable to order anything he wanted on the menu, no matter how expensive it was. Then he turned it over to him. He hasn’t said a word in a while, but the place, the food, the moment, Jimin is just totally enjoying it.

The restaurant is more crowded than he would’ve thought, on a Thursday morning. It’s a small place, with few places to sit inside and some more outside. The cutlery makes sharp sounds on the glass tables, and the chairs screech on the concrete when people stand, but Jimin likes it. The ambience is great, the wind refreshing, the parasol fanning over their table casting over them sufficient shadow to be appreciable and with how much Hoseok seems to gush over his omelette, this is exactly what he needed.

He listens to Hoseok like Hoseok listened to him the previous night, with that same attention and devotion.
He hears about Eunji and her ways around the apartment, how she so easily reintegrated herself. He sounds bothered by it, though he won’t explicitly tell. But Jimin sees it in the way he frowns when he describes some events, or that he pauses in between his sentences like he’s reflecting as he retells. Then Jimin gets to hear a bit about Nami, and he has to stop himself several times from saying anything. He wishes Hoseok would see himself when he talks about her. How different it is than the speech he holds about his actual girlfriend. It’s not that he thinks Hoseok likes Nami better. He just thinks he doesn’t like Eunji like he used to and doesn’t realize it.

He drops him of at his apartment at a time that would give him enough time to get ready for work, but not to get cornered with questions or reproaches. They spent some time in their favorite park, sipping on a bubble tea and Hoseok oozes lightness and wellbeing, and there’s no way Jimin is going to let Eunji’s controlling habits ruin that.

“Thanks, Jiminie. For today.” He’s beaming, out and ready to close the door, and Jimin feels like he’s discovering his best friend all over again. “I missed you.”

“I missed you too, hyung. It’s summer, we should make most of it and hang out a lot like we used to, yeah?”

Hoseok’s eyes darken, just for a heartbeat, but Jimin still catches it.

“Yeah, we’ll try to find some time.”

**Tae:** should i bring my swimsuit

23-06-2016, 15:52

**You:** no

23-06-2016, 15:57

**Tae:** no swimming?

23-06-2016, 15:59

**You:** yes

23-06-2016, 15:59

**You:** just no swimsuit
Tae: oh

23-06-2016, 16:00

You: im kidding bring it

23-06-2016, 16:01

“I like your parents’ taste in decoration better.”

“Thanks, I guess. I’m sure they’d be thrilled to know that.”

Taehyung walks around with fascination, like he’s never anything fancier. Like he didn’t grow up with the finest porcelain on the shelves and Monet all over the walls. He trails his fingers on the furniture, stops to stare at the pictures hung here and there like he’s in a museum.

“So we’re all lone children?” he observes, paused in front of a family picture in the living room.

“All dudes, all lone children, yes,” Jimin walks in from the kitchen, hands him his glass of wine. “That’s amazing.”

Jimin drags Taehyung around the house at his request, shows the rooms, introduces them with the most bored out voice he can manage.

It’s not that he wants to compare, but Yoongi never showed that kind of interest for the place Jimin lives in. Neither did Youngjae. Hell, even Hoseok didn’t, at first. So Taehyung’s little nods and how he travels down the hallway with curiosity are just unsettling.

“You kept your room for last? Icing on the cake?”

“No it’s last because it’s literally upstairs and at the very end of the hallway.”

Taehyung lets out a small laugh from behind him, hesitantly circles his arms around Jimin as they’re still walking. Jimin stops briefly, to let himself enjoy. It feels like it’s been too long since they’ve been together like that, tranquil and composed, and not devoid of worries, but just a little more at peace.

“That’s precarious,” he says, not liking how frail Taehyung’s hold look around his glass.

“I live dangerously.”

Jimin shakes his head and gently shoves him away.
When they step into Jimin’s room, Taehyung makes a series of ohs and ahs that earns him an invitation to shut up.

“Those stars stickers are badass,” he says, ignoring Jimin, nose pointed to the ceiling.

Jimin glares at him, long enough for his eyes to start drawing Taehyung’s features instead. The gentle curves of his nose, the pretty color of his lips, and what he felt earlier when he was talking with Hoseok, the infatuation, it all comes back to him like he’s hitting a wall.

“Your hair’s getting long,” he says like he’s criticizing, marveling at how softly it falls over his forehead. He likes it, but he doesn’t need to tell him that.

Taehyung’s stare finally meets his, he takes a sip.

“What’s wrong with long hair?”

“It’s falling in your eyes. Can you even see?”

“I can see you, isn’t that all that matters?”

“Gross.”

Taehyung nods, frowning but wearing on his lips that smile that makes Jimin hurt with affection.

The atmosphere tilts when Taehyung leisurely closes the distance separating them, that he kisses Jimin with more seriousness than he expected. Jimin feels his gut twist with an urge to tease.

“I know the situation isn’t the best,” Taehyung says, breathing in Jimin’s space, “but is this still fine?”

“Yeah,” he sighs, and when Taehyung leans in again, he lets him but doesn’t offer any response.

Taehyung questions him with his eyes, his lips tugged with mischievousness to match Jimin’s sly expression. “What’s that?”

“We should eat or something,” is the answer Jimin gives as he walks past him and through the door.

It’s almost two bottles of wine they’ve drank by the time they’re filling the dishwasher.

Jimin is tingling pleasantly, comfortably tipsy.

“You can go first,” he says, pointing to the patio door leading to the backyard. “I’ll go change.”

Taehyung gives an approbation in the form of a hum, and Jimin flicks the switch up, the one that brings all the lights in the pool to life.

It’s halfway up the stairs that Jimin decides that he’s not going to wear his swimsuit. He’s been in this same mood since they came down to eat, and he chooses to roll with it.

He answers Yoongi’s messages as he steps in his room, stops to take a look at his reflection in the
mirror. His eyes are just slightly glazed over, that t-shirt fits just nice. He rakes his fingers through his hair, it falls back messily. He looks good.

You: hyung we have to hang out soon
23-06-2016, 19:37

He puts his phone back in his pocket, stuffs his smallest bottle of lube and a condom in there, too.

“That’s a weird swimsuit,” Taehyung says when he sees him coming out unchanged, he’s already dipped to his torso.

Jimin gives him a small smile, undoes his pants and shrugs everything off so that he’s only in his t-shirt and his boxers.

“Didn’t feel like it.”

“So you’re gonna swim with your clothes on?”

Jimin shrugs and Taehyung laughs with incomprehension. He goes back inside for a short moment, brings their glasses and two towels out and puts them on the edge of the pool where the stones are dry, and he sits beside them.

Leaned on the heel of his palm with his glass ready in his other hand, he watches Taehyung dive and move underwater. The sun is about to dip behind the horizon, and dusk’s beautiful colors are playing in the sky, and on Taehyung’s water-pearled skin. He’s seen him wet plenty of times before, but it was never like this. They never had much room to move in the shower, and he never had the occasion to just take him in properly. But now he does. It’s like he’s seeing him for the first time, the gorgeous tan of his skin, the soft definition of his muscles, the perfection of his eyebrows when he slicks his hair back as he emerges.

Jimin’s feet are making disordered patterns in the water, and his swallows are bigger every time. There’s lust, prickling in him, and it’s alarmingly more demanding than usual.

“Are you ever gonna come in, or?”

The foot of his glass makes a grainy sound when Jimin places it down. He lets himself slip into the pool almost gracefully, holds his breath when he’s completely swallowed by it. He touches the smooth bottom and kicks his weight up to the surface, the air suddenly much colder when he meets it again. He settles on his back, limbs outspread, eyelids dropped closed and floating.

He breathes deep, shivering, coldness and anticipation in a single cocktail.

It’s all stillness for a time Jimin loses track of, his core warm with alcohol and his brain and his heart too full for him to start dissecting.

“Jimin-ah,” Taehyung’s voice is hoarse and pleasant and in the darkness, he feels ablaze.

“Mhm?”

“It’s worse than a swimsuit.”
“What is?”

“Your clothes sticking to your body.”

“I’m not uncomfortable, why is that so bad?”

“Because you’re fucking hot.”

“Yeah?”

“Don’t act like you don’t know,” he’s gotten closer and Jimin opens his eyes to a still-starless sky, and he sees the patio door in his peripheral; he’s in the shallower part of the pool. “How long did you think I’d be holding up? Seeing you like that?”

Jimin bites his lip. He flips back onto his feet, waist and up at the wind’s mercy, and Taehyung is right there, closing on him, the ripples of his movements gentle on Jimin’s skin.

Taehyung has that same look Yoongi has, sometimes. That predatory one. But Yoongi does it naturally, as he strolls down a street, when he drives, like he owns everyone and everything. Taehyung though, Taehyung is aiming it directly at Jimin, and if he wasn’t already lost in his need for touches and skin, he certainly is, now. He shudders. He likes the weight of his gaze a little too much.

Taehyung’s hand is still gentle when he cups it on the side of his neck, eyes anchored in his, still walking in Jimin’s space to force him to step back. Jimin knows he’s going to cage him on a side of the pool, he’s going to feel vulnerable and he’s fine with that.

Maybe he wants Taehyung to hold him tighter, tonight. Maybe he wants him to go harder. For him to just have his way with him. He’s never really felt that before, that need to tease and provoke, that need for hungry hands and violently-colored hickeys. Jimin couldn’t want rough sex from a partner who was already psychologically too rough on him.

But with Taehyung, it’s different. Jimin trusts him. More than the person he spent two years with. Jimin trusts him and it’s fine for him to feel like that.

It happens faster than he expects it, his ass colliding with the solid surface, the edge of it pressing in the small of his back. His breath catches then, both palms flattening on the wall on both sides of his hips for support.

He sees Taehyung staring at his mouth, then his neck, his chest that’s still hugged tight with fabric, and then lower and under the water, to where he probably can see how hard Jimin is.

“I just need to make sure,” he murmurs, and he brings himself closer, very slowly tries to kiss him. And Jimin feels pulled so tight, so needy, yet he’s burning with the temptation to test Taehyung’s patience until he can’t anymore, and he tips backwards, prevents Taehyung to get what he wants and only allows their lips to share the lightest of touches. Feather-like. Taehyung breathes out an irritated laugh. “Yeah, I got you.”

Taehyung spins him around as fast as the weight of the water allows him, pushes between his shoulder blades to have him bend. Jimin’s hands splay at each side of his ribcage, the freshness of the stones seeping through his shirt making him tense momentarily.

“Ass up,” he’s being told, and he climbs on tiptoes, readjusts himself more comfortably with a satisfied smile.
His boxers are being pulled down to his mid-thighs, where they bunch up weirdly, but then Taehyung lies on top of him and he finds that he doesn’t care. He really doesn’t. Taehyung steadies an arm near Jimin’s head, his other hand snaking between them to squeeze hard at the flesh of his ass. He traces wet lips on his wet skin, gliding behind his ear, under his jaw, insisting up and down his throat, settling at his nape.

Taehyung’s fingers glides between his ass cheeks, gently, smoothly, and it feels so ridiculously good under water that Jimin’s tempted to whine, but he rests his head on the pavers instead, pushes back against him weakly.

“I meant to be tame, for once,” Taehyung says, and his voice vibrates through Jimin, sends him shivering and trying to dig his nails in the hard surface beneath him. “Tell me if you ever want to stop,” and just when Jimin nods, Taehyung slowly pushes a finger inside and his exhale breaks into a moan. “But something tells me that you won’t want to.”

Taehyung works him open as good as he always does, the pads of his fingers brushing all the right places, pressing into him steadily. He leaves little bites all over his shoulder, breathes heavy against the shell of his ear, rocks his hips into the back of his thighs like he can’t wait to be inside. His weight is crushing, it makes Jimin’s breathing uneven and his ribs ache but Jimin feels good. He feels amazing.

He didn’t think he’d ever like it, that kind of dynamic. Yet here he is, his bloodstream fire and lust and anticipation.

“Tae,”

He’s given an inquisitive noise, something sweet in between the hickeys and the nips he’s being littered with.

“Tae, stop.”

Taehyung’s weight, his lips, his fingers, it all disappears before Jimin can really think about it. A reassuring palm on his bicep, it’s all that’s left.

“You okay?” Taehyung asks, and he sounds genuinely worried, and that makes Jimin’s heart swells beautifully.

“I was just testing you,” he straightens just barely, an impish grin crooking his lips. He feels a lick of guilt that he brushes off.

Taehyung shoves him forward even harder than the first time, momentarily cutting his breath, and Jimin’s cock twitches from where it’s still under the water and too close to the wall for comfort. He whines when Taehyung traces his rim, the sensation not enough and his patience growing thin.

“I got worried, don’t fucking do that,” Taehyung warns, he sounds upset and dangerous and Jimin loves it. “Did you bring a condom?”

Jimin quickly nods, the only thought of feeling Taehyung inside him making him clench around nothing.

Taehyung whispers him his contentment, kisses his hair. It’s June, the sky is wearing its black dress, the wind is chilly. It’s too high contrast with the heated pool, and Jimin is covered in goosebumps, but inside he’s warm. He’s warm and soft and very exposed, and it’s a little scary. But Taehyung makes it all okay.
“I think I love you.”

“Where?” Taehyung sounds breathless, and Jimin just then notices the movements behind him, the steady waves that reach him.

“Tae,” he whimpers, pushing back against Taehyung’s touch, against the steady pressure around his rim. Taehyung is stroking himself, his cock is out and he could just take Jimin like that, fuck into him now, no waiting. He wants that. Needs it.

“I need to know where, Jimin. Your jeans?”

“Yes,” and the moment Taehyung leaves him, he goes limp. His feet fall back flat on the bottom, his lungs rush in more air. But his brain, it’s filled with static, with his tipsiness that’s barely lingering.

He looks at Taehyung covering the distance to his pants and fumbling with the pockets, and he smirks when their eyes meets, taking a couple step to the side and pretending to want to get out the pool.

Taehyung clicks his tongue.

“Don’t you dare,” he says, wet fingers struggling to rip the packet open. And when he gets to Jimin again, with his free hand he takes a grab of his hair, gives a gentle tug and Jimin is gone again. He can tell he’s being careful of his boundaries and he’s truly thankful for it, because himself has no idea what it is that he’s doing. “I don’t know what’s gotten into you, but I’m not disliking it. Take that off.”

Jimin moans brokenly, fighting his shirt over his head before he repositions his body like he wants to behave, ass up and back slightly arched. Taehyung is rolling the condom on himself and it’s taking longer than usual, and his own fingers scramble quietly on the stone with eagerness, his lips bitten and swollen, dampened hair clinging to his forehead.

Taehyung grips at his hip hard enough to hurt and Jimin shudders bodily, head dropping forward. He teases him with the tip of his cock, rubbing it over his ass and his crack and giving appreciative noises. He presses into him a little to barely make him feel the stretch, taking it out the moment Jimin starts trying to take him in.

“D’you want it?”

“Yes yes yes,” and Jimin is aware that he sounds a bit desperate. Because he is. That’s all he’s been thinking about since he dropped Hoseok back to his apartment.

“Fuck I love it when you’re like that,” he growls, and he pushes his cock into him in one long, smooth thrust.

Jimin holds his air until Taehyung’s hips meet the back of his thighs, eyes scrunched shut and mouth dropped in a silent moan. Water. It makes him feel everything so much better. Taehyung draws back with a groan, slowly pushes back in, holding Jimin in place with a hand on his back. Jimin feels him trying to get in further even when he’s bottomed out, hips curling against his ass and he tightens around him, legs squeezing closed when the tip of his cock presses in sensitive places.

Taehyung doesn’t go fast. Can’t, with where they are. But he takes his time, goes deep with easy rolls of his hips, keeps his hold firm, nearly possessive, on his waist.

“You feel so fucking good,” he says through gritted teeth, and Jimin whines, struggling to remain on his toes, his calves straining.
They rock to that pace until it becomes torture, until he’s trembling a little more with every thrust, until he wants to cry because it’s so much but it’s not nearly enough.

His ribs keep pressing in the stone and it spreads a dull ache through him, something that feels on the edge of sweet when Taehyung is the one driving him against it with his cock.

He gives a push with his hands, attempts to lift himself from the ground and alleviate the pain for a few short breaths. But he’s forced down again, Taehyung quick and assertive, keeping him still and fucking into him even tighter.

“T-Tae,” he pleads, his fingers starting to hurt from how hard he’s clamping them into the ground.

Taehyung says nothing, gives another push and then the palm he’s kept flat between Jimin’s shoulder blades is taken away and it makes him the slightest bit lost, missing its weight. The water sloshes. And suddenly there’re drops of it hitting Jimin’s skin, along his spine and up to his nape. It burns. The difference in temperature is so high, it burns. A violent shiver travels him whole and he gasps, chest heaving in quick motions.

“M-more,” he croaks out, and Taehyung does it again, hissing when Jimin twitches and stiffens under him. “Fuck me, Tae, fucking –“

And Taehyung growls and pulls out, manhandles him closer to where he left his clothes, grabs one of the towels and unfolds it so it’s nice and flat on the ground.

“And you’re fucking stubborn,” he growls with clenched teeth.

And Jimin blooms prettily, feeling high on his inability to move, and on this scorching thing in his gut that flares up when he realizes he has no other choice but to take what Taehyung gives.

“Oh f-fuck,” and Taehyung’s fingers dig harder in his skin when Jimin breathes it out, quiet gasps slipping from his lips.

The build up is fast, way faster than in the water, with that sliver of pain shining through the pleasure and Jimin becomes tense, thoughts a whirlwind and skin like parcels of electricity, and Taehyung feels it. Feels the way his body responds to him, feels the need in the way he breathes and whines
and he bends over him, balances himself with a hand on the ground, presses soft kisses to the side of Jimin’s throat.

“Make yourself come on me, Jiminie.”

And he lets go of Jimin’s arm.

The words send more shivers through him and he dissolves in a litany of moans. He’s close but it feels like too much, he’s too sensitive, it’s overwhelming and he needs to be pushed over the edge of that precipice.

He’d want to have Taehyung keep him pinned down until he comes with just his cock up his ass, would want him to break him with the violence of his pushes. But he doesn’t think he could handle it. Not right now. Not when he’s trembling, and already apprehensive of the intensity of what’s coming.

So he wraps a hand around himself instead, and it’s enough to make him twitch violently, enough to have Taehyung groan when he does. His fingers feel like salvation and agony and he pumps himself carefully, tightening more with every glide.

Then the orgasm overcomes him, so intense that it hurts and he wails, eyes squeezed shut, knees drawing together and ass clenching hard around Taehyung’s cock.

Taehyung stills, deep inside of him, his exhales shaky, his palms gentle as he holds Jimin’s waist so that he does not tip over, and he lets him quake through his climax.

Jemin pulls his own fingers away like he’s been burnt, come sticky on them and he lets his forehead rest on the fabric, unable to think straight. He breathes in, breathes out, just this for a moment when he only belongs to himself, and the next thing he registers is the softness of Taehyung’s kisses down his back and up again.

“You good?” his voice is honey and milk, and Jimin nods, melts a little more.

He gives a tentative roll of his hips against Taehyung, almost shy. But Taehyung gets him, so easily does, and he meets him halfway, keeping it shallow as his lips rest soft in the curve of his neck. Jimin’s thighs are weak, little twitches and gasps with every push. It hurts, it burns, and he wants to move away from it as much as he wants to torture himself with it. He’s trembling, shaking all over, mouth dropped open and hyperaware of every little movement, of the lines of Taehyung’s cock inside of him. His stomach is taut with effort for keeping still despite the pain and Jimin feels like he’s somewhere else and he doesn’t want to stop.

But the next moment Taehyung is pulling out, gently helping him to roll onto his side, trailing warm hands along his shivering form when Jimin curls onto himself like it’s the only thing he needs. Jimin thinks it ended too soon. He didn’t even notice the moment Taehyung came, and that somehow makes him bitter.

Taehyung hovers over him, bracketing him, brings their faces together with a careful cup of his hand on Jimin’s cheek. Sweetly, delicately, he presses his lips to Jimin’s closed eyelids, his cheekbone, his nose, his jaw, then his lips. And he lets them touch like that for several beats of their hearts, tender, waiting for him to catch his breath.

Jemin’s body is still wracked with spasms and harsh shudders, but inside it’s a calm sea. It’s serene and blue and peaceful. He’s satisfied and happy and swelling with things that are too big for him.

Jemin hears the rubbery sound of the condom and he forces his eyes open, looking down to find
Taehyung fiddling with it and taking it off. He’s still hard.

“You didn’t come?” It’s more of an observation than a question. His voice is wrecked and he secretly likes it.

He shifts, his heavy limbs complaining, reaches to Taehyung’s cock, but he’s stopped, his hand gently taken off with a soft laugh.

“You know that I’m fine even if I don’t finish.”

“But I want you to,” and here it is again, that pleading tone.

“You’re spent, Jimin, I’m not gonna—“

“Taehyung,”

And he’s hard to convince, he really is. But he eventually lets Jimin suck him off on unsteady knees, pets his hair and tells him he’s good when he tries to take in more than he actually can. He holds his head without putting any pressure, gives slow thrusts into his mouth when Jimin asks him to. He comes with a quiet groan, trying to pull away, but Jimin keeps him still, swallows around him until he’s hissing and softening between his lips.

He crouches the next second, kissing him with something as hungry as it is sated and Jimin sighs against him.

“D’you wanna go inside?” Taehyung asks, low and whispery and bewitching. And Jimin’s in love. He’s pretty sure by now. That regardless of all that’s happened and all the internal warnings he gave himself, he fell in love with his fuck buddies.

“Not yet,” he’s cold and tired, but he’s not ready to let go, yet. Taehyung nods, tucks himself back in his swimming trunks, gets the other towel and puts it over Jimin like a blanket once he rolled himself on the ground again. “You’re gonna be cold,” he says, accepting it nonetheless, wrapping himself with it.

“Yeah, but I’ll just,” he disappears inside under Jimin’s gaze just to come back with his Marlboro pack, putting it on the stones and hastily slipping in the water again.

Jimin smiles, lids heavy and breathing deep. He replaces himself so that his head is towards the pool instead of the house.

When Taehyung resurfaces, he comes to lean on the edge of the pool and Jimin takes a cigarette and lights it for him. For once he’s the one offering.

And they talk like this for a while, not louder than whispers because they are close enough to breathe each other’s air. They make Titanic jokes and discuss plans of getting Cannelle a harness and a leash, and they avoid all the heavier stuff.

“You still haven’t fucked me awake,” Jimin accuses, idly looking at the bushes and the flowers his mother likes so much.

Taehyung laughs, stops stroking Jimin’s arm to push his hair away from his forehead with his long, perfect fingers.

“That’s because you always wake up before I do.”
And Jimin fakes a pout, but can’t counter this.

Sometimes they will stop talking and just stare at each other, and Jimin will be jealous of the cigarette Taehyung brings to his lips, will lets himself become more infatuated with every breath of smoke Taehyung is careful to blow away from his face.

_We’re fucked and complicated but I love you_, he wants to say. But it’s stuck in his throat and he doesn’t think it’s a bad thing.

It settles in just a bit later, when they’re in the shower.

“Was that weird?” he stills, staring at the grey stone tiles Behind him, Taehyung is working open the shampoo bottle.

“Was what weird?”

“Me. Acting like that. Teasing you.”

“ Weird? No? Do you feel weird about it?”

“A little?”

Taehyung gives his arm a gentle squeeze, Jimin feels him understanding, attentive. _There_. Taehyung kisses his hair, it makes a wet sound.

“Let’s not do it anymore, then.”

“But I liked it? It’s just… I don’t know.”

“Did I go too hard?”

“Do you like it better like that?”

“I like it like that and I like it when we take it too slow for sanity, and I also like just spooning with you into the next sunrise. It doesn’t matter to me. Not really. I just want to you to be comfortable.”

Jimin lets it soothe him, quiet. He’s still unmoving, when Taehyung is lathers and rinses his hair.

“I’ve never wanted it to be rough before,” he says eventually. “My ex always kept things pretty straightforward and—“

He silences the next part willingly, but Taehyung says it in his place.

“And Yoongi isn’t rough unless you really work him there.”

The change in his voice is so noticeable that it’s almost unsettling. He hums. Jimin expects to have to change subject for the mood not to die, because he knows Taehyung oysters up too easily and too tightly.

“We’ll only ever do what you feel comfortable doing,” Taehyung says, his tone back to something lighter. “You can stop me any time. You would know, you tested it.”
Jimin flushes and smiles, stepping under the showerhead to get a little warmth.

“Sorry about that,” it’s still only half sincere.

Jimin feels like he’s treading on thin ice, sometimes. He’s not sure if that’s only him feeling like that, or if that’s how it really is, but the distance between Yoongi and Taehyung feels lined with eggshells.

And right now, as he texts Yoongi, sitting and tilted into Taehyung’s space to rest against his side, he’s doubting that it’s the right thing to do. He feels the topic to still be raw and sensitive and yet, when Taehyung looks at his screen to see what he’s doing, Jimin doesn’t hide it. He lets him see and if he can read, he’s not really bothered about it. But each time, he expects him to tense, to become rigid or colder.

But he doesn’t.

Taehyung’s chest heaves evenly, his eyes are soft and he’s saying nothing.

And Jimin wonders what changed.

Δ
taehyung loves Jimin. He knows. He also knows it’s probably better if he doesn’t tell.

Tonight, Jimin did show a lot of trust in him.

But tonight, Jimin is also texting Yoongi, snuggled against him. They’re falling in love, he can see that much. And he understands, both of them.

Taehyung understands the beauty of things. He understands how they come and go, how they change, perpetually. How they shouldn’t be held onto even when it’s hard not to. He’s a firm believer that oftentimes, things are prettier when you just look, don’t touch.

He’s in one of those mindsets, where he just wants to draw back to let them breathe. Taehyung knows he’s splotched dark and ugly in some places, he’s aware that he’s difficult and complicated. And himself, even when he’s high out of his mind, can’t begin to piece himself together, most of the time.

He doesn’t want to ruin things. Yoongi and Jimin. He doesn’t want to stand between them.

He tells Jimin he has to leave, that he can’t stay for the night. Even if his change of clothes is waiting in his car.

Taehyung doesn’t think he can live without Jimin, now. But he thinks that if it’s to all go to shit for the three of them, then for tonight, just for tonight, he should try to learn how.
3.10 There’s blood on your lies, disguise opened wide

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

You: hyung
24-06-2016, 9:37

You: what are your thoughts on rough sex
24-06-2016, 9:37

Jimin rolls onto his back, eyes on his screen, fingers idly brushing the places Taehyung gripped at, where he’s bruised up, where he’s sore.

Taehyung left the previous night, with some muttered words that Jimin was too sleepy to completely process. He didn’t make anything of it. Not really. Until now.

Hobi hyung: uh
24-06-2016, 9:40

Hobi hyung: isn’t it a little early for that
24-06-2016, 9:41

You: did i wake you
24-06-2016, 9:41

Hobi hyung: no?
24-06-2016, 9:42

You: then its not too early
24-06-2016, 9:42
You: now tell me
24-06-2016, 9:42

Hobi hyung: jungkookie is that you
24-06-2016, 9:43

You: tell me
24-06-2016, 9:43

Hobi hyung: its… fine? i guess?
24-06-2016, 9:45

Hobi hyung: why?
24-06-2016, 9:45

You: i teased tae until he roughed me up yesterday
24-06-2016, 9:46

You: i never did that with anyone
24-06-2016, 9:47

You: and it was really tame rough sex
24-06-2016, 9:47

You: but still
24-06-2016, 9:47

Hobi hyung: ok?
24-06-2016, 9:47

Hobi hyung: and what do you need from me about it
24-06-2016, 9:48
Hobi hyung: good job jiminie, you did great
24-06-2016, 9:49

Hobi hyung: ?
24-06-2016, 9:49

You: dude
24-06-2016, 9:49

Hobi hyung: im so confused
24-06-2016, 9:51

Hobi hyung: its not
24-06-2016, 9:51

Hobi hyung: that big of a deal? idk?
24-06-2016, 9:51

You: you say that like everyone likes having their hair pulled
24-06-2016, 9:52

Hobi hyung: well
24-06-2016, 9:54

You: hyung
24-06-2016, 9:55
Jimin cringes and groans at the image.

The pain that shoots through him when he sits up makes him wonder if he’s going to be able to endure dance practice tonight.

Hobi hyung: you’re fine

24-06-2016, 9:57

Hobi hyung: if he was respectful then its all good

24-06-2016, 9:58

Hobi hyung: im really really confused

24-06-2016, 9:58

You: i dont know

24-06-2016, 9:59

You: i guess i just needed to talk about it

24-06-2016, 10:00

Hobi hyung: mhm

24-06-2016, 10:02

Hobi hyung: self discovery and all that good stuff

24-06-2016, 10:02

Hobi hyung: amirite

24-06-2016, 10:02

Jimin rolls his eyes, before they fall on his reflection in the tall mirror of his room. There’s faint
purple lining his neck, his knees are chaffed, his hair is a mess.

**Hobi hyung:** if you like it, then enjoy it
24-06-2016, 10:02

**Hobi hyung:** there's nothing weird about it
24-06-2016, 10:03

**You:** thanks hyung
24-06-2016, 10:04

He finds little reassurance in Hoseok’s words. The stupid voice in his head tells him that the way he behaved might have been what made Taehyung leave early. Either that, or his prolonged conversation with Yoongi over text.

**Hobi hyung:** also
24-06-2016, 10:07

**Hobi hyung:** was he good
24-06-2016, 10:07

**You:** I'm getting more concerned every day
24-06-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung:** about what
24-06-2016, 10:11

**You:** you wanting to steal my dudes
24-06-2016, 10:12

**Hobi hyung:** heheeh
That’s only then that Jimin remembers that Hoseok had to take a supplementary shift to help a coworker.

You: good luck man

You: hyung no

You: stop right this instant

You: no

You: can you come get me after work
You: … yes

24-06-2016, 10:23

You: ill be there at 15

24-06-2016, 10:23

Δ

Jimin: did you leave because of me

24-06-2016, 11:37

Taehyung frowns, huffs out his smoke before he kills his cigarette in his ashtray. The sky is grey and the wind chilly, today. It’s a weather that makes him want to smoke through a whole pack while studying the people walking down the street. Cannelle is peaceful, next to him. Even if she squints through every breeze, he can tell she likes it.

You: why would i have left because of you

24-06-2016, 11:39

Jimin: the sex thing

24-06-2016, 11:39

You: jesus, jimin, no

24-06-2016, 11:39

Jimin: why then

24-06-2016, 11:40

The mindset he was in the previous night, he’s not completely out of it. Not yet.
He still feels like he should put some distance between them, one that would be comfortable for his feelings. He hates himself a bit for it.

As he grabs his pack, he thinks that he might just be scared of settling in this again. He might just be trying to chicken out of what they are.

**Jimin:** tae

24-06-2016, 11:45

**You:** i just needed to

24-06-2016, 11:46

**Jimin:** are you trying to push me away

24-06-2016, 11:46

**You:** i dont mean to

24-06-2016, 11:48

**Jimin:** then stop that and just talk to me wtf

24-06-2016, 11:49

**You:** its not that easy

24-06-2016, 11:50

**Jimin:** i know

24-06-2016, 11:50

**Jimin:** but please dont push me away

24-06-2016, 11:50

**Jimin:** i dont think i deserve that

24-06-2016, 11:51

**Jimin:** and its not gonna help anyone
Jimin: we’re already fucked enough as it is

Jimin’s wave of raw honesty helps him center himself somehow and he sighs, leans back against the patio door and gives Cannelle a rub, from her head to her tail.

You: i know

He then receives a picture from Jimin, where a peaceful-looking café is extending in the background, and just his tiny fingers are flashing a piece sign to the camera.

He smiles. Breathes easier.

He’s still on his balcony, reading to the gradually fading natural light, when his phone rings.

He sees the caller’s ID, groans. His father has been texting him every day since Monday and he never once replied. He guesses he can’t avoid it forever.

“Yeah?”

“Son.”

“Yeah.”

“You could have answered my messages.”

“I could have.”

“Gayoung told me she invited you to her dinner.”

Always so straightforward.

“She did.”

“And that you told her that you didn’t need a substitute mother.”

Taehyung laughs. The only thing he remembers from that night is throwing up in his bathroom.

“It seems like I haven’t taught you manners.”

“You didn’t teach me much dad, the maid had to do that for you, too.”
It’s his father’s turn to laugh, and Taehyung hates how he can find himself in the sound.

“I taught you more than you can imagine, son. One day you’ll be grateful for it.”

“If that helps you sleep at night.”

“You’ll be there, tomorrow. At 19h. And dressed accordingly.”

“And if I’m not?”

“Then I’ll teach you one more thing. You’ll learn to live without my money.”

And his father hangs up.

Taehyung makes an annoyed noise, lets his phone flop out of his hand and onto the balcony, startling the cat. It’s so easy for his father to threaten. It’s how it’s been, ever since Taehyung was a kid.

When Yoongi was gone, Taehyung often considered leaving. Going somewhere else and start over, because there was nothing left for him, here. He still does think about it sometimes, when he feels too weak and overwhelmed.

But the truth is that he has this fear of falling into the rest of the world, of having no money and needing to worry about it. And it makes him easy to threaten.

He balls his hands into fists, smokes another cigarette, hoping it’ll help him bring his thoughts elsewhere. But it doesn’t. And he ends up, like every time he feels himself to be on edge and ready to break, facing his alcohol shelf. Because it’s the only way he found to keep his feelings not as close to the surface.

He goes blank, stares at his vodka. His raspberry vodka.

He knows what pattern he’s getting into. It’s the same as Yoongi’s mother, the one she’s trying to hide but fails miserably every time.

He licks his lips, hesitates, for once.

Taehyung thinks of his phone, of going to get it and call Jimin, just to hear his voice, to hear him talk. But a quick glance to the clock tells him he’s in the middle of dance practice and he’s not ready to disturb him for something that selfish.

He still goes back to pick up his phone, stomach tight with apprehension and this urge he has to scream, and he dials.

“Tae?”

“Hyung,”

“What’s going on?” there’s the sound of the outside audible behind him, the loudness of the wind hitting the microphone.

“My father just called.”

“What did he want?” there’s the slightest change to Yoongi’s voice then. But it’s enough for Taehyung to perceive it. Annoyance, perhaps. Worry. He carefully sits beside Cannelle.

“Remember Gayoung?”
“His fiancée?”

“Yeah.”

“What about her?”

“She decided to hold a dinner tomorrow and I’m forced to go.”

“Why?” and now his annoyance is all flared up.

“Why do you think? They probably invited people over and want to look like a happy family or something.” A loud bang on the other side of the line makes him flinch and he takes the device away from his ear for a second. “What are you doing?”

“I’m getting on my way to pick up Jimin at the studio.”

“Ah,” he swallows, nods slowly with his eyes fixated on the railings. He’s uncomfortable.

There’s a sigh on Yoongi’s end, then a prolonged, pregnant silence.

“Anyway, I just needed to get this off my chest. Sorry for calling you, hyung.”

“Taehyung.”

“Mhm.”

“You know I would’ve told you to come over, but you know how it’s gonna end. I don’t think it’s a good idea.”

He laughs through a bitter smile.

“Yeah.”

“Don’t be like that. You’re making it hard for me to do anything to help you, Tae.”

“You can’t blame me.”

“I know.”

Taehyung cuts the call without another word. It’s the first time Yoongi ever closes the door on him. It settles something disgusting inside of him, something self-depreciating and cowardly. He never felt so foreign to Yoongi and Jimin’s relationship, so set aside, and what was swimming inside last night when Jimin was snuggled against him comes back, overwhelmingly vivid.

He quietens his prickling nose and watering eyes with a shot of vodka.

Δ

Yoongi thinks he’s beginning to understand why Jimin feels like they’re all dislocated. Because that’s the impression he’s left with since Taehyung hung up on him.

He’s half sitting on the hood of his Cadillac, browsing through his phone to keep himself occupied when the door of the studio opens and people start coming out. He observes with passive curiosity as
he always does, knows he’ll need a little more patience because Jimin usually comes out later than most of the other dancers. Cars leave the lot one after the other and the excited voices gradually subside until it’s quiet again.

He fishes his cigarettes in his pocket, lazily lights one up. He sighs tiredly. He can’t stop replaying his last conversation with Taehyung. There’s a feeling of guilt, coming from all of this. From the whole past week, that’s what he’s been dragging around. Monday at their meeting, and then that night, when he was confronted to the pathetic view of Taehyung crashing at the refinery. The next morning, with Jimin being upset about the fact that he left in the night. And then at work, where everyone seems bothered that he’s only there on the Wednesdays and Thursdays, picking on his work and his attitude too often for comfort.

And Taehyung, who just reached out. And Yoongi, who’s trying to let everyone heal, had to cut him off.

Now he’s waiting for this guy he’s falling in love with, but this guy is stuck between Taehyung and him like a metronome. And Jimin won’t end up on one side. He’s been very clear on this. He won’t choose. So it’s either everything or it’s nothing.

And Yoongi is scared that they’ll have to set for nothing.

So he tries to squeeze every moment he can into his schedule without suffocating Jimin or hurting Taehyung. Which proves to be a hard thing to do. He feels under pressure and he hates it.

The door screeches and Jimin’s laugh resounds crystal in the fresher night. Yoongi looks up, smiles and lets his smoke out when he sees Jungkook flailing around and Jimin crouched to the ground from laughing too much.

Yoongi just wants them to be happy. No matter what it takes. Taehyung and Jimin. He wants them to be happy.

Jungkook ends up doing a handstand on the bare concrete, his tee riding off his body and Jimin shrieks him through a snort to stop, stop you’ll hurt your hands Jungkookie. Yoongi meets the younger’s eyes and he’s given a bright smile, so youthful and carefree that it almost hurts. He hopes that what he returns is enough.

Jimin gets to him after he’s given Jungkook a few pats on the back, he looks good. Exhausted, probably. But his skin glows with a healthy flush, his eyes glimmering with contentment, and his lips are plush and moist when he presses them to Yoongi’s.

“Hi,” he says, and that makes Yoongi grin stupidly every time.

“Hi,” he kisses him again, just a little longer because he’s missed it, and he lets him steal the cigarette from between his fingers.

Jimin takes a drag, carefully looks over his shoulder and at Jungkook like he’s expecting something that doesn’t come. But Jungkook is just waiting next to an old, red Kia, face illuminated by his phone screen.

“Let’s go?” and Yoongi nods.

The lights of the studio are being turned off when they’re leaving the parking.
“Hold on,” Jimin manages to straighten and look at Yoongi despite how squeezed they are against one another. Yoongi isn’t too sure why they’re still here, with thick cotton ropes digging in their skin and swinging in between two trees in this hammock his mother loves lazing around. Jimin just wanted to know if they could fit, and Yoongi couldn’t refuse anything to his eye smile. So he got dragged in and now they’ve been half comatose in there for over an hour, music playing softly from Yoongi’s phone on his chest. “You’ve never seen hyung?”

“I don’t think so? Well maybe I saw him, but we’ve never been introduced.”

“He’s my best friend, I can’t not have introduced you.”

“I’m tempted to blame this on alcohol-induced amnesia, but I haven’t been drunk in ages, so that’s not it.”

“Hyung.”

“I’d remember, Jimin-ah,” he says, half laughing, feeling exposed under Jimin scrutinizing gaze.

“I can’t not have.”

Yoongi shrugs and Jimin shifts back in place, tightly pressed to his side. The hammock shakes and rocks and Yoongi inhales, fills his lungs and tightens his hold around Jimin’s shoulder.

“Maybe you’re confusing me with Tae? Did he meet him?”

“Yeah they saw each other like, once. For two minutes. Ah… Yeah, maybe I’m mixing you up.” Yoongi hums, attention zeroing on the way Jimin gently plays with his fingers. “Why am I so sure you’ve seen him, then?”

“No idea.”

Jimin tells him that they should be doing that soon, and Yoongi agrees, but there’s a vague doubt dancing in the back of his mind.

His eyes flutter open to the first slivers of lightness poking at the horizon. His fingers, his feet, his nose, most of his body is stiff with chilly humidity, at the exception of where Jimin is still cuddled.

Through the leaves of the trees above them, he can see the aqua of the sky, pure and unmarred and he takes a moment to just exist. To feel the cold where it gnaws at him, the ropes where they strain against his flesh, the ache of his muscles, tense from the lack of movement. The morning birds are sweet in their songs, a soft rhythm where Yoongi finds a bit of himself.

He breathes a sharp inhale, teeth chattering.

“Jimin-ah,” he croaks, his arm is asleep under Jimin’s torso, but he wills it to move, to bring the warmth of his body even closer. “Jimin.”

Jimin hums and curls up tighter, arms folded against his chest, nuzzling the soft cotton of Yoongi’s t-
shirt. He looks like a kitten. Yoongi’s lips crook up, affection wrapping around his heart. He carefully rolls onto his side to face him making the hammock sway, tucks Jimin’s head under his chin, hooks a leg around his to have him slot better against his own body.

“We fell asleep,” he says, his voice scratchy, eyes still feeling puffy.

“M’cold,” Jimin mutters in Yoongi’s chest, his breath almost burning on the dew-covered skin of his neck.

“You wanna go inside? It’s still early, we could probably sleep if we close the curtains.”

“Just a little more,” he says, wriggling up until he’s at Yoongi’s level, and he slots their mouths together in a low, lazy kiss. It’s hot and it’s cold. Yoongi shivers.

Then he pulls away and they share a look, silent tenderness, and he takes him in. For exactly who he is, at 5am, hair mussed up and soft eyes, Yoongi sees him. He drinks him all in and he flares up with love.

“You’re beautiful, Jimin. You know that?”

Jimin cracks him a smile, a tired and shy one and Yoongi closes the space between them again.

When they wake up again, wrapped in Yoongi’s silken sheets, the window shows a darker sky and dense sizzle.

Yoongi cooks breakfast for them after they’ve showered, still flushed with the heat of the water and the need he didn’t repress to kiss Jimin stupid under the stream. He would have wanted to taste his skin, maybe kneel to suck him off or slowly finger him, but he glided his hands over his body instead, soothing away the last remains of the cold from the deepness of his bones.

They decide, as Yoongi closely watches Jimin eat, just like Taehyung so often does, that the weather is too dull for them to lazy about in the pool or be outside in general.

“Cinema? I think we only went like, once,” Jimin says, a bit absent, as he puts another spoonful of sugar in his coffee.

He’s noticed him fiddling around with his phone a lot, this morning. He’s laughing at it, or he’s eyeing it with curiosity and Yoongi hopes that it’s Taehyung’s he’s talking with. He was upset, yesterday, and if Jimin can make it better where Yoongi can’t, then he’s satisfied with that.

For now he swallows down how disconnected he feels and the concern he feels about Taehyung’s family dinner.

“Cinema sounds great.”

“You sound disappointed,” Yoongi passes the seatbelt across his chest, its soft click barely audible over the rain hitting the windshield.
“That’s because I am,” Jimin mutters, “I’m not hallucinating, am I? The casting was promising but the setting was shit, the plot was shit, the relationships were shitty as fucking hell. There was nothing remotely good about that movie.”

“You chose it though,” he puts the key in the ignition, sends the wipers on the fastest.

“And I regret it deeply.”

Yoongi drives, mostly silent, listening to Jimin’s half-serious rant, and he finds himself content with that. He’s smiling through the whole thing, navigating them in the city, trying to focus on the road that’s curtained with rain, sky dark even in late afternoon, until Jimin abruptly cuts his sentence and —

“What the hell is—Hyung!”

Yoongi stamps the brake pedal so hard that Jimin shoots forward and has to brace himself on the dashboard, his seatbelt straining.

“Holy— Did we hit it?” Jimin stays on the edge of his seat, trying to look over the hood of the car.

“What the fuck is it? I didn’t even see –“

“A cat, it’s—Oh my fucking god,” he unclasps his seatbelt, and the next moment he’s out in the pouring rain.

“Jimin,” he calls but he doubts he’s hearing, with the wind and the rain and the other drivers driving too fast in this smaller street.

He moves when he sees him bend and disappearing behind the metallic black of his Cadillac, and he tenses when the cold droplets hit his cheeks and his nape. He follows Jimin’s eyes, helps him look under the car, between the wheels, on the side of the road and even closer to the buildings. The clouds let very little light filter through but even with what they have, they can’t find any blood or traces of a body.

“Do you think it crawled in the wheel wells?” Jimin asks after a few minutes, and Yoongi glances at him but then stalls, because Jimin is combing his wet hair back and his shirt, usually loose, is drenched and sticking on his chest in some places and fuck.

“I’d be surprised,” he manages, tearing his eyes away and making a last round of the car. And when he’s leveled with the trunk, he looks down. And he sees it. “Fuck it’s so tiny.”

“Uh?”

Yoongi crouches, squints through the water making his eyelids flutter. The cat, the kitten, is standing on wobbly legs, pupils wide, looking absolutely terrified.

He’s never been that fond of felines, and especially with Cannelle that won’t stop hissing at him, but he presents his fingers nonetheless, unsure. The thing is bigger than his hand, but not by much. He gives a gentle scratch on its head, and the kitten immediately pushes against him, mouth opening in a silent sound and showing very tiny teeth.

Its long fur is dirty and wet, but Yoongi can still see its pattern, all black with its little paws, its chest and the bridge of its nose white. It feels weak under his touch, frail but willing, tottering in Yoongi’s direction.
“Hyung?”

Yoongi groans, swiftly scoops the kitten in his palm, brings it against his stomach and straightens, gestures to Jimin to get back in the car with his other hand and he walks to the door on the driver’s side.

He sits down heavily, chest heaving and falling in ample motions, drenched and his clothes feelings uncomfortable. He lets his head roll back against the headrest, and then towards Jimin, who’s still as stunning as he was a couple of minutes before.

“Fuck you’re so hot,” Jimin breathes when they make eye contact, and this time Yoongi doesn’t refrain to reach and grab his collar, pulling Jimin towards himself and over the console, kissing him hard.

The kitten is wriggling in his other hand, littering his stomach in thin scratches, but Yoongi is too enthralled in the now easy slide of Jimin’s lips against his own to really care. The hold on his t-shirt is still tight, and when their tongues brush, Jimin lets out a quiet moan and Yoongi thinks they could have sex in here, in his car, like he and Taehyung so often did. He’d want to suck at his neck and feel the weight of his dick in his hand, he’d want Jimin to fuck him good and slow with his fingers, like that one time, late at night, in Jimin’s room.

But the kitten squeaks more than it meows and it’s enough to shake Jimin out of it.

“It’s alive,” he says, looking down at the dark ball of fur still struggling to free itself.

“And shredding my skin.”

And he lets it go. The kitten doesn’t panic, doesn’t run everywhere in the car. It just licks its lips and settles down in Yoongi’s lap. Jimin gives it a tentative pet and it closes its eyes, trembling slightly.

“What do we do with it?”

He gives Jimin his key, lets him unlock the door.

The thing is stressed and trying to claw up his t-shirt and he needs both his hands to handle it.

“Tae?” Jimin calls and his voice bounces against the pale walls.

There’s no answer, just the soft padding of someone walking out the bathroom. And then he appears, Taehyung, brushing his teeth, hair coiffed away from his forehead, black slacks, immaculate dress shirt and untied bowtie around his neck. Getting ready for his family dinner. Yoongi swallows hard. Nothing’s helping today.

He looks surprised to see them, toothbrush immobile between his lips, probably waiting for an explanation for their wet look. But surely, it doesn’t take him more than three seconds to notice the kitten. His eyes go round and expecting, shimmering with interest and Yoongi makes a decision right then and there.

“Hyung almost ran over it.”

Taehyung frowns, gives Yoongi a come here motion with his hand, wanting the kitten.
“More like anyone could have hit it, it was in the middle of the street,” Yoongi adds, carefully
detaching the claws from his shirt and handing it over.

Taehyung’s brows knit together a little more, looking focused as he manipulates the kitten, giving it a
quick inspection. Its eyes, its teeth, its fur, Taehyung checks all of those like he’s always done that.
He puts it back into Yoongi’s expecting arms, makes a silent trip to the bathroom to spit the froth he
was muted by, the sound of the tap strident in their silence.

Jimin looks at him, and down to the fluff encumbering him, and he swiftly press his lips onto
Yoongi’s, a touch quick but sweet.

“It’s uh,” Taehyung’s voice comes again, mouth shiny with water, “a male. He looks young but he’s
not that young? He’s just really skinny and small in general. Still a kitten though. He,” he reaches to
pet at the kitten’s head, his fingers brushing with Yoongi’s, “looks like he’s been out for a while but
he’s not scared of human touch so he was probably someone’s and got lost.”

“What do we do with him?” Jimin asks, gaze heavy on their interaction.

“Well, what do you wanna do with him?”

Yoongi runs his hand in the fur again, absorbed in shimmers of citrine, he thinks he might be feeling
a low purring against his chest, and he feels stupid for letting it make him so soft.

“Can’t you keep it?” he eventually says, the silence following nearly suffocating. ‘I’ll pay for all his
stuff if you want me to.’

Taehyung laughs airily then, stuffing his hands in his pockets. Jimin moves to him, wearing a small
smile, busying himself with his bowtie.

“Hyung, you know money’s not the issue,” and he could look amused, but Yoongi knows it hides
more bitterness than anything else.

“I’m not even sure Tae is allowed to have a cat in here,” Jimin has Taehyung stretch his neck,
straightening the fabric of his collar.

“No, I’m not.”

Jimin, as casual as ever, climbs up on tiptoes and kisses Taehyung. It does something weird to
Yoongi’s stomach, itching a bit at his nerves, at this tension he’s been dragging along all day. He can
see what Jimin is trying to do, what he’s trying to reiterate. But it’s not like he needed the warning in
the first place. He never once saw this thing as a competition. He never once wanted Jimin to choose.

He tentatively crouches, places the kitten on the floor, watches for any signs of Cannelle being
around.

“I’ll take care of him and all that,” he says again. “Just keep him here? I just don’t want to take him
to a shelter.”

“Are you falling in love with a cat?” There’s a playfulness to Taehyung’s tone that has Yoongi look
up at him.

“Shut up,” he says, but he’s smiling. Jimin is, too.

Jimin focuses back on Taehyung’s cuffs, but he mutters something, it’s probably meant for himself,
or unconscious, but it makes the atmosphere around them frigid.
“I don’t get you guys, you’re so obvious.” He closes his eyes, realizing, fingers stilling on Taehyung’s wrist. “Sorry,” he says, but Taehyung already has Yoongi pinned in place just with the way he’s staring at him. It too easily shifted to something dark and convoluted. Yoongi feels guilty for it.

“You know what they say,” Taehyung starts, “going back with an ex is like eating back up your own puke.”

Yoongi takes a sharp breath, the words sinking in, then he swells with an anger that he can’t repress. He stands and before Jimin can say anything, he cuts him.

“That’s fucking bullshit,” he hisses, talking louder, making himself as poisonous as he feels inside. “We weren’t unhappy together and I never treated you badly before what happened and you fucking know it. I’ll accept a lot of blames, Taehyung, but never this. I’ll never let you say I was a bad boyfriend, you hear me? Don’t talk like I’m the worst fucking thing that ever happened to you.” Taehyung’s mouth drops open as if to say something, he lets his silent defiance weigh. “Shut up, I don’t want to hear it. I’m serious. Don’t make it worse.”

Jemin is still facing Taehyung though his hands have left him, he seems like he’s fixing at the buttons of his dress shirt, but with how lost he looks, Yoongi assumes he’s staring at nothing. Then he glances over at Yoongi and their eyes touch, and he reads there everything he needs to know.

“Drop it,” Yoongi tells him, bending to gently scoop the kitten in his palm. “Stop trying. I didn’t come back to Seoul for this. If I really wanted to stay miserable, I would’ve stayed in New York. I’ll be outside.”

And under their scrutiny, Yoongi goes through the door and out the apartment, where he leans his back against one of the walls of the corridor. He holds the cat up and close to his thundering heart, fighting the ache that’s making him throb, that’s threatening to shake him apart.

If that’s how Taehyung remembers him to be, then so be it. Yoongi just remembers them to be something else entirely.

But it doesn’t really matter, now.

Jemin takes a while. Yoongi scratches soft ears to try to calm himself.

He hears, through the door, the sound of their voices. Jemin’s, mostly. He can’t understand anything, but they’re arguing, that much he can tell. They’re arguing softly. Jemin doesn’t want to break Taehyung so he bites at him gently. Taehyung doesn’t really bite back, he just seems to try to soothe the wounds he’s getting raw under, and Yoongi somehow, really wishes he had this calming on effect on Taehyung as well.

But all they ever do since he’s back, is spreading more gasoline onto each other and waiting to see who’s going to strike the match.

Jemin comes out with red eyes, and self-bitten lips. They stand still and observe their stripped selves for a few short breaths, and Yoongi sees a wall that wasn’t there 20 minutes ago.

“He said he’s gonna keep him for you.” Yoongi nods, doesn’t look away. “Where do you wanna go?”
“He needs stuff and a bath.”

Δ

It’s a chemical scent, all around. Something clean but so very impersonal. The walls are of a softened lime green, the chairs decorated with navy blue cushion and Jimin hates how it looks under the light of the fluorescent.

They’ve been waiting for almost half an hour, sitting side by side, quiet, little curious paws roaming the floor and the tables where lay a dozen of animal magazines. Coming without an appointment to a vet clinic when it’s just about to close really wasn’t Yoongi’s best idea. But Jimin followed, gladly did. Just like he did for Cannelle.

What hangs around them weighs a ton, and it’s a huge distance that he has a hard time dealing with. And he wants to reach to Yoongi, fix this ugly situation he’s created. But he’s so emotionally drained from his conversation with Taehyung, so completely wrung out, that he doesn’t even know where to start. What words to use to make him feel better.

There’s a lady coming out of a small room, her hair tied in a ponytail, her black scrub harsh against the other colors around.

“For Tuxedo?” she smiles, and it makes Jimin uncomfortable.

Yoongi shifts in his chair, reaching for the kitten, and when he stands, Jimin stops him with a gentle tug on his shirt.

“I’m really sorry, hyung.”

Yoongi holds his eyes, but Jimin sees he’s been inside himself for a while.

And Yoongi, for the first time since they’ve started this thing they have, offer his hands for Jimin to take in public.

Jimin swallows and takes it, but doesn’t feel any better.

They’re finally done a couple of hours later, when night has been hasted by the rain that’s still pouring heavy on the warm asphalt, and the moving cars all around.

Jimin takes the cage from Yoongi’s hands to hold it in his lap for the time he drives. There’s this eerie glint of pain in the lining of their silence, and though it’s not directed at one another, Jimin still wants to crawl his way out of it. Even just for tonight.

He thinks that he’s slowly but surely settling in their dynamic. The one where no matter how much he’d want to grow some distance with them, he couldn’t. He just couldn’t.

There’s a peak in tension when they’re in the elevator, apprehension mixed with discomfort in between four mirrorlike surfaces.
Yoongi unlocks the door to an apartment drowned in dim light. Which, and Jimin knows, is not in Taehyung’s habits.

He places the cage on the floor as gently as he can, opening its door for the kitten to be free to come out. He’s been groomed and he’s wearing a thin collar now, a dark red leather thing with a bell that makes a pretty sound when he walks. Jimin thinks he’s cute. Cuter than Cannelle anyway.

There’s the smooth slide of the patio door being heard, and then Taehyung’s lazy footsteps.

“I’ve been careful to hide the cage when we got in but I think someone might have seen, down in the lobby,” Yoongi says, without any other form of acknowledgement.

Taehyung appears, and Jimin should be surprised that he’s already back from his dinner, but given his state, the veil covering his eyes and tense line of his shoulders, he’s rather glad he left early. His dress shirt is half unbuttoned with the sleeves rolled up, the bottom hem out of his trousers and with the disarray of his hair, he looks like he’s seen a war.

Jimin doesn’t know much about Taehyung’s family. They will skirt around the subject most of the time, if they can. But he knows that Taehyung finds no comfort in his relationship with his father the way Jimin does with his own parents. And he’s heard about the new fiancée, but never about his actual mother.

Taehyung gives a slow nod, keeps his eyes down, accepts the long, colorful document that serves as health booklet for the animal. He reads what’s written on it, planted in the middle of the hallway, as Yoongi unpacks what they bought and puts everything he bought where he knows Cannelle’s stuff is. And Jimin, Jimin is just there, and he can just breathe, and watch in silence as the picture crumbles a little more, as some more pieces get lost between the moments they should look at each other and the words they should be saying.

“Tuxedo?” Taehyung’s voice is hoarse, he must have been chain smoking again.

“Yeah. Tux.”

It’s all that Yoongi says before he bends to give his kitten a last rub and goes through the door. It does a harmless click as it shuts, but it acts as a slap for the both of them.

Taehyung meets his eyes in the softened darkness of his apartment, just for a fleeting moment, ripping them away with something akin to shame. Jimin bites at his lips with a sad kind of restlessness. He hates this.

“Do something,” he says, and he looks as Taehyung brushes his hair back with his fingers.

“There’s nothing to be done.”

“Come on, Tae.” It’s that same wall again. That fatalist one. He wonders how many times Taehyung had to repeat himself those things for him to believe them to be the truth. “You’ve been in love for so long that you can’t even see it anymore.”

Taehyung says nothing. And Jimin understands. He thinks it’s probably better this way.

He still goes to him, presses his lips to his in a tender touch. Because they all might be a mess, but it changes nothing to what Jimin feels for him. Or for Yoongi.
“What do you want to do?” Yoongi asks him when he sits in the passenger seat.

It takes a lot of him, to say it. It bears a sense of loss that he’s not ready to shoulder.

“I think I want to go home, hyung.”

Yoongi acquiesces without much of a fight.

“I shouldn’t have gone there,” Yoongi whispers, the moment his car comes to stillness in front of Jimin’s house. “With Tux. I shouldn’t have brought him to Tae. I should have let the dust settle like I said I would. I’m sorry.”

Jimin’s fingers are immobile on the seatbelt he was ready to unclasp. He wasn’t really surprised with Yoongi’s idea to bring the cat there. It’s probably what would have come to his mind, too. But the moment they stepped inside, Jimin did become apprehensive. He knew they hadn’t seen each other since that night at the refinery.

Yoongi sags in his seat with a sigh, his eyelids fall closed.

“That’s the worst thing I’ve ever done. Leaving him.” Jimin glances over at him when he says that. “I—” he breathes in deep and stalls, like he’s trying to stay composed. “When I think about it now, have no fucking idea why I did that. I just, remember being really confused in the last months before I left, with my dad pressuring me to leave and Taehyung’s father hating my guts and telling me I was ruining him and I—I don’t know why I was thinking this to be the right thing to do.” He makes a pause then, brows creasing. “I probably hoped it would help him get better? I was loving him so fucking much but each day I felt like I was taking him down with me. So I left. And I hated myself for it every single day.”

Jimin knows Yoongi have been stuck in memories for most of the evening, but he still wasn’t expecting that sudden outburst, after hours of blue silence. But there’s an urgency in his voice, like he’s wanted to get this off his chest for too long, but never could talk about it to anybody. So he lets his seatbelt go, lets his hands fall in his lap.

“Did you tell him that?” Jimin asks, as gently as he can manage with how cloudy he feels inside. “Everything you just told me. With those exact same words.”

“I didn’t really – I couldn’t find the right time. And he won’t hear me.”

“Hyung,” he shifts, angling his body towards his. “More than both of you having to talk about it with me, I think that you and Tae have to talk about it. Together. Properly.”

“I wish it was that simple,” Jimin feels him build that same fucking wall Taehyung set up on him a couple of hours earlier. He wishes he could shake them both. Wake them up from that nightmare they keep themselves in.

“You need to do it, hyung,”

“It’s not that easy, Jimin,” he senses him bubbling up. “He doesn’t want to even touch the topic most of the time and—“
“No one’s gonna get over it if no one fucking talks about it.”

And that shuts Yoongi up.

Jimin waits for stretched out moments, when Yoongi is in a mindset that he can’t get in. Just like Taehyung does, sometimes.

He tries to picture them, young and lost in the world they’re born in and lost in each other, and it just makes his heart sink lower in his chest.

“I’m gonna go, hyung,” and Yoongi finally looks at him. “I’m honestly feeling a bit— tired and I got important stuff to do for the company this week so it’s probably better if I rest a little.” Which is true. But it’s nowhere as extensive as he’s trying to make it seem.

“Did I upset you?”

“I think I just need to be alone for a bit,” Yoongi nods, pursing his lips and Jimin undoes his belt, but freezes mid-move, the words coming out quicker than he thinks them. “Maybe we should backtrack a little? Take it slow?”

Yoongi slowly nods again, blank, and Jimin realizes just how bad that sounded. He leans over the console and Yoongi meets him halfway. And in the soft press of their lips, Jimin would want him to understand that it’s not that he’s giving up or that he’s leaving. But seeing the two persons he loves hurting each other just places a dull ache inside his ribcage and sometimes it’s hard to bear.

“I’ll text you?”

Δ

It feels like they’re breaking up.

They’ve never made things official nor did they properly break up after Jimin cut things off with Taehyung last month.

But that’s exactly what it feels like right now.

“I’ll text you?” and Yoongi believes him so he forces his lips into a smile but it still feels like they’re breaking up.

Jimin closes the door behind himself and Yoongi thinks he should be saying something but he doesn’t. And he glances at his wing mirror to see Jimin standing where he left him, waiting for the car to disappear around the corner.

He’s feeling empty and too full when he gets back home. He takes his shoes off and places them neatly in the rack as he always does, and when he’s the two-third of his way up the stairs, his mother calls him.

“Yeah?” he calls back, hoping he won’t have to come back down.
“Can you come in the kitchen?”

He doesn’t want to sigh but it comes out still, annoyance that he doesn’t want to feel because of her. She’s not at fault.

“I found this in the hallway, upstairs,” she gives him a tiny piece of paper, folded in multiples. He takes it, her curious tone worrying him. “It’s not your handwriting, is it? Has someone been in the house last night with you?”

It’s Jimin’s. Some scribbled notes about dates for an eventual dance competition.

“Yeah, someone was with me. I’ll have to give it back to them.”

“Whose is it?” His mother smiles inquisitively and Yoongi cuts the conversation right there. He’s had his share of heavy conversations for tonight.

“It’s complicated,” is all he says. It’s the truth but it feels wrong on his tongue.

He stares at the walls on his room, standing in front of his bed like he doesn’t know what to do with himself.

Eventually, Yoongi takes a shower, a short one because it makes him miss the sound of Taehyung’s voice. And with that as a tapestry for his mangled feelings, he steps in his walk-in, digs in his stuff with expert hands, because he knows where he’s hid it the last time. And he wraps his tired mind in a blanket of nostalgia.

He snaps out of it only hours and hours later, when his phone lights up in the deep darkness around him.

**Taehyung**: i saw the picture you just posted

26-06-2016, 3:53

**Taehyung**: of the maschine

26-06-2016, 3:53

**Taehyung**: dont do it hyung

26-06-2016, 3:53

**Taehyung**: dont go back there

26-06-2016, 3:56

**Taehyung**: youll just hurt yourself
Yoongi was just horny ok

also for those wondering, a maschine is this thing X
3.11 Eudaimonia

The melodic sound of the doorbell cuts Hoseok in the middle of his sentence. “They’re early?” he says and Jimin nods, glances at the clock to read 10:37 then licks his fingers clean from the maraschino cherry juice. He gives his drink a quick stir, leaves it there to sit as he heads to the door.

“What is this thing doing here,” he asks, when Jungkook is the first one coming in.

“I missed you too, hyung,” he says, going straight to the kitchen with the alcohol he’s carrying.

“He gave me the puppy eyes,” Seokjin enters with an affectionate smile, enfolding Jimin in a quick hug before he gives Hoseok a much longer, much more it’s been too long since I’ve seen you one.

“He has school,” he deadpans, hand still on the knob and waiting for Namjoon, who’s just closing the trunk of the car.

“I wouldn’t skip class if I didn’t know I can allow myself to,” Jungkook says, coming back to get some bags out of Namjoon’s hands.

“Last time I heard about it, your grades were very average.”

“Yep, still are, but I don’t need anything extraordinary to go into photography, hyung. Besides, school will always be there and you guys won’t. So.”

And his tone, low and serious, has Jimin’s eyes narrow into tight little slits.

“What did you do to him?”

Namjoon offers a smile and Seokjin just shrugs, his expression soft and fond.

It’s their fourth day into their near radio silence, and Jimin’s longing for them doesn’t get any less intense. He exchanged little bits of conversations with Yoongi, mostly. And Taehyung makes sure Jimin is doing fine, but he doesn’t step any further than that. It strangely feels like those two weeks after he broke up with Taehyung.

He’s having a hard time situating himself. Or what the three of them are. He doesn’t know if he’s trying to push Yoongi and Taehyung where they don’t want to go, if he’s right to want them to figure things out, if he should stay out of it instead. But it won’t last for long, if they just wait and stay passive. He’s aware of that.

Hoseok’s amused voice resounds outside, followed by the sound of sloshing water and Seokjin’s laugh. Jimin smiles from the kitchen, tilting the bottle a little more to empty it in his own glass.

Sometimes he thinks of what would happen if either Taehyung or Yoongi was to give up on him, on
them. He thinks of the void he’d be feeling even if someone was to still hold his hand, thinks of the possibility of going forward with only Taehyung. Or only Yoongi. And it scares him. It frightens him and he refuses himself to it.

And staring at the marble counter, Jimin realizes just how fucked he is.

“Hyung!” Jungkook squeaks as he gets in, grinning bright and happy, wet and dripping everywhere on the floor.

“Jeon – You’re fuck—“

“I’ll towel it, don’t worry hyung. Make me one?”

“Make you one what?”

“Whatever you’re drinking, it looks good?”

Jimin stares him down. And then Jungkook’s eyebrows shoot up expectantly and Jimin groans against his own weakness. He shoos him outside, shaking his head as he uncaps a new bottle of rum.

He comes out with the two glasses, filled with the colors of the sunset, and just as he’s placing them on the table next to the lounge chairs, his eyes meet with Namjoon’s form, who’s standing alone and apart.

He’s taking off his hoodie, finally. But as he does so, the material of the t-shirt beneath it rides up, revealing the skin of his stomach up to his ribcage. Jimin freezes and Namjoon tugs on it, and the moment is over.

He spends the next hours asking himself if it was a play of the sun filtering through the trees, or if Namjoon was really covered in such extensive, dark bruises. For the first time, he really reflects on what Namjoon does, to make ends meet and send his baby sister to school. On what it comprises, to deal his kind of stuff.

Hoseok has to snap him out of it more than once, a deeper frown on his face every time.

“You okay? You keep zoning out.” And Jimin nods and gives him a sheepish smile.

In the end, he spends most of the afternoon alone but surrounded with his friends and he feels stupid about it, as they gather their belongings and prepare to go, Seokjin and Hoseok having work in the evening and Namjoon claiming to have some business to tend to.

“You sure you don’t want to stay?” Namjoon asks Jungkook in the somewhat tight space between them. He’s tousling his hair with rough fingers. “I can come pick you up after, if you want.”

“You know I don’t actually hate you, right?” Jimin says, hands working on zipping up the backpack hanging from Hoseok’s shoulders.

“Who could hate me?”

“That’s right,” Jimin gives Hoseok a light shove when he snorts. “So stay, if you want. We can call take out and play some stuff.”

“I’m a handful though.”

“Always been.”
“You sure?”

“You why are you acting like we never spent some actual time alone?”

He wraps his arms around Seokjin, his solid frame reassuring. He’s given light pats on the back before the warmth disappears and to settle around Hoseok instead.

“Just making sure,” Jungkook says, distrait, and Jimin catches a very brief exchange between Namjoon and him. Some tenderness that he keeps noticing from them, today taking form of Namjoon giving Jungkook’s back a long, firm stroke.

Seokjin gives the youngest a hug too, nose in his hair and eyes closed before he follows Hoseok and Namjoon out.

Jimin’s glad. He’s glad they all have each other.

Δ

Taehyung perks up, his cigarette loosely hanging from his lips.

Voices. It’s rare to hear those in here. Especially in the evenings.

He fits the stick between his index and middle fingers, exhales his smoke, gives himself a push to step away from the tank.

Again. Louder this time. Taehyung frowns.

He takes curious steps towards the origin of the sounds, hand in the pocket of his jeans in some false sense of security. There’s been more trucks passing than usual, tonight. And he wonders if that’s not just it.

Until he peeks from behind a row of huge pipes and sees people. Three, four of them. One, in particular, is talking louder, and he recognizes the voice as the one he’s heard before. Taehyung cocks his head to the side, observing them, taking drags or his rapidly dying cigarette.

It doesn’t take him long to realize what’s going on. Insults spoken too loud, and one of the four being violent shoved, are more than sufficient for him to understand. He just doesn’t get why Namjoon would be treated like that. It’s supposed to be his territory, after all.

He waits until the group has dispersed for long enough and that Namjoon seems to want to leave before he decides to get to him.

“You okay?” he asks, strolling his way. And there’s something weird about it. About caring for someone he barely knows, but Taehyung guesses that if they both find refuge in this place, they must have more in common than he thinks.

Namjoon only meets his eyes for the fraction of a second, a grey veil over them, takes a last pull of his cigarette before he throws the butt on the ground and steps on it.

“Yeah.”

“You don’t seem like it.”
Taehyung silently beckons him further back, closer to the place he hangs out at. And Namjoon follows, sighing and pulling his hood over his head.

“They’re new clients,” he starts and Taehyung hums. “But they act like they own everything. And I can’t just tell them to fuck off, because they buy a lot and I make good money out of them.”

They sit, backs against Taehyung’s favorite tank. Namjoon contemplates the Marlboro pack he’s being offered for a few seconds before he agrees to take one.

“You were still doing fine before them, no? So why not close the door in their face if they’re being precious little bastards?”

“Taehyung,”

“Mhm,”

“I can’t be doing this my whole life.” Namjoon’s eyelids drop closed, and he brings the cigarette to his lips with the nimbleness that Taehyung can only admire. “I’m doing this for my sister, for her uni, but I don’t want to keep doing it forever.”

It hits Taehyung like a slap in the face, how foreign he is to the concept of money and how to responsibly use it, to be worried that there won’t be enough food on the table. He never heard of Namjoon’s parents. Only ever of his sister and his girlfriend. But from the pieces he’s been able to collect, he’s getting vibes of desertion and a terrible amount of debts.

Taehyung nods and he hopes Namjoon can see it, because he’s feeling too tongue-tied to add anything constructive to it.

They spend time like that, side by side and talking with low voices about this and that to the muted buzzing of the refinery.

“How’s your girlfriend?” Taehyung asks, eventually, after Namjoon receives a fourth text message and smiles at his phone.

“It’s really been a while since we’ve talked like that, uh? We broke up some time ago.”

“That sucks.”

“Nah,” he leans his head back against the metal. “When you grow more comfortable when they’re not there, you gotta let it go. Poisonous.”

And Taehyung is reminded of Jimin’s best friend, out of the blue. Of the fights he hears about, of their toxic habits.

“Still. You were together for what? Three years?”

“Less than that. But you know, Taehyung,” he lets his sentence hang, fills their space with a little more smoke before he continues. “Birth is everywhere. It’s in the decisions you make and in the people you meet. It was like that with her. I started feeling alive somewhere else, somewhere she was not, and I was on another page even before I left her.”

Taehyung lets himself bathe in the confidence in his voice. It’s like it’s taken his hand and dragged him deep inside of his thoughts. And he likes it. Namjoon and his words, they have this power to drown people as much as to lift them up. They have a quiet type of connection that Taehyung can appreciate, that he knows neither of them share with just anyone.
“I gotta go,” Namjoon pushes himself until he stands, extends a hand to help him up, but he gives a slow shake of his head.

“I think I’ll stay here a little longer.”

Namjoon closes his palm into a fist then, a soft smile under bleached blond hair and a black hoodie, and Taehyung bumps his with it.

“Suit yourself.”

He gets to his apartment when he’s forgotten the time, when it’s silent on the streets and the air is full of a tranquility that only night brings.

He hears a bell coming his way, more strident than the other one. Taehyung crouches in the lightless space of the entryway, waits for Tuxedo to get to him, with his fluffy tail curled sympathetically, his inquisitive ears.

Taehyung did fall in love with him just the way Yoongi did. He’s Cannelle polar opposite, sociable and willing to be touched and manipulated, it’s so easy to grow fond of his character. But even despite that, when Cannelle stops shying away from Tuxedo and goes to Taehyung at night, that she rolls himself tight against his side, his heart still swells as much as it used to. If not more.

He takes a shower, for longer than he normally does, the hot water running down his body in warm trails, a fog building up around him, that he’s struggling to breathe through. He’s all thoughts and reflections and for the first time in a while, they’re not all grey and messy.

The tiny LED is flashing on his phone, when he comes out.

**Min Yoongi**: how’s tux

01-07-2016, 1:23

**You**: good

01-07-2016, 1:39

**You**: he eats a lot

01-07-2016, 1:39

**Min Yoongi**: i’m glad

01-07-2016, 1:41
He expects the conversation to fall to an end, with all the cold that’s hanging between them. He goes to his room, puts on the first clean pair of boxers he finds, and goes back to the kitchen, hungry.

**Min Yoongi:** i found a bunch of old stuff
01-07-2016, 1:42

**Min Yoongi:** tae
01-07-2016, 1:43

**Min Yoongi:** your voice
01-07-2016, 1:43

Taehyung’s chest tightens, standing in front of the fridge.

**You:** dont go there, hyung
01-07-2016, 1:44

**You:** just get some sleep
01-07-2016, 1:44

**Min Yoongi:** i’m 22 and off tomorrow
01-07-2016, 1:45

**Min Yoongi:** i think i can manage myself just fine
01-07-2016, 1:45

He grabs some leftovers that he doesn’t bother reheating, drifting in the apartment with all the lights off, until he’s sliding open the mesh door and breathing fresher air again. He doesn’t close it, likes giving the cats the opportunity to come and sit or lie beside him.

He lets Tuxedo smell the empty plastic container once he’s done eating, gently pulling it away when he tries to lick it.

“S’bad for you,” he mutters around the last mouthful, scratching the kitten’s ear.

The flame of his lighter kisses a first cigarette and he takes some more time in this space inside his head, where everything is said and no lie subsists. He bends his legs, bringing his knees closer to himself, his cigarette steady between his fingers.
He doesn’t really expect an answer at this hour, but there’s something his brain keeps looping around and he wants to say it, he wants to make sure he’s understanding things right and he’s just the slightest bit surprised when an answer comes less than a minute later.

Min Yoongi: mhm

01-07-2016, 2:29

Taehyung looks at his screen, bites his lip.

You: jimin is whats tying us together, isnt he

01-07-2016, 2:29

Min Yoongi: yeah

01-07-2016, 2:30

Min Yoongi: just like you’re what’s keeping me and him together

01-07-2016, 2:30

You: and youre whats keeping me and him together

01-07-2016, 2:30

Taehyung finally meets that wall he’s been expecting for a long time.

If he wants to try and keep Yoongi away, he will lose Jimin.

You: i dont want to lose him

01-07-2016, 2:31
Min Yoongi: i know
01-07-2016, 2:31

Min Yoongi: can i call you?
01-07-2016, 2:32

And even before he can type a response, his phone vibrates.

“Tae,” Yoongi’s voice is gravely and tired but so awake at the same time, and it’s unsettling. It reminds Taehyung of all those white nights they spent on the roof when they were younger.

He hums through the smoke he breathes out.

“D’you remember that?”

Taehyung closes his eyes to focus on his hearing, to that slow beat he can faintly catch from Yoongi’s side, one he hasn’t heard in years. It’s painful but he smiles. They’re beautiful memories no matter what.

“Of course I remember.”

“How many times did you fuck the program up before I could properly finish it?”

“I was young.”

“Sixteen is not that young.”

“I wanted to learn and you wouldn’t teach me,” he teases.

“That’s a lie, Kim Taehyung. Every time I’d try to show you something you’d just press on what-fucking-ever thing you could reach instead.”

Taehyung laughs, the pressure on his chest getting just a bit lighter.

“And this? Do you remember?”

He concentrates again, takes a drag that he feels stretching his windpipe and he blows it out slowly, the coldness of his phone under his fingers disappointing when he’d want to reach for warmth.

“What version is this? The fourth?”

“Third.”

“We exaggerated with this one.”

“I was never satisfied with it.”

“I know.”

“I kept thinking that my rapping part was lacking with how nice your part was.”

“When that was obviously not the case.”
Yoongi lets out a short laugh, vulnerable and nostalgic and Taehyung feels it crashing onto him stronger than it should.

“It’s still the case, four versions and two years and a half later. Those notes you hit at the end of the bridge, Tae, I still don’t understand why we’re here.”

Taehyung frowns, looks through the bars of the railing and to the faraway buildings, his throat tight.

“I think I lost the 11th one though, I can’t find it anywhere.”

“It’s me. I have it.”

“Oh.”

The next minutes are spent in a silence that’s like a calm sea, out of habit, one like they would share years back when they couldn’t be together in the same room for a reason or another. There’s just the whispery sounds of Taehyung smoking, and the tapping of Yoongi’s nimble fingers on his keyboard. But amidst of this, Taehyung gets so lost in 2014 and in those last months they spent together, that his quietness perspires sadness and Yoongi, as he always did, feels it, and stops typing.

“Want me to come over?”

“It’s fine,” he lies, killing his cigarette in the ashtray.

“You don’t sound fine, Tae.”

“I’m 19 and off tomorrow, I think I can manage myself just fine.”

Yoongi hums on the other side of the line, and it sounds sort of hurt, but mostly doubtful. It’s okay. Taehyung doubts himself too.

“As you wish.”

“Good night, hyung.”

“Good night.”

Δ

The next day, Yoongi learns that his parents need to leave for another city, for an important company meeting. Meeting for which Taehyung was required to go, but not him. It pinches at his gut uncomfortably and he doesn’t exactly know why. He hates this job and this company. Probably more a matter of pride.

“We’re leaving on Saturday morning and coming back on Monday,” his father says, newspaper spread on the table before him, his coffee mug almost emptied.

Yoongi acquiesces drowsily, weighed by his lack of sleep. He thinks, a little selfishly, of this opportunity to spend the weekend with Jimin.
For the whole afternoon he hesitates, looking at his phone. He goes through some paperwork even though Fridays are supposed to be work-free, accompanying his mother to one of her appointments, tries to put some order in the mess he’s made of his room the previous night.

And when at the end of it all he’s still stealing glances of his phone every ten minutes, there’s a bitter taste of loneliness lingering on his tongue. He’s isolated himself so much with time, with the years he spent cultivating hope in his loneliness with Taehyung.

**You:** jimin

01-07-2016, 15:51

**Jimin:** yes hyung

01-07-2016, 15:55

**You:** how’s your day

01-07-2016, 15:55

**Jimin:** mhm

01-07-2016, 15:56

**Jimin:** its pretty chill

01-07-2016, 15:56

**Jimin:** hows yours?

01-07-2016, 15:56

**You:** about the same

01-07-2016, 15:57

**You:** can i see you?

01-07-2016, 15:57

And the moment he’s sent it, he regrets it. That was sort of a bold move, and he doesn’t mean to rush Jimin. It’s been five days, but maybe he needs more time and that would be understandable. The
answer takes more time to come and he curses at himself.

You: that was pretty straightforward
01-07-2016, 16:05

You: if you’re busy it’s okay
01-07-2016, 16:05

You: and if you just don’t want to also
01-07-2016, 16:05

Jimin: what
01-07-2016, 16:08

Jimin: hyung no
01-07-2016, 16:08

Jimin: I was just asking Seokjin hyung and satan if they were fine with you coming
01-07-2016, 16:09

You: satan
01-07-2016, 16:09

You: is that Jungkook
01-07-2016, 16:09

Jimin: yes
01-07-2016, 16:09

Jimin: I don’t how you guessed but I love it
01-07-2016, 16:09

Jimin: so we’re going to have dinner at Iris before dance practice
01-07-2017, 16:10

Jimin: you wanna come?
Yoongi cocks his head to the side, thinking. That’s a familiar name. He makes a quick research about it. Fine molecular cuisine. Taehyung used to be into that a lot.

**You:** sure yeah

01-07-2016, 16:10

**Jimin:** can you make it for 5?

01-07-2016, 16:14

**Jimin:** also they seem very weird today dont ask me

01-07-2016, 16:14

Yoongi smiles, gathers fresh clothes and moves to the bathroom.

**You:** i’ll try not to

01-07-2016, 16:15

**You:** and yeah i’ll be there at 5

01-07-2016, 16:15

They are, as it turns out, indeed weird.

Seokjin and Jungkook bicker for most part of the meal, and over trivial things. The service, the taste, *what’s that round squishy thing in the middle hyung*, and even the way the place is decorated.

Jimin keeps sending him annoyed side-glances but Yoongi just thinks they’re endearing. They have something about them that flows easily, naturally. And even when they’re silent, there’s affection permeating the air between them, still.
“You and Tae are like that all the time, though,” Yoongi says, when he and Jimin are out and waiting for the two others to finish paying their bill.

Jimin frowns, offended but doesn’t say anything. Either because he knows it’s true, or because it got his thoughts rolling again.

“Hyung,” Jungkook calls as he door of the restaurant flies open, and both Yoongi and Jimin automatically turn to him. “Are you coming to dance practice? We could hang out after?”

Yoongi swells from the inside, flattered. Just like with Namjoon, Yoongi doesn’t know Jungkook a lot, but he grew fond of him quite effortlessly. He looks at Jimin and Jimin shrugs noncommittally, but there’s a soft, inviting smile on his lips.

“Actually, Jungkook,” Seokjin comes out, sliding his card in his wallet. “I think that if Yoongi’s fine with that, we’re going to grab a coffee while waiting for you guys.”

And then they all turn to him, expectant, and Yoongi thinks it’s the weirdest he’s felt in a while.

“M’yeah, of course.”

Seokjin apologizes. That’s what he does.

In a sincere, hushed voice, amidst the small crowd in the café and the loud sound of the expresso machine.

“I’m really sorry, I thought he knew.”

And strangely, Yoongi had forgotten about that.

He shakes his head, caught off guard, and from deep within, if Yoongi searches and digs, he’s not mad at him. Even if Seokjin retold more than he should have.

“It’s fine, hyung. We should have told him.” And then, a light, flickering on. “Oh. So you know. For the three of us.”

“I’ve known for a while, Yoongi-yah.”

“Oh,” he says, again.

“We all sorts of know, so I mean—“

“Oh my god.”

Yoongi lets himself slouch back in the banquette, eyes fixated on his cup.

“No judging here, all love. I really just wanted to apologize, I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable or anything.”

“I just didn’t expect everyone to know about it.”

“Jimin’s a pretty emotional person,” Seokjin says, the slowly setting sun throwing rays of light on his white button up shirt through the window they’re sitting by. “And he’s not ashamed or afraid of how
he feels. So him talking about it so openly only seems normal to me.”

“I know, it’s not that I think he shouldn’t have. It’s just – ”

“You’re scared of how involved he is.”

“—Yeah.”

“And you’re scared of hurting him.”

“Especially that.”

“You know he’s been ready for that right? That’s a risk he was game to take. That day when we went to the club in you disappeared in the restrooms, he knew what he was doing, Yoongi-yah.”

Yoongi then gets flashes, heavy in feelings and vivid in colors, of the night he first had sex with Jimin. Weeks and weeks later, it’s still not the place he would have chosen, but never once did he regret it.

“What does he refer us as?” he asks, unsure if he wants the answer.

“Fuck buddies, but we both know that—“

“Here,” a plate is placed on the table between and he almost startles. Namjoon. Hair fluffy and black apron around his waist. “Your conversation seemed absolutely devastating so here, eat some cake.”

Seokjin is stunned for a moment, eyes round, and then he erupts in this laughter of his that always makes Yoongi smile. That goofy and cute one. And Yoongi naturally follows, watching as Namjoon simply walks back to the kitchen. Seokjin plants both hands on the table, standing and then there’s Namjoon’s voice, blaring and assertive.

“I paid for it hyung, don’t you dare.”

Seokjin falls back in his seat, giggling, radiant and glowing and Yoongi can’t help but hurt a little.

After, there’s a shift in the subject, and Yoongi listens to Seokjin talk about Jungkook and Namjoon and school, around his mouthfuls of cheese cake. For a brief moment, Namjoon comes to sit with them and they fall in a dynamic that Yoongi also likes a lot. And he thinks, as he watches them softly argue over the ingredients of the muffin dough, that he should see them more often.

When they get back to the studio, the lights are already off and Jimin and Jungkook are waiting, sitting on the hood of Jimin’s Audi. Yoongi glances at the clock in his dashboard, surprised. 21:17.

“You guys finished early?” he says, jugging his keys in his hand. There’s the smooth purring of Seokjin’s car entering the parking behind him.

“Yup,” Jimin looks up from his phone, and he’s all tired and pretty and Yoongi wants to hold him. “And I wanted to introduce hyung to you properly, but he had to leave before you got here.”

“Ah, fuck.”

“It’s not a big deal. I didn’t know he’d cut it short so you couldn’t have known either.”
“What happened?” comes Seokjin’s voice, then the slamming of his door.

“Hyung had somewhere to go with his girlfriend,” Jungkook hops off from his seat, grabs his bag and swiftly goes to throw it in the backseat of Seokjin’s SUV. “So we decided to just stop at nine.”

“Jimin could have taken over, no?”

“He didn’t want to.”

“Why not?”

“Molecular food and dance are doing weird things to my body,” Jimin half whines, eyes back on his phone.

Jungkook snickers and Seokjin hums in an amused but understanding sound and Yoongi says nothing but he smiles, because he loves seeing Jimin like this.

“So,” Jungkook continues, the orange glow of the streetlamps playing in his hair. “I suggest we go pick up hyung at the café after he’s done and—"

“He can’t,” Seokjin cuts, “that’s where we went, and I asked him. Said he can’t tonight.”

“Oh.” He seems to consider for a moment. “Mine’s then? It’s safe territory for those two people.”

Jimin snorts. “Those two people.”

And so they end up there.

Jungkook’s house is huge. Even bigger than the one Taehyung grew up in. It’s all tall, white pillars and perfect grass and bay windows. It’s not an old building, Yoongi can tell from the flawless state of the paint on the walls, of the absence of real home atmosphere. And if Yoongi was going to say something, he’d say that it looks like a house of people wanting to show off, that suddenly found themselves with too much money to even know what to do with it, and so they had this built.

“Nouveaux riches,” Jimin tells him, once they’re the two of them in the entryway and waiting for Jungkook to finish bringing his belongings in.

“Oh,” and he gives a little laugh. “That explains things.”

Seokjin and Jungkook start their banter again in front of the Grand Cherokee’s trunk, getting more bags out and Yoongi observes them, puzzled.

“Hyung,"

“Mhm?”

“Taehyung’s leaving for a meeting tomorrow.”

Yoongi swallows, still staring outside but not looking at anything anymore.

“Yeah, he is.”
“He talks about it like he’s leaving for forever.”

“Well he hates those things, so that’s probably how he feels, yeah.”

“Mhm.”

Yoongi glances over at Jimin, he’s obviously uncomfortable with something.

“Why, what is it?”

“He uh, wants me to come over. Says he needs to talk. Before he goes.”

And then their eyes meet, and he can see so much hope and expectations and tenderness in Jimin that his chest constricts. Yoongi shakes his head.

Jimin looks away.

“Do you mind if I go on my own then?” he asks, because he knows Yoongi takes a while to be comfortable around people.

“Of course not.”

“Fuck. I hate having to do that.”

*I hate having to say no, too*, Yoongi thinks, but he swallows his words.

Jimin still leans in, presses his lips onto his with and lingers a kind of disappointment that Yoongi understands.

And he’s out the door.

Δ

“It won’t take long,” is the first thing Taehyung says. Jimin stuns, halfway through removing his shoes.

“Should I let myself in or?”

“If you have enough time then yeah, sure.”

“Don’t be an ass, Tae. I took the time for you, so I don’t see why I’d be rushing you.”

“Do you want something to drink?”

“I fucking hate it when you dodge stuff like that.”

“You’re driving, right? So no alcohol.”

“You’re horrible.”

“Kombucha?”

“Oh no, not Kombucha. Not tonight,” Jimin sits on the couch, bends to scratch Tuxedo’s head when
he comes near.

“Why not tonight?”

“We had molecular cuisine for dinner and my stomach’s not over it.”

He hears Taehyung laugh from the kitchen, the sounds of bottles clattering as he searches through his fridge.

“Molecular cuisine’s nice though, where did you go?”

“Iris.”

“Oh, good choice.”

Jimin quietly acquiesces, avoids talking about the fact that he went with Yoongi. Not that he thinks he did wrong, but if Taehyung said he wanted to talk, Jimin doesn’t want to put a spoke in his wheel.

“So?”

“Just water is fine.”

“Boring.”

“Tell that to my intestines.”

Taehyung laughs again, but it’s lighter this time. Jimin can picture so easily, too easily, the way his lips are pulled at the corners. There’s a last clatter in the fridge, then the high-pitched sound of the glasses on the counter, and Taehyung comes down the hallway.

“So about the Yoongi thing,” and something serious drapes over Jimin, and he straightens, taking the glass he’s offered and gaze following Taehyung until he’s sitting, too.

“I don’t want you to force yourself to talk,” he says. He wants to make sure that Taehyung knows.

“Today’s an okay day. Most of the time I don’t even want to think about it, but today it’s not as bad.” Jimin frowns, but doesn’t interrupt. “I didn’t really want you to know. I did. But I didn’t. I mean, I knew you’d have to, at some point. But you knowing, and me having to talk about it just makes it harder for me to bury it. D’you get me?”

“Yeah.”

“So if I can avoid talking about it, I will.”

“I understand,” he slides in, careful, stiff with how unused he is to Taehyung talking like this.

“But what I wanted to say, is that I’ll make the effort to if there’re things you want or need to know. Like, about last year and that kind of stuff. Or even about before that, when he and I were still together. Because I sort of love you, Jimin, and I feel that’s something I need to do.”

Jimin’s exhales stutters out, a warm wave of colors spreading through him, from his gut to his throat to his cheeks, and his fingers tighten around his glass.

“Too much?”

“N-No, it’s just—“
“You don’t have to say anything, I know we can’t be together. I’m not trying to argue on that. But I wanted to tell you.”

“You know I have feelings for you, Tae.”

“I know. But if you feel like it’s gonna make things more complicated for you, then don’t say anything.”

So Jimin nods. Because he feels too stuck to do anything else.

“So yeah, attending a fantastic meeting on Sunday morning,” and Taehyung slips in another mood completely, and it cuts through the tension between them like a knife. “Gonna be great, I can feel it. Can’t wait for the mandatory ass-kissing,” his tone is dripping sarcasm and Jimin can’t help but follow him in. “And then there’s this huge conference on Monday, right? Are your parents going?”

He stands and Jimin watches him, watches him stroll to the patio door like he’s not meaning to, slide it open and send him an expectant glance. Jimin stands.

Taehyung always ropes him in so easily, but Jimin, just like the first day, doesn’t mind it that much.

_I love you too, Kim Taehyung._

“I don’t think so, at least I haven’t heard about it.”
3.12 And in the tender light we swayed

Chapter Notes

I had to cut that part weirdly but this is what immediately follows the end of the last chapter <3

Jimin: are you still at jungkooks?
01-07-2016, 23:03

You: yeah we are
01-07-2016, 23:07

You: why? is everything alright?
01-07-2016, 23:07

Yoongi’s eyes go from his phone to Seokjin who’s sitting in front of him. They’re outside, in a backyard that looks much like the one that expands behind Jimin’s house, with an in-ground pool and a lot of places to sit. Jungkook disappeared a couple of minutes earlier to go change, and he’s been enjoying the lightness of his chat with Seokjin around a cup of London Fog.

Jimin: yeah dont worry
01-07-2016, 23:09

Jimin: can i like, come back?
01-07-2016, 23:09

Jimin: or has stan banished me forever
01-07-2016, 23:09

You: who’s stan
01-07-2016, 23:09
Jimin: satan* omg
01-07-2016, 23:10

Jimin: amazing
01-07-2016, 23:10

Jimin: so yea can i?
01-07-2016, 23:10

Yoongi laughs and Seokjin brings his cup to his lips, curious.

“Jimin?” he asks, and of course he would know who makes Yoongi smile like that.

“Yeah. He’s asking if he can come back.”

“Ah,” and Seokjin leaves his chair, goes back inside like he’s so used to it.

Jimin: hyung?
01-07-2016, 23:11

You: give me a minute
01-07-2016, 23:11

He waits, attentive to the voices and the sounds he can catch, trying to decipher what they’re doing.

Jimin: thats a long ass minute
01-07-2016, 23:14

You: brat
01-07-2016, 23:14

You: what’s making you so impatient
01-07-2016, 23:15

Jimin: ive been sitting in my car, alone, for 13 minutes
01-07-2016, 23:15

Jimin: hyung come on

And then somewhere in the kitchen Seokjin dissolves into a fit of giggles and Jungkook whines him to stop and Yoongi is overwhelmed. But in the good way.

The mesh door opens and Jungkook comes out, all in comfortable clothes, grey lounge pants and a loose black t-shirt that he’s tugging down.

“He can come,” he says, just when Seokjin follows him out, cheeks pink from laughing too much. “But he’ll have to kneel and tell me I’m the most beautiful being in the entire universe.”

Yoongi grins, grabs his phone.

You: jungkook says you can

01-07-23:19

You: but in exchange youll have to tell him he’s a god, basically

01-07-2016, 23:19

Jimin: hahahh yea for sure

01-07-2016, 23:19

Jimin: i’ll be there and i’ll tell him

01-07-2016, 23:19

Jimin: watch me

01-07-2016, 23:20

Yoongi doesn’t know what happened with Taehyung, why it was so short and why Jimin didn’t stay the night there. But he’s grateful for Jimin’s sense of balance. For the way he keeps juggling between two places but never makes him feel left out. He looks up, mouth dropping open to say something but just then Seokjin slides a hand under the back of Jungkook’s shirt and Jungkook squeaks, tries to shun away from the touch.

“It’s fucking cold hyung, stop,” he screeches and Seokjin laughs again.

And Yoongi just watches them. Content. Today is a good day.
Jimin’s phone buzzes on the nightstand and he tries, without much success, to extricate himself from Yoongi’s hold without waking him.

“Mhm?”

“Nothing, hyung,” he whispers against the warm skin of his collarbones. “You can sleep some more.”

Jimin’s been awake for a while. Eyes barely cracked open and ear thrumming to the song of Yoongi’s heartbeat. He’s been floating in this precarious space between dreams and reality, the steady rise and fall of Yoongi’s ribcage against his own sternum making it easy to zone out.

Yoongi groans, feels around Jimin’s body with his hand, up his back, between his shoulder blades, to gently scratch at the hair at his nape. And Jimin breathes deep, defenseless, shifts and snuggles closer, throws an arm over Yoongi’s stomach. And they’re peaceful like that for long, exquisite minutes, until the device vibrates with a notification again.

“Tell them I’m angry,” Yoongi says sluggishly, giving Jimin space when he tries to move.

Jimin smiles a stupid, happy smile, and reaches to the small table.

**Hobi hyung:** jiminie

02-07-2016, 9:58

**Hobi hyung:** theres this place we need to go answer me i know youre up

02-07-2016, 10:06

**You:** where

02-07-2016, 10:07

**Hobi hyung:** this new disc place that just openend

02-07-2016, 10:07

**Hobi hyung:** jungkooks alrreadyhere

02-07-2016, 10:07

“They’re so active all the time what the fuck?” Jimin whines, readjusting himself so he can type properly, on his stomach and propped up on his forearms.
“Summer,” Yoongi huffs, rolling onto his side and closer him.

**Hobi hyung**: godlike jungkook

02-07-2016, 10:07

**You**: jungkook give him his phone back

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: cant

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: hes drivin

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: also im offended that u dont wanna talk to me

02-07-2016, 10:08

**You**: we’re spending too much time together these days jungkook

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: yes and i am beyond blissed,hyung

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: beyond blissed

02-07-2016, 10:08

**Hobi hyung**: k so were coming to getchu

02-07-2016, 10:09

Jimin wheezes, lets his head flop forwards, then makes a desperate sound in the back of his throat.

**You**: yeah but im at hyung’s
Hobi hyung: nice then u got 7mins to get back at urs

02-07-2016, 10:09

You: its great and all but even above speed limit i need 15

02-07-2016, 10:09

Hobi hyung: go faster

02-07-2016, 10:10

Hobi hyung: live fast die young hyung

02-07-2016, 10:10

Hobi hyung: its 6 mins left now

02-07-2016, 10:10

“I have no idea what’s going on but apparently I need to go,” Jimin says, still sleepy and cozy in the haze of their affection.

“That sucks,” Yoongi mutters, half muted by the sheet he’s buried his face in. “Will you come back after?”

“If you want me to, yeah,” he shuffles down just slightly, but enough to be at Yoongi’s level and he kisses him, and he kisses his closed eyelids.

Yoongi emits a pleased noise, close to the purring of a cat.

“Come back, then.”

And Jimin follows them around, brain and thoughts still in the fog of sleep, skin still tingling from missing Yoongi’s, heart still blossoming with Taehyung’s words from the previous day.

“I still don’t understand why I needed to be there,” Jimin tells Jungkook, once they’re parked at the mall and walking their way to the closest door.

Hoseok is already leading them by a several meters, his loose-fitting tank top catching in the wind and bulging, his strides wide with excitement. Jimin looks at Jungkook, still waiting for an answer of some sort, but he just shrugs. And that’s when he notices the tiredness in his features, and the
laziness in his movements and Jimin understands that he’s probably been dragged out of bed, too.

“It’s just the first thing he told me when I sat in his car. *We’re going to get Jiminie, text him.* And he threw his phone at me. So.”

Jimin makes a skeptical noise, trying not to get frustrated over the way the wind keeps messing his hair up and sending strands in his eyes and making his shirt stick to his torso like plastic wrap.

He squints harder, stamps a hand on his head to stop everything from flying around and limit the damages. The air smells a bit like rain and a bit like salt. There must be a storm coming.

“Hyung?”

“Mhm?”

Jungkook hesitates, quiet but gaze unfaltering from the building ahead.

“Can I ask something?”

“Sure?”

“About your relationship with them.”

And that makes Jimin stop in his tracks, taken aback. Jungkook does the same after a few seconds, like he’s trying to be polite and wait for him. But he’s fiddling with the buttons of his shirt, looking down and buttoning it over his t-shirt. But that’s just something Jungkook doesn’t do. Buttoning his shirts.

“Yeah?”

Jungkook ties it up higher, at chest level, and it looks downright ridiculous with how large what’s underneath is, but Jimin won’t point it out. He seems too unsure for Jimin to give him a distraction.

“It’s uh, if – or when –“

“Kids?” They both whip their heads to Hoseok, who’s questioning them with his arms doing weird things in mid-air and when no one is moving, he starts walking back to them. “What’s up? Did you forget something in the car?”

Jimin glances from Hoseok to Jungkook and back, gauging Jungkook’s reaction. But he just shakes his head, smiles and starts walking again and that’s it. He’s snapped out of it.

“What’s wrong with your clothes?” Hoseok laughs, bright and mischievous. “Why the fuck did you do that?”

And later, when Jimin goes to find him again, between the rows of shelves and the people chattering excitedly, Jungkook gives the slightest of recoils and Jimin frowns.

“What did you want to ask about?” he says, low. Casual.

And there’s something about Jungkook’s *nah, nevermind* that rubs Jimin the wrong way.
“Now, I know that the restructuration has been hard on multiple levels, but I do hope that we can include those new elements as soon as possible.”

Taehyung keeps staring at the half-list he’s scribbled in his pad.

- more online promotion
- boost performance in the customer service department
- more presence on social medias because its apparently 2016
- forcing a 10% cut of customer service employees by 2018 because that’ll totally help the performance right
- yall need to go back to school
- introducing quarterly reports instead of bi-annual ones, and then some circling and underlining to look like he’s involved.

He has no idea about half the ideas that have been discussed in this meeting. He also has no idea why they held it in the first place or why he was needed to attend so badly. But all the big names are sat around the table with him as his father is talking, so he nods and acts like he cares, like the good and smart son he’s supposed to be.

“That’s a great opportunity to raise ourselves even higher above the competition and remember, great changes always start with small steps. That is all for me. Everyone have a great Sunday and it shouldn’t be too long before we see each other again.”

The whole room erupts in a fat, fake laugh and Taehyung worries his bottom lip not to be too cynical about it.

He gathers his stuff, really, just his pen and his pad, and gives the men he passes by curt nods, and he doesn’t even feel bad when he’s the first one to leave.

“Oh, Taehyung!” Gayoung’s voice startles him, fracturing the thin surface of his bubble. “How did it go? Your father was so nervous!”

“You can ask him.”

He doesn’t meet her eyes when he heads straight to the elevator, the length of the corridor seeming gigantic for his stressed-out mind.

“Taehyung,” she calls again, and this time he stops and turns, because there’s a sadness in her voice that reminds him too much of his mother.

“I’m not interested,” he says, the hand he’s free to put in the pocket of his slacks going to hide there, tightening around his cigarette pack. She gives him a confused look, and Taehyung thinks that she’s pretty. Too pretty and delicate to suffer through his father’s way. “Playing family. I’m not interested.”
Her shoulders sag softly, and Taehyung feels sorry for breaking her heart. She stares at him through her dark, silky bangs, for a piece of time that’s long enough for Taehyung to begin to get a grasp of her. Men keep coming out the room one after the other and she doesn’t budge, doesn’t look away, and it’s sort of frightening, but also nothing short of courageous.

He could like her, he knows. For whoever she is. But Taehyung’s too stuck up to get her out of the box he sees her in. As his father’s fiancée.

“We’re going to get married this summer,” she says, readjusting the strap of her purse on her shoulder.

Taehyung shrugs. “I know. Doesn’t change anything.”

He turns around, feeling constricted by his clothes, by his emotions, and starts walking again.

“Taehyung,” his father’s voice makes him go stiff. The way he says his name, always with such rigidity and authority, lines each of their interactions with a quiet type of anger. “You’re not going anywhere. We’re having dinner with Mr. Lee in an hour.”

“I’m not going,” he undoes his tie, undoes the buttons of his jacket.

“I’m not asking for your sentiment.”

Taehyung laughs, takes lazy steps towards the room he was so glad to get out of.

“You never do. Never did.”

He takes his pack out, opens it, makes the lighter twist between his fingers.

“Don’t embarrass me,” his father grits out, they’re both too aware that there are still associates in the room. Maybe even watching them. Listening.

The weight of the cigarette as he pinches it between his lips feels like reassurance, like a shot of confidence sent straight to his blood.

His father glares, jaw tight.

Taehyung smiles, winks and exits.

Δ

In a clear but starless sky, Yoongi kept searching for the moon without ever finding it. The lights of the refinery are bright and angry, towers and tanks of metal all around, the gas flare standing tall and proud, but it shouldn’t hide the moon. Not when it’s past 2am. It should have been there and above, beautiful as it always is.

It’s new moon, his phone eventually told him. And Yoongi laughed at himself and lit another cigarette.

He’s not used to coming here alone anymore. But it used to be his favorite place, through the later part of his teen years. When Taehyung was still young and burdened by a curfew, Yoongi would come here and drink, smoke cigarettes and then not cigarettes, gaze up there and to the artificial stars,
text or talk with Taehyung over the phone until he fell asleep.

He remembers, with fondness beribboned with bitterness, the day they found this place. Taehyung was 14 and Yoongi 17 and they had gotten lost in the city after school, like they often did, because they didn’t want to go back home. They’d officially been together for three months. September. When the air is still warm but lies in it the smell of falling leaves and mud. They kept seeing them from afar and be curious about them, those orange lights and that flame dancing over the tallest tower. And that evening they decided they would reach them.

He remembers the roundness of Taehyung’s eyes when they finally made it, the way everything reflected in them perfectly, drawing the most beautiful constellations Yoongi had ever seen. He remembers the fall of his mouth, quiet with amazement, how he would look anywhere else but still managed to grab at Yoongi’s hand and hold it tight. And that’s something Taehyung didn’t really do, because he knows it makes Yoongi uncomfortable outside of a safety zone, but Yoongi let him still, that night.

He remembers how fast Taehyung was to find a breach in the fence and slipping in, and how he should have been worried and have told him to come back out but just smiled and followed him. Because that’s how they were.

There was no hesitation or doubts or worry, between them. What Taehyung did, Yoongi would have done. And vice-versa. There were only very few times when they weren’t perfectly aligned and they always worked it out somewhat easily. Because Taehyung used to talk a lot, and open himself to Yoongi so widely that he could read the words on his lips before he said them.

And even when Yoongi had his first girlfriends, they never had a clash about it. Taehyung would still come and cuddle him when they’d play video games, and when they hugged, there was a soft undertone of as long as you’re mine it’s fine in the way Taehyung would breathe against his neck and Yoongi couldn’t ever deny it.

Because that’s how they were.

Yoongi takes the last drag of his cigarette and kills it on the concrete. He keeps the smoke in, lungs tight, and sighs it out with closed eyes. He reminds himself of Taehyung, right now. Wrapping his brain in loneliness and blanketing the screams of his thoughts in a silence so heavy that it screams louder.

He stands, his shoes screeching loudly on the small stones and the sand as he does. He readjusts his hoodie on his frame, looks around for a few more minutes where he’s not ready to let go, and finally heads out.

Yoongi took the wrong route. Willingly. And now he’s waiting for the elevator, arms crossed and body tired, but brain still too awake.

Taehyung is still in Ulsan until tomorrow anyway.

He twists the key and gets in, faces the dim darkness of the apartment, takes a couple of steps in the hallway and breathes out. He can already hear a tiny bell slowly coming his way, and though his eyes are still unadjusted to the lack of light, he still crouches and presents a hand.

The cool, moist press of his nose comes first and Yoongi smiles, waits for Tuxedo to rub against his
hand to pet him. His purring is barely audible, not nearly as round and powerful as Cannelle’s, but it’s there still, and it’s calming. He’s still feeling thin and tiny and fragile under his fingers, but it’s not as worrying as it was when they found him. He wouldn’t have lasted much longer, the veterinarian told them, and Yoongi believes her.

Tuxedo’s interest shifts places a few minutes in, and he sets on giving Yoongi’s shins body rubs and he just watches him, immersed and sort of mesmerized. He rethinks his life-long certainty of being a dog person for a fleeting moment.

There’s shuffling coming from near the bathroom and he thinks he’s been good enough to lure Cannelle in too, but then there’s more shuffling, until it can’t be a cat anymore and he looks up.

“That’s a weird ass time to come here and pet your cat,” Taehyung says, standing at the other end of the hallway, shirtless and his hands stuffed in the pockets of his sweatpants.

Yoongi startles from the inside, ribcage squeezing and heartrate kicking up. He closes his eyes for a few breaths, pulling himself together.

“Weren’t you in Ulsan?” he asks, with the most stable voice he can manage, after having been silent since Jimin left him in the evening and having smoked his way through half the night. He straightens up, Tuxedo settling on investigating his ankles instead.

“I left right after the meeting,” his voice is also scratchy, but Yoongi doubts he was sleeping. “So I was here in the evening.”

Yoongi gives a slow nod, feeling himself becoming fidgety, a kind of restlessness he’s familiar with.

“He’s a good boy.”

Yoongi squints in confusion, gets a glimpse of a gentle smile on Taehyung’s lips as he approaches him. Close, close. The washed-out scent of his cologne gets to him and he swallows thickly.

Then Taehyung crouches and starts scratching the kitten’s head.

“Tux. He’s been adjusting well. Don’t worry too much.”

“I know, I’m not worried. I just felt like seeing him.”

For that, and how excruciating the longing for Taehyung had been for the last days. He just wanted to be here and breathe in a space that’s Taehyung’s, see those couches and those plain walls and pieces of him scattered everywhere.

“How was the meeting,” he asks, and Taehyung hums pensively, rubbing the bridge of Tuxedo’s nose over and over with his thumb, the kitten pushing against the touch like he needs it.

“There’s going to be some weird stuff happening. 2017 will probably be rough.”

“Financially?”

“Financially, and in terms of workforce.”

“They’re messing with that again?”

“I can already hear the employees complaining about the increase of work. And they won’t be wrong.”
Yoongi scoffs, feeling annoyed. Sometimes he wonders how the company has made it this far with such shitty gimmicks.

And then Taehyung stands, the line of his body so close, too close to Yoongi’s. Their eyes meet, and Yoongi’s stomach flutters and coils beautifully. Painfully. There’s no softness and no pretense when they stare, and he lets Taehyung place a gentle palm to his jaw, the touch feeding him like he’s been starving.

Taehyung. He’s not the boy Yoongi left behind. He’s broader and heavier in his intents and he sets every parcel of Yoongi’s being ablaze, just like he always did, but it’s not the same. Not exactly. It’s powerful and dark, and full of a sadness that make him want to snap.

Taehyung closes on him, his eyes are eating at Yoongi’s lips.

He’s a man, albeit a broken one. He’s not the boy Yoongi left behind.

“Don’t,” he whispers, just when the air Taehyung breathes out fans over his mouth. His fists are tight, he’s stuck in nostalgia and aching all over for more, but there’s nothing in this, in the way they touch, to salvage them.

Taehyung withdraws, and his warmth leaves Yoongi, makes him breathless and regretful. He’s not angry. And Yoongi is not angry. They’re in a vicious circle and they know, they understand. They’re not stupid. They talk about it in the glances they steal at each other, in the way their fingers inevitably reach for each other’s skin, in the smiles they share that sometimes originates from nothing but a fragment of the past they’re both, sadly, still holding onto.

Yoongi grits his teeth when the click of the front door resounds behind him and he finds himself in the plainness of the building’s corridor.

Δ

The click of the door is harsh, like a bite. Like something pernicious, that he will keep hearing on loop until he falls asleep.

Taehyung exhales loudly, closes his eyes. He runs his fingers through his hair, lazy, a little lost. He knows Yoongi’s right, he knows he’s the most level-headed one. He knows.

He takes a few moments there, static, watching Tuxedo scent-marking him as well.

And then the door flies open and he startles, paralyzed when Yoongi throws his key on the small table lined to the wall and has his hoodie off before he’s even halfway through the hallway. He cups Taehyung’s face with both hands, it oozes despair, and he kisses him hard.

And Taehyung closes his arms around him, takes him in, because that’s how they’ve always been. *As long as you’re mine, it’s fine.*
Hobi hyung: so how is it
04-07-2016, 12:22

Jimin reads their last couple of texts again, wondering if he’s missed one.

You: hows what?
04-07-2016, 12:22

Hobi hyung: the album you bought this weekend
04-07-2016, 12:24

You: oh
04-07-2016, 12:24

You: talk about an abrupt change of topic
04-07-2016, 12:24

Hobi hyung: yeah sorry
04-07-2016, 12:25

Hobi hyung: i just got to work and saw we received it this morning
04-07-2016, 12:25

Hobi hyung: so yknow, wanted an advice to be as professional as possible in my suggestions
04-07-2016, 12:25
Jimin rolls his eyes, readjusts himself in his papasan. He’s been lounging outside for over an hour already, shadowed by the trees and drinking a homemade fresh fruit juice.

**You:** honestly
04-07-2016, 12:26

**You:** you should ask yoongi hyung
04-07-2016, 12:26

**You:** because i brought it at his place and left it there
04-07-2016, 12:26

**Hobi hyung:** how could you forget it
04-07-2016, 12:27

**You:** nah, didnt forget it
04-07-2016, 12:27

**You:** but we gave it a couple of listens and i think he fell in love
04-07-2016, 12:28

**You:** so i told him id get it back eventually
04-07-2016, 12:28

**You:** but for now hes the one having it
04-07-2016, 12:28

**You:** its good, from what ive sort of heard
04-07-2016, 12:29

**Hobi hyung:** sort of heard
04-07-2016, 12:32

**You:** dont ask
04-07-2016, 12:33
Jimin rethinks, with gentle jitters crawling up his stomach, of all the time they did play it on the stereo of the living room but ended up having sex in the warmth of the solarium or in the kitchen, eating outside, or of those lost hours they spent on the roof, looking at the lights of the city.

**You:** just know its good hyung  
04-07-2016, 12:38

**Hobi hyung:** uh huh  
04-07-2016, 12:40

**You:** you should give it a listen  
04-07-2016, 12:40

**Hobi hyung:** i will  
04-07-2016, 12:43

**You:** also, about hyung  
04-07-2016, 12:45

**Hobi hyung:** yeah?  
04-07-2016, 12:47

**You:** you should meet him  
04-07-2016, 12:47

**You:** youre like, the only one left
Hobi hyung: yeah thats a bit awkward at this point
04-07-2016, 12:51

Hobi hyung: theres the diamonds and feather night at the Triad?
04-07-2016, 12:51

Hobi hyung: to launch the summer season
04-07-2016, 12:52

Hobi hyung: we could go?
04-07-2016, 12:52

Hobi hyung: its wednesday i think
04-07-2016, 12:52

Jimin feels himself swell, like someone has breathed air straight into his lungs. He loves those type of nights. The ones where he can be more adventurous with his eyeliner and more creative with his outfits.

He remembers the one they went to last year, when Youngjae had just broken up with him. Hoseok had smoked up some black around his eyes and chose with him an outfit that made him feel good and beautiful. Jimin had spent the night drinking and dancing with him, kissing random people just for the way it made their eyes glaze over with want. It made him feel so free, and new, in a way. It had been, without a doubt, the most fun he’d had in months. If not in the previous year.

You: oh man thatd be amazing
04-07-2016, 12:54

Hobi hyung: right?
04-07-2016, 12:55

Hobi hyung: oh, wait
04-07-2016, 12:56

Hobi hyung: fuck
04-07-2016, 12:56
Jimin stomach drops.

**You**: what

04-07-2016, 12:56

**Hobi hyung**: i forgot i switched my shift with someone

04-07-2016, 12:58

**Hobi hyung**: i told nami id stocktake with her thursday morning

04-07-2016, 12:59

**You**: it cant be that early can it

04-07-2016, 12:59

**Hobi hyung**: 6:30

04-07-2016, 13:02

**You**: what the fuck?

04-07-2016, 13:02

**Hobi hyung**: yeah, the companys deciding that, not her

04-07-2016, 13:03

**Hobi hyung**: so theres no way im going out the night before

04-07-2016, 13:03

**Hobi hyung**: ah its been such a long time since i went out, sucks

04-07-2016, 13:03

**Hobi hyung**: you should totally go though

04-07-2016, 13:03
He groans, makes a trip to the kitchen for more juice, bummed out.

You: with who
04-07-2016, 13:05

You: jungkooks underage
04-07-2016, 13:05

You: seokjin and namjoon hyung arent into dancing that much
04-07-2016, 13:05

You: and im not too confident about going with friends from school
04-07-2016, 13:06

Hobi hyung: then who does that leave
04-07-2016, 13:06

You: you know who that leaves
04-07-2016, 13:06

Hobi hyung: go with them
04-07-2016, 13:08

You: they cant be in the same room without fucking hissing at each other
04-07-2016, 13:08

Hobi hyung: try, you never know
04-07-2016, 13:08

Jimin does consider, for a moment. He imagines the tight, heated place between Yoongi and Taehyung’s bodies if he were to dance with them, and he shivers.
Hobi hyung: anyway about the meeting yoongi thing
04-07-2016, 13:10

Hobi hyung: we can go somewhere on friday night
04-07-2016, 13:10

Hobi hyung: or saturday
04-07-2016, 13:10

You: you usually spend your saturdays with eunji
04-07-2016, 13:11

Hobi hyung: yeah well
04-07-2016, 13:12

Hobi hyung: tomorrows our 7 months anniversary
04-07-2016, 13:12

Hobi hyung: so we’ll spend the day together
04-07-2016, 13:13

Hobi hyung: its fine if shes alone this weekend
04-07-2016, 13:13

It makes Jimin feel a bit weird, the coldness in the way the last message is written. It’s been a moment since he heard about her, and he wonders if something happened, or if it’s just the slow decrepitude of their relationship kicking in.

Later, when he’s got his shades and swimsuit on, waiting for Seokjin to show up, Jimin receives a text from Yoongi and he struggles to put his finger on the vibe it gives off.

Yoongi hyung: im back from tae’s place
04-07-2016, 15:07
He freezes in the threshold for a beat, towel in his hand, nervous. He sets on expecting the worse, knowing it’s probably the safest way to go about things, with them.

**You:** oh

04-07-2016, 15:08

**You:** how did it go?

04-07-2016, 15:08

**Yoongi hyung:** not bad, not particularly well either

04-07-2016, 15:10

**Yoongi hyung:** but i thought i’d let you know

04-07-2016, 15:10

**You:** you had sex didnt you

04-07-2016, 15:12

**Yoongi hyung:** yeah we did

04-07-2016, 15:16

Jimin lets his head roll back against the chair, breathing his frustration away. *It’s not the right way to go about things,* he wants to tell him. *You need to talk. Really talk.*

**Yoongi hyung:** does it upset you?

04-07-2016, 15:16

**You:** since when do i get upset because you guys have sex

04-07-2016, 15:16

**You:** im upset because it doesnt fix anything
Yoongi hyung: he doesn't want to talk about it

And he knows, deep down, that it would be the worst thing to do. But he feels helpless, watching them stab at each other’s feelings and blaming their own selves for the way they bleed.

You: I miss spending time with the both of you

Yoongi hyung: I know

Yoongi hyung: but I do miss being with you and my best friend

Jimin whines loudly in frustration, body shriveling and hands wrapping into fists, when Seokjin comes out through the patio door. Seokjin holds very still for a moment, maintaining eye contact, trying to suppress a laugh.

“Do you need me to come back? You look busy.”

“M’no,” and Jimin gestures him to take place in the chair next to his. “It’s fine.”
Yoongi hyung: but i know that its probably better for him if we stop seeing each other so often

04-07-2016, 15:25

“Who is it?” Seokjin asks, gently placing his keys on the table. He’s wearing a thin-stripped blue polo and dark shorts, his shades sitting pretty in his brown hair. He radiates happiness.

“Yoongi hyung, he’s saying frustrating things,” he answers, a little dismissively. “You look good, hyung.”

“Thank you,” and he gives Jimin a warm smile that seeps under his skin like a sliver of sun. “Do you mind if I go?” he points out the pool with a tilt of his head. “I baked muffins and breads all morning in this heat.”

“Make yourself at home, I’ll join you in a minute.”

You: if i asked you to come somewhere with me and him on wednesday night

04-07-2016, 15:29

You: would you?

04-07-2016, 15:29

Yoongi hyung: where?

04-07-2016, 15:30

You: Triad

04-07-2016, 15:30

Yoongi hyung: it’s a club, right

04-07-2016, 15:30

You: yea

04-07-2016, 15:31

His hopes aren’t high, he knows Yoongi is not the fondest of those places. He already told him more than once how out of place he felt there. But the images he had when Hoseok gave him the idea to
invite them are still pinching at his senses so he had to try.

**Yoongi hyung**: i don’t think he’ll agree

04-07-2016, 15:32

**You**: so if he agrees, its cool with you?

04-07-2016, 15:32

**Yoongi hyung**: i really dont think he will

04-07-2016, 15:33

Taehyung, as it turns out, agrees.

It’s the first thing Jimin asks him when he sets foot in his apartment the next day. And Taehyung, stunned and sort of confused and still holding the doorknob, blurts out a *uh, yeah, okay*.

And Jimin’s not sure if he’s pleased or nervous about it.

They have dinner on the balcony that evening, some take out they took way too long to decide on, sitting thigh against thigh, dragging it out.

They smoke and they kiss and they talk, lazy, content, until the sun is far under the horizon and the moon shines bright instead.

Jimin tries not to think about the moment when they won’t be able to go on anymore. When everyone will be too tired to compensate or compromise. Tries not to think of how he feels like he’ll inevitably lose them. The path they’re on, right now, doesn’t result in laced fingers and he’s painfully aware of it.

He presses his lips to Taehyung’s, revels in the way they give under his. This moment, is what matters.
“Tae,” he begins, once they’re back inside and cleaning the dishes they used. He loops his arms around his body, rests his head on the back of his shoulder. “Why don’t you go to vet school?”

“You know why I don’t go to vet school.”

“You never really told me. You’re a brilliant student so it can’t be the grades. Why then? The company?”

Taehyung stops wiping the glass he’s holding, synchronizing with Jimin’s stillness.

“Mhm.”

“But you would’ve liked being a vet better, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Then you should go? What’s stopping you?”

Taehyung is silent for a few breaths, the steady movements of his ribcage lulling Jimin to a sleepy state. He nuzzles his shirt, closes his eyes when he’s enveloped a little more in his scent and kisses the ridges of his spine. Then it clicks.

“He didn’t give you a choice, did he?”

He feels him sighing and that’s enough to send waves of sadness to ricochet through him. He gets images, memories, of Taehyung sitting alone in class last year, hood over his head, hollow eyes and looking like he wanted to murder everyone. He remembers, so perfectly, seeing Taehyung climb up the stairs after class like he was escaping prison, and he remembers raising a brow, because he thought he was a new level of fucked up. He gets echoes of his voice when he gave an oral presentation alone the first semester. It was the first time Jimin was hearing him, and through how perfectly structured Taehyung was being, he found something fascinating in the deepness of his tone and in how scratchy and in how, now he knows, melancholic his voice was.

“It’s the same for hyung. It was like that for us.”

And it’s something Jimin can’t really get a grasp on. He can imagine, feel around for the edges of it, but can’t fully understand. Jimin studies what he’s studying because he felt like it was the natural thing for him to do, if he wasn’t going to pursue music. He’s never been pressured into it, though he knows it might have saddened his parents if he hadn’t. But he knows they would have accepted it rather easily, like they accepted everything he is. He doesn’t cringe or feel sick with the idea of eventually taking the business over, so he can’t even get a glimpse of how anxiogenic and tiring it could be.

He breathes, forehead against Taehyung’s nape. Things make so much more sense now.

“Quit it?”

“It’s not that easy.”

“Why not?”

“My father threatens to cut all my cards if I do as little as not go to a family dinner. So you can imagine how bad it would be if I left him without an heir.”

“Let him. Let him cut all your cards if it pleases him. You should do what makes you happy.”
“You don’t know what it’s like to live without money, Jimin.”

“I don’t, but the vast majority of people aren’t as wealthy as we are, so it’s certainly doable. Maybe
not easy. But doable.”

“And how am I supposed to pay for vet school if I’m broke as fuck?”

“I’ll help you?”

Taehyung laughs lightly, but it’s nothing biting or bitter. He twists in Jimin’s arms until he’s facing
him.

“You’d be my sugar daddy?”

Jimin smiles, settles both his hands on Taehyung’s waist.

“You can be dismissive all you want but you know I mean it.”

“You’d do that for a fuck buddy?” his voice drops to a sultry, nearly secretive sound and Jimin
creanes his neck to kiss him, slips curious fingers under his shirt.

“You. I’d do it for you, Tae.”

Δ

Taehyung wakes to the sound of rustling fabric and hushed voices. He cracks an eyelid open,
meeting a brightness that can only come from a mid-day sun, and he rubs the heel of his palm over
his eye socket.

More rustling. And the sound of a zipper. He tilts his head to the side, his gaze meets Jimin. Hurried,
rushed, Jimin. He’s stuffing clothes in a duffel bag. Some are his, some are Taehyung’s.

“What are you doing?” Taehyung asks, propping himself on his forearms.

Jimin answers something, his lips move, but the words sound like a flipped record.

“Jimin?” he says, and the echo of his own voice morphs into Yoongi’s.

“Jimin?”

Jimin takes the duffel bag and exits Taehyung’s bedroom and in the threshold, Yoongi stands. His
irises are blown black and his hair is of a sharp ruby, the color running down his temples and it looks
like blood. Taehyung blinks once and he’s gone.

He gets out of bed, clothed but feeling naked and he walk towards the voices he hears. They’re loud
like screams but feathery like whispers, bouncing on the wall of his apartment.

Taehyung freezes in the hallway. His feet won’t move no matter how much he wants them to. He
watches, horrified, as all the furniture is taken out by the front door, by nimble hands and faceless
masks. He can’t see, but he knows it’s his father’s doing. He’s sure he can hear his voice through the
white noise buzzing his brain. He’s talking on the phone and telling them to strip the whole place.
He opens his mouth, talks and yells but it only comes out as the sound of his breathing. He brings his hand to his chest, close to his heart to try and calm it down but it meets something stiff, rigid and he yelps, his silence swallowing it.

Jimin comes out of the living room, his hair is of a burnt orange like it used to be, he’s moving fast and a little like he’s floating, Taehyung can’t feel the vibration of his footfall on the floor. He passes by him, looking at or through him, Taehyung can’t know for sure. He enters the kitchen, where Cannelle is sitting on the counter, her tail giving slow whips, her emerald irises ethereally bright and beautiful. Jimin grabs her and she doesn’t hiss, doesn’t object, and he goes down the hallway again, stopping near the front door.

His hair is black now, it’s wet and it drips onto his clothes. His black clothes. He smiles, something sad but decisive and he looks at Yoongi, who’s standing beside him. Taehyung feels a knot rise in his throat and he’s struggling to breathe, watches Jimin go through the door before he sets his eyes on Yoongi.

And Yoongi, Yoongi is holding Tuxedo tight against his chest, and the light around him dims and dims, until he’s melding with it, and Taehyung loses track of the edges of his body.

“I’m sorry,” he hears him say, his voice distorted and ugly.

“I’m sorry.”

“I’m sorry.”

“I’m so—“

The door clicks closed and it’s like a punch to Taehyung’s stomach, crushing his lungs, burning his throat.

Bright, bright light, like only the mid-day sun can cast, but the place is empty and the walls are white and it smells like chlorine. The voices are gone, it’s quiet and terrifying.

There’s a pinch in the hollow of his elbow and he looks down, looks back, and in the back, in a corner and looking small, a hospital bed.

Taehyung sits up in the darkness, gasping.

His ribcage hurts, tight with pain, his skin is heated and sweaty.

“Tae?”

He startles, heart clenching and his eyes well up. He hides his face in his hands.

“Hey, you okay?”

Jimin runs a hand down his back and he resists recoiling from the touch, focusing on the heaving and falling of his own chest. The bed shifts as Jimin sits up as well, letting out a tired groan as he does.

He puts his arms around Taehyung’s shoulder and tries to pull him in but Taehyung doesn’t let himself fall in his arms. There’s still a thrum between his ribs and vile doubts filling his brain and while he knows it was just a dream, he’s still not out of it. He’s used to them by now, they were
always bad. But never like this. Jimin was never involved. He was never playing any part in it.

It just makes Taehyung feel emptier and worthless.

When he finally unfolds from himself, there’s the fluff of Jimin’s hair tickling at his neck, the weight of his head on his shoulder and the warmth of his hand rubbing at the small of his back. He doesn’t know how much time he spent inside his own mind, delicately untangling the knots of his thoughts, but Jimin’s still awake. Barely. But he is. He’s still there and waiting for him.

Taehyung glances at the clock, it reads a little past 4am.

Jimin’s lips press soft against his shoulder and he shivers.

“Nightmare?”

Taehyung hums. He feels a little ridiculous now, even though he knows he’s not.

“You wanna talk about it?”

He shakes his head and Jimin breathes out an okay on his skin and places gentle kisses there, his fingers coming to play with his hair.

Taehyung remains still for a while, letting himself being soothed, and he eventually goes to the kitchen to chug down a glass of water.

When he comes back, Jimin is still sitting, waiting, looking at him with sleepy eyes. He stays close to the door, and they stare at each other in quiet understanding, just deep breathings to hold them together in their silent agreement. Until Jimin makes grabby hands at him.

And Taehyung lays him down, kisses and makes love to him like it’s going to be the last time.
3.14 Pierres précieuses

Chapter Notes

Weirdly cut once again, but the start of this is the same day as the nightmare scene from last chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yoongi hyung: i’m still not sure this is a good idea
06-07-2016, 21:53

You: you said you’d come if he said yes
06-07-2016, 21:54

Yoongi hyung: i’m not trying to back out on you
06-07-2016, 21:54

Yoongi hyung: just don’t want you to be disappointed if it turns to shit
06-07-2016, 21:54

You: i’m starting to know you guys
06-07-2016, 21:55

You: i mentally prepared myself for that hyung
06-07-2016, 21:55

You: when will you get there
06-07-2016, 21:55

Yoongi hyung: ill call a cab soon
Jimin places his phone face down on the counter, resumes the feathering of his eyeliner. He can hear Taehyung shuffling through some clothes in his bedroom, and a wave of excitement washes over him. He sighs contentedly.

The day had been quiet, gentle in a way Jimin had rarely experienced before. After Taehyung woke up, panting and frantic and waking Jimin on a startle, the atmosphere instinctively became soft between them. Jimin did his best to stay conscious and ready to talk if Taehyung needed to, because the fear in his eyes and the tremble in his hands was nothing short of worrying.

Taehyung said nothing, not then and not after they had sex, and neither for the whole day.

But they danced around each other from sunrise to sunset, indulging and lazy make out sessions and prolonged hugs. Jimin felt that there was something more to them then just kissing and touching, like something Taehyung needed to say but couldn’t. Unfit circumstances or lack of words, perhaps. And when Taehyung asked him what he wanted to have for dinner with his gentlest voice, and that it settled a messy kind of warmth in Jimin’s stomach, he realized that no matter what he says about liking solitude, Taehyung maybe doesn’t really want to be alone.

“Are you gonna stay dressed like that?” Taehyung asks from his room.

“Yeah? Why? Should I change?”

“Absolutely not.”

Jimin smiles, feeling light and jittery. He’s aware of the possibility of the whole night turning bad, but if Taehyung and Yoongi are in a good day, like there used to be much more often, then it might also end up amazing.

He gives the corner of his eyes a last gentle pat with his finger and straightens away from the mirror. He’s satisfied with how he looks tonight, with his black silk blouse that he tucked in his skinnies and those nice, silver earrings he hasn’t worn in forever.

“Are you done?” Jimin asks, gathering his things on the counter.

“Almost, working on that eyeliner.”
“Eyeliner?” he squeaks in surprise.

“I can’t?”

“No it’s just that I’ve never seen you wear any?”

“I used to wear it more often, before uni.”

Jimin hums, unsure what to expect, rearranging his clothes in his backpack. Not like it really matters, he’ll come back here after anyway. And then Taehyung gets in the bathroom and Jimin’s eyes meet his through the glass and he stills.

“What do you say?”

And Jimin can’t answer for a few breaths, composing himself. Taehyung looks stunning. Dark distressed jeans and flowy, borderline on sheer white t-shirt, hair purposefully mussed up, eyes sharp and sultry and feline, Jimin swallows thickly, butterflies filling up with stomach, heart pleased.

“Not bad.”

“Uh huh,” he closes on Jimin, kisses him. “You’re blushing.”

Jimin has nothing to say to defend himself, so he just gets up on tiptoes and presses his lips to Taehyung’s again, want flaring up between them.

“We have to go,” Taehyung reasons, when their hands have become too curious and their breathings too synchronized.

Jimin groans, eyes closed, before he breaks the embrace and grabs his phone.

You: we’re calling ours now

06-07-2016, 22:18

“I’m gonna die,” Jimin mutters to himself when Yoongi finally arrives, looking as sinful as Taehyung.

Taehyung gives him a questioning look that he just dismisses with a shake of his head.

Even outside the club, it’s busy. There’s loud talking and laughing and screaming, eye-catching clothes and in general, a lot of beautiful people.

But when Yoongi walks up to them and that he and Taehyung share a prolonged stare that’s more loaded with lust than any other words they could have said, Jimin feels like they’re the only ones existing. It’s magnetic, what’s between them, and he feels pulled in, fascinated.

Taehyung takes a long pull from his cigarette before he offers it to Yoongi, never breaking eye contact. And the way Yoongi so easily twists his fingers around Taehyung’s to take it looks so oddly
sensual that Jimin’s exhale stutters out.

Then Taehyung’s gaze settles on him, and there’s something like playfulness in it, a sharp glint of mischievousness.

Jimin hopes it’s a good day for them.

Δ

Taehyung has seen and has been to fancy clubs before.

He’s spent nights on thirty-dollars-drinks, sitting on leather couches in a dim, chic atmosphere. But none of those were as pretty as this one is, tonight. *Diamonds and feathers*, Jimin told him. And it’s exactly that.

The whole place is drowning in a sultry kind of darkness, brightened up in chosen places in monochrome. Black and silver and white. He gets it now, why Jimin told him to dress in that spectrum. The tables and the bar are decorated with feathers, the banquettes covered in velvet, veils hanging in places, all black. There’re cylindrical vases lining the biggest wall, from the floor to the ceiling, filled with what looks like diamonds, a few spotlights making them shine just right and Taehyung isn’t sure if he wants them to be real or not.

The contrast is so rich in the whole place, so dimly erotic, that it feels ethereal. A little like a dream. There’s music, but it’s nothing overexcited. It’s heavy, dangerous beats, the kind to have slow and sweaty sex on.

There’s people dancing, people sitting, a little crowd around the bar. But everyone is dressed just as good to compliment the whole ambience, and the glances they throw around are knowing, predatory. Taehyung thinks he should at least feel a little intimidated, but he doesn’t. Not really. He’s feeling good. He’s intrigued and willing.

He lets himself bathe in the subtle dynamic around him, admires the way the light dances in the thin layers of smoke and the diamonds on the wall, shares eyes contact with different people, observing them. That’s how he goes through his first drink, standing at the bar.

It doesn’t take long for Jimin to become fidgety. His glass empties much quicker than Taehyung’s or Yoongi’s, his eyes are focused on the dancefloor and in them is something lustful, a little naughty and so pretty, and in the sultriness of the lighting, he looks beyond mesmerizing. It’s the first time Taehyung finds himself in that kind of environment with him. It’s the first time he sees that side of him, that minx one, that radiates power and sexiness and he likes it. A lot.

Taehyung watches him lean into Yoongi’s space and talk in his ear, sees Yoongi’s eyes narrow in concentration, before Taehyung looks down and at the collar of his shirt. He dressed so neatly, his tucked-in shirt buttoned all the way up with his sleeves rolled up, Taehyung just wants to mess with it. To mess with him.

Yoongi shakes his head gently, smiling and he mouths something Taehyung can only get a part of. Jimin nods and then he’s straightening up, his lips close to Taehyung’s ear.

“Come dance with me?”
Taehyung lets out a growl no one can hear and glances over at Yoongi, who’s looking back with as much playfulness as Taehyung is staring at him with.

“You go first,” he says, chugging down the rest of his drink and pressing his hand to the small of Jimin’s back. “I’ll join you after.”

Jimin’s brows crease in confusion, and Taehyung gives a tilt of his head to indicate the restrooms.

“Okay, I’ll wait for you on the dancefloor,” Jimin whisper-yells to him again, and Taehyung can tell that the way his lips graze the shell of his ear is purposeful.

He looks at his reflection as he washes his hands, inspecting the state of his liner, then studying the others around. They’re all in this slow and leisured sexual mindset he’s in. And for a fleeting moment, Taehyung wonders if it was Jimin’s intent. If he wanted to rile them up by bringing them here, push them to collide. He knows Yoongi and him had sex a few days ago. Taehyung didn’t hide it.

He comes out of the restroom to even more bodies moving around. He makes his way through them, shoulders snagging on some, feeling the weight of the gaze of some others, ignoring the ones trying to strike a conversation.

And when he’s close enough so that the bar is in full view, he’s quick to locate Yoongi, and finds that he’s not alone. But it’s not Jimin he’s with. It’s a guy Taehyung saw coming to sit near them just before he left. And they’re sharing the same space, the guy often leaning in to talk to him and Yoongi answers him in a lazy, nonchalant fashion, smiling in this way that has Taehyung know he’s playing along.

They make eye contact but Yoongi doesn’t budge, lets himself being courted as Taehyung calmly makes his way to the bar to order something else, holding his gaze. Taehyung considers taking his drink and leaving. After all, it would make no sense for him to interfere. But then the guy reaches to brush Yoongi’s hair away from his face and when Yoongi recoils even just the slightest, Taehyung swells with possessiveness and something a little deeper than that, something that’s probably an echo of his nightmare from the previous night.

Yoongi sees him, and he smiles.

By the time Taehyung has skirted around the massive, round counter, Yoongi has taken a step back to put some distance with the man, glass wrapped of his fingers.

Taehyung feels Yoongi tense under his touch when he slides between them and kisses him, both his hands cupping his face, gentle enough not to hurt him, but firm enough to get his message across. He feels his breath hitch and eventually, his lips give.

“Stop that,” Taehyung tells him when he breaks away, and Yoongi’s eyes are glazed over and beautiful, even amongst all the diamonds around.

He flashes a smile to the man who’s still dumbly staring at them, before he dives into the denser crowd, searching for Jimin.
It’s been a while since he’s had his body thrumming to boosted bass and watered-down alcohol. Last time was with that faceless guy, not long after Yoongi came back.

Time flies.

Jimin’s mouth moves to the lyrics of the song that’s playing, his voice drowned, but Taehyung is sort of enthralled. Maybe it’s the place, the air around them that makes him like that, maybe it’s utter and admitted infatuation. Probably both. He rests his forehead against Jimin’s, wraps an arm around his waist to bring him closer amongst the enthusiastic mass moving around them. Jimin smiles and tilts his chin to kiss him. It’s nothing innocent, the sensation lingers and presses hot in Taehyung’s gut. Then his hips move against his, to the rhythm, always, and Taehyung wants to bite at the plumpness of his lips and tell him he’s a tease, but he’s liking it too much to complain.

Dance is taking up such a big space in Jimin’s life, Taehyung thinks he’s an idiot for never having seen him dance before. One night at a club can’t catch up with the almost four months he’s known him properly, but he makes a silent promise to go see him to the studio more often. Like Yoongi apparently does.

“Don’t space out on me,” Jimin speaks in his ear, before he trails pecks along the length of his neck, lightly digs his teeth in the skin of his collarbone.

Taehyung forces his chin up, kisses him again, with more hunger, more need for his touch, for his skin. The vibration of Jimin’s moan when their tongue slide against one another makes him grip at his hips from under his blouse, eagerness tinted with impatience.

Jimin likes it a bit rougher, now. He didn’t tell Taehyung, but didn’t have to. It just shows in the way he arches his back when Taehyung thrusts into him hard enough to have him drag up onto the sheets, in the way he gasps when Taehyung works a stripe of love-bites on the inside of his thighs.

The club might have been a bad idea.

Because now, he can only think of Jimin’s and Yoongi’s bodies, naked and flushed with pleasure. But Yoongi seems in a more passive mood, insisting to stay sat at the bar, and Jimin vaguely told them about Seokjin wanting to join them later.

He makes Jimin spin, tugging him back so that his ass is snug against his crotch. Taehyung doesn’t consider himself the best dancer, but he can follow Jimin’s lead just fine, can take control of their rhythm too, if he so pleases. Jimin goes pliant in his hold, responsive, and his whole body tips back to rest against Taehyung’s.

“You’re trying to tease hyung, aren’t you?” he says, the plush of his mouth against Taehyung’s ear. “Because of that other dude?”

Taehyung huffs out a laugh, somehow surprised of how easily he’s been read, but the words sending even more desire to travel under his skin, making him restless. He cranes his neck, gives the column of Jimin’s throat a myriad of light kisses, down to his shoulder and then up to his jaw, side-eyeing the bar and Yoongi’s form in between moving people.

“He’s watching us,” Jimin says, head tilted to the side to give Taehyung’s space.

“Of course he’s watching us, do you know how hot you look?”

Jimin physically reacts to the words, momentarily closes his eyes and gives his back the slightest
arch, pushing back against Taehyung’s hips. And Taehyung thinks Jimin is truly amazing. The way he moves, the perfection of his rhythm, the slow rolls of his body, he doesn’t know how he got so lucky, but he doesn’t intend on taking it for granted. He’s going to savor every second of it.

They flow like that for a song or two, making love with clothes on and in the middle of tens of persons, killing everything else around and the weird glances they might be getting. At the exception of Yoongi’s, who’s gaze weighs hot and heavy on them. Taehyung likes it.

Jimin presses harder against him and Taehyung’s mouth drops open in a silent gasp, his fingers digging further in the skin of his waist, and Jimin grins, bites his lip.

“I wanna fuck you so bad,” Taehyung growls in his ear and Jimin shudders, rhythm faltering for a short moment. He lifts his gaze to meet Yoongi’s, and he’s wearing that knowing, provocative smile, sipping on a second or third drink, Taehyung isn’t sure. “Force you against a wall and take you right there.”

“Fuck,” Jimin’s head lolls back to rest on Taehyung’s shoulder, and he moves in a more retrained way, like he’s holding back, but Taehyung pulls him flush against him, cants his hips into his ass and there’s no way he can’t feel how hard he is.

“I’d fuck into you so tight and so good that you’d—“

“Wait,” Jimin pleads and stops moving altogether, gripping at Taehyung’s wrist to stop him too. But he doesn’t. Not completely. He keeps them rocking still, measured and lascivious.

“Are you gonna come just from that?” he says with a smile in his voice, holding eye contact with Yoongi. He sees something menacing in there, something dark, something he craves.

“N-No but we’re going to reach a point of no-return if you continue.”

“Tell me more about it.”

Jimin looks at him over his shoulder, skin glistening prettily, eyelids heavy.

“You’d have to fuck me in a bathroom stall,” he says, so easily, and Taehyung can’t help but smile, high on lust.

“I’m not opposed to the idea.”

“Hyung’s still at the bar.”

“You never specified it would be only you and me.”

Taehyung feels him inhale sharply, watches how, for what seems like forever, Jimin and Yoongi stare at each other, how this tension they hold drips with lust and longing. He kisses behind Jimin’s jaw, groaning when he shivers, waits patiently for the moment they’ll break and cede, because he knows it’ll come.

“Oh,” Jimin breathes, “fuck.”

“Mhm?”

“Seokjin hyung’s here.”

Taehyung straightens, looks around to find him nearing Yoongi, with this assured and attractive strut of his. Taehyung laughs. Not disappointed or angry. Just somehow cut in his spontaneity.
“That will have to wait then,” he says and subtly, very subtly, Jimin deflates under his fingers.

Jimin’s bummed out attitude doesn’t last long though, and the direction the three of them we’re taking for the night turns into something else entirely.

They drink and they talk, and when they get interrupted they don’t make a big deal out of it. They even end up at one of those table, round and surrounded with a luxurious banquet, the four of them and sometimes even strangers and they don’t mind. On the contrary, actually.

They’re bathing in blatant flirting, but Taehyung thinks it just serves to fuel them. And when this girl comes to him, asks him with her most seductive voice to come dance with her, and that, simultaneously, Yoongi fucks him with his eyes and that Jimin tightens his hands on his thigh very, very close to his groin, Taehyung thinks that it’s a fun night.

He meets a wall, though, when Yoongi tells them he has to leave. He’s working in the morning and it’s past 1am. But he understands. He, himself, even if he’s enjoying his time, feels sort of overwhelmed, and he thought of going home once or twice, or at least finishing the night somewhere else.

He looks at Yoongi giving Seokjin a short hug, then a longer, more intimate one to Jimin and he ponders. He ponders, even when Yoongi does not touch him, does as little as looking at him, but that what he radiates pinches Taehyung in the right places.

“I think I’m gonna go too,” he says, a little rushed. “I’m getting sleepy. Are you staying?”

Jimin slowly blinks at the question, dumbfounded, sliding along the banquette to let him out. He looks at Seokjin and Taehyung in turns.

“Well I mean, I’m supposed to go back at yours, right? So I should probably leave too?”

Taehyung softens, gets his keys in his pocket and works the one of his apartment free.

“Don’t lose it,” he says, liking the surprise in Jimin’s alcohol-veiled eyes.

“O-Okay.”

Taehyung kisses his cheek, close to the corner of his lips. And, anticipating, he follows Yoongi, who already got swallowed by the crowd.

Δ

Yoongi breathes deep, when they get outside.

The air is cold, in comparison to the heat that’s built up in the club. It’s still buzzing, around them.
But it’s with a different energy. It’s slower, more lethargic, but that much more weighed with sexual tension and Yoongi tries to ignore the lingering dance of couples kissing against the walls and how it keeps lust licking at his senses.

He takes his phone out to call a cab, his vision barely blurry, even with how much he had to drink, and freezes when he sees the texts he’s received but was too busy having fun to open.

**Caitlyn:** My appointment is on the 20th, that’s the soonest I could go.

06-07-2016, 23:58

**Caitlyn:** I’ll keep you updated.

07-07-2016, 00:01

He walks around a bit, keeping a safe distance between Taehyung and him, reassured by the way Taehyung is fiddling with his own phone, probably getting his own cab.

**You:** okay

07-07-2016, 1:37

**You:** take care of yourself in the meantime.

07-07-2016, 1:37

He then gives a quick call and settles on waiting for his ride with a cigarette between his lips, offering Taehyung one also.

And when a black car gets to them, he offers Taehyung to go first and is answered with a smirk.

“Get in, hyung.”

“You sure? I don’t mind if you take it.”

“I said get in.”

Yoongi frowns, confused by Taehyung’s suddenly assertive attitude but he does get in. But so does Taehyung. And he gives the driver his own address.

“What are you doing?” he scoots further in, giving him enough space.

“You’re coming with me.”
Yoongi’s arms give and he falls onto his front.

“Up,” he’s being growled at Yoongi grits his teeth, trying to catch his breath.

Taehyung is rough, he’s fucking into him hard and Yoongi struggles to balance himself and he keeps collapsing, his thighs are burning and shaking, his fingers hurting from knotting in the sheets so tightly.

Yoongi hears the smack to his ass cheek before he feels it and he closes his eyes, waiting for the sting. When it comes, it’s angry and sharp, has him press his hips into the bed and groan, the pain morphing into that beautiful sensation of satisfaction. Something he can’t understand every time. But that he can, tonight.

“Up.”

And this time Yoongi does. Or at least he tries his best to. He pushes himself halfway up, on his knees and his forearms, limbs trembling and Taehyung digs his fingers in the skin of his waist when he’s stable enough to be penetrated again.

He thrusts back in, the force of it nearly enough to knock Yoongi forward again. He’s fucking him in this way that makes him a mess of old emotions and chaotic thoughts. Taehyung is being self-indulgent, mostly. But it’s also possessive and domineering, it’s pure want and pure power to take if he so pleases. Yoongi doesn’t dislike it. It makes him flutter from the inside and clench tighter around his cock when the he’s being gripped with enough strength to bruise. It’s just that he’s still not used to it.

When they were younger, Yoongi was, most of the time, more in control whenever they’d have sex. Taehyung would often initiate it, but he’d let Yoongi lead things, would trust him in whatever they would try, would beg for a bit of pain, sometimes, that Yoongi would struggle to give. Still struggles to give.

Now Taehyung’s different. But this side of him, Yoongi already knew it existed. He just doubted it would ever surface, through that delicate balance they’d found.

But he did that.

Yoongi made him tip on this side of himself.

Taehyung bends, drapes himself over his back, grips at one of his shoulders for some leverage as his hips work in tight but precise little jerks. Yoongi weakly pushes against him, trying to keep his ass up when his torso is crushed on the bed and he pants harder in the pillow, the air in the room heavy, hard to breathe through.

He feels teeth in the crook of his neck and he tosses his head to the side, yelping, shivering when the softness of a tongue lulls the pain.

“I can’t fucking stay away from you and I hate it,” Taehyung whispers against his skin and Yoongi moans and tenses, his nails making satiny sounds in the fabric under him.

He’d normally answer something, he’d bite as much as he’s being bitten, but he can hardly process anything aside from how amazing Taehyung’s weight feels atop of him, and how good it feels every time his hipbones collide with Yoongi’s ass.

Taehyung straightens back and Yoongi’s lungs rush air in. He attempts to shift to give his surely weakening legs a chance, but then Taehyung cants his hips, changes the angle just a bit, and Yoongi
whimpers with sensitivity and his arms give in. This time Taehyung is following him in his fall, holding his weight with his both hands bracketing Yoongi’s head.

“You’re so bad at this”, he mutters with a soft laugh and it ignites Yoongi in a strange way, this time and all those other times before when Taehyung made him feel small and controlled. It makes him want to snap at him, to yell, but it also makes him want to whine and try to please. He muffles the sounds he makes in the back of his hand, feeling on edge, tiny prickles running along his skin and up his spine.

Taehyung slows his thrusts but keeps them deep, pushes until he’s buried to the hilt and that Yoongi moves up a bit on the sheets and it’s worse. It’s worse than having to be up, because his cock is pushing in the mattress every time Taehyung is pushing into him and it sends sharp sparks of pleasure through him, builds him up much quicker than he was intending to.

“Ah, T-Tae,”

Taehyung pulls out abruptly and Yoongi whimpers, disoriented, propping himself on his forearms to try and chase the warmth.

“Stop whining.”

Yoongi’s jaw tightens in annoyance but then his legs are being forced closed, and Taehyung is straddling his thighs. He scrambling on the sheet in mild panic when he feels the head of his cock nudging at his rim.

“N-Not like that, you know it’s too—“ Taehyung presses in and Yoongi’s mouth drops open in a silent cry, whole body shaking as he feels him get deeper. “Too much, it’s too mu-uch.”

But Taehyung only hums and grinds against his ass, both his palms on Yoongi’s back to keep him still. And he teases him, fucks in tight and lazy, doesn’t let him move. But he’s responsive to way Yoongi quakes and moans, to his labored breathing and the tensing of his body.

Yoongi barely notices when one of his hands leaves him, barely hears the bottle of lube being opened, he’s lost somewhere in his sensations, between the perfection and the precision of Taehyung’s thrust and how overwhelmed he is. He’s pulled taut, head dropped between his shoulders and hair fanning over his eyes, hazy and transfixed.

His climax creeps up on him slowly, making his fists tight and his mouth slack, and he grinds down on the bed with desperate little stutters of his hips.

“You’re gonna come,” Taehyung says, more a statement than a question, and Yoongi swells up, breathes heavier, toes curling up as he starts clenching up around Taehyung cock.

“Don’t stop, Tae, oh fuck don’t stop, don’t—“

Taehyung pulls out and Yoongi buries his face in the pillow in frustration, breathes harsh, and he might just cry from how edged he is.

He’s being flipped and crawled over and he’s stunned for a second, eyes wide and unfocused, not fully registering what’s going on, but gripping at Taehyung’s hips out of reflex when he positions himself. Like something he’s done so many times, that he could do with his eyes closed.

There’s heat wrapping around the head of his cock and he only really catches on then, that Taehyung is fucking himself onto him. It’s scorching and so, so tight that his back arches of the bed and he chokes on a moan, feet planting themselves on the bed for some composure. He tries to hold
Taehyung up because he’s barely prepped, he’s slick with lube like he fingered himself a bit but it’s not nearly enough.

“You’re not—“

Taehyung forces himself down a little more and hisses, and Yoongi feels twisted for liking that expression he’s wearing so much. His eyebrows knitted in a frown but with the most perfect smile. Pain and bliss.

He grips at Yoongi’s wrists to try and pry his hands away, for more freedom to move and Yoongi, who was feeling completely at his mercy less than two minutes ago, suddenly feels the pent-up frustration from the whole night surge back through him. He clicks his tongue, throws Taehyung on his back and settles between his thighs, lifts them up and bend him in half to keep him still.

“You’re so fucking lucky I tested negative,” he growls, when he notices that Taehyung is still wearing a condom, but that he isn’t.

Taehyung moans low and drawn out when Yoongi’s cock presses into him again, slow but steady and Yoongi feels him clench and release around him, sees the tremors taking his body over. He throws his head back and closes his eyes when Yoongi falls forward, chest to chest, heart to heart and that he’s still working his cock deeper.

There’s something fascinating about the way Taehyung deals with the pain. Something beautiful. Even in the past, when Yoongi would bite him hard enough to bruise, that he would lay lines of purples splotches in places no one could see and that Taehyung would become a shivering mess, begging and pleading, Yoongi was captivated. He wouldn’t do it often. Couldn’t. But when it happened, seeing how willing Taehyung was, the peacefulness in his features and how fulfilled that seemed to make him always made Yoongi feel some type of way, that even today, he can’t quite describe.

Taehyung’s arms wrap around Yoongi’s back and he digs his nails there, his breathing short and uncoordinated, and he makes a broken sound that pleases Yoongi, something that’s on the thin line between pain and pleasure.

“You want it? Then fucking take it.”

Δ

Jimin twists the key in the lock, careful not to make too much noise when he gets in.

The whole place is quiet, at the exception of the sound of Tuxedo’s bell coming to meet him. He crouches, alcohol making him oddly pleased with his interaction with the kitten. He takes his shoes off, and quietly walks to Taehyung’s room drowsily, brain slow to register how thick with sex the air gets the more he approaches.

That makes him frown but then the door gives a weak creaking when he pushes it open and he winces, immobile and eyes trained on the silhouette bulging from under the covers. He places his phone down on the nearest flat surface he can find, feeling the urge to scrub his face clean, to remove his makeup and take away that sweaty sensation from his skin, the one he always gets when he dances too much. And just when he’s about to go out again, there’s rustling coming from the bed and the harsh breathing of someone waking up.
“Sorry Tae,” Jimin whispers, “is jus’ me, go back to sleep.”

“Jimin?”

Jimin’s stomach makes a flip.

“Hyung?”

He watches, dumbfounded, as Yoongi sits up. The sheets and the darkness are doing a good job at concealing it, but Jimin can easily guess that he’s naked.

“I didn’t know you’d be coming back here,” Yoongi says, sleepy.

“Uh, yeah.”

“Would you be more comfortable if I’d leave?”

“I’m very, very tipsy, h-hyung, But I can still spot bullshit when I come across s-some.”

Yoongi scoffs, Jimin thinks he can see him smiling. He then outstretches his arm as an invitation that Jimin is more than willing to take, but feels too gross to.

“Clean. My face. I’ll be back.”

“Mhm.”

“Where’s the owner of this pl-lace?”

“Walking around with a bell around his neck.”

Jimin grins drunkenly, flaring up with fondness, with a softness that makes him want to just cuddle for days. And, on cue, Tuxedo enters the bedroom. And Jimin melts a little more.

“I don’t know where he is, probably not far.”

He nods, settling on dragging himself to the bathroom.

And when he’s done, that he’s feeling free and clean and new, that he took off his blouse because it was getting too warm again, he strolls around the apartment. He finds him on the balcony, expectedly. With Cannelle sitting with her face between two bars of the railing to look down, he’s standing and smoking, unhurried, his sweat pants riding low on his hips.

Jimin groans, a rush of the excitement from the moment they were dancing coming back and grappling at his insides.

“Hey,” Taehyung says when Jimin passes the threshold. It’s nearly a rumble, with how husky his voice is.

“Hey.”

He wraps himself around Taehyung from behind, like the previous night in the kitchen, lets calm radiate over him and he closes his eyes. Taehyung’s skin is sticky and salty when he places kisses to it, but he gets a strange satisfaction from it, knowing Yoongi has been the one to put him in that state.

“Did you have fun?”
“M’yeah.”

“Good.”

Jimin remains like that for a few minutes, head still spinning a little, but feeling too comfortable against the warmth of Taehyung’s back to think of going back in. His thoughts are a wreck, sleep starting to tug at him.

“Don’t fall asleep, babe.”

“Mhm.”

“Go with hyung, yeah? I won’t be long.”

“M’okay.”

He works hard to disentangle himself and Taehyung half turns to him, placing his lips onto his in a kiss that lingers, that makes Jimin want to whine. He’s gently being pushed back inside, and he grumbles on the way, but not for long, because soon, it’s Yoongi’s embrace he’s crawling into.

And when he wakes, not too long after, it’s to find the sun rising out the window and Taehyung leaving his place on the side of the bed to slip in the middle, in the tight, tight space between Jimin and Yoongi.

Jimin barely smiles and cuddles closer.

They’re beautiful.

But it’s painful, to look at them.

Chapter End Notes

I don't say this often enough, but your support is amazing and I'm really grateful for it! Thank you! <3
Taehyung sighs contentedly, warm water rushing down the planes of his torso, making his skin flush pleasantly. He woke up to Yoongi’s absence and Jimin’s legs tangled with his, but he knows the shower’s been used, could see how wet the walls were, could faintly smell that shampoo he keeps just for Yoongi, somewhere, in one of the bottom cabinets.

But there was no message from him, and Taehyung figures that’s something he should have expected.

“You could have waited for me,” is the first thing Jimin tells Taehyung when he comes out the bathroom, when he’s not even done with rolling his towel around his hips.

“Didn’t wanna wake you,” he answers, and it’s true. He knows Jimin’s a light sleeper, so when he saw his expression still serene and his lips resting in a cute pout even as he pried himself away from his embrace, Taehyung didn’t even think of disturbing him.

“I was awake the moment you turned the shower on.”

Taehyung breathes out an apologetic ah and walks up to him in the kitchen, where he’s leaning on the counter, and he kisses him. His lips are wet and almost too soft, he tastes like bitter coffee. He takes in his puffy cheeks, his red eyes and his hair, that’s too flat on his head and he smiles, gently.

“You look horrible,” he says.

“Thank you,” he cranes his neck and kisses Taehyung again. “I’ll go shower, now. Alone.” He gets to the bedroom, strolling in this lazy way of his when he’s tired, only to come back a few seconds later. “I made coffee. And also for this,” he gives Taehyung the apartment key he was lent the previous night, “thanks.”

The door is being closed and the shower starts running in a familiar sound, and Taehyung is still standing in the middle of the kitchen, thinking.

He prepares some type of breakfast, even though noon has rolled in. He makes it quick and simple, because first and foremost, he can’t really cook, and also, he’d like for them to go out in the afternoon. Go sit somewhere nice and bathe in the sun for a while.

Jimin is still in the bathroom, taking his time, but Taehyung can hear him shuffle things around and rummaging through his backpack and it’s entirely too domestic. It makes his heart perch high in his throat, makes him fuzzy inside but also anxious. Worried. Because he’s getting used to it. He’s liking it. He’s trying to believe in it. But the truth is, it could be ripped from him any day, and he’s too
Taehyung doesn’t think of this as something permanent. He knows the flame will get blown out one way or another. Taehyung can’t be with Yoongi, and Jimin won’t be with neither of them unless they’re all together. In a sort of equilibrium that Taehyung can’t even begin to conceive.

His phone sings and he snaps out of his thoughts, mid-way through pouring soup in small bowls.

**Choi Gayoung:** Hi, Taehyung. Your father is away for business for a couple of days, and I think his phone is off because he is not answering me.

07-07-2016, 12:12

Taehyung scoffs. *Classic,* he wants to write. *His phone is not off, he just doesn’t want to talk to you.*

**You:** yeah and what do you want me to do about it

07-07-2016, 12:13

**Choi Gayoung:** Well, he told me he has a Leica somewhere in the attic that I could use but I can’t seem to find it. So I thought that perhaps you would know.

07-07-2016, 12:15

He narrows his eyes into slits, searching his memory. And he does vaguely recall the camera, laying around on the office’s desk, or on a shelf in his father’s bedroom, or in Yoongi’s hands, when they were feeling adventurous. But he has no clear images of his father using it. Probably because he couldn’t ever find something pretty enough, or something worthy enough of being immortalized. No objects, no flowers, no shared moments with his son.

**You:** almost brand new

07-07-2016, 12:15

**Choi Gayoung:** What do you mean?

07-07-2016, 12:15

**You:** it should be in the boxes somewhere
Choi Gayoung: That’s what he told me, yes. But the attic is gigantic and there’re so many things in here, I don’t want to break anything.

07-07-2016, 12:16

You: did you ask the maid

07-07-2016, 12:16

Choi Gayoung: Yes, she doesn’t know either.

07-07-2016, 12:18

Choi Gayoung: I was just taking a chance asking you, it’s really fine if you don’t know.

07-07-2016, 12:18

He stares at his screen, imagining her alone and bored in this house that can’t be called a home.

He gets images of his own mother, with bags under her eyes and emaciated cheeks. He hears her sad, tired voice that wouldn’t sing anymore. Feels the weight of her gaze when she held him by his shoulders and poured onto him a river of apologies, just to make sure nine years old Taehyung understood how sorry she was to leave. *I can’t live here, my baby,* she said, *I’m slowly withering.*

And guilt creeps in, crawls under his skin and up his spine. His ribcage tightens.

You: ill come in the afternoon

07-07-2016, 12:20

You: ill help you find it

07-07-2016, 12:20

The attic is smaller than he remembers it to be.

In his memory, it seemed so vast and dark, and he remembers feeling like the stacks of boxes were mountains, high towers of secrets he could get lost in forever, and end up being swallowed whole.
When really, there isn’t nearly as much stuff as his child-self pictured, and the ceiling is even a little low.

Gayoung looked surprised to see him when he got there. She looked shy, but relieved.

And they’ve been at this for over an hour now, carefully opening cartons and looking at what’s inside, mostly surrounded by quietness and, sometimes, the buttery sound of her voice when she asks him questions.

Taehyung doesn’t understand what the fuck it is that she’s doing here. What made someone like her, young and pretty and full of potential, fall in love with his father. He doesn’t understand what she sees in him. Doesn’t understand what his own mother saw in him, either.

“It’s in here,” he says, unfolding the top of a box that’s filled with plain wrapping paper. “I’m pretty sure.”

She stands from where she was crouched a few meters further, rubs her hands together as if to clean them and walks to him, hooking her stray strands of hair behind her ears. Taehyung feels around the wrapped objects to guess their general shapes, brows furrowed, and when he thinks he’s got it, he carefully extirpates it out. Gayoung lets out a small oh when Taehyung opens the bundle, revealing the Leica in nearly perfect condition, and his throat constricts when he sees her eyes light up.

She’s not that much older than he is and she really is beautiful, with her short shorts and long legs, her small waist, delicate hands and bright smile and Taehyung feels bad. For her. For being stuck here and in a relationship that, she might not know yet but that he does, is poisonous.

He hands it to her and she takes it like it’s the most treasured thing she’s ever touched, and Taehyung thinks it’s a little exaggerated but he’s not a photographer and can’t really understand the sentiment. He closes on her slowly, and her eyes lift up to him out of reflex, widening just the slightest.

“I wanna see,” he says, voice gravely and he sees her swallow tightly and flush a cute shade of pink.

For a moment she stays silent, and Taehyung thinks he knows what she’s thinking of the way he’s acting. But she couldn’t be more wrong.

“The pictures you’re going to take with it. I wanna see.”

“Oh. Yeah, sure.”

“Good. I’m gonna go, now.”

“Yeah, okay,” she stammers. She seems disoriented.

There’re a few stretches of silence when Taehyung skirts around the boxes to get to the door and just when he’s about to exit, her voice comes again, more grounded, this time.

“Thank you for coming and helping me.”

He doesn’t look back at her.

“No problem.”

His father won’t want to see. Taehyung knows. He won’t care and he’ll try to keep her mind busy with other stuff. And, in a couple of months, when they’ll be married and that he will feel safe
enough to let his inner asshole resurface, he’ll tell her to stop bothering him about it.

But Taehyung hopes, prays, that having asked her to see her work will be sufficient to push her to continue breathing through it, will keep her from withering away.

*You need to bloom even through the dirt.*

He wonders, when he’s waiting at a red light, if Jimin stayed. He seemed confused when Taehyung told him he had somewhere to go, after breakfast. And even more when he told him he could stay, that he didn’t know how long it would take, but that he could wait for him. Jimin gave some sort of vague agreement and kissed him when he left, but Taehyung doubts he’s still there.

It might be crossing a line. Taehyung’s not sure why he’s feeling like that, but he does. Maybe the awkwardness of not knowing what to do, alone, in someone’s space. Or the subtle invitation, underlining the words, to stay. For longer. To make himself comfortable.

*You:* are you still there

*07-07-2016, 15:54*

*Jimin:* are you driving

*07-07-2016, 15:54*

*You:* yea why

*07-07-2016, 15:56*

*Jimin:* you piece of shit dont do that

*07-07-2016, 15:56*

*Jimin:* yes im still there

*07-07-2016, 15:56*

*Jimin:* dont text me back, fucker

*07-07-2016, 15:56*

Taehyung grins, insides fluttering. He puts his phone in the console and takes the next street on the right. Makes a small detour.
You: can you stop that?  
07-07-2016, 15:58

You: you closing up on me wont fix anything  
07-07-2016, 15:58

Yoongi hyung: i’m like that because you’re getting your hopes high again  
07-07-2016, 15:58

Yoongi hyung: you really have to understand  
07-07-2016, 15:58

Yoongi hyung: that at the exception of us needing to deal with the shit i put him through  
07-07-2016, 15:59

Yoongi hyung: and friendship  
07-07-2016, 15:59

Yoongi hyung: there’s nothing left between tae and me  
07-07-2016, 15:59

You: then please explain his reaction from yesterday night  
07-07-2016, 16:00

You: when you were at the bar and that dude was hitting on you  
07-07-2016, 16:00

Yoongi hyung: has nothing to do with love  
07-07-2016, 16:04

Yoongi hyung: its petty want for dominance  
07-07-2016, 16:04
Yoongi hyung: yeah and you should too

07-07-2016, 16:06

Jimin clicks his tongue, slouches further against the brick wall. He lights another cigarette, frustrated, and watches the slow drag of the clouds against the sea blue of the sky.

He can be more straightforward about things, with Yoongi. Jimin doesn’t fear he’s going to break at any moment, so he doesn’t tiptoe around him as much. But the walls he meets are more brutal, too. Yoongi’s firm and assertive when he wants to be, and while sometimes it’s something that makes Jimin’s skin tingle pleasantly, some other times, like today, it makes him want to yell into open spaces.

You: and you dont feel anything neither, right

07-07-2016, 16:09

You: just good ol friendship

07-07-2016, 16:09

You: nothing too special

07-07-2016, 16:10

You: you were limping this morning

07-07-2016, 16:10

You: and he was limping too

07-07-2016, 16:10

You: but yknow, no big deal

07-07-2016, 16:10

Yoongi hyung: ok jimin stop

07-07-2016, 16:14

Yoongi hyung: you’re upsetting yourself
Yoongi hyung: look, i still have some work to do

Yoongi hyung: i’ll text you after i leave the office, yeah?

Jimin doesn’t answer and puts his phone on silence, sends it to flop further on the floor of the balcony.

He inhales deep, filling his lungs with smoke, appreciating the way it makes him feel full, and he watches the patterns disperse in the wind when he exhales. It’s become comforting. Smoking. He remembers the first times he saw Taehyung do it, how ritual-like it was, and he thinks it’s like that for him too, now. It’s not necessarily a good thing. But it makes him stop this carousel of his thoughts when they’re too messy, and it makes him feel special whenever Yoongi or Taehyung pass their own cigarette to him.

The gentle sound of a bell breaks the quietness Jimin has wrapped himself in, and he watches Tuxedo shake his head, scratch his ear. He reaches to pet him, the luxurious fur giving under his fingers. That, also, is calming.

Jimin hears the front door opening and he perks up, looking through the mesh door for a silhouette he’s starting to find a home in. He can’t help but smile when Taehyung sits next to him and that he’s radiating like the sun, eyes bright and mischievous grin, shamelessly grabbing Jimin’s pack and stealing a stick from it.

Jimin says nothing, stunned and spellbound, just looks at him and this way he has to smoke that just sends his mind haywire, that makes him wants to touch him and kiss him breathless.

Until Taehyung leans in and presses his lips onto his with the flicker of passion that feels like a blue flame under Jimin’s skin, and that he places in Jimin’s free hand a small object, warm from being held for too long, with edges that are sharp against his palm.

A key.

“I had it made today. It’s yours.”
Jimin stays much longer than he usually does. Through the rest of Thursday and the nearly whole of Friday.

It’s nice, to fall in a rhythm with someone else. It’s something he’s never experienced before, growing accustomed to the way someone navigates in smaller spaces enough to start gravitating with them. He never could do that, with Youngjae. He was older, had an apartment, attended college and was autonomous, but whenever Jimin would go over for a little while and tried to help with anything, he was being pushed off. *You’re underfoot, Min-ah, let me do it,* and the way he kept saying it with a laugh never made things any sweeter.

Taehyung starts opening up differently. Having Jimin close doesn’t make him talk more about what he avoids, but he moves around him, he looks at him, and it’s not the same. There’s compliance. A certain serenity, also, as if his constant presence was soothing something restless inside of him. Or maybe giving Jimin a duplicate of his apartment key made him feel secure. Safe. Like a promise he would have sealed on his own side.

It feels sort of unnatural, when he leaves for dance practice. He’s only been here for three days and he doesn’t know why in so little time he managed to grow attached to the idea of spending his time here that much, but it brews a bitterness in his gut when he kisses Taehyung goodbye for the weekend.

“You never came back to me, about going out this weekend.”

“Ah, fuck,” Jimin looks at Hoseok fiddling with his phone, trying to pair it with the stereo while they’re waiting for everyone else.

“You didn’t ask him?”

“Slipped out of my mind,” he says, taking a pull of water before he goes to grab his own phone in his bag.

“Probably a little late to ask, even for tomorrow. You, rich kids, are busy people.”

Jimin glances at him from across the room, unsure if he should frown or laugh.

You: remember when we talked about introducing you and hobi hyung

08-07-2016, 19:23

“What was that about, hyung?”
“I’m just pissed at life, and money is bullshit. Nothing new.”

“And that deserved a jab to my ego?”

“I apologize to your ego.”

“Did something happen, or?”

Hoseok huffs, seemingly struggling to focus on his screen.

“Not really. Not more than usual.”

**Yoongi hyung:** yeah?

08-07-2016, 19:24

**You:** how about tomorrow night

08-07-2016, 19:24

**You:** we could spot a nice place and have a drink

08-07-2016, 19:24

Jimin presses the send button, quietly gets to Hoseok’s side when some of the others are arriving. They’re loud and excited and he knows Hoseok will use them as a shield, it’s just a matter of time.

“Something I can do to help? How much do you need? I can give it to you, if you want.”

Hoseok’s thumbs still over the screen, shoulders sagging in the subtlest of ways, but Jimin knows him, and Jimin saw.

“Jimin-ah,” he says, eyes unwavering and tone flat, “I really love you and everything, but it just makes me feel like a piece of shit when you say things like that.”

Jimin shrivels up, guilt clogging up his thoughts and he responds to the first thing his body wills him to do, and opens his arms, a shy invitation for a hug. Hoseok still doesn’t look at him, but welcomes him with his arm that’s not busy with his phone.

“Didn’t mean to make you feel like that,” he mutters in Hoseok’s shoulder.

“I know. And I don’t want you to feel bad for wanting to help me, it’s really nice of you. And I’m grateful. It just makes me feel ridiculous and small and I hate it.”

“I’m sorry.”

The music then starts playing at low volume from the speakers, and Hoseok finally wraps around him fully.

“Don’t. You’re fine.”
Jimin’s mouth drops open to answer, but Jungkook’s voice covers all the noise around when he calls him, and he flinches, Hoseok also momentarily tensing before he giggles with gentle trembles.

“What?” he grits, twisting his neck to look at him.

“Someone texted you,” and surely, he’s beaming, bright, airy, soft hair falling before glinting eyes, and Jimin wants to squish him. “Twice.”

“High importance stuff.”

“A priority.”

Hoseok snorts, releasing his hold and Jimin can’t even be mad when Jungkook hands him over his phone with this shit-eating grin of his, waiting for some kind of reaction.

“Go stretch or something,” Jimin tells him, unlocking his device.

“I’m already stretched.”

“You got here like, three minutes ago. Don’t lie.”

“I stretched at home.”

“That’s the most ratchet thing I’ve ever heard.”

There’s a silence between them after that, so unusual that Jimin looks up at him, only to get winked at and he stills, perplexed, as Jungkook trots off.

“the fuck.”

“Did he answer you?” Hoseok asks from a little further away, stretching, rolling his shoulders in smooth, precise motions.

“Uh,” and Jimin, still confused, still hasn’t mustered the consciousness to read his text.

Yoongi hyung: sounds good yeah

08-07-2016, 19:26

Yoongi hyung: not a club this time, right?

08-07-2016, 19:26

Jimin chuckles, fond, and he thinks about how he hasn’t seen Yoongi since the Diamonds and Feathers night, two or three days ago. And that he might be missing him.

“So?”

“You seem too eager, hyung.”

Hoseok scans the room, probably checking if someone is missing before they start.

“Eunji wants to go somewhere, and I’d gladly kill two birds with one stone with that night with you
and use it as an excuse.”

Jimin lets out a groan that only he can hear, uncomfortable with the whole thing.

“Hyung says he’s down. He just doesn’t want to end up in a club.”

“It’s fine,” Hoseok rakes a hand through his black hair, gives him a small smile, then he slips in this skin of his, when he takes control of the whole group. “I know a perfect place.”

Δ

You: it’s nothing fancy, right?
09-07-2016, 21:04

Jimin: nope
09-07-2016, 21:04

Jimin: pretty chill place
09-07-2016, 21:04

Jimin: i think youll like it
09-07-2016, 21:05

Yoongi throws his towel on the bed after giving his wet hair a last rub, and he huffs. He doesn’t feel like going anymore.

He’s been tense and unnerved for the past two days. Since that conversation he had with Jimin over text. It’s rubbed him the wrong way, enough to make him on edge, swarmed with feelings and apprehensions that he doesn’t know how to get out of his system. And he knows that tonight is a good chance to just, unwind, to take it easy with Jimin around. But the sole idea of going out and maybe meet empty eyes of strangers on the street or having guilt seep under his skin if they ever come across the Taehyung topic has him bristling.

Yoongi doesn’t want to go because he knows how he is, and he knows he’s close to detonation point. He knows he wouldn’t need much to trip and fall, and break his so carefully crafted shell.

He considers for a while more, mind sluggish, standing naked and staring out the window.

Inside, it’s silence. And then it’s doubts. About things he thought he knew for sure.

He settles on ripped jeans and a white tee, throws a plaid shirt on top that he doesn’t button up, grabs his snapback and puts in on before he storms out of his room.
Taehyung hisses when a loose end of the chain-link fence scrapes at the skin between his shoulder blades, giggles drunkenly when his shirt gets stuck in it and keeps him in place.

The refinery is a good place to be, tonight. It’s a good place to be in general, but especially tonight. When he’s fuzzy with alcohol and the wind blows just a nice breeze to keep him from overheating.

Yoongi and Jimin, they’re going out tonight. Taehyung isn’t. He’s been invited. Jimin did. But he refused. He stepped back. Those emotions are here again and he doesn’t feel like fighting them. This nightmare he’s had, and that left him so distraught, he can’t shake the feeling of it off.

Bottle in hand, pills in his pocket and orange stars all around, Taehyung thinks this is a good place to be, tonight.

The disc shop dude.

Jimin’s best friend is the disc shop dude.

He’s the disc shop dude that he finds stupidly hot even though he’s only seen him twice, and he’s the nicest human discovery Yoongi has made since he’s met Jimin.

He’s this clever kind of funny that has Yoongi grin in his glass when he’s drinking, he has that interest in music and old vinyl that he shares and fuels, and that proximity with Jimin that he can’t get enough of.

He’s lean and knows how to dress himself, got this sun-like smile just like Jimin does, got black hair that falls in his eyes, a cute mole on his upper lip and he’s very much sitting across him.

And admittedly, Yoongi is a little past tipsy.

His first time since he came back from New York.

But there’s something to their interactions, everything just flows well, in a seamless current and Yoongi appreciates that. So they talk and they talk and they drink, because we already started, hyung, you have to catch up is what he was welcomed with when he found them.

They won’t shut up.
Yoongi’s starting to feel a bit numb in the limbs, his cheeks flushed but he’s just overflowing from the inside and Hoseok so easily follows him wherever he takes the conversation and Yoongi likes it a lot. There are people with whom it just clicks, and Hoseok is one of them.

Jimin, sitting next to Yoongi, is just listening to them, a soft, drunk smile on his face and he looks blissed out, though a little pale. Yoongi subtly slips a hand under the table and squeezes his knee, Jimin’s little fingers coming to play with his the second after.

If Hoseok sees anything, he doesn’t let it show, goes on with his story of a client who once tried to steal a 12-inch vinyl and putting it in their jacket.

Δ

Eyes closed, pebbles digging in his back, Taehyung has a mind that whispers silly things to him.

It talks about deserting, about a grand voyage, about the beautiful things there are out there and that he can’t see. Below his feet or above the clouds.

It talks about ghosts, and how they can be felt but not seen, much like feelings. It murmurs about shadows and how they converge with the light, about absence and how the voids, always, inevitably fill themselves back in.

It talks a language that hurts, a tongue that pours blood like waterfalls cry water. The language of the snakes and cowardice. It’s words that only belong to him, that only he knows and can hear, that he can understand but never speak.

Soliloquies.

Taehyung flattens his palms on the concrete, wondering if he’s still really there. Because everything spins, there is no floor, there is no ceiling, and there’s nothing in the middle and he thinks he might be floating. Away. Hopefully.

Δ

“Is she mad?” Jimin asks, slurring in his words, when there’s a lull in the conversation and that Hoseok picks up his phone.

“Yes. But whatever.”

“Hyung,” Jimin says and then laughs, until Hoseok cracks up too.

Yoongi listens and hears but doesn’t really understand. He’s wasted and hazed up and his thoughts are barely coherent. There’s the warmth of Jimin’s skin radiating through his jeans under his hand, and Hoseok’s collar riding too low on his chest.

He stands, sorts of abruptly.

“I’m gonna get another pitcher.”
It could be anything, really. Anything could set him off.

“`You okay there, Jiminie?’ Hoseok asks after filling his glass once more, and Yoongi, for some reason, swells at the nickname. “You don’t look too good.”

Jimin makes a vague gesture with his hand that Yoongi reads as _not so much_ before he clutches his stomach.

“Want me to get you some water?” Yoongi offers.

Jimin shakes his head childishly and the fashion with which he pushes Yoongi’s hand away from his thigh, rushed, like he _needs_ it off, shouldn’t affect him so much. Jimin’s drunk and he’s drunk, also. But it does. Just like that time when Jimin got out of his car with the voice, the demeanor of someone who’s breaking up.

And for a few seconds, Min Yoongi stands there and he wonders what the fuck he’s doing with himself. What the fuck he’s doing here, and why the fuck he’s still trying to keep up with this relationship if he feels so guilty all the damn time.

But Jimin leaves his seat and he snaps out of it, refocusing, as much as his intoxicated brain allows him, on this clumsy urgency that fuels Jimin’s moves.

“I’ll be back.” It’s all he says before he heads off, and Hoseok tells him, sufficiently loud, to text him if there’s anything.

Yoongi really wants to go outside and smoke. He craves the weight of a cigarette between his lips. Wants to feel the way inhaling deep and exhaling soft pulls at his thoughts.

He lifts his glass to his mouth, swallowing around the bitterness. Hoseok has let his voice fall to a low rumble, something nice to listen to. He’s talking about dance. And dance classes. Yoongi thinks it’s absurd that with how often he went to get Jimin there, that they didn’t come across each other. His brain though, tells him he’s already seen him dance. And, trying to rationalize and meld together the two sides, Yoongi decides that nothing he thinks, right now, is reliable.

Hoseok looks at his phone again, and Yoongi, curious, attempts furtive glances to the screen. Blurred out letters, and Hoseok’s falling expression, it’s all he sees.

“He’s taking long?” he says, eventually, when he takes his own phone out and checks the time.

“Yeah, maybe he got sick,” Hoseok’s voice is surprisingly stable. “I’ll go check. Are you staying here?”

Yoongi hums and leans on the small, round table, resting his chin in his palm as he watches Hoseok walk off. He likes it, here. They can hear each other just fine, without forcing it, and the music isn’t especially good but the ambience is, with the dim, cold lighting and the cozy booths.

He observes the people around, scrutinizing them and placing them in tiny boxes of stereotypes. He
wonders about them, who they are, who they love. Who they hate. He can feel himself getting a pleasant kind of drowsy, losing grasps on his thoughts.

Yoongi smiles. He thinks this is a good place to be, tonight.

Δ

Feet, scraping the ground. Approaching. It resounds so loud in Taehyung’s ears that he flinches from the inside, but his body remains still. His ribcage harshly expands around air when his eyelids flutter open.

The sky seems so heavy, above. Ready to fall.

And Taehyung waits for it, through the fog that’s making him grey, he’s expecting it. The pressure in the pit of his stomach, the clench around his heart, the darkness blanketing him.

His nails rake on the ground, catch in little stones and he registers dull pain. His other hand is wrapped around the key to a thoughtless mind. He wants it. He wants that monster inside his brain to stop talking, stop saying nonsense that feels too real. He needs it.

Whatever’s coming, it’s close now. Taehyung wonders if he can still be seen, floating in nightmares like that.

He lets his head flop to the side, concrete digging in his temple.

If it’s the sky that’s coming for him, then so be it. He’s ready.

“Taehyung?”

Δ

They’ve been gone for centuries. Or at least that’s the impression Yoongi is left with.

He’s had the time to go through a full glass of beer and being tempted by the shooter girl twice and they’re still nowhere to be seen.

You: where you guys at
10-07-2016, 0:03

You: uyou ok?
10-07-2016, 0:07

You: jiminah
Eventually he gets worried enough to leave the table. He combs his hair under his snapback as neatly as he can, stuffs his hands in his pockets, and rakes the whole place of his eyes, struggling to even make out faces properly.

He passes by tables, squinting, probably staring too long at some of the people sitting there and really, there’s little to no possibility that Jimin and Hoseok just, left to chill elsewhere without telling him. But he doesn’t know what else he’s supposed to be doing.

“Jimin-ah?” he calls, loud, when he gets in the restrooms. It’s huge and mostly empty, rows of plain metallic doors. “Hoseok-ah?”

He clicks his tongue when nothing comes, just a few hushed voices that he doesn’t recognize.

You: didy ou leave without me!

10-07-2016, 0:19

You: ?

10-07-2016, 0:19

He makes another round, checks the tables once more, and then around the bar, checking his phone every 30 seconds or so. And when even his drunk brain can’t subdue the prolonged stares from strangers anymore, Yoongi aims for the door.

He wishes he had Hoseok’s number, so that he wouldn’t feel so helpless and lost.

He gets in his and Jimin’s chatroom for what feels like the millionth time tonight, starts typing that he’s leaving, as he blindly makes his way out. And just when he goes through the left-open door and that he meets fresh air, he violently collides with solid warmth.

There’s a mess of arms and hands as they grab onto each other for stability, Hoseok fingers wrapping around Yoongi’s biceps and Yoongi’s clutching at his elbows and it’s very confusing and overwhelming. Hoseok then melts into a fit of giggles right in the threshold and Yoongi is flooded with relief, following in his brighter mood and grinning.

“Where were you?” he breathes, putting his phone back in his pocket when Hoseok slackens his hold on him.

“We uh,” Hoseok wheezes before he takes a large intake of air, eyes unfocused but glimmering, features pretty with amusement. He lets his fingers brush down Yoongi’s arm when he takes a step back, and Yoongi feels them too well even through his shirt and his foggy senses. “Jiminnie went h-home.”

“Wha—Why?”

Hoseok mumbles a few words he can quite grasp, and then there’s people behind Yoongi wanting to
go outside, pushing at them with attitudes instead of touches and he urges Hoseok backwards, dragging him further and closer to the street.

“Gimme your phone first,” Hoseok extends a hand and Yoongi raises an eyebrow. But he gives it. Hoseok wouldn’t need much to persuade him of anything in this state.

“What for?”

“So that this ki-ind of stuff doesn’t happen again.”

Yoongi huffs a laugh and only then does he indulge in a cigarette, content when the flame licks at it and sends thick smoke around them.

“Jiminnie got sick? And very comatose? So he uh, asked me to call him a cab and s-send him home.”

“Is he okay? Should we go?”

“Told me to tell you not to worry,” his thumbs glide over the screen, nimble. “He seemed fine? Just very tired, I guess. But I understand if you want to go, hyung.”

Yoongi lets their eyes meet at the word. They stare, and it’s kind of satisfying. Hoseok gives the device back and smiles, intoxicated, and something tells Yoongi to stay. He offers Hoseok his pack. Hoseok turns it down.

“I’m trying to stop,” he says, and Yoongi thinks he has appreciable will power, to be able to refuse in such circumstances. “Really hungry though.”

Yoongi isn’t, but he doesn’t see himself leave.

They use smaller streets, to avoid passing cars as much as they can. They’re strolling down on the sidewalks, to the song of Hoseok’s blabbering. He’s talking. A lot. And Yoongi listens, doesn’t find it unpleasant. Hoseok’s filling the compact buzz around them with stories and cheery or offended tones, with curious laughs, and he’s all over the place. Like he’s nervous. Or angry. Yoongi can’t tell.

He looks at his phone often, and so does Yoongi. Jimin still hasn’t answered, and it’s worrying. Taehyung is silent, too.

Yoongi feels cut off from them. It’s weird and cold. A little different and scary. He’s so used to this pull he has to them, to their slow gravitation, that now he’s drunk and walking with someone he’s known for only a couple of hours, and it feels foreign. It’s novelty. Interesting. But whether it’s a good thing or not, Yoongi can’t tell either.

He vaguely tells himself that it says a lot about him and his incapacity at socializing properly.

Hoseok takes a turn into a somber place, a long, thin alley that becomes darker with every inch and that seems to be leading straight into hell.

“Hoseok-ah.”

“It’s a shortcut, hyung. Trust me.”
And Yoongi can’t really link up thoughts, but he’s not stupid. Not yet. He’s not someone who particularly nurtures a lot of fears, but this, in the state they are in, very much isn’t the best idea.

“I’m really not—“

“Come on,” Hoseok grabs at his sleeve, pulls him forward and to be swallowed by hell’s mouth. “I used to go through here all the time.”

And really, it’s hard to believe.

Because he’s walking in front but he’s sloth paced, radiating anxiety and stress, his arms crossed on his chest protectively. He trips and almost falls a couple of times and Yoongi just smiles when he hears him squeak. There’s something endearing about it. Something that reminds him of Jimin. It’s not hard to believe that they’ve been friends for so long.

“I can hear you m-mocking me in your h-head, hyung.”

“Well.”

“I know where I’m going.”

“Sure.”

There’s a few stretches of silence when Yoongi just listens to Hoseok’s breathing and looks up, to see a blurred out sky through the space in between buildings.

“See? There’s a street there,” there’s hope rising up in his voice.

“Thank God.”

There are the lights of passing cars out there, and more noise as they advance. Yoongi walks closer to the side, trailing his fingers on the brick wall for steadiness. It’s probably colder in here, as it should be. But Yoongi doesn’t feel it. He’s just very light and happy and –

There’s a loud, clattering sound to their left, something falling. And Hoseok, in front, spooks and screams, backpedals right into him and Yoongi wraps his arms around him reflexively, catching him so they don’t tip backwards.

Hoseok’s warm against him. That he can feel. So very precisely. He’s warm and solid and he smells good and he’s cute. He’s so fucking hot.

Anything could have made Yoongi detonate. But it had to be Hoseok.

Δ

The trembles start from his fingers. Then like a shock they travel up his arms and down his spine. His breath hitch and he gasps. Air won’t come in anymore.

“Hey,”

There’s a soft, cold press in the hollow of his elbow. It’s Namjoon’s voice but the touch of death.
Taehyung whimpers and curls up on himself and away from it. He’s not as ready as he thought. He screws his eyes shut so that he can’t see what’s perched above him. He feels safer in the void behind his eyelids anyway.

Cold is here again and it’s firmly gripping at his arm and Taehyung jumps. The cold expands then, wraps around him like a snake and tightens, chokes him. It breathes a hole in his ribcage and he feels himself collapse.

The sky falls, beautiful and onto him, it presses on his being like it wants to swallow him whole and make him a star, listless and immobile on a pitch black canvas.

Taehyung starts burning, down from the pit of his stomach and all the way up to his throat.

*I’m dying.*

He screams.

Δ

Yoongi doesn’t know who kissed who first. It just happened.

Hoseok doesn’t kiss like Taehyung, and he doesn’t kiss like Jimin. It’s unsettling. But he makes little breathless sounds when their lips move together, and he’s so eager in the way he’s grappling at his t-shirt, it’s enough to appease Yoongi’s confused brain.

He backs him up against the nearest brick wall fairly easily. Hoseok is pliant but he’s not giving. Not entirely. He pulls Yoongi until their fronts collide, flush, he touches him like he’s trying to prove something.

And Yoongi indulges him. Because he likes the wetness of his lips and how soft they are, he likes the movements of his ribs against his, how they just melt together like it was meant to happen. If it’s not a coincidence then it must be fate. Or a curse, perhaps.

He licks at his bottom lip and Hoseok’s tongue meets his a heartbeat later. Yoongi’s fingers dig in his waist as he groans, he’s flushing with lust and maybe something akin to shame, but Hoseok brings a shaky hand to his cheek and he finds it difficult to draw the line between the two, now.

He breaks the kiss, and their gazes collide like their bodies so often did, tonight. Yoongi admires the bright lights from the street nearby on Hoseok’s skin and how they play in the obscurity of his irises. And the more he looks, the more he sees in there something he knows. Something that’s sneaky and dangerous and suffocating. Yoongi doesn’t know if that’s because that’s how Hoseok’s feels too, or if his eyes are just mirroring his.

“Hyung,” he breathes, and Yoongi dips a hand between them to brush at Hoseok’s crotch, deftly hooking his thumb in the waistband, asking for permission. Hoseok places his hand over his and urges him on, his head tilting back with a sigh and Yoongi figures that’s enough.

He places lingering lips to the skin under Hoseok’s jaw, gives it light suckles, letting Hoseok lightly rut against his hand and breathing pleased little noises.

He lowers himself to his knees, struggling with keeping his balance as he does.
“O-Oh fuck,” it’s so satisfying to hear, chopped sounds in between pants and Yoongi just smiles, lifting Hoseok’s shirt to pop the button of his jeans off. “Hy-yung.”

He looks up and through his eyelashes, meets Hoseok’s surprised and expectant eyes. He’s stiff still under Yoongi’s touch, like he doesn’t dare move. Like they’re something ticking in his brain, choking on his thoughts.

And suddenly Yoongi recognizes himself.

Doubts.

Harsh, treacherous doubts.

His lungs deflate and his throat closes up, his fingers go shaky. His whole body, his heart, his gut, his thoughts, it all quakes.

He releases the fly of Hoseok’s pant like it’s a blue flame and ripping through his flesh, lets his head fall forward and against Hoseok’s thigh.

“I can’t,” he croaks out. There’s the chanting of Hoseok’s harsh breathing and the passing cars and he tries to hold on to that, as to not break completely.

“I know. It’s okay.”

Gentle, careful fingers come to card through his hair and he lets him, he knows Hoseok is also soothing himself through the gesture.

And the longer it lasts, the more vivid the memories become. Of Yoongi playing with Taehyung’s hair when he was a kid, then a little later, when doing it would leave lavender traces onto his fingers. And on that night when he took care of him after he’s was sick and wet to the bones after fucking himself up at the refinery. When he was lying on the couch with his head in Yoongi’s lap, sleeping, and Jimin, cuddled against him protectively, his eyes gentle and tired and –

“I love them so much,”

He whispers but it feels like he’s screaming.

It resonates through him, blooms and echoes beautifully. Like something he’s been wanting to say for too long.

His fingers come to twist in the fabric of Hoseok’s jeans and he squeezes, hard, until he’s white-knuckled and tense.

“I know,” Hoseok’s voice is strained, thick. He’s stroking Yoongi’s hair in feathery motions now. Light, so very light and calming. “I know you do.”

And for the first time in a very, very long time, Min Yoongi lets himself cry.
“Fuck.”

Yoongi remembers that Hoseok has a girlfriend only the morning after, when he’s brushing his teeth and staring at his discomfited expression in the mirror. His eyes are red and puffy, his lips dry and his skin is a sick kind of pale.

He sighs in frustration, spits his froth in the sink, barely rinses and wipes his mouth.

You: i just remembered that you have a girlfriend
10-07-2016, 9:59

You: i’m really sorry
10-07-2016, 9:59

Seokseok: yeah well, i was half of it
10-07-2016, 10:01

Seokseok: its not like i couldnt have stopped any time
10-07-2016, 10:01

Seokseok: so dont feel too bad about it
10-07-2016, 10:02

His eyes zero on the nickname Hoseok gave himself when he entered his number in Yoongi’s phone. It’s cute. It clashes with the normality with which he usually names his contacts, but he’s fine with it.

Seokseok: im sorry, too
10-07-2016, 10:02

Seokseok: we really just fucked up in general
Seokseok: are you on your way yet?

He looks at his dresser. He doesn’t even want to put clothes on.

But he promised. He told Hoseok, when they were both sitting on the ground of that dirty alley, backs against rough bricks, that he’d go. Through sobs and sniffles and slurred, drunk sentences, he told him he’d go see Jimin and talk to him about what happened, and that he’d stop acting like a coward with Taehyung.

So Yoongi needs to do that.

Even if today seems to be the worst day to do it. He promised.

You: im making myself decent and im off

There’s knocking on the door and Jimin is frozen in the corridor, breakfast in a warm plate in his hand.

He is in no state to answer that door. He’s been sick when he came home, accidentally fell asleep next to the toilet and woke up, groggy and lifeless and slow. Even this extra-long shower he’s taken didn’t do much.

He ignores it and goes back to his room and he doesn’t feel guilty about it, until he sees his phone light up.

Yoongi hyung: are you up?

Yoongi hyung: im at the door
And Jimin, horrified, notices the messages Yoongi sent him the previous night, that he probably saw but that his intoxicated brain decided not to answer to.

The door opens, and Yoongi is as grey as the rainy sky hanging around this morning.

“Oh,” he breathes, taken aback. He’s not sure if he’s ever seen him as blank as this. “You okay? You look a little sick?”

“There’s something I need to tell you.”

Yoongi doesn’t meet Jimin’s eyes. And this, more than what he just said, makes Jimin’s gut coil with anxiety.

“O-Okay?”

“Can I come in? Or are your parents there? We can go somewher—“

“No it’s fine, come in,” he says, stepping to the side. “You want something to drink?”

And they’re not halfway to the kitchen when Yoongi says it.

“I kissed Hoseok. Last night. We made out in a street near the bar.” His voice drops, breaks. “I’m really sorry.”

Jimin feels himself becoming heavier, like someone is pressing on his shoulders for him to disappear into the floor. His breath hitches a little but he doesn’t stop walking.

“We’re not together, hyung. I thought it was clear between us, that we could see whoever we wanted.”

“Jimin.”

“And you were drunk. So it’s fine.”

He can hear Yoongi stop behind but Jimin just enters the kitchen, doesn’t look at him. He’s flushed, inside he feels like he’s boiling. There’s the slight sting of humiliation making him snappy, and he knows, just from that, that he’s getting in defensive stance.

“In what world does that make it okay, Jimin?”

Jimin laughs, sweet and bitter.

“I used to kiss people all the time when I was drunk. It’s really not that big of a deal.”

Then he opens the fridge, takes the jar of fresh water and aims for a cupboard to get a glass but Yoongi plants himself in front of him. It’s a fragile eye contact that they share, and Jimin feels so out of it, dizzy with what’s battling inside, that he doesn’t notice just how harsh his stare is, and how Yoongi nearly recoils under it.

“We’re not together, but I sort of feel like we are, and I feel like I’ve cheated on you so I’m apologizing.”
Jimin’s hurt. He’s uncomfortable and tight in his own skin, even when he’s getting this sensation like there’s a hole, growing in him. Like a sense of helplessness. Or being unworthy. Or not having done enough. He’s hurt, but he doesn’t feel cheated on. It’s always been clear that they weren’t together. That’s what the lines of their silent contract says and he’s aware of it. So while he chose not to see anyone else, he didn’t expect of them to do the same.

“Will you apologize to Taehyung too?”

Yoongi sighs, tries to pry away the jar from Jimin’s hands to place on the isle. But Jimin holds on to it. It offers him safety. Protection. He’s not going to let it go.

“Why are you like that?” Yoongi asks, with sagged shoulders and tiredness in his every movement.

“You didn’t cheat on me, hyung. You cheated on your feelings for me and that’s why you feel like that. So that means you cheated on your feelings for him too.”

Yoongi doesn’t deny. Doesn’t object. But he closes his eyes, tries to dress up a wall. But it’s too frail, and Jimin sees through it easily.

“Oh, did that maybe make you realize that you’re still in love with Tae?” Anger, flaring up. “Because that’d make it at least a bit worth it.”

There’s a long stretch of silence where Yoongi radiates so much uneasiness that it’s like they’re growing miles between them, when Jimin can clearly hear his breathing. He searches his face a little more, for the shred of an answer. And he finds it, in the form of this frown Yoongi wears when his thoughts are consuming him. Jimin laughs. Relief and anger, they make a strange mix.

“So it did?”

“I’m really sorry, Jimin,” he murmurs in the tense air. “I wish I had something else to say.”

“Now what? Am I out of the game?”

And Yoongi finally looks at him properly, face to face but with something like panic flickering in his eyes. Jimin shifts the cold container in his hands, swallows thickly. He shouldn’t have asked that. He’s just digging them further. Nothing good will come out of this if he lets his emotions twist his words.

But he’s still mangled, inside. Tangled. And it’s hard to see the lines before he crosses them.

“No?” Yoongi says, hurt. “I just told you I have feelings for you, why the fuck would I want you to –“

“That was a stupid question. Don’t answer. Do you want that glass of water or?”

He hopes Yoongi understands his invitation but he reaches to touch Jimin’s arm instead, cautious, as if he’s scared of overstepping a boundary and Jimin forces himself not to flinch. He’s reactive. Raw. But it’s still enough for Yoongi to notice it, and he withdraws his hand. Jimin caves in a little more.

“I think I need to shut off for a while, and you probably need some time too?”

Stay here and hold me.

“Yeah.”

Yoongi nods, lips pursed, gaze lost.
“So I’ll go?” Jimin agrees quietly, not knowing with which hand to reach first. So he stays still, very still, as the black hole inside of him continues to eat him up. “I won’t be far. If you… ever wanted to talk.”

Jimin can faintly distinguish the purring of Yoongi’s Cadillac leaving the driveway and his throat closes up, his nose prickles. With his vision blurred up, he puts the jar back in the fridge.

You: he told me
10-07-2016, 12:33

He’s numb. He’s been contorting his thoughts and his feelings for over an hour, in his bed, in a second shower, then in the papasan outside.

Hobi hyung: im on my way
10-07-2016, 12:33

A fresh wave of tears bubbles its way up.

You: thats really not necessary
10-07-2016, 12:33

Hobi hyung: i think it is
10-07-2016, 12:34

You: no, dont come
10-07-2016, 12:34

You: hyung
10-07-2016, 12:38
And when he still doesn’t get any reply, he sighs, the low press of anxiety arising in his gut.

The metal fence of the backyard squeaks and Jimin barely reacts to it, though it makes his senses electric again. There’s the melodic sound of Hoseok’s keys juggling in his palm nervously, his shy footfall half muted by the grass.

“I knocked and you didn’t come so I figured you’d be here.”

Jimin is still fixating his phone. It’s still that same picture he’s been looking at for too long with an empty gaze, one from a friend from university, where she’s on a beach and happy.

“Why are you here, hyung?”

“To apologize.”

“I don’t need that.”

“What? You’d prefer that I’d just try swiping it under the rug?”

“Tell me what happened.”

“Can I sit?”

“No.”

“Fair enough.”

“Tell me.”

Hoseok sighs, trying to mellow down Jimin’s impatience. Jimin makes a silent promise to himself that he’ll listen without interrupting.

“We were… really drunk, and hungry, so we tried going to one of those 24 hours fastfoods. We used a bad shortcut, I tripped and stumbled into him. And I kissed him.”

“You kissed him?”

“Yeah.”

“He told me he’s the one who kissed you.”

“No that was definitely me.”

“And after that?”

There’s a pause, heavy with guilt.

“We made out against a wall and he uh, went down on his knees but he froze and stopped.”

“Would you have let him do it?”

“I was really drunk, Jimin. I don’t know. Maybe.”

“He’s good.”

“Please don’t be like that.”
“It’s true though.”

“It’s not funny, I already feel bad enough as it is.”

“That wasn’t meant to be funny. You always sound so interested about how they perform in bed.” Hoseok pulls in a sharp intake of air and Jimin’s whole body seizes and tightens, he becomes dizzy. He went too far. “I’m sorry, hyung.”

“Don’t apologize. I deserved it. I’m the one who’s sorry.”

Jimin shrugs.

“Jimin,”

“It’s not that important, I mean—”

“It is important. We both fucked up and you deserve apologies.” There’s a pause, where Jimin can see Hoseok is uncertain if he should continue. “Can I be honest about something? I have nothing to lose anyway.”

Jimin shrugs again. He looks up and at Hoseok, he seems as devastated as Jimin is. His ribcage loosens up, he breathes deep.

“Sit.”

And Hoseok does, moving with soft fluidity, akin to the wind.

“To be honest,” his voice drops low, confession-like, “and from here you can choose not to believe me and I’d understand, it doesn’t excuse what I did anyway, but I kissed him because I felt like he needed me to? Like he— ugh. There was doubt all over his face for the whole evening, like he was lost and I guess I just, related. I could see the way he was looking at you, there were stars in there, Jiminie, believe me, but he would also zone out sometimes, whenever you laughed or that you and I would talk together. That was stupid of me, I’ll never deny that. But for some reason I, thought it might do one of us some good? That it would clear something.”

“Did it work?” Hoseok’s words lay coating his shell, and he’s not sure if he wants to let them seep in.

“I think it did, for him. He uh, cried a lot.”

“He cried?” Jimin frowns, surprised.

“M’yeah. We talked for a long time after that. I can’t remember much, honestly, but he was really emotional. And he promised me he’d come today.”

“He did.”

“I know, he messaged me.”

It’s bothering him. The thought of them texting.

“So that’s how it is.”

“No, that’s not how it is.” Hoseok heard the venom in his tone. “Jimin-ah, I understand how you feel, but—” Jimin scoffs and Hoseok frowns. “No trust me, I fucking do.” And only then does he think of Eunji. Of what she made Hoseok go through. And now what he’ll make her go through.
“But I can tell you from what I’ve seen of him last night, that first, he has no interest in me whatsoever, and second, he has no intention of going anywhere that’s far from you two.”

Jimin swallows. His tongue feels too big in his dry mouth.

“Do you want me to leave?” Hoseok asks, when Jimin keeps mum for too long.

“I—I think I’d prefer that, for now.”

Hoseok gives a patient nod, stands.

“I’m really sorry, Jimin.”

“He didn’t cheat on me, hyung. We’re not together.”

“He didn’t technically cheat on you, but that’s how he feels and that’s probably how you feel and that’s understandable.”

“That’s not how I feel. I’m just hurt because I don’t know why he had to do it in the first place instead of fucking talking about what was wrong.”

“Sometimes you don’t know what the problem is until you’ve sunken up too deep into it.”

Jimin eyes him, trying to understand with a brain that’s in shield mode.

“You did cheat, though,” is the best he has to offer, and the sagging of Hoseok’s shoulders and his momentary stillness make Jimin, despite everything, empathetic.

“I slept at Nami’s because I couldn’t face her. Nothing happened,” he rushes to finish, when Jimin’s stare becomes too sharp to bear.

“You know you need to do something about your relationship, hyung. It’s been going to shit for a long time.”

“I know, it’s just—I’m really not here to make this about myself so I’ll go now. I won’t be far if you ever wanted to talk.”

And as he watches his best friend retreating behind the line of trees and bushes, Jimin realizes he and Yoongi both used the same words before leaving him.

**Namjoon hyung:** Jimin?

10-07-2016, 15:04

**You:** hi, hyung

10-07-2016, 15:05
Namjoon hyung: Can we chat for a bit?
10-07-2016, 15:08

Namjoon hyung: I would’ve preferred to drop by, but I had to take an extra shift and I really want to tell you as soon as I can.
10-07-2016, 15:08

Jimin whines low around his straw, still in his chair. He tried keeping himself busy, but would go blank so often that he ultimately decided to take refuge outside again.

Rain has been coming and going, refreshing, sometimes fat droplets and sometimes drizzle. He watched it fall, hit the cobblestones and melding in the pool, sheltered by the trees above.

“’The fuck is wrong with today,’” he complains to himself, overwhelmed and emotionally sore.

You: yes?
10-07-2016, 15:09

Namjoon hyung: It’s about Taehyung.
10-07-2016, 15:10

Jimin groans, but reflexively stands. At this point he’s pretty sure about what’s going to follow. He knows they’re sort of refinery buddies. He also knows what’s Taehyung favorite place to crash his own brain.

You: what happened
10-07-2016, 15:10

Namjoon hyung: I was at the refinery yesterday and I found him lying near a tank and he freaked out on me. He had a panic attack.
10-07-2016, 15:13

“Oh god,” Jimin whispers, his heart gives a harsh clench.
**Namjoon hyung**: He was really drunk and he had LSD on him but he didn’t take any.

10-07-2016, 15:13

**Namjoon hyung**: I think he was just in a really bad place.

10-07-2016, 15:14

“I fucking hate him, why is he like that,” he tells to no one, with a voice that cracks around the last syllable.

He climbs the stairs, changes clothes again because nothing seems to work or fit properly today.

**You**: how are you so sure that he didnt take it

10-07-2016, 15:14

**Namjoon hyung**: I can recognize someone on LSD.

10-07-2016, 15:19

**Namjoon hyung**: And I know because that’s the baggie I sold him a while ago.

10-07-2016, 15:19

Jimin flops his hair under a snapback, grabs his keys and he’s out the door.

There’s a fluttering in between his ribs when he unlocks the door with his own key. Then he’s met with the smell of cooked onions permeating the air and the steady sound of a knife on a cutting board.

“Tae?”

The chopping stops.

Taehyung peeks at him from the kitchen’s opening. And if Jimin thought he looked bad, if he thought Yoongi or Hoseok looked bad, it’s nothing compared to Taehyung’s state. He emanates an exhausted kind of softness that makes Jimin ache.

He looks like he never really woke up, with narrowed, red eyes and untamed hair, his shirt he’s
wearing inside out, pale skin and hanging limbs.

He walks down the corridor to meet Jimin, wiping his hands with a cloth.

“Hey? Is something wrong? I didn’t expect—”

“Namjoon hyung texted me.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, oh.”

Taehyung gapes a little, mouth opening and closing as if wanting to deny, and Jimin thinks, just for a fleeting moment, that he looks pathetic.

“I’m fine, now.”

Jimin goes to stand in front of him like a wall, close enough to make him uncomfortable. And it’s fine, it’s good, because Jimin is upset and he needs him to know.

“I don’t believe you.”

“Jimin,”

“Okay and even if it was true, then can’t I just be here to see you? Would you rather I go?”

“N-No?”

“Come cuddle,” and he knows he’s dry, he’s moving with anger and talking with tired worry and it’s probably not what Taehyung needs right now. But it’s the only thing he can offer, after having been stripped and tossed all day.

“I was cooking something actually— “

“I don’t care, come.”

And Jimin passes by him, engages in the corridor leading to Taehyung’s bedroom. He hears him go shuffle in the kitchen, in the fridge, then his footfall comes.

“And I’m the big spoon today,” Jimin decides, waiting for Taehyung to lie down.

“But you’re half my size?”

“Fuck you. Get on the bed.”

And Taehyung crawls on the mattress, settles on the messy, tangled sheets.

“I don’t know what I did to deserve aggressive spooning but okay.”

“You fucked yourself up again, that’s what you did.”

Jimin tucks himself against Taehyung’s back, molds his body to his, slips an arm around his waist. He breathes deep, feels absent. You’re going to destroy yourself if you don’t stop, he thinks in the guilty silence around them. He closes his eyes, appreciates the warmth seeping through his shirt, his thumb running soothing circles on Taehyung’s stomach.

“You need to slack on alcohol, Tae. It’s obviously doing nothing good for you.”
“It’s easier, when I drink.”

“You think it’s easier, but it’s not. It’s really not.”

There’s no reply to that, and this could mean acceptance, or refusal to fight. No one says anything for a long while, Jimin just stares at the wall as Taehyung’s breathing deepens. Then his gaze meets the nightstand, where there’s still a half-full glass of water, and next to it, ibuprophens.

The whole days comes back to him in a violent wave and he cuddles closer, tighter, hoping it’ll lessen the blow.

“What am I supposed to do with the both of you?”

Jimin lashes out of comatose an hour or so later.

A bit dazed, he listens to the steady pitter patter of the rain on the window for a few minutes before he disentangles himself from Taehyung’s limp body and gets out of bed.

“Jimin?” a sweet voice, heavy with sleep.

He snatches his snapback from the nightstand, carelessly puts it on. Grabs his keys. His wallet.

“Jiminnie? Hey, what are you doing?”

“I’m leaving.”

“What? Why?”

Taehyung scrambles a bit on the bed, moving with some sort of languid panic that Jimin forces himself to ignore. What he’s thinking, it might be the best thing for him to do. But if he doesn’t go out the door right now, he might never be able to do it.

Taehyung is standing in the corridor with wide eyes, when Jimin comes back that same night. They’re shiny just how Jimin likes to see them, and his mouth is just slightly open like he’s been swept breathless.

Jimin puts his duffel bag on the floor.

Taehyung gives him a slow blink.

“I hope you like company.”
Chapter End Notes

This is becoming disgustingly long, you guys. And we're not nearly done. I know some of you might be thinking that we're not going anywhere at this pace, but I promise we are! ☕
3.18 Shoot down the stars

You: when are going to tell tae
11-07-2016, 8:37

Yoongi hyung: i don’t know
11-07-2016, 8:41

Yoongi hyung: trying to find a good way to go about it
11-07-2016, 8:41

Yoongi hyung: but there’s none
11-07-2016, 8:42

Yoongi hyung: you’re early
11-07-2016, 8:42

You: im not sorry
11-07-2016, 8:42

Yoongi hyung: you don’t need to be either
11-07-2016, 8:44

Yoongi hyung: i really feel bad, jimin
11-07-2016, 8:44

Yoongi hyung: i don’t even know what else to say
11-07-2016, 8:45

Jimin brings his cup to his lips, breathes deep around a bitter swallow of coffee. He winces, adds a
little more sugar.

He’s still upset. There’s still that pinch in his chest, insistent, voracious. Hoseok and Yoongi. He doesn’t really get why they both needed so badly to come crashing into each other to fucking get their heads out of the water.

But then he hears Taehyung stir in the sheets and he softens. He flutters from the inside. This choice that he made makes him feel new and satiated and content and it tames the flaring of pain that the whole day before caused.

You: you didn’t cheat hyung
11-07-2016, 8:47

Yoongi hyung: stop saying that
11-07-2016, 8:47

Yoongi hyung: you know it doesn’t change how i feel about it
11-07-2016, 8:47

Yoongi hyung: do you want me to come over?
11-07-2016, 8:49

Yoongi hyung: you can’t really come here because my parents are in
11-07-2016, 8:49

Yoongi hyung: but we could meet somewhere if you’d like?
11-07-2016, 8:49

You: im at taes now
11-07-2016, 8:50

You: i’ll be here for a while
11-07-2016, 8:50

Yoongi hyung: okay?
11-07-2016, 8:52
“You: you felt him up again
11-07-2016, 8:52

You: and it’s namjoon hyung who found him
11-07-2016, 8:52

Yoongi hyung: fucking christ
11-07-2016, 8:52

You: so i decided to stay here for a bit
11-07-2016, 8:52

You: see if that could help him
11-07-2016, 8:52

Yoongi hyung: you’re really good to him
11-07-2016, 8:54

You: i try
11-07-2016, 8:54

“Jimin?”
“I’m in the kitchen, Tae.”
“It’s so early, why are you up?”
“If it’s so early, then why are you up?”

Taehyung groans and Jumin smiles to his phone, scrolling through his Instagram. He comes into view just a few moments later, the carelessness in his demeanor and the wild of his allure making him sexy and Jimin wills his thoughts to wrap around anything but the tenting in Taehyung’s lounge pants.

“You feeling better? There’s some coffee ready.”

“Yeah I could smell that. Why don’t you just use the K-cups, I don’t get it.”

“Are you feeling better?”

Taehyung pauses, looks at him over his shoulder, halfway through pouring hot liquid in his cup.
“After a shower,” he says simply, before his lips melt into a smile. “And maybe a kiss.”

“The shower before.”

Taehyung fans out a breathy laugh and picks up his cup, kisses the top of Jimin’s head and goes straight to the bathroom.

And Jimin thinks that before he met them, he might have never known love.

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**You:** you know, hyung  
11-07-2016, 9:03

**Yoongi hyung:** yeah?  
11-07-2016, 9:05

**You:** im going to spam you with messages now  
11-07-2016, 9:05

**Yoongi hyung:** wouldn’t you rather tell me that stuff in person?  
11-07-2016, 9:05

**You:** no it needs to come out now  
11-07-2016, 9:06

**Yoongi hyung:** yeah okay  
11-07-2016, 9:06

The shower is being turned on, and Jimin takes another sip, finds some composure.

**You:** i feel like youve broken my trust  
11-07-2016, 9:08

**You:** but not because you kissed him
You: not because of the act of kissing in itself

You: you and tae and me, we all know what we agreed on from the start

You: but because you didn’t tell me what was wrong

You: and it had to reach that fucking point

You: and it honestly just makes me feel like you can’t talk to me about stuff

You: or trust me

You: and that everything we went through wasn’t worth shit

You: and I hate that

You: ok I’m done hyung

Yoongi hyung: I didn’t know what was wrong

Yoongi hyung: I was just feeling like shit and idk

Yoongi hyung: I had the feeling that no matter what I’d do, it’d go wrong

Yoongi hyung: and I didn’t understand why and what was blocking me
And it settles in easily, like a piece of puzzle, what Hoseok tried explaining to him. That Yoongi might have needed to hurt himself against a wall to understand what it was that he couldn’t solve. That no sweet talk or attempt at convincing him would’ve worked. He exhales, just a tad calmer. The shower has stopped.

You: yea well
11-07-2016, 9:18

You: how about you tell me about that stuff next time
11-07-2016, 9:19

You: if we’re to try to make this work for the 3 of us then itd be a good starting point
11-07-2016, 9:19

And Jimin stares at his screen, jitters and apprehension twirling inside, hoping that with that last message that he’ll be able to confirm which direction Yoongi is taking, now.

Taehyung comes back, dripping hair and wet skin, and he pours himself another cup.

Yoongi hyung: yeah
11-07-2016, 9:22

Yoongi hyung: i will
11-07-2016, 9:22

Jimin flops onto the table. His heart is thumping hard at the prospect of a victory, at the hope of not losing everything he has with them.

“You okay?” Taehyung asks, and from his tone, Jimin knows he’s smiling.

“I’m fucking swell, thanks.”

Δ

There’s something different, when Yoongi comes on Tuesday.

When he comes through the door unannounced, his smile shy and a bag of takeout crinkling in his
Taehyung doesn’t say anything, because Jimin is pleased, and he’s also pleased. They spend the afternoon on the balcony with rain and smoke and cats, and Yoongi kisses and touches Jimin and Taehyung doesn’t say anything because he’s happy with that, too.

And when they naturally, a little too naturally, engage in cooking dinner together and that Yoongi gives no clue of being on the edge of leaving like he usually does, it just fuels Taehyung’s doubts further.

Yoongi and Jimin, they share knowing glances probably thinking Taehyung doesn’t catch them. But he does. And he senses perfectly well, their lingering, clumsy affection. Yoongi’s eyes are curtained with hesitance and with something Taehyung doesn’t like to see in them and that he hadn’t seen in a long time. Something close to regret. Or guilt.

There’s something different. It’s sweet and laidback, but it’s shadowed by something they won’t tell.

△

You: i know he can feel something’s wonky jimin
13-07-2016, 15:03

You: he’s
13-07-2016, 15:03

You: good with that stuff
13-07-2016, 15:03

Jiminie: be straightforward about it then
13-07-2016, 15:04

You: “hey, so my ass finally decided to realize that i still have something for you, after having abandoned you without a word over a year ago and i was wondering if we could try and make this work again”
13-07-2016, 15:07

You: “and with jimin of course, poly relationships are so common and easy, right”
13-07-2016, 15:07

Jimin: wow
13-07-2016, 15:08

Jimin: that was so dramatic

13-07-2016, 15:08

Jimin: i dont think ive ever seen you like that hyung

13-07-2016, 15:09

You: im in a bad mood

13-07-2016, 15:14

You: and i got a shitload of paperwork to do

13-07-2016, 15:14

Jimin: yeah, i should do some stuff too

13-07-2016, 15:17

You: and ive just been told that they’ve scheduled a meeting on friday

13-07-2016, 15:17

You: fucking friday

13-07-2016, 15:17

You: im supposed to be off on fridays

13-07-2016, 15:18

You: they can shove their meeting up their ass real deep

13-07-2016, 15:18

Jimin: hyung

13-07-2016, 15:18

You: i fucking hate this place

13-07-2016, 15:18
You: christ
13-07-2016, 15:19

Jimin: uh
13-07-2016, 15:19

You: what are you guys doing
13-07-2016, 15:19

Jimin: ??
13-07-2016, 15:19

You: i’m trying to fucking calm down
13-07-2016, 15:22

Jimin: right
13-07-2016, 15:22

Jimin: tae is out sorting out some papers for his car
13-07-2016, 15:22

Jimin: and im sitting outside with tux
13-07-2016, 15:23

You: give him a pet for me
13-07-2016, 15:25

You: i miss him
13-07-2016, 15:25

Jimin: you literally saw him yesterday
You: still miss him

Jimin: youre weird today

You: yes i know thanks

Jimin: hyung, in your experience

You: yes

Jimin: does tae need a lot of space?

Jimin: since im sort of squatting his place

Jimin: and i dont want to suffocate him

You: not really

You: if you’re there and he needs space he’s able to find some within himself
Jimin: mhm
13-07-2016, 15:45

Jiminie: so, concretely
13-07-2016, 15:45

You: there were surely times when he caught the quiet with you, right?
13-07-2016, 15:49

You: like he goes silent and he looks a little blank
13-07-2016, 15:49

You: he’s still there and he sorts of responds to you
13-07-2016, 15:50

You: but it’s like he’s watching a movie inside himself
13-07-2016, 15:50

You: and sometimes it’s 3 minutes, sometimes 30
13-07-2016, 15:51

Jimin: yeah
13-07-2016, 15:52

You: thats what he does
13-07-2016, 15:55

You: if someone’s there and he needs a little solitude
13-07-2016, 15:55

You: he has this ability to easily draw a clean line between inside and outside
13-07-2016, 15:56

Jimin: okay but wouldn’t it be better for me to just, give him some alone time?
You: that’s what i used to think too when we were younger

13-07-2016, 16:02

You: but he started to grab my hand and ask me to stay more often than not

13-07-2016, 16:02

You: tae can get lost real deep sometimes

13-07-2016, 16:03

You: and he’s aware of that

13-07-2016, 16:04

You: and i think he likes having someone to hold onto if he goes too far

13-07-2016, 16:04

Jimin: thatd make sense

13-07-2016, 16:05

You: well that conversation did an awesome calming job

13-07-2016, 16:10

You: thanks

13-07-2016, 16:10

Jimin: youre welcome

13-07-2016, 16:13

Jimin: im dragging you out btw

13-07-2016, 16:13

Jimin: tonight

13-07-2016, 16:13
Jimin: because your mood sucks
13-07-2016, 16:17

Jimin: and satans done with school for the summer and he wants to celebrate
13-07-2016, 16:17

You: who’s gonna be there
13-07-2016, 16:18

Jimin: tae doesnt know yet but he’ll be there
13-07-2016, 16:18

Jimin: namjoon hyung, seokjin hyung
13-07-2016, 16:19

Jimin: because of course its about the demonic child
13-07-2016, 16:19

Jimin: hob hyung after hes done with work
13-07-2016, 16:19

Jimin: and some guys from dance class said theyd come but im not too sure they will
13-07-2016, 16:20

You: uh
13-07-2016, 16:22

You: if hoseok’s there maybe it’s better if i don’t come?
13-07-2016, 16:22

Jimin: its fine
13-07-2016, 16:23

**Jimin**: i’ll just sit between you two

13-07-2016, 16:23

Jimin doesn’t sit between them.

He doesn’t sit between them at all.

In fact, he doesn’t even sit next to Yoongi.

He’s too busy bickering with Jungkook about their attempt at a campfire to even notice the moment Hoseok arrives, looking as tired as ever, by the patio door of Jungkook’s house.

Hoseok gives him a small nod as salutation, that Yoongi returns with a sympathetic smile, before he goes straight to Jimin, bringing him further to talk.

“Did you finally get to hang out with Hoseok?” Seokjin asks, next to him, as Yoongi continues staring at Jimin and Hoseok. To try and feel around their conversation, and the mood filling it.

“Uh, yeah,” he says, evasive. Jimin seems a little tense, and that makes him tense, too. The kind that has him ready to leave if things become too weird or uncomfortable. “Last weekend, actually.”

“Oh, yeah? How was it?”

“Chill, I guess,” it’s the only thing he manages to get out, because the simple thought of that night makes him want to fidget out of his seat.

“He’s a really nice guy.”

Yoongi hums in approval, sips on his beer. Jimin then glances at him, and his eyes soften. Yoongi wishes he could just take his hand and squeeze it, say with gestures the words he’s been repeating to him since what happened. *I’m sorry I’ve been unfaithful to what we have.*

Jungkook makes a victorious sound from near the fire and the moment breaks, Jimin and Hoseok swiftly turning to look at what’s going on.

“I didn’t know Namjoon and Taehyung were this close,” Seokjin continues and Yoongi feels bad for having been such bad company over the past ten minutes.

He shifts in his chair, looks around absentmindedly, to the handful of dance-class-kids he’s already seen but never talked to as they float around in the lighted-up water on neon pool mats. Then to the brightness of the flames, at Jungkook who’s grinning as he’s warming his hands above them, and next to his, Jimin’s tiny ones. To Hoseok, calmly talking, looking closed up. And then finally at Seokjin, whose gaze lays heavy on him, waiting.

“I personally wasn’t surprised, when I found out,” he rushes out, and Seokjin smiles a knowing smile. “They’ve been gone for a while? Getting beer shouldn’t take that long.”
“The whole getting beer thing was an excuse, Yoongi-yah,” he laughs. “Namjoon wanted to talk to him, and he used that as an excuse.”

“Right,” he sighs when he rethinks of what Jimin told him, about Namjoon finding Taehyung slammed on the ground at the refinery. This is one more thing they’ll need to address.

He reaches for his bottle, loosely fits his lips around the mouth and tilts it as he thinks.

“How is he doing, by the way?” he asks, after the nippy liquid cooled his throat.

“Namjoon?”

“Yeah, last time we talked he was hyped about going back to school.”

“Ah, well,” two of Jungkook’s friends come to sit around the large table with them and Seokjin eyes them cautiously, nonchalantly reaching for the snacks. He knows he’ll have to be careful with his words now, and with what he discloses. “He’s still thinking about it a lot, but you know, work.”

Yoongi nods. Seokjin’s not talking about the café. “And there’s his sister too, she’s working hard at school and found a part-time job but he’s still feeling responsible for her. So she’s his priority.” He hums, watching Seokjin munch around happily. “But I’m supporting him, and he’s got good people around, so he’s very trusting. He actually found some—“

“Alright,” Jungkook speaks loud enough to make everyone quiet, “now that there’s a proper, professional fire, everyone in the pool.”

And Yoongi watches, half horrified, half fascinated, as Jungkook lifts Jimin like he’s weightless, ignoring his screeching, and throws him in the pool with a satisfied cackle.

“Oh god, it’s happening again,” Seokjin whispers next to him.

There’s loud sloshing and Jimin’s tipsy, whiny voice as he curses but really, he’s just being cute.

Jungkook then turns to Hoseok and Hoseok immediately raises a menacing finger that does nothing but make the younger laugh.

“Don’t,” he says, tone low but a smile on his lips, and he takes a step backwards. “My hat, my shoes, my keys. Don’t.”

“Then you have ten second to take it all off, hyung,” Hoseok glances over at where Yoongi is sitting, visibly trying to find an escape. “And you know how fast I run, don’t try anything weird.”

The two kids at the table scamper off, sort of amused and sort of scared. Snickering.

And Hoseok melts, defenseless, shrugs his shoes off, stashes his keys in one, tops it all with his snapback. And Jimin is laughing, happy, when Hoseok ends up thrown in the pool as well.

Jungkook looks at Hoseok splashing about for a few seconds, making sure he’s managing, before he looks at them over his shoulder and Yoongi suddenly feels restless.

“He’s lucky he’s adorable,” Seokjin says, grabbing at another piece of fruit and stuffing it in his mouth before he stands. Jungkook walks to them, as nonchalant as ever when he’s so full of intentions, staring at Seokjin. “I will go with dignity, thank you very much.”

Jungkook and Yoongi snort in tandem, eyes trained on Seokjin as he pulls his shirt over his head, his skin flawless and smooth under it. He shoves the piece of clothing to Jungkook’s chest like he’s
annoyed, fixating him, but then he winks and Jungkook winks back and Seokjin slips in the water with all his of his mustered grace.

Jungkook places Seokjin’s t-shirt on his chair, calmly, and Yoongi feels pressured. But heavy like a stone.

“Hyung,” he starts shyly when their eyes meet, “do you,” he cocks his head to indicate the pool, “want me to, uh—“

And Yoongi cracks up.

And in the background, Jimin and Hoseok crack up too.

“Ah, he’s so cute,” Jimin wheezes, leaned on the side of the pool and watching them.

“I’ll go, Jungkookie,” Yoongi says in between two breaths, the affectionate nickname coming out easily.

Jungkook beams, and in a few seconds he’s half naked and jumping in with the others.

Yoongi doesn’t especially like pools or swimming. And he’s not especially fond of parading around in only trunks. But today can be an exception.

It’s close to dark already, and the ambience is electric but peaceful, buzzing with excitement and relief and alcohol-induced affection. It wrapped around Yoongi like it wrapped around everyone else.

He fights another shiver, bundled up in his wet towel, the gentle wind brushing his nape feeling glacial. He’s the only one, around the table now. Another beer sounds tempting but he still has to drive home, so he ignores the cooler. And the flashing LED on his phone.

He inhales deep, he’s inside like a calm sea. Yoongi doesn’t think he’s ever had that many people that he could call friends. And it’s unsettling. But it also gives him the feeling of being more solid. Stabilized. He spent his childhood and teenage years with Taehyung and never strayed too far, even at school. And he grew up thinking and feeling like Taehyung would always be his only foundation, the only variable that would hold constancy in his life. Taehyung was taking so much space in him, in and around his heart that he never felt the need for friends or a highly sociable life.

But then Jimin came, offering another hand to hold onto. And then came the reconnection with Seokjin. And the amalgamation with their circle of close friends.

Taehyung is still there, for Taehyung it doesn’t change. Yoongi still thinks he’s an unstable constant. But that doesn’t mean he has to be the only one.

Jimin’s squeaky laugh resounds in the pool and Yoongi’s eyes dart to him, to find him hooked on the poolside, slightly apart, watching whatever it is that Taehyung and Jungkook are doing. And Yoongi’s heart makes a flip when he sees them.

It feels like forever since he’s seen Taehyung like that. With the overly-bright smile that makes his insides twist and coil, with that lightness in his movements and that playful sparkle in his eyes. It feels like forever since he’s seen Taehyung like he used to be before he left. And he thinks it’s
Jungkook, who’s provoking that. Yoongi, from the first time he saw Jungkook, always remained with the impression that they were alike. And it’s exacerbated now, just how much. They have a chemistry that’s easy to see.

Jimin giggles at something Jungkook says and Yoongi wonders if Jimin is even aware of how open Taehyung is, tonight. He’s all spread out like a peacock, blooming with his prettiest colors. He wishes he knew that it’s how he used to be, younger. And that he regrets them not meeting at that time.

Yoongi knows Jimin and Taehyung would have flourished together in the most beautiful of ways. Because they were supposed to happen.

And he dares believe that Jimin fits him too well for them not to be meant to happen, too.

And Yoongi realizes, as Jimin wraps his arms around Taehyung’s torso and hugs his back to protect himself from Jungkook’s water splashing, that this is reason they’re here. This is the reason they unconsciously fell into this strange formation of three. It’s not just because they want to hold on to each other stubbornly. It’s because they need to.

Because they would have happened, in a way or another.

He feels fuzzy. A little weird.

“Yoongi-yah,” and he lets his gaze train on the line of cedars lining the backyard until it meets the warmth of Seokjin’s own. “Don’t stay there alone.”

“I’m very cozy here, hyung,” he says, his voice rough.

Seokjin gives him a skeptical look from where he’s sprawled on the ground. He’s slow with alcohol and absentmindedly fiddling with the back of Namjoon’s black t-shirt, who’s sitting next to him, their feet dangling in the water. There’s something sweet about it, Yoongi thinks.

“That can’t be cozy, you look like a wet dog.”

Yoongi scoffs.

“Well thanks.”

Seokjin shakes with laughter, weakly slapping Namjoon’s back reflexively, and Namjoon winces, just barely, before he smiles gently and reaches back and takes Seokjin’s hand in his instead. He, on his contrary, didn’t drink much.

“I don’t like seeing you alone,” he says again, softer this time.

“He won’t be alone anymore, hyung,” and there’s soggy footfall on the stones, accompanying Hoseok’s voice. Yoongi glances at the heap of kids Hoseok just left, still in the shallow part of the pool, precariously watching videos on one of the boys’ phone. “I’m fucking freezing.”

Yoongi reaches for a towel on one of the chairs as Hoseok flops down in another, and he gives it to him, watching as he cocoons himself. In his peripherals, he sees Jimin and Taehyung glancing at them, burning but very brief, and he wonders if it’s fueled by the same thing.

What happened with Hoseok comes rushing back. Yoongi tightens the towel, and his arms, around himself.
“Ah,” Hoseok sighs, tinted with regret, as he rubs his hair to try to get it dry.

“It’s not so bad, you’ll get to change back at yours,” he tries, following Hoseok’s frantic movements with his eyes. He’s given a dismissive hum. He frowns. “Right?”

“I uh, don’t have a lot of clothes where I’m staying right now, so I’ll have to wash all this and I wanted to wear those pants tomorrow to work.”

“You don’t have a lot of clothes in general?”

“N-no, that’s not it,” and Hoseok clearly doesn’t want to tell, but Yoongi has a feeling he needs to.

“Just tell me.”

Hoseok closes his eyes, exhaled loudly.

“I’m still staying at Nami’s.”

And Nami is not his girlfriend. She’s a good friend, from what Yoongi picked up from the conversations he’s had with Hoseok over the last days. He also remembers, from Jimin’s telling, that things haven’t been too nice for a while with the actual girlfriend.

“Hoseok-ah,” he speaks subdued, enveloping them in enough intimacy so that Hoseok can feel free to confide in him without others overhearing.

“I can’t, okay? I don’t know how to break up with people.”

“You can’t let her live in your stuff while you hole up somewhere else.”

“I know.”

“Isn’t she suspicious? That you’re not going back home?”

“I tell her I’m at Jimin’s or Jungkook’s.”

“And she doesn’t say anything?”

Hoseok brings his knees closer to his chest, cramped on the chair. It looks like he wants to get warmer, but it’s a pretense Yoongi can easily see through.

“She’s seeing other guys, so it’s probably fine by her.”

“Christ,” and there’s a wave, harsh with guilt and anger, overflowing him. “She told you that or?”

“I caught her cheating not long ago, and she promised she wouldn’t do it again and that it was a mistake. But they still come over. And I know. It smells like sex and colognes I don’t wear. Too often.”

Yoongi feels like shit.

“That’s fucking horrible, Hoseok, please,”

“I don’t know how, hyung. She lives there, I can’t just throw her out.”

“Does she pay anything?”

“A little food sometimes, but —“
“Is it because she can’t afford it?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Then fucking yes you can throw her out.”

“I thought about moving, instead.”

“No? That’s your place, she’s the one who needs to get the fuck out.”

“You’re oddly involved.”

“Yeah of course I am. Does Jimin know this?”

“Are you guys fighting?” one of Jungkook’s friends ask.

Seokjin makes an inquisitive noise and sits up. Taehyung and Jimin freeze, looking at them.

“No one’s fighting, Sejun,” Hoseok says, mild reproach laced with amusement. “Adult conversation is what it’s called.”

Yoongi tenses at his choice of words. He makes eye contact with Jimin, only to find gentle curiosity in there.

“What are you trying to say, hyung?”

“That you should mind your own business unless you want to do three full sets of pushups at next practice.”

The guys laugh, drunk, and just when Hoseok’s lips drop open to say something, Seokjin comes stumbling, Namjoon in tow.

“I’ll help you,” is all Yoongi says, and he makes sure Hoseok heard.

“Help him do what?”

“Nothing, hyung,” Hoseok forces a smile, reaches in the cooler and opens himself a beer. “It’s all good.”

Δ

Eyes shut, Taehyung’s brain is absorbed by the feeling of Jimin’s fingers on his skin, on those calming, light presses he lays on his arm. They rub, make small circles, they stop. It’s unconscious, mostly. Jimin do those things out of habit, reaching to touch, to share a contact with him, and Taehyung likes it. It reminds him a bit of how Yoongi and him used to be around each other.

He’s not sure how they manage to squish together on that lounge chair, drunk, with Jimin sitting sideways with his legs across his lap and Taehyung’s arm solid around his waist. But they did. And it’s a very public display of affection, considering there’s still Seokjin and Jungkook and Namjoon around. Even for fuck buddies, that’s a little much. But he’s way too comfortable and content to even properly think about the implications.
The fire is weakening, unkept, but the sound of it buzzing in the background of their conversation is still one of Taehyung’s favorites. And when Jimin talks, his ribcage vibrates against his, his voice dance to his ears and he really doesn’t need much else.

So he leaves the drawer closed.

He forces his eyelids open, resisting comatose, to find the three others aligned perfectly on the opposite side of the table. Jungkook in the middle, quiet with tiredness, and curled up on his chair, Seokjin gently playing with the hair at his nape as he converses with Jimin. Affectionately. Taehyung tries not to think too much of it. And next to them is Namjoon, expression serene as he scrolls through his phone.

Namjoon who took him on a ride so they could talk. Just talk.

They didn’t even brush the topic of that night at the refinery. Taehyung doesn’t remember much anyway. Namjoon’s worried voice, the itchy material of the backseat of his old car, a hint of fear of them going too fast and crash and die, tripping when they got in the elevator. Most of the story he knows from the text Namjoon sent him the following day, the first being Call a cab and go back, your car is still there and an unreasonable hour in the morning.

Taehyung humored him and talked. Today was a good day. He hopes he’ll soon enough get to thank him properly.

His phone lights up for the third time on the table and he sighs, bends forward to reach for it. Jimin squeaks as he tries not to fall off when he moves before he reaches for it himself and hands it over to Taehyung.

“You,” he says, and that makes Jimin smile drunkenly. And the way his eyes dart away tell Taehyung he’s blushing.

Min Yoongi: i’m glad you followed jimin tonight
14-07-2016, 1:47

Min Yoongi: it was good to see you have fun
14-07-2016, 1:49

Min Yoongi: good night
14-07-2016, 1:57

Taehyung cocks his head to the side, skeptical. The letters are blurry and the screen hurts his retinas but he rereads the messages. Twice.

You: good night
14-07-2016, 1:59
The things Yoongi said, the mood in his messages. They remind Taehyung too much of before.

**Min Yoongi**: and jimin is not answering
14-07-2016, 1:59

**Min Yoongi**: so tell him good night on my behalf too
14-07-2016, 2:00

“Hyung says goodnight,” Taehyung repeats, in the space between two silences in the conversation. Jimin looks at him, with hooded eyes that shine unaltered joy, and he takes his phone from him. And Taehyung just lets him, listlessly watches what he does.

**You**: goodnight hyungg
14-07-2016, 2:01

**Min Yoongi**: good night jimin-ah
14-07-2016, 2:01


“Stop being gross,” Jungkook whines but Taehyung only finds him smiling, sagged, angled towards Namjoon.

“You’ll be gross too when you’ll get yourself a girlfriend,” Jimin says, Taehyung ignores the flutters the comparison sets off in his stomach.

It’s dead silence for a few seconds, when Jungkook sinks further in his seat, Seokjin and Namjoon’s glancing at him. And then Seokjin cracks up and Jimin follows, and so does Taehyung, though he doesn’t exactly understand why.

And when the fire dies, that the darkness becomes full around them and that they’ve been snuggled up in that companionship that allows comfortable silence for a while, Taehyung runs a palm on the length of Jimin’s back where he’s lying against him. He’s pretty sure he’s waking him up.

Taehyung doesn’t know for how long it will last, or how long any of this will last, but for the time being, Jimin is not just his fuck buddy. He’s his roommate. And he grabs onto this as tightly as he can. Revels in it.

“Mhm?”
Alright guys, so just keeping you updated on a few things.

Something happened and now I got some health problems that I need to get treatments for twice a week. It sounds worse than it actually is, and I'm not trying to throw a pity party, it's just that it steals me quite some time for my writing and I can't do as much every day.

So I had 3 choices, either I was taking a full hiatus, I dropped the updates to once every other week, or I kept it as is but with shorter chapters.

So I chose to make the chapters smaller but still update every week (keep in mind though, that it might make them less action-packed). Because I know a lot of you like my consistency. And to be honest, I like that schedule, too. Keeps me motivated and all that good stuff. But yeah, let me know what you think?

As always, I'm so, so grateful for your support, and I love you all very much! <3
Yoongi hyung: you and tae kept looking at us from the pool
14-07-2016, 13:35

Yoongi hyung: but i really didn’t want to make things weird
14-07-2016, 13:35

You: no i know hyung
14-07-2016, 13:38

You: no one thought it was weird, just you
14-07-2016, 13:38

You: i’ll start to believe youre the one who doesnt wanna get over it
14-07-2016, 13:39

Yoongi hyung: it hasn’t even been a week jimin
14-07-2016, 13:45

You: do you like him?
14-07-2016, 13:46

You: hyung?
14-07-2016, 13:57

Yoongi hyung: you know i don’t
14-07-2016, 14:04
Yoongi hyung: i told you that
14-07-2016, 14:04

Yoongi hyung: but i believe we could be good friends
14-07-2016, 14:05

You: ok then what more do you need
14-07-2016, 14:05

You: i mean
14-07-2016, 14:05

You: i told you im still not 100% comfortable? but i think its a normal thing
14-07-2016, 14:06

You: and im fine with you seeing each other
14-07-2016, 14:06

You: so you can stop acting like youre expecting a brick on your head at all times
14-07-2016, 14:06

Yoongi hyung: i still really feel like shit about it
14-07-2016, 14:08

You: then you need to work on yourself
14-07-2016, 14:08

You: still mad at him though
14-07-2016, 14:09

You: because he actually cheated
14-07-2016, 14:09

Yoongi hyung: he knows he fucked up
14-07-2016, 14:11
Yoongi hyung: and he feels bad about it
14-07-2016, 14:12

Yoongi hyung: don’t be too hard on him
14-07-2016, 14:12

You: if you knew the whole story hyung
14-07-2016, 14:13

You: youd probably understand me better
14-07-2016, 14:13

Yoongi hyung: probably
14-07-2016, 14:14

You: their relationship stopped being healthy a looong time ago
14-07-2016, 14:14

You: the efforts hes doing arent worth it hyung
14-07-2016, 14:15

You: she just keeps fucking him up and he lets her
14-07-2016, 14:15

You: im mad that he had to reach that point and cheat to understand
14-07-2016, 14:16

Yoongi hyung: yeah well
14-07-2016, 14:16

Yoongi hyung: i sort of had to do that too
14-07-2016, 14:17

You: im annoyed
You: anyway

You: you seem to be busy a lot today too

Yoongi hyung: yeah

Yoongi hyung: trying to do as much as i can so that they stop ganging up on my ass

Yoongi hyung: that came out weird

You: did they forget youre the son of one of the ceos

Yoongi hyung: no

Yoongi hyung: think they’re just testing me

Yoongi hyung: whatcha doing

You: looking for a nice place to eat tonight

You: you two have a meeting tomorrow morning, right?
The alarm goes off and Jimin tenses.

He’s been floating between two states for a while, on the edge of very light sleep, and the sounds coming from Taehyung’s phone are straight up assailing.

He groans, rolling over when Taehyung snoozes, sighing when his waist is circled with the warmth of an arm.

Then Taehyung snoozes a second time.

And a third.

And every time it makes Jimin’s nerves fray a little more.

“I’ll murder your phone if you don’t stop snoozing.”

Taehyung breathes out a laugh, disentangles their bodies and Jimin finally opens his eyes, unhappy about the sudden coldness that hits him.
Jimin doesn’t get up.

But he twists in the sheets, curling on himself so that he can watch Taehyung moving around and getting ready. He seems focused, so they don’t really talk. Or at least until the very end, when he’s all suited up and looking perfect, with his soft hair and smooth complexion.

“You look good in suits,” Jimin croaks, still sleepy and snuggled up.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“So you think I’m hot shit?”

“Don’t ruin everything.”

Taehyung smiles on his way out of the room, putting the last touch and buttoning his cuffs. Jimin hears him brush his teeth, the tap running continuously like he doesn’t know how to save water.

“The tap!” he says loudly.

The water stops.

“What?”

“The fucking tap. Don’t let it run if you don’t use water.”

There’s a prolonged silence. No moving, no brushing. Then it’s on again.

Jimin stifles his frustrated grumbling in the mattress.

“You’re fucking horrible,” he says stiffly when Taehyung nears the bed.

And Taehyung snorts, lightly shoving Jimin so that he’s on his back and he straddles his hips. Jimin looks up at him, surprised but anticipating, his hands going to rest on his thighs.

“You’re going to get cat hairs on your trousers.”

“First world problems.”

Jimin clicks his tongue. He’s definitely snappy today.

Taehyung bends, cups his face with his palms and places a kiss to his lips. Jimin melts. Easy.

“Don’t get all worked up so early in the morning, princess.”

Jimin kicks him off.

He plucks a bottle of sesame oil from the shelf and places it in his basket.
You: we’re a lot of dancers

You: so jeans all a different color will probably be hard on the eyes

You: so i think that choosing either black or 2, 3 colors and splitting them might be safer

You: its a competition after all

Hobi hyung: yeah

You: anyway we can talk about it with the boys tonight right

You: we still have a couple of weeks to decide

He strolls down the aisles, his mood lifted.

He keeps pushing away the thoughts his brain sends him about how he’s doing too much and that he perhaps should be careful. Growing too attached to this situation with Yoongi and Taehyung. That’s what he’s scared of.

He spends the next five minutes choosing a brand of soy sauce. And admittedly, he didn’t do grocery shopping very often in his 19 years of life but he likes it. He likes picking the right ingredients, discovering new, fancy things. It’s nice but Jimin thinks it would be nicer if he weren’t alone.

Hobi hyung: i know its completely out of topic

Hobi hyung: and very random
Jimin frowns, stops in front of the cans of diced tomatoes.

You: what

Hobi hyung: Wednesday I noticed it

You: noticed what

You: so much useless suspense hyung please

Hobi hyung: Yeah sorry I was doing something

Hobi hyung: I noticed how Yoongi hyung and Taehyung are

You: what do you mean

He continues walking, very slowly, careful to avoid people and carts. He grabs a bunch of spices that he finds interesting, goes back in his tracks to get gochujang.

Hobi hyung: how they are together, the way they look at each other
Hobi hyung: when you said their affection was stabbing you in the eyes
15-07-2016, 10:55

Hobi hyung: thats how i felt too
15-07-2016, 10:56

You: right?
15-07-2016, 10:56

Jimin draws in a lungful of air. That’s a kind of relief he doesn’t remember ever feeling. He smiles, jittery. Fidgety, even.

Hobi hyung: yea
15-07-2016, 10:57

Hobi hyung: the sexual tension is not joke, too
15-07-2016, 10:57

And his day is made.

For such a long time he’s been seeing Taehyung and Yoongi go around each other, has been seeing their obvious, though aggressive courting, underlined with deep and steady affection. And for such a long time he’s been denied that truth, been told he was wrong, that he was this close to believe he was imagining it to please or justify himself.

You: yeah lets talk about that
15-07-2016, 10:57

You: straight up torture sometimes
15-07-2016, 10:58

Hobi hyung: well the sex is probably amazing with them
15-07-2016, 10:59

Hobi hyung: so theres at least that right
He scoffs, somewhat bitter.

He doesn’t know how many times he mentally replayed those two short times they had sex the three of them when he was jerking off.

Sex with them is something he wants to explore, this, just like the spectrum of intense feelings they’re making him experience since they’ve met. He wants to bathe in languid intimacy with them, wants to see them touch and interact with this same bluntness they gift him with, even if it’s just holding hands or kissing.

Sleeping three in a king size bed is a messy, compact experience, a bit overheating, but it also fills him with a satisfaction he can’t really find elsewhere.

Perhaps he should feel egoistical for wanting more, given their situation. But he wants it. So much, that sometimes he’ll get on edge if he spends too much time thinking about it.

Much like right now, as he rounds the corner of an aisle and nearly collides with a father dragging his daughter by her tiny hand.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” he mumbles, smiling when the little girl beams at him.

You: i wish

15-07-2016, 11:00

Hobi hyung: its not?

15-07-2016, 11:03

You: there were those two times i talked to you about

15-07-2016, 11:03

You: nothing happened since then

15-07-2016, 11:04

Hobi hyung: damn, really?

15-07-2016, 11:05

You: i like how surprised you are
Hobi hyung: well yeah

Hobi hyung: there's some serious vibes around you three

Hobi hyung: so i mean

Jimin heaves a sigh. He’s made it to the produce area and he can’t seem to be able to focus. His brain’s clogging up with thoughts he didn’t need today.

You: it’s complicated

Hobi hyung: understandably so

Hobi hyung: you seem frustrated about it

You: semi?

Hobi hyung: if it has to come together, it will, eventually

Hobi hyung: trust time, jiminie

You: i know, im trying
He puts his phone in his back pocket, gnaws at his lip.
He looks around, boxes filled with colorful fruits and vegetables, fresh and inviting.
He picks what he knows Taehyung usually buys, then what they need for the recipe he has in mind.
He grabs some of the stuff he likes.
And some of Yoongi’s favorite. Because hoping never hurts anyone.
For what they have right now, he needs to trust.

He turns the key in the lock and steps inside, music in the living room and the faint sound of Taehyung’s laughter welcoming him.
Jimin smiles, struggling the bags to the kitchen. He’s seen Yoongi’s Cadillac parked at the front of the building so he knows he’s here, too. And if the relieving, warming thought of them chilling together in Taehyung’s bedroom wasn’t enough, he then hears Yoongi crack up too, and that sends butterfly to flutter in Jimin’s stomach.
He abandons the groceries on the counter and settles on going to find them, stopping and crouching on the way to scratch Tuxedo’s head.

When he peeks in, it’s to find them sitting on the end of the bed, half facing one another, their hands placed together like mirrors in mid-air as Taehyung seemingly explains something about joints and bones. They’re beaming. The air around them glows and weighs with kindness and friendship. Close, close friendship. The kind that only being in love for years brings. It’s beautiful.

He stays there, observing like someone observes northern lights, with fascination and a light heart, until Taehyung notices him with a glance.
And he pulls back. Breaks their moment and places an imaginary distance and a cold wall between himself and Yoongi.

Yoongi, startled, follows his gaze and looks back where he sees Jimin and Jimin feels himself crumbles under discouragement and impatience. His frustration comes back up at the surface and he exhales it out.
“I’m so done with your shit, seriously” he grits out. “Can it stop being like that, at least?”
“Like what?” Taehyung asks and Jimin hold his eyes.
“Stop fucking pretending nothing ever happens when I’m not there.”
Yoongi keeps quiet, as he too often does. Taehyung looks at Jimin, and then at Yoongi and back before he continues.
“Jimin—”
“I saw you face-fuck him but I never saw you kiss him. Can you explain?”

Taehyung freezes.

Yoongi closes his eyes and tries to suppress a smile, pressing his lips together.

“Sounds weird, right? When I say it like that.”

“You know why I’m being like –”

“You should do it, like, now.”

“Do what?”

“Kiss.”

And at this Yoongi glances at him, a glint of panic veiling his features.

“Jimin-ah, don’t make things weird,” he says.

“No, I’m serious. Do it.”

And Jimin remains planted there, staring and waiting.

It’s turbulent, inside him. Jimin’s usually a pacifist, a problem-solver. But today it’s turbulent and he wants to push things because where they stand is starting to eat at him.

And Yoongi seems to understand, because there’s a last flicker of hesitation in his gaze, a last string of doubt before he turns to Taehyung, cups with cheek with a hand to bring their faces together and kisses him.

And it’s short, really, nothing too special but it has a wave of satisfaction wash over Jimin, making his heart rate quicken slightly. He feels himself blush simply at the way they look at each other when they pull apart, with glazed over eyes and intimacy so thick between them that it’s as if Jimin seized to exist.

This time it’s Taehyung who goes in, who melds their lips, makes them follow a languid dance and Jimin knows what he triggered, and he’s more than okay with it. There’s something enthralling about it, and he’s mesmerized, warmth spreading within like wildfire, the first licks of arousal.

Yoongi straddles Taehyung’s hips and Jimin’s breath catch, stutters when their hands roam aimlessly and their fingers grasps at each other’s clothes. He wants to touch them so badly, kiss them and suckle hiccups in their skins but he’s too content with where he is right now, in the threshold and frozen and just watching them unfold.

Taehyung is being pushed onto his back, easily. Yoongi maneuvers him like he’s putty, drags him up the bed, lifts his arms to hold them above his head and meets no resistance at all. He touches him nimbly like he’s used to play with him this way. It’s definitely something new, seeing Taehyung like that. In that spot. And it’s not that Taehyung always wanted to top, in fact that’s a conversation he and Jimin never had. It’s just that Jimin always preferred to be the one taking cock and Taehyung never objected. He just went along with it and took control. So him being limp in Yoongi’s hold, his breathing quick and body giving the littlest, shyest of arches, is an image Jimin works hard to engrave in his currently fogged up brain.

The music is still there in the background but he can hear them kiss very clearly, like he’s especially
sensitive to it. The perfect coordination or their movements is tantalizing, making him restless and when Yoongi shifts and finally rolls his hips down against Taehyung’s and that Taehyung gives a small, breathless moan, Jimin swallows hard.

“Fuck,” he whispers, and doesn’t deny himself a squeeze of his own half-hard cock through his jeans.

They grind against each other for a while, riling themselves up. Riling Jimin up. Taehyung seems so eager to please, meeting Yoongi halfway and kicking his hips up, unable to do much more with his legs being caged between Yoongi’s.

“Hyung,” Taehyung pleads, soft, when Yoongi gives him space to breathe and goes to nip under his jaw instead.

“Mhm?”

“Hyung,”

“What is it, baby?”

Taehyung whimpers and Jimin tightens from the inside, taken aback and aroused by his tone and how submissive he is, wondering if that’s how it always is, between them. Or if it’s how it used to be, before.

He undoes the button of his jeans, unzips them, takes his cock out through the hole in his boxers. And he manages, even with the anticipation that makes him feel electric, to gather some composure and keep it lazy, stroking himself as he watches them hump and moan and kiss.

One of Yoongi’s hands leaves Taehyung’s wrists, beckons Jimin closer and Jimin looks at it dazedly.

It’s an invitation he’ll gladly take. Maybe later.

“Lemme just watch for a while,” he says and Yoongi straightens, looks at him, and then down at the measured movement of his fist around his cock. And then Taehyung half sits up, his eyes following the same dangerous line and Jimin finds himself with the two persons he loves watching him masturbate. So he gives his dick a slow, firm tug for good measure and raise an eyebrow in silent invitation for them to continue.

“Jimi—“

Yoongi cuts Taehyung off with his lips, coming to crash over him with a soft violence that Jimin wants to feel, too. He wonders, as Yoongi nearly rips Taehyung’s slacks and boxers from his body, what it’s like to be spectated like that. To give some kind of show. He takes a step back, enough to get some support and lean against the doorframe, trying not to moan at the tightening in his gut and the twitching of his cock when Taehyung tries to sit and that Yoongi forces him back down.

He wants that, too. Jimin wants that.

Taehyung holds still as Yoongi undoes the buttons of his shirt, one by one and starting from the top, kissing the skin he uncovers. And when the last one is undone, he doesn’t stop, pressing his lips to his pelvis, the jut of hipbone, to the whole length of his cock. But that’s all he gives. Little pecks, moist and lingering just enough to tease.

“Hyung,” Taehyung rutts up and Jimin fucks into his fist.

“You do the fucking so often, you forgot how to be patient.”
Taehyung’s fingers are scrambling at his shoulders and he whines low and deep, asking for something hot and wet around him. But Yoongi stretches, reaches for the nightstand where he picks up the lube, and just then, barely perceptible, Taehyung’s breathing goes wilder, his eyes widen. Sitting back on his haunches, Yoongi pumps a bit of clear liquid onto two of his fingers, discards the bottle on the bed.

He shifts, kicks Taehyung’s leg open with his knee and settles between them. Then he levels himself with Taehyung, hovering him like he wants to prey on him, and Taehyung doesn’t even have the time to try and drape his arm around his neck, Yoongi slips a finger inside him and he shrivels, exhaled breaking into a whimper.

Jimin’s mouth falls open, the sight punching at his senses and having every stroke sending searing heat up his spine, and he wishes he could feel it, too. Yoongi’s long, slender fingers, that know just where to reach and press and insist. He frowns in concentration, fist pumping faster. He knows it’d be easy to come from just this, to those thoughts and those pretty sounds he hears, to how pliant Taehyung is, and how assertive Yoongi is behaving.

The second finger comes sooner than Jimin expects it. Way sooner. And Taehyung freezes, lips parted and expression pained but Yoongi holds his eyes, calm and relentless as he pushes it in. Taehyung doesn’t object, doesn’t offer any resistance, his hands splayed on Yoongi’s still clothed chest. He undulates smoothly as the digits are thrust in and out of his ass, exhaled stuttering more often than not. He trails rigid fingers down Yoongi’s torso, trying to grapple at his clothes, until he finds his belt and starts fiddling with it.

“You’re impatient,” Yoongi scowls, but doesn’t stop him.

Taehyung’s throat bobs, wanting to wiggle down so he can rub the strain in Yoongi’s underwear, and Jimin can see the angle is odd, can see it’s not really working, until Yoongi humors him and curls his hips into his touch. And when after a while, Taehyung reaches for the hem of his boxers, when he tries to tug them down, Yoongi fucks into him harder and faster, enough to cut his breathing and his train of action, and he tenses, his fingers going to knot in the crisp fabric of Yoongi’s shirt. Jimin watches his wrist pump, shivering at the wet and sloppy sound it makes and he groans, the telltale burning flaring up in his groin.

“A-I’m ready,” Taehyung pants, his body wanting to curl on itself from the force Yoongi is using.

Yoongi laughs, dark and seductive and Jimin bites his lips and wills himself to decrease his pace, wanting the delay the moment he’ll be done.

“It’s already a miracle you’ve let me put two.”

And Jimin watches, a little mystified, as Yoongi sits up and withdraws his hands, leaving Taehyung heaving and wanting. Himself never took under three, often goes up to four. And even Yoongi usually takes three when Jimin finger-fucks him. But there’s not much that’s making sense right now, not much he can focus on properly when he feels so close to coming, aroused out of his mind, and that Yoongi slowly, very slowly, drags his boxers down until they’re bunching under the curve of his ass and that he’s pumping his cock, teasing on purpose.

Yoongi looks at him over his shoulder and the intensity of his gaze is enough to send Jimin shuddering and bubbling up with excitement.

“You wanna fuck him?” he asks, and Jimin’s thoughts flatline momentarily, taking in the way Taehyung tosses his head to the side to look at him. He’s flushed pretty and panting, his lips shiny, his eyes bright yet dark with lust.
And Jimin considers for a few breathless seconds. He’s only been the one doing the fucking a handful of times with his ex, and while feeling Taehyung under him and his body clenching around his cock is truly tempting, the memories of his previous experiences bring too much discomfort for him to try again in a moment like this.

“I’m uncomfortable with topping,” is what slips out of his mouth, and there’s in him an apprehension of having ruined the mood but nothing shifts weirdly in the room, everything stays just as tense and passionate as it’s been for the last twenty minutes.

“Okay,” Yoongi whispers, and outstretches a hand to him. “Come here, I wanna kiss you.”

And this time Jimin does uproot from the floor, leisureed in how he walks to them, because he likes how impatient it seems to make them. He tugs at his cock in calculated motions, squeezing around the head on the upstroke.

“Fuck, Jimin,” Taehyung breathes, his irises drowning in pupil when Jimin does lay his eyes on him.

And when he’s close enough, Yoongi fists his shirt and pulls him in, forces him to come crawling on the mattress on his knees. His mouth is demanding, his tongue teasing and Jimin melts, lets him take over. There’s shuffling in the sheets, hands on his thighs and creeping up until warm fingers are wrapping around his cock and stroking him carefully and Jimin lets Taehyung do that, too.

They make quick work of getting him naked, having him strip his clothes before he’s getting thrown onto the bed. Yoongi flips Taehyung over then, gets him on his hands and knees and Taehyung drags Jimin on the mattress until he’s under him, caged between his arms, legs spread and bent at the knees to accommodate him.

And they come crashing.

Taehyung presses his lips onto his like they’re in a rush, like doing anything else but kissing him might kill him and Jimin struggles to keep up. He lets out little whines that are quietened by the sounds of their mouths moving together.

Jimin has his eyes shut, but he can feel the slow rocking of Taehyung’s body above him, and hear the slick noises of the lube where Yoongi is probably two fingers deep in him again.

Taehyung bites, his lips and his neck and his shoulder, licks down chest, sucks at the skin there until Jimin feels it stinging, and he, reflexively, buries shaking fingers in his hair. Taehyung peppers pecks down his stomach, insists near his navel, and then there’s warmth around Jimin’s cock, wet and smooth, the suction perfect and he bucks up, moaning.

His eyelids flutter open and he falls prey of Yoongi’s gaze, who’s folded over Taehyung, pressing open-mouthed kisses to the crook of his neck. He then pulls on Taehyung’s dress shirt, baring his shoulder and his mouth goes to explore there, grazing his teeth on the honeyed skin and making Taehyung’s breath quiver.

Jimin writhes, strands of hair tickling his forehead when he moves. He fumbles on the sheets, trying to find the bottle but Taehyung finds it before he does, blindly coating his index, rolling his tongue around the head of Jimin’s cock.

Taehyung pushes it in, taking his time, when Jimin just wants to feel him move, pressing himself down on it. Yoongi gives him a wicked smile when he lets out an unsatisfied groan, his eyes narrowed and swimming in dark intent, and that shuts him up, keeps him still like he’s hypnotized.
There it is, that predatory stare that makes him shiver. That glint that makes Jimin feel like Yoongi wants to own him. Eat him up.

He thinks it might be the first time he’s truly caught up in their dynamic. Where it’s untouched by circumstances or ego-built walls, lies or denial. It wasn’t quite like this the two previous times they had sex the three of them. Now it’s rougher at the core though softer in actions, it’s more possessively, aggressively charged. It makes Jimin tremble in a new way. He likes it.

Taehyung nearly chokes around his dick, a low moan ripped out of his throat and he pushes back against Yoongi, lips leaving Jimin with a soft pop, but a hand holding him at the base, the finger inside him stilling.

“You want it?” Yoongi rasps, straightening up and looking down, where Jimin is sure he’s teasing his hole with his cock.

Taehyung’s nods silently, head resting on Jimin’s thigh.

“I can’t hear you.”

“Y-Yes, hyung, please,” and it’s a weak plea, but sincere enough to make Jimin itch with want and yearn for more of his skin.

Yoongi circles an arm around his torso to lift him, Jimin biting back a whimper when Taehyung’s warmth leaves him completely. But then he quietly stares, as Yoongi keeps his front to Taehyung’s back, close, close, and guides him down. He hastily props himself on his elbow and his heart stutters in his chest, his gut tenses and tingles when he gets the perfect view of what’s going on. Yoongi, now naked, holding his cock for Taehyung to sit on. And Taehyung, shaking and exhales uneven, lowering himself until the head breaches in.

Jemin nearly panics, frantic as he reaches down and presses two fingers inside himself, the rush making it burn slightly but he’s unable to resist, giving himself a poor imitation of how good Yoongi’s dick is.

He revels in Taehyung’s reaction, in how he shudders the deeper he takes it, to his pained but satisfied expression, to the irregular heaving and fallings of his chest.

Right then Jimin understands why it was so easy to trust him, that day when they fucked in the pool. Why he found it so easy, to let himself be guided by him. Taehyung likes a bit of pain, likes being roughed up like Jimin did at that moment, and it made it effortless for him to get Jimin, and take him where he wanted to be.

Taehyung is fully sitting on Yoongi’s thighs, now. His stomach is tensing and releasing and his cock is giving harsh twitches, Yoongi’s hands digging in his waist to hold him straight. He takes himself up a bit, legs straining, and then lowers himself again. For a few minutes when Jimin has forgotten how to breathe, fingers still deep in his own ass, he looks at Yoongi’s coming out and disappearing inside Taehyung, the sounds slick and crude.

He realizes, dazedly, that Yoongi is going raw into him. That they foregone the condom. And while it stirs something inside him, like a pinch of jealousy, what overtakes it is fascination, curiosity, and that riles him up even more.

Their pace kicks up, Yoongi fucking up into him hard, and Taehyung scrunches his eyes shut, falls forward and hovers Jimin again, steadying himself on one of his forearms. His other palm roams Jimin’s body, finds its way back to his cock like it needs to be there, stroking it evenly as his mouth
is pressing on his lower ribs, moaning against the skin. They move like this for a while, paced, rough breathing filling the room, quiet whines and grunts. It’s already a lot, for Jimin. A lot of physical and visual and auditory stimulation and his brain can’t process much.

But Taehyung takes Jimin’s fingers out of his ass and replaces them with his own, even adding a third, forcing Jimin to ground himself by tugging lightly at Taehyung’s hair, knotting the sheets with the other hand and it makes everything worse.

Taehyung falls into Yoongi’s rhythm. Purposefully. His hands thrusts into Jimin at the same time Yoongi pushes into his ass, and it’s so precise, so accurate, that in moment of blurred thoughts, Jimin feels like Yoongi is fucking him. That he’s driving his body into his. They’re in perfect sync, like they’re one. He clenches and tenses at those thoughts, at the need he feels to feel something filling him up.

“Hy-Hyung,” he whispers and he rubs at Taehyung’s upper back, encouraging him as he lifts himself up on his elbow, demanding a kiss.

And Yoongi gladly gives it, bends over Taehyung, slows the rolls of his hips as he does. It’s an uncomfortable stretch but they manage to make out still, lazy, unhurried as they work in shallower movements.

“Taehyung is being so good,” he murmurs against Jimin’s lips, “he’s the one taking my cock but he manages to make me feel like I’m fucking you, too.”

It spreads a wildfire inside of him, urgent, scorching, and Jimin’s exhale breaks into a moan, falling back on the bed with Taehyung shuddering atop of him, fanning moist air over his lower belly.

From there it goes easy, with his own hand snaking down to tug at his length and Taehyung’s fingers brushing just the right places when he pumps his fingers in and out of his hole. The burn comes fast, threatening to consume him whole, Jimin is overwhelmed and desperate. Taehyung crawls up to kiss him, Yoongi following, and Jimin falls into it. He cups the side of his neck and he moans in between the touches of their tongues, Yoongi’s thrusting making it challenging to keep it steady.

Yoongi growls, probably caught up in the sight and he speeds up, presses in more tightly and Taehyung adjusts to the change fairly easily, in the way he fingers him.

Jimin feels his climax looming in, his whimpers getting higher in pitch with every rocking of their bodies, and Taehyung breaks the kiss, plants himself above him and pins him with his eyes.

“Come,” he orders, “come for me.”

It takes only a few more strokes before Jimin curls up, choking on a sob when his body goes electric, twitching and blooming, fist tight around his cockhead as he weeps on his own stomach.

He doesn’t even let his body cool down and brings Taehyung’s face to his again instead, licking his moans out of his mouth when Yoongi pounds harder, and preventing him to move too much or drag up the bed.

Yoongi’s going rough. He’s panting and grunting and he’s not being gentle and Jimin’s mind has a flicker of envy, no matter how fucked out he feels at the moment.

He’s vibrating with anticipation when there’s a shift in Yoongi’s breathing, telltale of his orgasm. Jimin’s hips roll up against nothing, still buzzing with lust. He hears Taehyung’s nails scratch on the mattress, feels his chest catch around his air, their lips mashed together forcefully. And then it all goes still.
Taehyung goes immobile.

And Yoongi hisses through the sticky sound of his fist working around his cock.

Taehyung jerks his head back, and Jimin meets his hooded, hazed eyes.

He feels streaks of come landing on his legs, and understands Yoongi has pulled out and came on Taehyung’s ass.

“Hy-yung,” Taehyung half-sobs, distraught and his brows creasing as Yoongi moves away from him. “Why did you pull out? I wanted it inside?”

That makes something click inside Jimin, and in a greed rush, he pulls Taehyung down onto the bed, swap their positions. He sits on his waist, their sweat-slick skin sticking together, and as if he’d said it out loud, Yoongi understands him and fits himself behind him, straddling Taehyung’s thighs.

Taehyung is stunned, his eyes round and unfocused and Jimin lets it fuel him, revels in that sentiment of satisfaction that courses through him and he smiles. And even before he can snap out of it, Jimin lifts his ass, bends and reaches back, Yoongi’s hand going at his hips to steady him. And he guides Taehyung to his hole. His breath hitches, thoughts fizzling at the first contact, when the heated cockhead pushes lightly at his rim. It’s like he’s been craving it for so long, too long, and he’s finally getting it.

“Wait,” Taehyung nearly slaps him with how hard he brings his palms to his thighs to stop him, digits pressing hard in his flesh. Yoongi wraps an arm around him, keeps him still. Jimin groans.

“Condom.”

“Condom?” he heaves, taken aback, the soft lust he finds in Taehyung’s eyes absorbing him.

“Yeah?”

Yoongi’s hold loosens. Taehyung is slowly rocking into Jimin’s fist, and it makes it hard to think rationally.

“You did it without so I assumed… it was fine?”

He’s met with silence, heavy in doubts and questions, and things he probably doesn’t know about. There’s desperation crawling under his skin that he tries to tame, impatience pooling in his gut. He swallows.

“I never did it raw before,” he says airily, and Taehyung’s hips buck up in his touch, his eyes meeting Yoongi’s over his shoulder for eternal seconds. “Whatever you choose, please do it quick, I just really want to feel you Tae –“

Taehyung growls, his nails raking down Jimin’s skin, orbs bright with want. Yoongi grips his hips, lowers him. Taehyung pushes up.

Jimin shivers and gasps the whole time it takes for him to bottom out. He’s twitchy, oversensitive. It burns and it’s delicious.

“You okay?” Yoongi murmurs close to his ear, noticing how he’s struggling to rein himself in.

“Yeah, it’s fi-ine, I like it like that.”

At first, he moves on Taehyung’s cock with shy rolls of his pelvis, cautious, before he allows himself
to bounce on it for a short while, eyes scrunched closed, concentrating. His senses are on overdrive, with Taehyung inside of him and Yoongi against his back like a second skin, moving in time with them, his flaccid cock brushing where Jimin’s hole is stretching around the girth.

Then Jimin thinks of having them both inside. At the same time.

And he clenches hard.

“Ah, fuck, fu-uck, yes,” his words break, flooded pain and pleasure. Taehyung hisses and fucks up and Jimin knows he’ll bruise up where his fingers are tight and merciless.

“You’re so perfect, Park Jimin,” comes Taehyung’s rough voice and Jimin gasps quietly, fights how the swells of arousal make him want to curl up on himself.

“Are you gonna come again?” Yoongi kisses his throat, his shoulder, holds him up and solid.

Jimin just grapples at his arms around his waist as a response and hopes it will suffice.

Yoongi hums low against his skin, brings his hands to knead his hips gently before they tighten abruptly, stilling him completely in mid-air, with just the tip of Taehyung’s cock inside.

“Fuck him up.”

And Taehyung obeys, fucks up into him hard and fast, freezing his lungs and Jimin slumps back against Yoongi, whimpering and trembling.

He tenses and jerks, Taehyung’s moans and Yoongi’s lips burning through him, consuming him and he barely feels it building, just goes through the violent wave of pleasure wracking through him as he comes a second time, searching for air and mouth agape in a silent cry. Taehyung hisses, his hips giving a harsh stutter into him.

“Holy shit, did you come again?” he asks, breathless, looking at Yoongi when Jimin doesn’t respond, unable to even voice anything more than whines. “Hyung, did he come again?”

Jimin faintly registers Yoongi nodding, his chin pressing on his shoulder.

“Fuck that’s so – so fucking hot. Kiss him, hyung, please—”

Yoongi steadies Jimin’s limp, giving body with a single arm around him, use the other to cup his face and bring it to his, melding their lips. Yoongi has grown hard again, Jimin can feel him against the meat of his ass and through how numb he is, how sated and buzzed and overstimulated, he wants to push against him, but can’t.

There’s wet in the corner of his eyes, his heart, his lungs hammering a beautiful song in his chest but it’s close to becoming more than he can handle.

Yoongi’s tongue is tracing his lips, coaxing them open and he lets him, trembling and weak, until Taehyung’s moans start pitching higher.

“M’gonna come,” he rushes out and Jimin falls deep into anticipation again, little fingers scrambling on Yoongi’s arm as Taehyung snaps his hips up in a sloppier rhythm.

“C-Come inside,” he sobs, “please, co—I wanna feel you, Tae please, I –“

He’s being pressed down harshly and Taehyung cries, rolling into his ass and he comes. Yoongi gentles them both through it, his deep inhales and exhales like an anchor Jimin holds onto as he
comes down, the slow, soft rubbing on his hands on his sides soothing. His skin erupts in goosebumps, his throat tightens. Taehyung lifts him gently, his cock slipping out with a wet sound, and Yoongi envelopes him with his body, helps him lay down and settle so that Taehyung is spooning him.

“I’ll go get a wet towel or something,” he whispers, like he’s afraid to break something. The atmosphere maybe. Or Jimin.

“No,” Jimin begs quietly, making a grabby motion at him.

“I won’t be long, I promise,” he sits on the edge of the bed, his skin is flushed and shiny with sweat.

“Hyung,” Taehyung tries to warn.

“We really need it —“

Jimin’s chest goes wild. His nose stings.

He’s overpowered by a wave of emotion so intense, so powerful that he can’t control any of it and he chokes on a sob.

“Oh.”

Taehyung wraps himself tighter around him, makes himself reassuring as Yoongi slips right back in, comes to his front and tangles with them.

It rolls off of him in patterns, beautiful emotions he can’t process and he cries and can’t understand why but they’re holding him, and it’s fine. He allows himself to live through that.

“What happened?” Yoongi speaks low, fragilized, when the sobs have gentled out. “Did we do something wrong?”

“N-No, it’s just— I don’t even know —“

“Jimin-ah,”

“It’s happy, hy-yung. It’s a happy feeling.”

Taehyung kisses his nape. Yoongi sighs softly and presses his lips onto his, and he smiles.

And Jimin smiles too.

And only after long, exquisite minutes of cuddling does Jimin allow Yoongi to go pick up a towel.

Chapter End Notes

i apologize for this
“I think we should go somewhere,” Jimin says.

It’s late, they’re well into the evening, and they’re fixing themselves nachos in the kitchen.

He found out, throughout the day, how physically, but also emotionally draining it had been, that sex he’s had with them earlier. He’s still not too sure why he cried like that, but it happened and he came out of that bedroom completely exhausted.

Jimin did try to participate in dance practice. He’s made it there, his body protesting, too-sharp moves sending jolts of pain up his spine and his legs not much more solid than jelly when all he wanted to hold Yoongi’s hand or kiss Taehyung’s lips.

Hoseok noticed his state with a grin, and allowed him to do monitoring instead. Jimin was diligent for most of it, but in the end, he got sent home early. That’s an interestingly colored hickey, Hoseok told him before he left, looking at his neck and Jimin couldn’t even find in himself to blush.

“Like, vacations or something,” Jimin adds.

Yoongi hums at the proposition, focused on the tomatoes he’s slicing.

“No?”

“What do you have in mind?” Taehyung licks his finger, wincing when the strength of the peppers gets to his throat.

“Japan? France?”

“France?” Yoongi’s voice blooms through his smile.

“France is nice,” Jimin shrugs. It’s been years since he went there. He was probably 12 or 13.

“Yeah, France is cool. Charmante baguette.”

Jimin lifts his eyes to Taehyung, torn between snorting and face-palming.

Yoongi breathes out a laugh and Taehyung bends to kiss Jimin, exaggeratedly keeping hands away as to not cover him in veggie juice.
They’re disarming.

“If we’re to go abroad, we should probably go somewhere that’s not too long of a plane ride.”

“Why?”

“I still have to come in for work on Wednesday and Thursday, so it would be best if we didn’t lose time on that.”

“Right.”

Taehyung skirts around him and leans in the space between him and Yoongi, takes a wooden spoon in the utensil holder. He still smells clean from the shower they took in the afternoon, relax in his sweat pants, his hair fluffy and eyes soft. And Yoongi emanates the same thing, that calm wellbeing, simple and comfortable. Jimin likes them like that the most. He likes this type of quality time the most.

“Japan then,” Taehyung agrees. “China?”

“Japan’s a good idea,” Yoongi picks his tomatoes, spreads them evenly on top of their mix that’s waiting on the pan.

And just like that, like it was the easiest thing, they settle on a place to go the following weekend. It’s never too hard to come to an agreement when they’re all involved. They work well, the three of them together. They balance each other.

And much later, when they’re smoking on the balcony after having fought sleep through two movies, Yoongi starts acting like he’s going to leave and go back home.

And Jimin asks him to stay.

There’s a slight shift in the mood, mostly from Taehyung. His attitude bleeds a bit of fear but mostly indecision. But he doesn’t object.

They start an episode on Netflix, even when they know they won’t last through it. They will fall asleep on the couch in a mess of limbs, Jimin knows, and it feels just fine.

Δ

Taehyung’s eyelids flutter open to Netflix still rolling by itself.

He fills his lungs, looks around drowsily.

On the other side of the couch, Yoongi is asleep, head rolled back against the cushion, his hand resting gently on Jimin’s back. And Jimin is half over his lap, cheek mashed against his thigh, body curled like a cat. They look peaceful.

Taehyung just stares for still minutes.
He floats, lulled by their breathings, his eyes going from Yoongi’s fingers on Jimin’s shirt, to the soft pout of his lips, to the subtle crease in Jimin’s eyebrows as Taehyung presumes he dreams.

It’s beautiful, in a way. It’s beautiful but it hurts.

Taehyung hates feeling like that. When he’s too acutely aware that he’s the one putting up the wall that’s waiting for them at the end of this road.

Taehyung loves Jimin. And he knows, no matter how much he tries to ignore them, that there’re still tendrils of his feelings lingering from his past with Yoongi. Always will. He knows. But he can’t love him anymore. Doesn’t feel capable of even trying.

And perhaps he’s being selfish, given that he’s conscious that this is going nowhere, but he won’t let go of this, of what they have. Seeing Jimin and Yoongi trusting, and taking care of each other fills gaps Taehyung can’t seem to close up by himself. A twisted way of repairing his own feelings through their love.

He dreads the day Jimin will leave them. Because it will happen.

He just hopes that when the moment comes, Yoongi and he will part ways, too. Because there’s no fixing to them.

He runs his palm along Jimin’s leg, firmly, watches him stir.

“Jiminie,” he whispers and Jimin inhales sharply, coming back to the surface. “Let’s go to bed?”

There’s a hum, and then a whine, and then Jimin is slowly, very slowly, blinking his eyes open. Taehyung thinks he doesn’t see him wake often enough, that he could rouse him thousands of times without ever getting over how pretty he is when he comes out of a dream.

“Mhm?”

“Bed, come on,” he rubs at his calf encouragingly until he sits up, waking Yoongi in the process.

Taehyung stands, his joints stiff, extending a hand for Jimin to take, pulling him out of the couch. Jimin hugs his chest briefly, and stumbles out of the living room, talking sweetly to Tuxedo when he follows suit.

Yoongi reaches on the coffee table for the remote control, turns the TV off with a huff. Surely he can feel how heavily Taehyung’s gaze is set on him because he pushes himself off the cushions, fiddling with his clothes in an attempt to fix them.

“Should I leave?” he asks, cautious, vulnerable. His voice is merely above a murmur, but it’s like a stab to Taehyung’s chest.

“Don’t.”

Yoongi nods, holds his eyes for a few tense heavings before he comes closer, places a hand to Taehyung’s neck and tiptoes to press their lips together.

Taehyung doesn’t deny him.
“Tae,”

“Yeah?” Taehyung answers from the bedroom.

Jimin smiles. Their domesticity is still making his stomach flutter happily.

“Can I like, ask you something?”

He hears him shuffling down the corridor, until he’s leaning in the doorway of the living room. He crosses his arms over his chest, and Jimin hates that perfectly fitting t-shirt and those lounge pants. He’s been a hormonal mess since the previous Friday, and his brain is having it too easy shifting to thoughts about having sex on every surface of the apartment.

“T’sup,”

Jimin swallows, recenters himself and breathes. It’s a touchy subject.

“Let’s say—,” he starts, pausing to think of a better way to put it. “Would it, like, bother you if I were to go and spend some time alone with hyung? If we go out or if we hang out at my parents’ or something like that?”

Taehyung looks at him, orbs shimmering something tender.

“Would it bother you if I were to spend time alone with him? If I were to go to his house or if he was coming here when you’re not there?”

“Of course not.”

“Then there you go.”

Jimin melts and nods, wavering at the smile Taehyung gives him. He’s attractive. Painfully so.

“Okay, go away before I make you late.”

And at this Taehyung laughs airily and strides over to him, bends to hover over him on the couch. Presses his lips to his.

“I’m serious,” Jimin says in between feathery kisses, body already warming up and wanting more.

“I know,” and Taehyung runs his tongue along Jimin’s lips, earning him a groan.

“Stop being a teasing piece of shit.”

“So snappy.”

“You told me those are important papers. I’m trying to be responsible.”

“Right,” Taehyung grins through his sarcasm, straightening, and Jimin nearly regrets his good judgement. He leaves the room, talks louder so they don’t have to cut the conversation. “When is your stuff again? Wednesday, right?”

“Yeah, leaving for Busan in the afternoon. Should be back in the evening.”

“You should probably spend some time at home? So that they don’t get worried.”
“Are you kicking me out?” he asks with mock hurt, going back to scrolling through his Twitter feed.

“I like having you around too much to do that and you know it.”

And Jimin does know.

He’s two steps into the place and he can see it already, how the girl startles and tenses, the knowing smiles of her coworkers and how she starts trying to look busy.

She should be used to it by now, to see him here. He used to come several times a week, when Hoseok first started working at the disc shop. She even knows his name, and can recite his order by heart.

“Soy latte with two pumps of hazelnut, right?”

“Right.”

She blushes when he smiles politely, holds his eyes for a little too long before she darts hers away, handing him his receipt. Jimin feels like she wanted to add something but refrained from doing so. She starts moving nimbly, preparing his drink and Jimin steps to the side, waiting.

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**You**: the girl at the coffee shop

18-07-2016, 13:03

**You**: near the h&m

18-07-2016, 13:03

**You**: i think shes still crushing on me

18-07-2016, 13:04

**Hobi hyung**: and youre texting me out of stress

18-07-2016, 13:04

**Hobi hyung**: and to avoid looking at her

18-07-2016, 13:04

**You**: yes

18-07-2016, 13:04
Hobi hyung: because you're scared she's gonna ask you out

18-07-2016, 13:05

You: yes

18-07-2016, 13:05

You: I hate rejecting nice people

18-07-2016, 13:05

Hobi hyung: she's not gonna do it

18-07-2016, 13:05

Hobi hyung: you're visibly a rich kid and it probably scares her

18-07-2016, 13:05

Hobi hyung: we poor kids know where we belong

18-07-2016, 13:05

You: 1- wtf hyung

18-07-2016, 13:05

You: 2- that could almost be credible if we hadn't been best friends for like 9 years

18-07-2016, 13:06

“Here,” her voice chimes as she places his cup on the counter for him to take.

“Thanks,” she looks at him expectantly when he takes the first sip, bites her lip when he makes an appreciative sound. Jimin’s having a bad feeling.

“Say,” she mutters and his stomach coils uncomfortably. “Would you agree to grab a coffee with me somehow? It’s been a while since you came here so I thought I might as well ask you in case you disappear forever?”

And that’s arguably a bit dramatic, but he’ll blame it on the nerves.

“I uh,” he looks down, warmth pooling in his cheeks. “I’m sorry, I’m already taken.”

“O-Oh,” she laughs, it screams discomfort and embarrassment, and that’s what gets to Jimin the
most. He hates it. “It’s all good then. She’s a lucky girl.”

Jimin wants to correct her.

_Him._

_Two hims._

But he doesn’t.

“Thank you again,” he forces out, gesturing to his coffee.

She gives a timid nod, flushed even darker, and her gaze weighs heavy on him for the whole way back out of the shop.

“Hey.”

Hoseok welcomes him in the store Jimin knows so well, briefly hugs him when no one is looking. There’s still a remainder of stiffness between them. Hoseok is still sorry and he still tiptoes around him and Jimin wonders if he’s the one being weird for wanting to get over it this fast.

Yoongi and Hoseok kissed. They made out, even. But no satisfaction came out of it for neither of them. Jimin likes to think it was a distress-induced moment. And the way Yoongi’s attitude genuinely shifted since then, Jimin will take it as a confirmation.

“She did invite me,” he says, voice flat.

“Really?” Hoseok grins. Jimin breathes out a _yeah_ and takes his cup to his mouth. “Gutsy. What did you tell her?”

“That I was taken, hyung. What else do you want me to say?”

“That you’re very gay and have no romantic or sexual interest in girls.”

“Yeah, but above that I’m taken.”

“Well, _technically not_—”

“Hyung,”

“Hoseok-ah,”

Jimin’s eyes find Nami’s, who’s calling from near the register. She’s become prettier.

“Great timing,” Jimin tells her when they’ve gotten closer. “He was being an asshole.”

“When is he not, though,” she smiles as she says this, putting papers in order on the counter.

“True.”

“Want me to leave, maybe?” Hoseok offers, looking between the two, offended. “You guys seem close all of a sudden.”
“Forming friendships over a common rivalry,” Nami says, absentmindedly raking thin fingers through her fringe to bring it back.

“I’ll be in the backstore if someone ever needs me.”

She laughs, lifts her eyes from her business.

“Hoseok-ah, come back here. I’d need you to work of the sales’ budget for this week.”

Jimin perks up, interest piqued.

“Why?”

“Because I need to leave early today and that I have too much stuff to do, that I trust you, and that I’m trying to teach you useful things. If this a sufficient answer?”

“I’m a teaching major, though. Not business.”

“I’m the admin major,” Jimin presses in.

“Jimin-ah, please work on the budget then,” she says with a theatrical voice.

“Yes, noona,” he agrees, following in her teasing tone.

Hoseok cringes.

“Alright I’m out.”

Jimin chuckles, watching him retreat.

Hoseok admittedly looks tired. Exhausted, even. But there’s something lighter around him. More at ease. He told Jimin over text that he was working things out with Eunji, and Jimin wants to believe that the outcome, whatever it is, will allow Hoseok to breathes a little easier.

And as he strolls between the boxes, taking a look at the last vinyl they’ve received, Jimin thinks of the possibility of Hoseok having to move out if things were to turn bad with Eunji. Having to change apartments again when he already lived in too many, and never could settle well enough to develop a sense of belonging. He then he imagines what it would be like to help him in his research once again, visiting two, three places a day and not finding them quite fitting, watching him recalculating his needs because he doesn’t want to have roommates.

And when he gets images of empty and emptier places, Jimin suddenly thinks of that door. The one in front of Taehyung’s bedroom. That gives in a room he never bothered going in.

And he realizes, just what that room is. Or was.
Jimin closes the front door behind himself, as quietly as he can manage. As if it could disturb anyone when he knows Taehyung isn’t back yet.

There’s a dull ache in his chest. He hopes he’s wrong. He hopes he’s right.

He takes his shoes off, ignores Tuxedo’s demand of attention in his haze. He walks up the corridor, feels the coolness of the knob, carefully pushes it open with an anticipating flutter broadening in his gut.

There’s sunlight coming through the big, naked window, warming the flooring in bright rectangles. The walls are white, cream, maybe. Nothing too drastically different from the rest of the apartment. There’s dust, settled heavy on the floor, untouched in months. Jimin takes a couple of steps in, watches particles dance in the air as he disrupts the fragility of the room.

The most fascinating thing, is that it’s completely empty. Unlike a spare room should be. There’s no furniture. No boxes. No nothing. Completely empty.

Instead it’s filled with a sensation of yearning, of neglect. Of pain. Thick, all around.

Jemin soothes himself with thoughts, aching a little more from the inside, brushes his hair back with his fingers and hesitates before he slides the window open.

He takes the view in, breathes through the warm breeze for a while.

Then he rummages through the apartment until he finds the vacuum, and some cleaning products.

And when he’s done, that the room smells nice but that his mind is still running in wild, sad places, he sits in the middle of the room with his phone, and waits.

Δ

Taehyung sits the pen on the paper and leans back in his chair, nonchalant.

Those documents, they’re much like a death sentence, to him.

The official papers. Making him the official heir of Kim Intl.
That ink he’s scribbling on them is just the physical embodiment of the emotional blood he’s poured into this shit over the years.

He’s fidgety and on edge. His foot jumps under the table. He’s just glad that his father left over an hour ago, bored, busy, probably. Taehyung doesn’t mind the lawyer. He’s a discreet man with an appeasing voice. He’s been reading things to Taehyung for over two hours now, everpatient, even when he knows very well he isn’t paying attention.

It’s just clause after clause after clause.

Each is another nail on his coffin, so he just shuts everything off.

The elevator makes a strident ding and Taehyung’s headache flares up. He winces.

He steps out and allows himself to loosen his tie, just the slightest. And then a lot. Because he finds that he doesn’t care that much, if anyone here sees him being sloppy.

He passes through the tall, glass doors, exiting the lobby, squints through the harshness of the sun and sighs. His pack feels good under his palm when he fishes for it in his pocket, the cigarette he places between his lips a poisonous comfort. He finds a shadowed area where his eyes can rest, burns through his cigarette watching the cars passing on the busy street.


He knows he’s stepping foot first into his living nightmare. That he’s engaging in things that will tattoo this life he doesn’t want of into him. But right now, he doesn’t have the strength to pull out of that quicksand.

He won’t deny that he often replays Jimin’s words for himself when he’s having thoughts like these. That he uses them as a mean of hope of some sort.

“You would’ve liked being a vet better, right?”

“What’s stopping you?”

“I’ll help you.”

But he never allows them to really sink in, so that he doesn’t build anything around them. Less hurt, he thinks. Less hurt if it all goes to shit.

“It’s fine, you can send the car back,” says a soft voice Taehyung recognizes as Gayoung’s.

He lifts his gaze, finding her dressed loosely, hair gently moving with the wind, the Leica hanging around her neck. She looks so casual, that he wonders what business she had here in the first place.

“Mr. Kim asked for you to –“

“It’s fine, I said. I’ll call a cab after I’m done if I need to.”

When their eyes meet, she smiles. It’s still shy, and she looks tired. But Taehyung is, for the first time, not bristling in her presence.
She gives a polite nod, and he does the same, momentarily surprised when he sees her rising a cigarette to her lips and pulling on it. She cups the camera, lifts it as to make sure it catches his attention, that he understands she’s actually using it.

And this, more than she will ever know and that he’ll ever admit, calms him.

He inhales, long and full. He smiles back, kills his cigarette, and drives home.

It had to be expected.

He got home to a silent but definitely occupied apartment, walked to the kitchen, but saw that the door of the second bedroom was open when he glanced down the corridor.

Taehyung knew it was going to happen, eventually. More so since Jimin spontaneously started sharing his living space.

He rolls his keys in his palm. Dreads what he will, or won’t, find in there.

“Tae,” Jimin calls from in there.

His tone, the seriousness it bears, brings a lot of old thoughts and ideas back, sending them to whirlwind in Taehyung’s already exhausted mind.

He walks towards it, the smell of citrus more intense with each stride.

The room is bright. Brighter than the others. Brighter than he remembered it to be.

Jimin is sitting on the floor, in the center, crossed-legged and pretty. He’s the sun from the inside.

“Tae, did you have your father rent you a two-bedroom flat in case hyung would come back and live with you?”

Taehyung feels a lump form in his throat. He swallows around it.

It’s fine. It’s over. What’s done is done.

He turns on his heels, gets in his bedroom, changes.

“Tae,”

He doesn’t mean to leave Jimin hanging, but this, much like Cannelle, is something he needs to do. To salvage his own emotions.

“Come with me,” he tells Jimin as he storms out and gets ready to leave again.

“Don’t fucking avoid me, Taehyung, stop do—“

“I’m not avoiding, I promise. Come. You’ll see.”
It’s oddly familiar, this situation.

Jumin being dragged out on a whim, and to the place he least expected. Spending money on things he’s not sure make total sense.

He whined when Taehyung parked his Audi in the lot of a store, confused. Frustrated, a little, perhaps, that Taehyung didn’t answer his question. But he supposes that this reaction, coming from him, should be enough of an answer.

“What the fuck?”

Taehyung squeezed his hand over the console and Jimin deflated, followed him inside.

You: we’re out buying furniture
18-07-2016, 17:29

Hobi hyung: what
18-07-2016, 17:30

Hobi hyung: why
18-07-2016, 17:30

You: the answer is still nebulous
18-07-2016, 17:30

You: need emotional support nonetheless
18-07-2016, 17:31

“Would this be better in black or mahogany?”

“Tae,” he starts, upset.

“I know you have no fucking clue of what I’m doing, but please humor me? I’d like that room to look decent and I’m sure your taste in decorating is better than mine.”

“That’s not true.”

“Black or mahogany?”

Jumin exhales, attempt to shake off this weird feeling he has.

“What else do you plan on buying?”
“A large desk, a bed, probably –“

“A bed?”

“We’re looking at bedside tables right now, so I mean,“


When one of the sellers sees them perusing around, going from the expensive mattresses to the even more expensive drawers, Jimin and Taehyung inevitably end up with him glued to their feet.

Jimin supposes it’s normal. That he should try not to get bothered by his questions and his attempts at intruding in their conversation. After all, Taehyung is not looking at the price tags even the slightest. He doesn’t need to. And that makes them even more interesting for that employee.

The thing is, Taehyung is closed off. And the only person he lets in right now, is Jimin. So it’s him who has to deal with the propositions and the small talk.

**Hobi hyung:** very weird but im here if you need to scream
18-07-2016, 17:32

**Hobi hyung:** nami left, so i can text you without hiding all the time
18-07-2016, 17:33

**Hobi hyung:** hows it going
18-07-2016, 17:58

**You:** a mess
18-07-2016, 18:37

**You:** theres a man stuck to our asses
18-07-2016, 18:37

**Hobi hyung:** a man?
18-07-2016, 18:37

**You:** a seller
You: and tae tries hard not to be rude but its not exactly working

You: so i gotta deal with that man alone

You: but do you remember my science teacher in 9th grade?

Hobi hyung: how could one forget

You: he has the same haircut

You: i cant, hyung

You: i just cant

“Maybe that collection over here would be more to your liking? The desk is very sturdy, very beautiful oak, a lot of compartmentalization.”

Jimin gives a forced smile, bothered. It’s eating at his patience.

You: help

Taehyung is strolling at the front, pausing whenever something catches his attention.

“Or maybe this? It’s more expensive but the quality of the wood is –“

“Thank you, sir. We really appreciate your help, but for now I think he’s just looking.”

“I understand yes.”
“We’ll come find you if there’s anything you can do to help.”

The man bows, his hair giving Jimin one last horrible flash of science class, and leaves.

“Fuck,” he breathes, the knot in his stomach loosening.

Taehyung looks at him over his shoulder, smirks.

“Fuck you.”

Taehyung’s frame lightly shakes with laughter, but he extends his hand behind himself, and waits. And Jimin, suppressing a smile, takes it.

“I understand what you’re saying, but I think I’ve been clear enough when I said I wanted them home tonight.”

“There’s no delivery truck available, sir.”

“You already said that.”

“Tae,” Jimin tries to press in, coming to stand right at his side. Taehyung just reaches to run a warm touch down his back.

“There is nothing more I can do. It will have to wait tomorrow in the morning.”

“There is something you can do, you just don’t want to try.” The girl behind the counter sighs and rolls her eyes, and that makes Taehyung scoffs. “That’s exactly what I’m saying. Get me your manager.”

“He left.”

“Get me the employee that’s in charge right now, then.”

“She left too, sir. It’s almost nine.”

Taehyung leans over the counter, palms on the surface, brows furrowed. Jimin holds his breath.

“A store as big, as high-end as yours? With no management at night? Stop fucking lying and just get her for me, will you?”

She clicks her tongue but disappears a moment later, her strut stiff and frustrated.

“Why are you being like this,” Jimin hisses, nudging him of his elbow.

“I need this to be done tonight.”

“Why is it so important?”

“Because it is, for me.”

His tone is firm. Jimin decides not to prod further and just trust him.

He settles on scrolling through his social medias, Taehyung’s irritable mood contagious and heavy.
A lady then comes their way, looking much more cheerful and open to conversation and Jimin regains hope.

“Good evening and welcome,” she greets, stepping behind the computer. “I hear you’re wanting them in your home tonight?”

“Yes,” Taehyung’s voice is calm and soft, despite the tiredness Jimin finds beneath.

“Surely my employee told you all the trucks were booked for the night.”

“She did.”

“I can offer express delivery, but I’m afraid it would add a considerable fee to the purchase.”

“I understand,” Taehyung says, fetching his wallet in his jeans pocket. “And I’m perfectly fine with that.”

“Very well.”

Jimin updates Hoseok on the denouement as Taehyung works the papers out with the manager. That’s a side of Taehyung he hadn’t seen in a while. In months. That assertive, confident side that Jimin can now say that it’s one of the things that he found attractive in him. He glances up from time to time, appreciating Taehyung’s solid attitude, and he recognizes in there the son of a CEO and the admin student.

Jimin tenses when he hears the amount. He’s used to numbers and high company expenses, but all those things they chose adding up for a couple of thousands still fills him with misplaced anxiety. It’s rather stupid, considering that he’s always lived with an endless well of money, and that Taehyung did, too.

Taehyung hands her his credit card. Titanium. Jimin wants to believe that he’s doing this for his wellbeing.

“Those sheets are nicer than the ones on your bed though,” Jimin says, pulling the fabric over the corner of the mattress. “Softer.”

Taehyung straightens and stills, considering.

Jimin looks at him but doesn’t stop unwrinking and smoothing up the material, diligent.

Until Taehyung rips it all off and Jimin screeches.

“No! Why? God Tae I hate dressing beds why are doing this to me?”

“You said they were nicer and I agree,” he replies, getting to his own bedroom instead.

“I didn’t mean that we had to switch them!”

“Stop whining, come here.”

Jimin groans and rolls his head back in frustration.
“I’ll make love to you in the new bed after that, is that enough of a compensation?”

“No.”

He can hear Taehyung’s laugh through the sound of the other bed being stripped.

“Do you hate it that much?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t do it then, I’m not gonna force you.”

Jimin sits on the new mattress, looks at all those things Taehyung bought.

That desk, so long and massive that it nearly lines a whole wall, in dark, prettily veined wood, with a large working surface, plenty of drawers and a few shelves on top. It doesn’t exactly make sense for it to be here, Taehyung has his own stuff in his room already, and this is definitely too big for a student anyway.

Taehyung also got a tall bookcase that they neatly placed in a corner, two nightstands, a huge bed frame with a sculpted arch above, all in fine, deeply colored oak. And of course, the king-size mattress.

Jimin is still confused and still doesn’t have the answer to the question that might have triggered this, but at least this place doesn’t look as deserted and sad anymore.

“But I feel useless if I don’t help you,” he says, voice small.

“You’re not useless, stop that. Just do something you don’t mind doing if you really want to, and we’ll be chill.”

“Mhm.”

He stays there for a while longer, listening to Taehyung working in the other room until he joins him, picking up the discarded sheets and starting a batch of laundry.

“Jungkook does photo right?” Taehyung passes behind him as he says this, grabbing another set for the new mattress before he disappears again.

“Yeah, why?”

“Was thinking of putting pretty stuff on the walls.”

“Of the room?”

“Yeah.”

“Hyung is into photography too, isn’t he?”

“He is.”

“Why don’t you ask him, then?”

“Maybe, yeah. We’ll see.”
They do have sex. After a lengthy, warm shower. But they don’t make it to the bed. Taehyung riles him up against one of the walls of the corridor, lifts him and secures him legs around his own waist and fucks him right there, until they end up on the floor, where Jimin rides him to completion.

But they do collapse on it after having cleaned up, bodies melting in the plushness, side by side and staring at the ceiling. They breathe even, in a languid mood, Taehyung’s thumb gently rubbing the back of Jimin’s hand.

Jimin is scared to look at the time. He doesn’t think it’s healthy for him to feel so awake at this hour.

“So, about this room,” Jimin starts, tiptoeing around it. He doesn’t want to rush him. “You said you would agree to talk about it if I had questions.”

“I know, I remember.”

There’s another minute of quiet, where Jimin knows Taehyung is mustering something from deep within. A little strength, a little courage. The right words without the overflowing emotions that might come with them.

Jimin interlaces their fingers.

“In retrospect,” he says, and Jimin’s whole being tunes in on him. “The hardest part of him having left, is not knowing if he was ever going to come back. We didn’t talk, and no one agreed to tell me what he was up to. So I was left hanging onto every passing day, with the hope that he was maybe on his way back to me, that he had understood how much we missed each other. And at the same time, I was terrified I had already used up my last time ever seeing him.”

He pauses. Jimin swallows, fights the way his eyes too-easily welled up.

“And every day, those feelings grew. I tried growing apart, cut that tie in my head. I went out, tried fucking some random people in questionable places. Did drugs. A lot. I was drunk more often than not. Especially last summer.”

Taehyung shifts, folds an arm under his head, brings their joined hands close to his heart.

“But it didn’t work. One moment I was sure I’d be meeting with him again soon, and the one after I was having a panic attack in the restrooms after class because I felt like the hole he left inside me was going to eat me whole. Literally.” He breathes. There’s tremors in his voice that Jimin wants to soothe but isn’t sure how. “He probably told you, right? That we used to record stuff together.”

“Yeah.”

“The reason I asked for a two-bedroom apartment, is because I moved here around four months after he left, and in a moment of high hope, I thought he would come back to me. And live with me. And that this room, we could make a small studio out of it. But that obviously didn’t happen. And after half a year of being here alone, I couldn’t stand looking at this room anymore. So I stopped cleaning it, closed the door and left it untouched. Because it was hurting me too much.” Jimin says nothing. There’s nothing to be said or discussed. “So yeah. That’s the story of why I got this place and why this room is empty. Or was empty.”

He’s glad Taehyung talked about it. That he trusted him enough to let himself be weak in his presence, and that he didn’t dodge the subject like he too often did.
“Thank you,” is the only thing Jimin lets slip between his moistened lips.

He expects Taehyung to close up, quickly. To go back into his self-protective mode and find refuge in his thoughts. Jimin would understand. He wouldn’t be hurt if Taehyung was to unconsciously push him away.

But Taehyung hums instead and rolls to the side, incites Jimin to do the same so that they face each other. His eyes are red and tired. Jimin aches a little more.

Taehyung cups his cheek, presses closer, kisses Jimin’s forehead and then wrap his body of his own.

“Thank you.”
3.22 You know I’d rather drown, than to go on without you

Chapter Notes

This chapter is short but

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You: i managed to clock out earlier
20-07-2016, 15:55

You: are you still at tae’s?
20-07-2016, 15:55

Because that’s exactly where Yoongi is, right now. Pulling open the glass door of the building and heading to the elevator. Still all suited up, his tie not even loosened up.

For some reason, today he’s particularly eager to see them. Jimin and him did hang out the previous day, just them, Taehyung still having business at the company. They went to a place Jimin talked about often, a pier that took quite some time driving to, and they walked and sat and talked, ate at a cute and cozy place near the sea. He’s been told they furnished the second bedroom on Monday, on a whim. Jimin was wearing an affectionate smile for most of that sliver of conversation, so Yoongi is curious to see that as well.

Jimin: ah, sorry hyung, i already left
20-07-2016, 15:56

Jimin: had to drop off at home early to get my suit and all that
20-07-2016, 15:56

Yoongi hums, steps out of the elevator, stills to type on his phone right in front of the apartment.

You: its okay, do you think it’ll take long?
20-07-2016, 15:56
You: i could wait for you with tae
20-07-2016, 15:56

Jimin: its a dinner with a couple associates so its hard to tell
20-07-2016, 15:57

You: yeah i get it
20-07-2016, 15:57

You: keep me updated?
20-07-2016, 15:57

Jimin: i will
20-07-2016, 15:57

A few seconds later, he receives a picture; Jimin in his Armani suit, lips gently curved up. And from the leather seat Yoongi gets a glimpse of, he’s in the company’s car. Yoongi smiles and pockets his phone, quietly goes through the front door of Taehyung’s place.

Yoongi looks through the living room, meets deep chestnut eyes, and Taehyung acknowledges him from where he’s sitting in the threshold of the patio door. He goes straight to the newly decorated room, takes in the additions and it sparkles interest in him, a sense of comfort.

“How d’you find it?” Taehyung asks when Yoongi joins him, sits at his side.

“Looking sharp. Price must have been, too.”

Taehyung shrugs, offers him his pack.

“Just a couple thousands. He probably won’t even notice it.”

Yoongi scoffs, thanks him after grabbing himself a stick, and leans in for a kiss as he hands it back.

He’s being let in, indulged. But Taehyung doesn’t let it last for long and retracts.

“Jimin will grow attached to the idea if we don’t slack off, hyung,” he slowly breathes out his smoke as he says this, and Yoongi watches it twirl away, his heart feeling heavier by the second.

“He already is. And I’m getting there too,” he confesses. His cigarette is still intact between his fingers and the idea of putting it aflame is not as tempting anymore.

Taehyung studies him, impassive. Yoongi knows he stepped in a fucking web and that no matter what’s said from here on, something is going to come out damaged.
“Don’t grow too attached to it. What we have is fun, but we both know it’s not viable because we can’t work. You and me.”

His voice is calm. Serious. His words, thought over.

“You know how I feel,” Yoongi says. “You’re just being stubborn at this point.”

Taehyung stands and Yoongi’s eyes follow him. Key moment. It’s scary. Taehyung, and this whole situation, they’re threatening to slip through his fingers if he doesn’t hold on tight enough and it’s terrifying.

“And how do you feel?”

He sighs, not liking how Taehyung is trying to force it out of his mouth. It gives him that sensation of being cornered.

“I have feelings for you, Tae.”

Taehyung laughs, but there’s nothing biting to it.

“It’s good, I guess. But did you guys ask me how I was feeling?”

Yoongi licks his lips. He doesn’t know what to say. For someone who was yearning for them so much, now he’s just getting tired, and somewhere deep, frustrated. Taehyung bends and kills his cigarette in the ashtray.

“Hyung,” Taehyung sounds so composed, when Yoongi knows he wouldn’t need much to go off. “If even after all this time you can’t say you love me properly because of what happened, then that should give you an idea of how fucked up I am inside.”

Yoongi stares, objections wanting to spill out, but there’s just silence. But silence, silence is not enough for them anymore.

“I’m going to go to those vacations because Jimin’s happy about them and I don’t want him to feel let down. I’ll see myself out of my own apartment now, so that I don’t have to hurt myself by asking you to leave.”

Yoongi makes a move to stand, the cigarette still in his hold, albeit crushed with the tension of his nerves.

“There’s no rush, hyung. Just don’t forget to lock the door.”

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You: im sorry jimin, i wont be there when you come home

20-07-2016, 16:32

Δ
Taehyung does stall in front of the corner store.

He burns through one, two, four cigarettes, pondering if he should go in or not. Battling with his own mind.

Whenever his thoughts go too fast for his emotions, Taehyung drinks. That’s how it’s been for months and months, now. When his brain brings him in places he doesn’t want to be, Taehyung drinks. It helps. Or at least that’s what he thinks when he’s emotionally overwhelmed. Next mornings are something else entirely, though. Those, he doesn’t think of them until he’s drowning in a headache and retching above the toilet.

Jiminie: its a mess here, ill be back later than i expected
20-07-2016, 19:01

Taehyung fixes his phone, a flicker of disappointment passing him through.

But he finally walks away as he starts typing.

You: its all good, be careful on the way home
20-07-2016, 19:02

He door is unlocked.

He narrows his eyes, but presses in nonetheless.

And then he’s hit with the smell of cooked meat and the tang of fish sauce. He looks down, only his own shoes are in the rack.

“Jimin?”

“It’s me,” Yoongi’s voice comes and Taehyung goes tense, immobile in the corridor. He wasn’t expecting him to still be here. He doesn’t think he can function with the same poised coldness as he did earlier. He breathes through his nose. His chest hurts. “You were taking a while so I decided to cook you dinner. I know Jimin will be here late.”

Yoongi comes out of the kitchen, closes in on him and Taehyung is suddenly so, so vulnerable.

Taehyung holds eye contact, and holds his breath. There’s a cloud around them, similar to the one from weeks ago, in that same place, where they talked about what happened before New York for the first time. Yoongi’s tone is low and his pace sluggish, like when he speaks things from the heart,
and his eyes, they’re somber and beautiful, sweet like a past that still hurts too much.

“I love you, Kim Taehyung. That’s how I feel.” Taehyung seizes up. He bits his own teeth. His lungs, his whole ribcage, it all starts aching. “Stop running away, now.” Yoongi stares at him for too long, gauges his reaction. “Good night.”

Yoongi doesn’t kiss him. Just passes by like a soft storm and goes through the door, closes it quietly.

Taehyung stands in the corridor, alone and bleeding emotions, and a part of him wants to run after him. But the other is just too strong and nails him in place, tells him he’s scared and angry and resentful.

He knows, that this part wins too often. He knows, in moments like this, that his heart still beats for Yoongi the same way it beats for Jimin, but that this shell he’s built in clubs and in between shots and weed and strangers’ hands on his body, will always come up and remind him that he can’t trust.

Taehyung knows and feels, but he can’t forgive.

He leans on the wall, drops his face in his hands. His throat tightens and the tears come, and he doesn’t fight them.

Chapter End Notes

Yoongi is slowly growing a spine
There’s something suspicious about Hoseok talking less and less about his apartment, and about the brevity of his words when he does. He dodges questions, prefers to meet with them outside.

Jimin is starting to worry that Eunji has crossed a line or that Hoseok has just given up and bent to her, after what happened with Yoongi. And the thing is, he’s got prominent bags under his eyes, but his smiles are bright and genuine, so Jimin tries not to overthink and trust him instead.

“And you still don’t know what happened?”

Jimin shakes his head but he’s not too sure if Hoseok did see him. He seems busy eyeing how Seokjin is trying to teach Jungkook how to steam milk for a latte, behind the counter, when Namjoon is rushing with the line of clients, alone.

“M’no,” he ends up voicing. “He wasn’t mad or anything, he was just super tired and went to bed early.”

“Hyung was with him, wasn’t he?” Jimin hums in response, ripping to shreds the tiny envelope of that additional sugar he’s put in his mochaccino. “Did you ask him?”

“I did, but he texted me back and I was already asleep. He kept it vague as fuck.”

“And today?”

“Tried to dig more, but he’s really busy with work and all that stuff. He hasn’t answered me yet.”

“Jimin-ah,” Jimin looks up to Hoseok, smiles when there’s a loud sound breaking through the place, Namjoon’s low voice cursing and Jungkook snickering. “It’s getting really complicated, isn’t it?”

He shrugs. He’s been over that thought so many times that he’s just accepted it.

“It’s a lot of figuring out when to give them their space together, trying not to feel like you’re pushing one of them away when you’re alone with the other, and fitting some time for your own person too. I mean, that’s not the easiest configuration to work with, but it’s worth it.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“What did you mean, then?”

Hoseok weighs his words, takes a sip of warm sweetness, and Jimin waits, curious.

“You. Trying to bring them together. I can see, and I agree with you that there is something between them. But they don’t seem to work out. So I was thinking, that you might want to find satisfaction in what you already have. Don’t you think?”

Jimin sets his jaw.

“There’s nothing remotely satisfying in seeing the two persons I love suffering because of each other, hyung.”
“To be very honest, they seem to keep you worried more than they make you happy.”

“Well you’re not really in a position to talk, are you?”

There’s an iceberg settling in between them in the form of a biting silence and Jimin slouches back in his chair, eyes closed, exhaling regret.

“I’m sorry, hyung. That was a cheap shot.”

“I shouldn’t have gone there. I questioned your relationship, and I shouldn’t have. So I apologize for that.”

“I’m happy, okay?” Jimin lets his tone glide lower, softer. He knows he’s too sensitive on the topic and probably overreacted, though he can’t really tell why. “When I’m with them, I’m happy. They make me feel good and loved and wanted and all that nice stuff. But I’m just desperately grappling around to find that one thing that’s missing for us to all feel equally as good.”

“Time, is probably it.” Hoseok’s voice is clear, but his eyes are not. They’re cast down, clouded. “That’s what Seokjin hyung told you, right? That you should help them build something new, and not try to fix the past.”

“I know. But it’s hard doing one without doing the other.”

“I can imagine. But what they went through, and, without biasing or anything, especially Taehyung, was rough. You can’t expect of him to just, forget everything.”

“I’m not. I’m really not. But I’d just want him to stop lying to everyone when he pretends he’s not in love with hyung.”

There’s the sound of metal hitting the floor and Seokjin wheezing, followed by a fast set of steps coming their way.

“Maybe he’s not even aware that he’s lying.”

Something in Jimin clicks, and the thoughts start rushing.

“I’ve been kicked out,” Jungkook talks through his laughter, plopping in the seat next to Hoseok. “Namjoon hyung said I was too distracting.”

“And above all, not an employee,” Jimin adds.

“Steaming milk is fun though, and trying to draw a heart in the latte and just ending up with a fucking deformed circle. You okay, hyung?” He asks Hoseok.

“Yeah, I’m fine, Jungkookie. But I think I should be heading to the mall.”

He stands and Jimin squints, takes his phone out and looks the digital clock on it.

“It’s not even two, you’re getting in in an hour and a half, no?”

Hoseok nods, gathers his half-emptied cup and his wallet. Doesn’t meet Jimin’s eyes.

“But I need to drop by somewhere to buy some stuff.”

Jimin and Jungkook glance at each other, startled by how purposefully vague Hoseok is being.
“Oh, okay,” Jungkook whispers, sobered-up in a matter of seconds.

“I’ll keep you updated?” Jimin nods but he once again doubts that Hoseok can see him. “Jimin you’re leaving tomorrow morning, right? For Japan.”

“Yeah?”

“Have a nice trip if we don’t talk until then.”

Jimin freezes. Jungkook does to. And Hoseok goes through the door, the gentle bell sound accompanying his rather harsh exit.

“Why wouldn’t you talk until tomorrow?” Jungkook turns to him, settling better in his chair.

“No idea. But I don’t think it has anything to do with me.”

Δ

Yoongi gives a curt nod to the lady sitting at the front desk, her smile polite and knowing, and he heads out.

It’s raining, tonight. It’s violent pours and cracking thunder, it gives the wind a whip of coolness.

He fits a cigarette between his lips. Here surely isn’t the place of choice for this, a health clinic. But filling those authorization papers for the DNA test and getting sampled, knowing that there’s no turning back on this, stressed him out. If everything goes well, they could get the results in as little as 48 hours.

He walks to the edge of that small roofed area in front of the building’s entrance, momentarily tenses when stray drops land on his warm skin. Then he fills his lungs, loses himself in the grey clouds and the freshness of the outside. It makes him want to sit for hours and witness the sky falling, like Taehyung and him used to do so often.

You: i’m just out of the clinic

21-07-2016, 19:37

It’s petrifying. The thought of Caitlyn being pregnant with his baby.

It’s been gnawing at him in the most impromptu of moments. At night when he’s dozing off, at work when he’s looking through documents to find other employees’ mistakes, when Jimin meets his eyes and that he smiles so prettily.

And yesterday, when he was reckless enough to tell Taehyung he loved him, he thought of this, too. And of the possibility of having to rip himself away from his own life again.

He feels bad, for allowing Jimin in, and for allowing himself to believe what there is between the three of them, even before having settled this matter completely.
Because if he’s the father, Yoongi is going to have to leave. Flying off from Korea and return a city that killed him under lighted up skyscrapers and loneliness. He’s going to have to abandon Jimin and Taehyung here, and try not to look back as he’ll walk away from what’s keeping him up and going in this life he has only half chosen.

**Caitlyn**: Ah, good. Thank you.

21-07-2016, 19:41

He ignores the glances he gets from passersby for looking so grim.

If he’s the father, Yoongi is going to lose everything.

**You**: how is it going now?

21-07-2016, 19:43

**Caitlyn**: It’s starting to show no matter what I wear. I get more and more questions.

21-07-2016, 19:44

**Caitlyn**: I don’t like it. People at the company are only being judgmental and it puts a lot of pressure on me.

21-07-2016, 19:44

**Caitlyn**: I was thinking about going off work soon, retreat in a nice place until she’s born.

21-07-2016, 19:44

**Caitlyn**: What do you think?

21-07-2016, 19:44

He swallows around the tightness of his throat. He hates this.

He burns through the rest of his cigarette, kills it under his foot and throws it in the trashcan near the door.

He lights up another.

**You**: are you asking for my opinion because you’re assuming i’m the father?

21-07-2016, 19:46
Caitlyn: No, I want your advice because you might not remember, but we used to be friends.

21-07-2016, 19:46

Caitlyn: And because you’re a sensible person. So please don’t be unnecessarily mean to me.

21-07-2016, 19:46

Caitlyn: I’m not having fun at all, with this story. It’s stressful.

21-07-2016, 19:47

Yoongi sees a message from Hoseok popping up at the top of his screen and he’s curious, but doesn’t open it up immediately.

You: i think

21-07-2016, 19:48

You: that if you feel like this is something you should do for the both of you, then do it

21-07-2016, 19:48

You: trust yourself and your instinct

21-07-2016, 19:48

Caitlyn: The company wouldn’t be happy with that, right?

21-07-2016, 19:50

You: we don’t care about that, cait

21-07-2016, 19:50

You: your health and the baby’s are far more important

21-07-2016, 19:50

Caitlyn: You’re right.

21-07-2016, 19:51
He takes a long drag, types this question he’s not sure he wants an answer to.

You: what happens if it’s not mine?
21-07-2016, 19:53

Caitlyn: I’ll raise her on my own.
21-07-2016, 19:53

That makes him uncomfortable. He leans on one of the wet beams holding the roof.

You: why?
21-07-2016, 19:53

Caitlyn: Because if the father isn’t you, then I know who it is, and there’s no way I’m letting him near my baby.
21-07-2016, 19:54

That doesn’t ease the knot in his stomach. At all.

You: do i want to know why?
21-07-2016, 19:54

Caitlyn: No, you don’t.
21-07-2016, 19:54

Caitlyn: Anyway, no matter the outcome of this, I know I’ll manage to make it work.
21-07-2016, 19:54

You: im sure of it too
21-07-2016, 19:54
Caitlyn: How are you doing now?
21-07-2016, 19:54

He stares at the letters for long, frowns when he gets images of a past self that wouldn’t want to live no matter how steadily his heart was beating in his chest.

You: better than i did
21-07-2016, 19:55

This is all he feels like he can say. This is a territory he’ll avoid stepping in if he can.

You: reach to me, if you need anything
21-07-2016, 19:55

Caitlyn: I will. Thank you.
21-07-2016, 19:55

Yoongi strides over to his car, protects his screen from fat droplets as he tries to read Hoseok’s message.

Seokseok: im gonna do it
21-07-2016, 19:47

He raises a brow, unlocks his Cadillac with his key fob, slips in the passenger seat.

You: do what?
21-07-2016, 19:57

Seokseok: i was with jimin earlier
Seokseok: and he made me realize i was just fucking done

Seokseok: so tomorrow im going to go to my apartment and tell eunji its over

Seokseok: and tell her to fuck off of my place

Yoongi smiles in spite of himself.

After that conversation he’s had with Caitlyn, this feels very satisfying. He’s glad that Hoseok and he could stay friends. They get along effortlessly and they haven’t known each other for a long time, but Yoongi can feel their friendship rooting in solidly. There is lingering awkwardness from time to time when they talk because of what happened, but he’s confident that it’s going to wash off eventually.

You: then you should do it tonight

You: i’ll go with you

Seokseok: i work till late, hyung

Seokseok: tomorrow seemed more doable to me

You: i don’t want you to change your mind overnight

You: that seems to be the kind of thing you do

You: so lets go right after work
You: you get off when the mall closes, right? 22?

21-07-2016, 20:01

Seokseok: yeah

21-07-2016, 20:02

You: i’ll be there

21-07-2016, 20:02

Yoongi gets weird flashbacks as they climb up the stairs to Hoseok’s apartment. He remembers the drab color of the walls and the distorted echo in the staircase, when he went up and down to smoke on the night of the party. That party that brought Taehyung and Jimin back to each other, where Seokjin was being an ultimate soft-drunk and that he saw Hoseok for the second time, closely dancing with a pretty girl.

Now Yoongi knows who that girl is. And there’s a bitterness to it, knowing what they’re headed to do.

Hoseok keeps heaving cleansing breaths, but he’s not hesitating. Hasn’t since they met in the parking lot, the air still thick but the rain in a lull.

“It’s going to be fine,” Yoongi encourages when they’ve reached the door. “I’ll be waiting here.”

Hoseok gives a quick jerk of head that Yoongi interprets as him nodding, and tests the doorknob, to see if the place is locked. But it gives easily and with a roll of his eyes he slips in.

Yoongi rests against the wall, aware that it might take a while, and starts typing an answer to Jimin when there’s a raised voice resounding inside, one he doesn’t recognize. It’s masculine and aggressive and he bristles, keeping still and resisting his urge to go in.

He can’t say he’s surprised.

He stares at the door on the opposite side of the corridor, but he’s focused on listening, failing to understand the words that are being yelled. Then there’s a thud, just loud enough for him to know that someone’s been thrown into a wall and he’s storming in.

He makes it to the kitchen, fists tight and ready for whatever, and it’s been so long that he’s felt like that, high on adrenaline. Years. The last he remembers was when he had gotten into a violent argument with his father when he was seventeen and giving no fuck about having plans for university.

Yoongi’s eyes meet some dude’s, sharp and built on a tall, broad frame, who’s standing in front of Eunji protectively. His hand is flat on Hoseok’s chest, holding him against the wall like he’s some
dangerous stranger.

“Who the fuck is that?” the dude grits when he sees him, and Hoseok’s head snaps to Yoongi.

“It’s fine, hyung, I can deal.”

“Oh, yeah. I don’t doubt it,” he plants himself in the doorway, scrutinizes them. Eunji, specifically. “Just making sure nothing’s getting out of hand.”

Hoseok studies him for a few breaths and centers his attention back to Eunji.

“I can’t leave,” she says before he even opens his mouth, and she’s pleading. She’s in a nightgown and she looks sex-wrecked from that dude that isn’t Hoseok, but she’s pleading. “I have nowhere else to go.”

Yoongi digs his nails in his palms in silenced anger.

“It’s not working on me anymore, Eunji,” Hoseok speaks low, but assured. “You fucked me over and for too long. Just leave.”

“Hoseokie,”

Yoongi sees the way Hoseok’s face contorts in frustration, how his jaw tightens, and his voices comes out much louder after that.

“Fucking—Don’t you dare calling me that—“

He tries to take a step forward but the guy rams him back against the surface, and Yoongi hears Hoseok’s breath cutting and the dull noise his head makes when it bounces against it and he tenses a little more. Eunji gasps, her eyes watery. Horrified. But Yoongi can’t tell who she’s worried for.

“You don’t talk to her like that,” the other threatens and Hoseok bats his hand away, attempt to put him out of his own space but it doesn’t do much, just gets him an ugly snicker and another hard shove and Yoongi’s done. In three strides he’s over to them.

“Okay,” he growls, fist the guy’s collar and pulls him down so that they’re looking straight into each other’s eyes. “Listen here, piece of shit,” he’s getting blinked at, then smirked at. Yoongi’s pretty sure the other thinks that he’s having a height advantage. “You have—“

Yoongi sees him swing a fist, aiming for his face, and the angle allows him to easily dodge it. He grabs at his wrist and twists his arm so it’s tight against his back, forcing him to move until he’s front to the wall. He hears him muffle a groan and then spitting insults, and with his free hand, Yoongi slightly pushes his arms further up toward his shoulder blades.

He’s hissing now, and Yoongi swells. He never really got in a lot of fights, mainly because Taehyung asked him not to. But he knows too well that in other circumstances, he would’ve been a fighter.

“You have five minutes to gather your shit and leave. Else I’m calling the police.”

The silence weighs in the room, there’s just the harsh sounds of their breathings and Eunji’s sobs to envelop them.

Yoongi waits for an answer that doesn’t come.

“Do you understand me?”
The guy mutters an agreement, voice strained and Yoongi jerks him forward one last time before letting go.

“I could have dealt with it,” Hoseok says, once the apartment has fallen into quietness, the other two having finally left.

He’s still standing in the middle of the kitchen, gaze haggard and posture slack, slouched.

“I know you could have,” Yoongi is walking around the rooms, placing back on the shelves fallen objects. “It has nothing to do with your ability to deal with him. It has to do with me not putting up with seeing him hurt you.”

“That sounds like a love declaration.”

“Does it?” Yoongi chuckles, tone going lighter to match Hoseok’s.

“Sort of.”

All the rooms are a mess, but the bedroom is by far the worse. The bed is in a worse state than just being unmade, the curtains are drawn closed and the window shut, making it dark and heavy with humidity. There’s the lingering smell of weed and sex, and Yoongi frowns, unwillingly brought back to a forgotten time. There are dozens and dozens of discs and vinyl taken out of their rack and littering the shelves and the desk. Some of them look broken, like someone stepped on them. There’re clothes thrown haphazardly on the floor, Hoseok’s drawer and closet have been rummaged through and Yoongi’s heart sinks.

The whole room looks like murder.

He doesn’t know all the details of the story and how it could reach so low, but he’s glad it’s over.

“Thanks, hyung,” Hoseok speaks from afar and Yoongi dreads the look on his face when he’s going to see this.

“Don’t mention it,” he mumbles, doubts Hoseok heard. He makes his way back, finds him sitting at the table, looking exhausted. “Don’t mention it,” he repeats, gentle. “What’s your plan now?”

Uh, cleaning up?” he laughs and it’s bitter. It hides a sadness Yoongi can still see in his eyes.

“Want me to help?”

“I— Yeah? But I also think I just—I really want to see Jimin? I’ve been hiding it from him and I feel really bad about it and I don’t know, it’s just—”

“I’ll text him.”

“But I know you guys are leaving tomorrow and I don’t want to tire you up so—”

“Don’t worry about it. Want me to call someone else too? Jungkook?”

Hoseok holds his eyes for an unnaturally long moment, before he picks up his phone in his pocket.

“I’ll write in the group chat.”
“Okay.”

Yoongi wants to find the way Hoseok behaves reassuring. The fact that he finally made a move to end this, that he went through with it, and that he’s not shrinking onto himself is, at least, of good omen.

You: jimin-ah, i’m sorry for not answering you earlier
21-07-2016, 23:18

You: what are you two doing right now
21-07-2016, 23:19

Jimin: its fine, hyung
21-07-2016, 23:23

Jimin: tae randomly passed out packing his bag
21-07-2016, 23:23

Jimin: and im still packing mine, why?
21-07-2016, 23:23

You: i know it’s late
21-07-2016, 23:23

You: but would you come to hoseok’s place?
21-07-2016, 23:24

“Jungkook and Namjoon aren’t answering, but Seokjin hyung says he’s gonna come over.”

“Good.”

Yoongi admires how close they all are.

Jimin: ok im worried
21-07-2016, 23:24

Jimin: what happened
You: i think he’d rather tell you himself

Jimin: do i need to bring something

You: food, probably

You: and stuff to clean up

You: but seokjin hyung is coming too, so maybe talk about it with him

Jimin: fuck ok

Jimin: im on my way

Δ

“I’m fucking scared of what I’ll find.”

Seokjin places a warm palm on his shoulder.

“We’ll be there, so no matter what, it’s going to be fine.”

Jimin picks up a bottle of biodegradable all-purpose cleaner, places it in his basket and tries to believe him.
Jimin’s heart shatters, when he pushes in the apartment and that the first thing he sees is Hoseok coming his way, arms open and gaze begging.

He abandons his bag on the floor, let Hoseok find a place within his arms, feels his ribcage tight and uncomfortable when he hears him break into sobs.

“What the fuck happened?” he asks, shifting them away from the door so that Seokjin can come in too.

Yoongi comes out of the living room, hands in his pockets, his snapback keeping his hair away from his forehead, and he sets on picking up the bags and bringing them back to the kitchen. Seokjin is quick to follow him.

“It’s over,” he mumbles in the fabric of Jimin’s hoodie. “I did it.”

Jimin and Yoongi do their best to keep Hoseok away from the bedroom, leaving him to Seokjin’s care, and to less violent messes.

Jimin curses his way through, tearing up multiple times whenever he sees one of Hoseok’s possession damaged. And he prefers to think those were accidents. For his sanity, he assumes they are.

Yoongi runs soothing touches down his back whenever they’re close, hugs and kisses him the more tired they become. Jimin pulls the curtains open to a rainy night dotted with the orange light of the streetlamps, rolls the window open so that it lets in fresh, new air.

He can’t even find it in himself to be mad about Hoseok hiding what’s been going one for two weeks. How he only came back here twice since that night at the bar, the last time being over ten days ago, peeling himself from Eunji and squatting Nami’s couch like he had no place to return to. Which, thinking back, explains the abrupt lift in his moods but the darker colors under his eyes.

Admittedly, Jimin’s a little hurt. Hoseok knows Jimin would have found him a place to stay, would’ve welcomed him, would’ve helped him. But he understands that a lot of things happened for the both of them in very little time, with the incident with Yoongi and Jimin practically moving in with Taehyung, and that Hoseok might not have found a way to tell him without feeling like a burden.

“Fuck, I hate her.”

“If that can be of any consolation, she cried a lot.”

“It’s not.”

“And the dude that was with her went out the door with his tail between his legs.”

“The dude?” Jimin shoots Yoongi a glare, anger pinching at him even harder.

“Yeah, she wasn’t alone when we got in.”

Jimin makes a frustrated noise in the back of his throat, momentarily seeing red when he remembers how broken Hoseok had been after finding out Eunji had cheated on him.
“I shouldn’t have let him go back to her.”

“That’s not really something you have control on, Jimin-ah. Hoseok is an adult. You can only be the net, in case he’s falling.”

Yoongi’s tone is dipping lower with every sentence.

“That’s the kind of things Namjoon hyung would say,” Jimin tosses another shirt in the laundry basket.

“I’m tired. That’s probably why.”

Jimin smiles at this. He studies Yoongi moving around, and he does look tired. Stressed, even. His brows are creased and his gestures choppy, like he’s unsure or confused.

“How was your day, hyung?” he asks, wanting Yoongi to stop and look at him. But he doesn’t.

“T’was fine.”

“Okay, and if you actually answer honestly?”

Now Yoongi stills, meets his eyes and then sighs. He skirts around the bed, his hands find an easy place on Jimin’s cheeks, his lips meet his with a tenderness that wasn’t there earlier.

“Stressful. Emotionally draining.”

“Wanna talk about it?”

Yoongi leans in again, lets the kiss linger for longer.

“I will, eventually. But for now let’s finish this. We’re having a plane to take in less than eight hours.”

Jimin nods. Breathes through the flutter in his stomach.

And when they’re finally done, it’s past 3am, and the apartment smells like citrus and baking soda. Seokjin is, with sleep-hooded eyes but soft features, baking croissants, and Hoseok is waiting for them like a kid, sitting on the counter and blabbering, though he’s very obviously too drowsy to function.

Jimin texts Taehyung not to worry, that he’s at Hoseok’s with Yoongi and that they will be back soon, and he plops down next to Yoongi around the table.

He’s back with the rising of the sun, exhausted but feeling warm like he’s swaddled up, at peace with the untying of Hoseok’s situation.

He joins Taehyung under the covers, cuddles him and breathes deep, wishing Yoongi could have been there too. He’ll only be able to get a nap, but as Taehyung wraps an arm around his waist and brings him closer, Jimin decides it’s going to be sufficient.
3.24 Jupiter 33

Chapter Notes

The trip part was long enough for me to cut it into three part, so here's the first one!

WARNINGS FOR:
Homophobia
A lot of hormones (?)

“Hyung,”
Park Jimin and traffic jams.
“Hyung, I’m gonna kill someone.”
Park Jimin and traffic jams when he hasn’t slept more than two hours.
“You’re not going to kill anyone.”
Yoongi doesn’t know why he had this idea to get Jimin to pick him up, but now he’s thankful he did. Because Jimin is driving and he’s angry and tired, and even with Taehyung in his Audi in front to lead them, he’s still very much lacking patience.
“The dude behind us keeps the nose of his fucking Honda in my ass, hyung.”
Yoongi finds it funny but Jimin doesn’t.

Taehyung: is he ok
22-07-2016, 8:39

Taehyung: he looks like hes about to go berserk on someone or smt
22-07-2016, 8:39

You: he’s having a roadrage trip
22-07-2016, 8:39

Yoongi lifts his eyes, observes Taehyung’s reaction when he gets the message. Then their gazes
touch through Taehyung’s rearview mirror and Taehyung smiles, takes a long drag from his cigarette.

They still haven’t addressed what happened two days prior, but Yoongi isn’t sure there is a need to. Saying *I love you*, that’s something he felt he had to do, had to make clear, and he isn’t expecting any kind of response. Because it doesn’t need one. He supposes that with everything between them, it wasn’t really surprising for Taehyung. That he was perhaps expecting it. So that doesn’t make of Yoongi’s words a game changer.

He was apprehensive about this morning though, given that they hadn’t talked at all since then. But they’re okay. There’s no leftover tension or awkwardness, just a knowing aura when they look at each other, and Yoongi thinks he needs to thank Jimin’s omnipresence, and how good he unconsciously is to Taehyung.

The cars start moving slowly and Jimin sighs, lets his Audi glide forwards until they have to stop again, stares fixedly at his mirror.

“Hyung, he’s doing it on purpose. The little fucker—”

“Just let him, Jimin-ah.”

**Taehyung**: give him a smoke

22-07-2016, 8:42

Half amused, Yoongi reaches in the console, plucks Jimin’s pack and offers it to him.

“You’re cranky,” he says.

Jimin glares at him, his features stoic.

“I don’t think you quite understand how frustrated I am right now, hyung.”

Yoongi hums out a *right* with a gravelly voice, reluctantly puts the carton where he found it. He’s trying really hard not to grin or laugh, because Jimin is cute, when he’s like that. But he’s also a bit scary and Yoongi doesn’t want to ruin the mood of their trip.

**Taehyung**: call him sweetpea

22-07-2016, 8:45

And that makes Yoongi snort.

“What?” Jimin hisses in response. He’s so stiff that Yoongi can feel it like a wall standing between their seats. His hand is tight on the gearshift, his other cramped around the steering wheel. He keeps sending nervous glances around.
“Sweetpea?”

Jimin’s head snaps toward Taehyung’s car and he raises him his middle finger.

“Fuck you,” he mutters, knowing full well that Taehyung can’t hear.

Yoongi suppresses another laugh when he realizes that Taehyung has seen Jimin and cracked up, alone in his car.

“No, you piece of shit, there’s no place there, where are you trying to go,” Jimin gestures to a car that’s attempting to fit between them and Taehyung and he gives his Audi a sharp jerk forward.

Yoongi bounces in his seat with how abrupt the move is, smiles and looks out the window of the passenger side, swallows down his words.

He’s tired. So tired.

Taehyung: will you guys make it tho

22-07-2016, 8:47

You: pray

22-07-2016, 8:47

The next minutes are quiet, Jimin having muted the music, saying it frayed his nerves even more. Their pace is excruciatingly slow, progressing on a couple of meters before they need to still again, and Yoongi suspects that this is more than just normal morning traffic jam, that there must have been an accident further ahead.

He’s just glad they left early.

“Look at him, hyung, fucking look at him snickering like some kind of— Fuck I hate this,” Jimin fishes his cigarette pack, harshly presses one between his lips and lights it, pulls in smoke like it’s air and that he’s this close to drowning.

“We’re almost there.”

“We’re not.”

“Yeah, we are, you’re just too——“

“We’ve been in here for a fucking hour, I’m just— Back off, dude, I’m serious. Back the fuck off.”

Yoongi laughs drowsily, feeling helpless. He runs his fingers through his hair. He meets Taehyung’s eyes, shrugs.

Taehyung: tell him we’re almost there
You: have you ever tried making conversation with an angry wall

Taehyung: so dramatic

Taehyung: tell him, hyung

You: i already did

You: hence why i was referring to an angry wall

“Are you tryna get in the trunk, dude?”

“Jimin,”

“Would you want me to open it up for you? Mhm? To help you a little?”

Yoongi indulges himself and picks his own cigarettes.

He’s too tired to deal with that situation properly. He’s known for a while that Jimin was easy to drive into impatience on the road, but he’s never witnessed him to be so vehement. Fatigue. He’s going to blame it on that.

The car moves and Yoongi shifts, rolls the window down, letting in a fresh rush of air.

“Hyung they’re smiling at me.”

Yoongi peeks at the Honda from in between their two seats, finds the driver and the girl next to him staring teasingly.

“There’s literally nothing I can do,” he mutters around his cigarette, placing a gentle palm to Jimin’s thigh.

Taehyung: jimins gonna come out
“I’m fucking done.”

You: he’s not intense

You: he’s not that intense

“Okay man, I think I’ve been patient enough.”

The door flies open. Jimin takes a last drag of his cigarette before he throws it to the ground and gets out.

“What the fuck? Park Jimin get your ass in this car.”

“Fuck you. Don’t tell me what to do.”

Yoongi clicks his tongue, looks at Taehyung as he unclasps his seatbelt.

He comes out from his side, squinting through the morning clarity, eyes trained on Jimin’s figure as he’s coaxing the guy into opening his window. It’s something else, to see him like that. Pumped up. Ready to pounce. Jimin is usually the tension breaker, peaceful and always more inclined towards conflict-avoidance and problem-solving. But now he’s oozing assertive energy that seeps through the words he tries to keep polite, while he’s talking to a visibly socially-numbed person.

And that leads Yoongi to wonder how Jimin would have reacted the night before, when Hoseok was getting shoved into a wall repeatedly.

“I’m just asking you to keep a reasonable distance with my car, I don’t think that’s too hard to understand?”

The guy makes a face, mocking Jimin, pretending he’s not hearing through the barely rolled-down window. Jimin’s pretense falls.

“You’re not hearing? Let me speak louder for you then. Keep your head out of my ass, you fucker. I’m not gonna say it again.”

Yoongi lazily strolls towards them, pulling smoke from his cigarette, when he sees the two persons in the car getting agitated. They’re yelling things he can’t decipher, but that light up a vibrant, violent fire in Jimin’s eyes.

“What did you say?” Jimin gives a wicked grin, steps even closer. “Come on, get out. I want you to say it to my fucking face.” That only gets him lewd gestures and more yelling. Yoongi now gets a better idea of what they said that made Jimin in that state. “You don’t wanna come out? Right? You coward piece of shit, talking through your ass.”
“Jimin,”

Yoongi’s voice is drowned by the sound of the Honda’s door being opened. That’s somehow surprising. For a fraction of a second, he’s tempted to just watch things unfold, and admire the way Jimin rolls with it, but he also knows that the wise thing to do is to stop whatever is going to happen before it does.

The guy extracts himself from his car and Yoongi taps his ash off exactly when Taehyung gets to them, as composed and confident as himself is. The girl suddenly stops throwing insults at them.

“What’s up,” he drawls and Jimin glances at him, have them talk in silence.

He likes seeing them like that. He likes that a lot.

They bicker and tease each other constantly, but they fit together more perfectly than they’ll ever see.

“So is this one taking it up the ass too?” the dude says, tentatively aggressive through his smile. But Yoongi can see he wouldn’t need much to recoil.

Taehyung throws him a sideways look. And really, it’s all it takes for the other to freeze.

“Ah, so that’s what it’s about.” Taehyung eats up the space that separates them, comes to stand uncomfortably close to him. Yoongi watches, delighted, as Taehyung slips his cigarette between his lips and pulls, blows out his smoke in a small, controlled stream to the guy’s face. “Don’t make me say what you’ll take up the ass if you don’t shut your homophobic mouth. Do yourself and this lady a favor and go sit back in there.”

Taehyung steps in the guy’s personal space to force him backwards when he doesn’t get cooperated with.

“Come on.”

That was almost too easy.

“Hyungshikie,” the girl calls, almost childishly, from inside the Honda. “Come back in.”

“You really should listen to her, Hyungshikie.” The guy gives, and, still a little hazed by Taehyung’s attitude, sits. “Look at how nice I am, I’ll even take care of your door for you.”

And Taehyung slams it shut.

Yoongi’s lips curl up in a sly smile to match Jimin’s satisfied expression. Taehyung softens as fast as he bristled up, soothes a hand down Jimin’s back with enough affection to defy blindness.

“We still have a plane to take,” Taehyung leads them away.

And when they share a look, Yoongi decides that it’s going to be a nice trip.

Δ

“Keep the right for like, a while.”
Yoongi huffs out a laugh at Jimin’s lack of precision.

Taehyung feels like he’s watching some kind of movie.

He’s settled in the back, sprawled on the flawless leather seat of the car they rented. It’s spacious and clean, with all the latest technologies and fun little gadgets, but it’s nothing he’s not used to. He’s looking outside the window at times, at this unusual scenery, but his focus is trained on the way Jimin and Yoongi interact with one another. It never gets boring.

When they got out of the airport and that the keys were handed to Jimin, Yoongi placed a gentle hand to his shoulder and told them he could drive, and they just went along with it. Because Taehyung likes watching Yoongi drive too much to protest and that Jimin is still too fidgety from what happened earlier, so he’s helping with the directions instead, phone loose in his hand. It’s still a bit confusing to see the steering wheel on the right, but this, along with the energy enveloping them, is different. A good kind of different.

They’re talking in low, relaxed voices, now. Taehyung likes to see them like that. Just like he felt content seeing Jimin’s head loll against Yoongi’s shoulder when they both fell asleep on the plane.

But Taehyung is still having times when he just really feels disconnected from them. It’s, most of the time, something neutral. An ascertainment. Where he just studies them unfold and it seems to him to be nothing short of natural, satisfying, even. While some other moments, it’s an overwhelming ache he just wants to escape from.

He realized, not too long ago, that it’s because he can’t imagine Yoongi and him to be together anymore. Or he won’t let himself.

But today it’s fine. He doesn’t have this need for drastic protection, where he slides a wall ten inches thick in front of his emotions. He stills thinks a lot about the words Yoongi said, about the soft sincerity in his eyes when he did, but they don’t flare anxiety in his stomach like it did in the two previous days.

As Taehyung lights his first cigarette in Japan, he briefly replays their altercation with that driver back in Seoul. He opens the window, just barely, appreciating the gush of warm air getting in. He’s somewhat surprised that it didn’t turn the mood into something tense and shitty. He already knew that Yoongi isn’t really bothered by those words and that kind of discrimination. That he doesn’t take it personal and just blames it on that fat layer of stupidity enveloping certain people. But he isn’t sure why, he thought Jimin might be more affected by it, even given how easy it is for him to display affection when there are people around. Maybe Jimin did see a lot of bullshit, maybe he’s seen way worse than this.

*There’s still so much about Jimin I don’t know*, he thinks. And then his scarring-up heart and his messy brain do the rest, and he sighs, sending smoke to curl past his lips. *There’s still so much to learn, but I might never get to.*

Taehyung made sure to get them the most expensive place he could find. It’s a tall building, rising in bricks and columns towards the sky, too perfectly symmetrical in such a lively surrounding.

The inside glows, crystal on chandeliers that reflect prettily on the cream walls. The hobby is large and the furniture sparse, carefully chosen. Crimson velvet and dark wood. The whole place is made
to feel sacredly quiet, voices only whisper and shoes sounding too loud even with the lightest of steps. Very faintly, he can hear the mellow notes of a saxophone and Taehyung thinks that it makes a great job at stifling the echo splintering in this, somehow, barren space.

They’re sent to the last floor. To the penthouse. Jimin hides a smile, Taehyung bubbles up with satisfaction.

The elevator moves like a hot knife through butter. The numbers on the small screen above the door keep changing and Taehyung watches them with mild fascination. Their breathings sound exaggerated over the ghost music but they’re the only thing that really make sense to him in here. In the dim space, Taehyung and Jimin meet gazes in the mirror-covered wall in front of them, and reach for each other’s hand.

Then the door slides open, so smooth it’s almost surreal, and Yoongi lets Jimin pass first, then lays expectant eyes on Taehyung’s softened shell.

And when Taehyung walks past him, Yoongi places a palm on the small of his back, like he used to do, months and less marred memories ago.

Taehyung decides it’s going to be a nice trip.

Yoongi runs the keycard in the lock and the door opens but he stills. He becomes stiff, Taehyung can see. Like paralyzed. It only lasts for a few seconds, but he finds it enough to be worrying.

“Hyung?” he tries, and Yoongi mechanically steps in.

Jimin swings his bag down on the floor before he makes a beeline to the bathroom and Yoongi almost imperceptibly flinches. Taehyung frowns.

“You okay?”

Yoongi nods, gently places down his own bag.

“Is the place okay?”

He turns then, and Taehyung doesn’t like the dull shimmer in his eyes. One he doesn’t understand. He lets him get closer still, lets him cup his face in a touch that’s unbearably gentle, nostalgic, and welcomes his lips when Yoongi leans in.

“Yeah, the place is fine, don’t worry.”

It’s, undeniably, one of the most luxurious places Taehyung has ever visited.

It’s spacious and clean, with a bed draped in silk of a deep color, sophisticated lamps lined with gold, a whole wall made into a window that gives on the city. The kitchen is compact but complete, but too cold to feel cozy. It’s luminous, with those careful color they used and Taehyung thinks it’s a very generic place, just filled in with things most people can’t afford.
“That bathroom though,” Jimin says, when he joins them. “The bath is like, as big as the kitchen alone.”

“More like a huge jacuzzi,” Yoongi adds.

“Pretty much.”

Jimin sends Taehyung a flirtatious look and Taehyung is quick to respond to, his gut coiling at the thoughts of what they could do in there.

There’s an infinity pool, outside. And Taehyung forgets about the jacuzzi. The water is crystalline, inviting, and he doesn’t think twice, just takes his clothes off. Jimin giggles, imitates him, and Yoongi, true to himself, just lights a cigarette and smiles, lose his thoughts in the scenery he finds down there.

No one talked about it, but they didn’t need to. It was an unspoken accord between them, to leave Korea so that they wouldn’t have to care about someone recognizing them. And Taehyung had been craving this for a while now. A place where they could be free around each other, where their parents couldn’t get any direct access to them. Where they could forget they’re heirs, weighed down by their fathers’ rivalry.

After a few minutes of skinny dipping, Jimin makes it to the edge of the pool, coaxes Yoongi closer until he’s crouching in front of him. Taehyung’s eyelids fall heavy, as he watches Jimin tiptoe for their lips to meet. It’s languid and intentional, full of promises. Intimate. An intimacy Taehyung feels like he’s part of. Yoongi is daze up when Jimin leaves him. He brings his cigarette to his mouth but doesn’t straightens up.

Jimin comes to wrap around Taehyung like a koala, chest to chest, his legs around Taehyung’s waist. His skin is warm and soft and Taehyung’s fingers glide on it easily, effortlessly.

They kiss, lazy, full of beautiful things.

“I’m happy we’re here,” Jimin whispers.

Taehyung talks with a smile instead of words. And from a couple of meters further, Yoongi smiles, too.

Taehyung is full, so full of beautiful things.

For these few days they have together, he’s willing to pretend they’re all okay.
Taehyung sees Yoongi stop in his tracks once again, nose to the sky.

"Was it really a good idea to tell him to bring his camera?"

There's amusement, in Jimin's tone. And a little skepticism. Taehyung turns to him, admires the lights of the city playing on his features.

"It's probably been a while since he even took it out of its bag," he answers. He's calm and poised, now. At peace, somehow. "He stops everywhere all the fucking time but it's actually interesting to watch him go, if you take the time. He gets in this mood—" he pauses, pulls on his cigarette, fills his lungs with grey clouds, "he's only ever like that when he makes music and when he's looking through a lens."

Jimin looks around, makes a noise of agreement that Taehyung barely catches.

Tokyo is boisterous, even at night. There's neon wherever he takes his eyes but the energy is beautiful and infectious and Taehyung breathes deep, content.

He's happier than he's been in too long.

Jimin straddles Yoongi's hips, his knees digging into the supple material covering the mattress. They kiss with a slow assurance, like they have all the time in the world. Taehyung wishes it were the case. Their lips move and Taehyung follows their rhythm with half-lidded eyes. It's fluid and wet and perfect. Something akin to hypnotizing.

He's whipped.

Their shirts are being taken off and Taehyung remains where he is, close to the kitchen where he went to dispose of their glasses, unmoving, clothed, warm with desire. But this is good. This sight, those sounds. He's usually one with a craving to touch and to feel, to immerse himself in another person but this, at this very moment, is satisfying. Jimin and Yoongi move with one another in a way he's foreign with, but that gets him entranced. Wanting to see more.

Jimin is undressed with two of Yoongi's fingers nestled in his ass when he breathes out a plea for Taehyung to join them. Under Yoongi's attentive gave, Taehyung shakes his head but undoes his pants.
"Tonight I'm watching."

He wakes up to the smoothness of Jimin's skin back against his chest. He inhales, long and sleepy, blinks against the brightness filling the room until his sight is less blurry. He scans Jimin's complexion for soft moments, liking the purple that flourishes under his jaw and down to his shoulder. His palms roam up from his hips to his waist, his arms circle his torso to bring him closer. He kisses his hair.

"He's pretty, isn't he."

Taehyung's heart rate jumps, before it mellows back down. It's as much surprise as it is wild flutters from realizing Yoongi has been quietly sharing this moment with him. This moment when Taehyung loved Jimin a little more deeply. But he guesses that it's how it is, now. They share the same affection for someone else. Taehyung's lips curl up gently as he embraces the fuzzy contentment the idea spurs in him.

They love Jimin in team.

He breathes a laugh at his own thoughts, nuzzles Jimin's nape before he meets Yoongi's eyes. They look at each other for a time that seems still. Endless. Taehyung finds a little ache in how vulnerable Yoongi lets himself be, even when they don't talk. It's a thing they used to do often. No words, just the raw discourse of their eyes. He wishes they could still do it. He wishes they wouldn't always need Jimin to be the pacifier, to be the force taming their resentment.

Taehyung wishes he wouldn't always need Jimin to be his pacifier.

Yoongi licks his lips, shifts so he's resting on his elbow, and, careful not to rouse Jimin, he leans in. Taehyung lets him. It's a feathery touch at first, then it's more demanding. And Taehyung lets him, because no matter how much he wants to push Yoongi away, he doesn't remember of a time when he was truly able to refuse him anything.

"You're beautiful," Yoongi murmurs as he pulls away, casting his eyes down to the still sleeping form. "But Jimin, he's – he's really –"

"Really pretty."

"I'm not sleeping, I can hear you. Stop being so disgusting."

Yoongi falls back on the mattress with a muted laugh and Taehyung grins, flushes, accommodating Jimin as he rolls to face him instead.

"Is that how you are when I'm not there?" he slips a hand around Taehyung's waist, wiggles closer. "So gay."

But Taehyung can clearly hear the smile in his voice.
"We should," Jimin starts, then he wraps plush, moist lips around his straw, swallows a bit of his colourful drink. "We should find the most expensive restaurant around and secure ourselves a place there for tomorrow night."

Taehyung and Yoongi acquiesce, faces painted with mischievousness, and under the shadow of the parasol hovering the table where they're sitting, they start searching for nice places on their phones.

The sun is setting, slowly making of the sky a second sea. The sound of the waves just by them is lulling and comfortable. Taehyung isn't sure they can be here at this hour, in this secluded place on a beach where there isn't anyone.

In fact, Taehyung knows. He's seen the sign when they made their way here. He can read Japanese. He just chose to ignore it. And if the others know just like he does, they don't mention it.

The sand is still warm. It slips in and it gets everywhere but it's not enough to have any of them complain. It smells like salt and algae and of that food they brought to eat. In this quietude, Taehyung should be able to think, but he isn't. Inside he's blooming with a silent presence, feeling full, complete. Like nothing needs to change. Like there's nothing to be thought over.

Jimin laces their fingers, when Taehyung reclines back on this blanket they brought, patiently waiting for aqua to turn into navy, in hopes of seeing stars.

He hears Jimin and Yoongi talk, low, like they're afraid to shatter something. They glow from each other, they shine and they reverberate the most beautiful of feelings, so powerful that they reach him. Taehyung isn't sure if they know that they envelop him whole when they continue to fall in love and that he's standing beside them.

He hears Jimin and Yoongi talk, but he doesn't really listen. Taehyung can't think. He's looking up in search of tiny hopeful specks, when his universe is right at the tip of his fingers.

His phone vibrates in his pocket. Again. He knows who it is. He doesn't need to look. It's the fifth time his father calls, today.

He closes his eyes and fills in his lungs, tightens his hands around Jimin's. 

*Don't think.*

*Don't think.*

Taehyung holds his breath as he adds the second finger. The thrusts them in slowly, eyes trained on how easily they move in and out of Jimin's body, brain numb by how filthy they look, sliding along Yoongi's cock.

They're all still wet from the time they spent in the pool, looking down at the brightened-up city, and their skins are slippery and dotted in translucent pearls. The air around them is thick, humid and hot, heavy in their lungs. Taehyung is having a hard time just processing anything at this point, with how hazy his mind is, and how sex-crowded the room is.
Jimin lets out a quiet gasp and tightens at a slight twist of Taehyung's digits, and it's just enough to have Yoongi hiss and close his eyes. Taehyung watches him encircling Jimin's frame of his arms, holding him secure where he's lying atop of him, heart against heart.

"Hyung," Jimin moans, lips plushed against the skin of Yoongi's throat.

"I know," it's a strained but reassuring whisper and Taehyung lets it crawl under his flesh in the form of arousal, swallowing hard.

He bends, kisses the ridges of Jimin's spine as he continues to work him open. Yoongi is moving, synchronized with him, as he always is. And for a few long minutes, it's just this. Their flawless rhythm, wet kisses, uneven breathing and the minute clamping and unclamping of Jimin's hands in the sheet on each side of Yoongi's ribcage.

"Kiss me," Yoongi demands, as a mean of distraction and Jimin does, whimpering broken sounds between their lips and Taehyung needs to focus, reign in his overwhelmed senses.

Because it's hot. It's hot and tight and moist and it's perfect. And he wouldn't need much to surrender to this impulse he has to work himself to completion. Coming to this sight would be easy and he knows.

But Jimin seemed so eager and hopeful when he asked them for this, with a breathy I wanna take you both, at the same time spilled in the space between their kisses. Taehyung plants a palm to the small of Jimin's back, grounding himself. Licks his lips, concentrates.

He twists his wrist, so that he's more running his fingertips along Yoongi's cock than he is dragging them against Jimin's walls. Yoongi bucks up mindlessly and Taehyung smiles, entranced, teeth grazing the delicate flesh of Jimin's asscheeks.

"Tae, I'm—it's fine, just get it in—"

"There's no way you're ready,"

Jimin angrily shakes his head as he whines, pushing against him, wanting to take more than he's offered.

"Be patient, mhm?" Taehyung tells him, gently kneading his side, and he can see how tightly Yoongi is holding him, like he's scared he's going to slip from his hold.

"I just need someone to fuck me," he says, jaw tight. "Please, just—"

Taehyung abruptly pulls his fingers out, scoots back a bit on the bed.

"Come on, hyung," he growls, "give him what he wants."

And Yoongi gives a dry chuckle but he does fuck Jimin, hard and fast, holds him firmly and as he drives into him, and it's rough enough to have Jimin lose his breath for a few tense moments. Jimin lets out high little mewls and moans, and even with how lewd the squelching noises of the lube are, Taehyung thinks he has the prettiest voice for this.

He reaches down, pumps a slick fist over his cock. And he drags it out. It's more being cautious than being lazy. It's more the will to last.

"Fuck," Yoongi grits, when his pace has weakened to a languid roll of his hips. He throws his head back and heaves a few ragged breaths, his wet hair a dark mess on his forehead.
"You good?" Taehyung asks, when Yoongi's hands start roaming Jimin's back again.

Jimin makes a noise of agreement and Taehyung reposition himself, dribbling more lube onto his fingers.

The third one fits in tight, and it riles Taehyung up as much as it makes him doubt it'll actually work. Jimin keeps making tiny strangled sounds on the push but still arches his back deeper so Taehyung, careful, continues. He licks his lips, his brows knitted and gaze trailed on the fine line of Jimin's spine, crawling up to his ribcage and then his nape, until his eyes meet Yoongi's.

"Holy—fuck that's so good," Jimin splutters in the pillow, just next to Yoongi's ear, and it sounds like he's on the verge of tears.

"Yeah?" Taehyung smirks, holds Yoongi's stare. "You're taking all of hyung and three of my fingers, how's that?"

Yoongi growls and Jimin is wracked with a harsh shudder, and he tightens, scrambles a bit more on the sheets.

"So good, Tae, it's so fu— Hyung?"

"Mhm?"

"Are you— how're you feeling? Am I crush-shing you?"

"I'm feeling amazing, baby," he kisses his hair, gives one long, slow thrust, "don't worry."

And Taehyung smiles at the nickname. Because it's the one Yoongi used to call him. And it's fine if he uses it for someone else, as long as it's Jimin.

"A-Ah, fuck—"

"Don't clench up," Taehyung soothes a hand over Jimin's tailbone, trying to push his cock in with the other one. Jimin breathes deep, whining against Yoongi's neck, and Taehyung times himself with it, presses in as he exhales and loosens up. "There you go. You're doing so good, Jiminnie, so good—"

Jimin hisses and Taehyung freezes.

"Wa-wait, Tae—"

"Want me to pull out?"

And he does when he sees Jimin nodding in short little jerks. Taehyung sits back on his haunches, tugging at his cock lazily as he looks at Jimin and Yoongi being into each other. He likes, loves how Yoongi brings Jimin's lips to his and kisses him, how gentle and comforting he is, the way his hands roam his body like it's the most precious thing he's ever known. He likes the controlled waves of his hips, how calm he is despite how wild his ribcage is around his air.

Once again, and for one time too many, Taehyung thinks they're good together. Just together.

"Come back," Jimin says, hot against Yoongi's lips, "gimme your fingers again."
Taehyung works against his blurred out thoughts and grabs the bottle of lube.

The third time they try, it works. Jimin stops breathing for the whole time Taehyung pushes in and Yoongi is holding very still, but his eyes are swimming in stars that Taehyung gets lost in, amongst this and the warmth that welcomes him.

Jimin starts panting hard when he's bottomed out, letting out pleased noises that Taehyung could drink straight from his swollen lips.

"Fuck it's so tight," Yoongi strains, never breaking eye contact, like it's the only thing that's keeping him sane. "You're so good," he murmurs in Jimin's hair, threading gentle fingers through it when Jimin keens and shifts to accommodate them better.

"How you feeling?" Taehyung folds over him, holding his weight with an arm on the bed. This whole thing, the tightness, how scorching hot it is, he likes it. But tonight, maybe it has to do with the position they're in, he has this sensation that he's disconnected from them.

"It's so much, I just,"

"Too much?"

"Y-Yes, but in the-uh good way."

Taehyung hums, peppers kisses to his neck, to his shoulders and down to his last set of ribs, until his lips meet Yoongi's hand that's resting there. He nuzzles it, just barely, closes his eyes when Yoongi cups his cheek and rubs his thumb over his heated skin, trying to bring him back in. Because he might be sensing it, that Taehyung is acting a little off.

He gently takes a hold of Yoongi's wrist and licks at his fingers, slips two of them between his lips and sucks. Just how he knows Yoongi likes it. Slow and thorough.

Yoongi curses and kicks his hips up and Jimin lets out a choked mewl. Taehyung's exhale cuts and trembles out. He smiles around his fingers.

And he wills himself to be swallowed again, in them. In this comfort he finds within the space between them, the person he learned to love and the one he always did. He gives in to that fiery, beautiful mess they create in him, when he least expects it. He accepts this momentary drowning in things he understands and some others not so much, he accepts, for now, what he doesn't want to see.

Taehyung gets lost in the tender sound of Jimin voice, in the deep, dark affection in Yoongi's eyes.

"I'm gonna fuck you now," he says around Yoongi's wet digits. "Is that okay?"

Jimin straightens up just barely, lidded eyes falling in Yoongi's and Taehyung watches them, transfixed, as their lips glide together once, twice. Jimin gives a weak grin.

"Fuck me up."

He's in the middle.
Taehyung wakes up, and he's in the middle.

And while he's sort of petrified about the fact that he still half-consciously slipped between Yoongi and Jimin, he can't find in himself the will to move. So he stares at the ceiling and keeps still, listens to their breathings and focuses on the weight of Jimin's arm across his stomach. Taehyung likes this place, where he's nestled at. But not what it means.

"You're overthinking," comes Jimin's voice, gentle but scratchy and weak with how much he worked it up the previous night.

And Taehyung would like that very much, but even in between long stretches of balanced thoughts, his brain screams at him that he doesn't want of this. That he'll get hurt. And it's louder than everything else.

Jimin breathes deep, shifts so that he's even closer, wraps his body around Taehyung's even tighter and somehow, they manage to fall asleep again.
He could almost get tricked by how smooth and effortless things are.

Yoongi says something witty about the place they’re in, Jimin laughs, Taehyung laughs.

Jimin proposes a place to grab lunch, looks at Yoongi to find him nodding, looks at Taehyung to find him nodding, too.

There’s a glow around them, a kind of bubble that they don’t have, back home. A secure place where they’ve managed to cut everyone around, and they’re just them. With a lot of soft glances and silent understanding.

It’s easy.

Almost believable.

“Tae, can you check how far the restaurant is from the hotel?” Jimin asks around his mouthful of fancy marinated chicken and hummus panini.

“Can’t, my phone is dead.”

Yoongi raises his eyes to him, a glint of skepticism in them.

His phone is not dead. He just turned it off after the 12th time it rang that morning.

They consume the whole place up as they walk through it.

They’re all dressed up in their favourite suits, clad in Gucci and Armani, and as the waiter leads them to their reserved window seats, Taehyung is high on self-confidence, dizzy with conceit. He did walk on red carpets, crossed conference rooms of grand hotels with heads turned his way, but he’s never felt like this.

With Yoongi and Jimin, it’s not the same at all.

For once he feeds on how people are looking at them, and how quickly their gazes are drawn back after the first glance. He swells with pride whenever someone stares at Jimin with a subdued beatitude, or when they ever so subtly take themselves out of the way when they see Yoongi approaching.

It’s intoxicating.

It’s something he knows he might be experiencing for the last time, because they can’t do that in Seoul, for obvious reasons that his switched-off phone can testify for.

This, and the fact that he can’t be as comfortable around Yoongi when they’re back home. Because
every pale wall and empty chair around the table reminds him of that dead space in the between months he spent alone.

But here, it's on the edge of real. And that scares him whenever his thoughts drift to it, but Jimin gentles him through it. Jimin manages to tame the fear. And Taehyung stops erupting in apprehension whenever Yoongi reaches up to kiss him.

It’s good. He feels good.

They get to their table and Taehyung can still feel a few gazes heavy on them and he smirks, unbuttoning his jacket before he sits, Jimin giving him a bashful smile that he knows is just keep up appearances. He places his napkin in his lap, then finally looks around.

The place is nice, perched high atop of a hotel.

It's warm in colour and rich in wood, dark and classy. Taehyung has seen prettier, but the view they get is stunning. The whole of Tokyo laid at their feet, bright and beautiful against an inked sky that takes up half of the scenery. He likes it, though he knows it's not what his eyes are going to be trained on, tonight. We’re three, Jimin said on the phone when called to get them a place, and it sounded just right to Taehyung’s ears.

All of this is nice, but Taehyung doesn't miss it. All the fancy, high-end stuff. That's what took roots in his head, the longer their vacations went on. He's been living in an expensive apartment for over a year now, had to learn to cook and how to use a washing machine, but he doesn't miss the life he had in his father's house.

They go through the first part of the dinner in that aura they created for themselves. Carefree and voluble. Taehyung often stops to appreciate Jimin's fine etiquette, his politeness, his amiable attitude and how he smiles to the waiter. It's something Yoongi and he lack. They've been brought up to be arrogant, farouche, and though they haven't really let themselves being permeated with it, there's still an undertone of it in the way they act. It's regretful.

The dimmed lighting plays prettily on their features when they laugh and it's appeasing. And when a little later their conversation drifts onto the topic of music, how Taehyung's singing voice is, or just how much Yoongi misses spending hour crafting songs and Jimin's lack of experience with a microphone, Taehyung forces himself not to clam up.

He gets himself a spoonful of soup and remains quiet, but he doesn't close up. And it sends the tiniest glint of hope to flicker in his chest.

It happens when Yoongi’s phone buzzes on the table. When the screen wakes with a harsh, white light on the surface naked of tablecloth.

It happens when he goes completely still, when he stops mid-sentence.

The caller ID reads “Caitlyn”, and Taehyung remembers her. Remembers having seen her name on his phone before.

“Hello?”

It happens when Yoongi switches from relaxed Korean to stiff English.
“You’re where? Ah. Right.”

It happens when Yoongi stands under his and Jimin’s surprised stares, and that he excuses himself and heads to the door.

Taehyung closes up.

Δ

“Hello?”

“Hey, it’s me. I’m in Spain right now but we really need to talk.”

It’s been so long since he’s heard her voice. Nothing saccharine, it’s low and grounded. And tonight, it’s particularly whispery. It feels so distant. Like a long-lost dream. Or more like a nightmare.

“You’re where?”

“Spain. But I got the results for the test.”

“Ah, right.”

“Are you busy? Is now a good moment?”

“Y-Yeah, let me just,” he pushes his chair back carefully, stands. And as he does, he sees the veil falling over Taehyung’s eyes. The barely noticeable drop of his features. It’s now, the culminating moment. But he hopes that whatever the result is, he’ll get the chance to explain things properly to them. “I won’t be long,” he tells them with a hand covering the microphone and Jimin is the only one who nods.

“So where are you?” she asks, when Yoongi takes long to find a quiet place. He finally settles on taking the elevator down and exiting the place altogether.

“Yokohama.”

“Ah, that explains it. You’re there for business?”

“No, I’m here with my uh,” he rounds the corner of the hotel, ends up in the tight space between two parts of the building, but it will have to do.

“With your?”

“Boyfriends,” he says it without thinking about it too much. He’s aware it might be the last time he ever gets to call them that. The line goes silent then and Yoongi wonders if the call got cut. “Cait?”

“Sorry, that surprised me a little. Are you okay now?” Her voice is dancing with tremors now, and he can hear in it that she’s smiling, also.

“Yeah,” he inhales long, closes his eyes. He tries not to focus on how precisely he can feel his heart beating, on how much it’s raging in his chest. He tenses and licks his lips, throat tight. “Go ahead.”

“The baby,” a brief pause, “she’s not yours.”
Yoongi crouches to the ground as the tension goes, his lungs squeezing empty.

His fingers start shaking, frantic, relieved.

He’s feather-light and impossibly heavy at the same time.

He doesn’t want to sound happy, because while he is, he knows what it implies for her. And over the course of the past weeks, he developed a deep sense of empathy towards her and her situation. He knows she will raise the child alone. He swallows, incapable of words.

“You know,” her tone is thick with tears, but Yoongi is glad she’s saving them from this silence. “From the start, I wanted Camille to be yours. Because you’re a good person, Yoongi. And that I—“ she scoffs softly, “sort of had feelings for you.”

Guilt like a stab, radiating remorse in his chest.

He gets images of the nights she wanted to talk, to sort things out and he would just ignore her, would go out, would be anywhere but near her. Because he couldn’t stand the thought of a relationship without Taehyung in it.

He remembers the times she cried herself to sleep, when he couldn't find the strength to try and console her. Because he would have ended up telling her that she wasn’t what he needed to be fixed.

“But then I remembered how unhappy you were in New York. How much you were missing Korea, and how often you would just, scroll through stuff on your phone. The same stuff, always. I noticed. And when we started talking again,” she sniffs, takes a deep breath. She tells someone on her side of the line that she’s fine, that she swears she is, before she continues. “I guess I realized you were happier elsewhere. And that your thing was really back home. So deep down, I think I always knew I would never be able to pull you out of there.” There’s another pause there, weighty and auguring important words. “Are you happy?”

Yoongi stares at the concrete next to his dress shoes, considers but realizes simultaneously.

“I am.”

“So it’s all good that she’s not yours, right? It all turned out well, in the end.”

He scowls. Somehow the way she says this does not feel right.

"Cait, are you sure she's not mine?"

“She’s not yours, Yoongi. She’s not. It’s all good,” she sniffs again, slowly coming back to a calmer state.

“You swear?”

“I swear.”

Yoongi nods to no one, in this shadowed place he’s in. “Okay.”

It's good news but it's not. It's uncomfortable. He's relieved, but all the same, he knows he won't ever manage to feel completely clean about it.

His eyes catch on a movement, to find Jimin peeking from behind the wall, expression going bright when he sees him. Yoongi smiles through a latent discomposure, straightens back up when Jimin sets on waiting for him with Taehyung at a polite distance.
“If you ever need anything, you have to tell me, okay?”

She resounds with a gentle laugh.

“What could I ever need, with all this money we’re making?”

“A listening ear. That’s what you could need.”

It's quiet again. For a while. Enough to have him know she's crying. Yoongi was never the greatest with words, but since he's not there to place a soothing hand to her back, he wills himself to try.

“It’s gonna be fine, Caitlyn. You’re a loving, caring person. You’re amazing. You’ll do great.”

“Thank you,” the words break on her tongue and Yoongi is just washed over by a wave of sadness. Of regrets. All the things he fucked up in such a short span of time. “Yoongi, be happy, yeah?”

“I will.”

A couple of still seconds, then the call is cut. His hand holding the phone drops to his side and he sighs, a little bruised up and his eyelids shut.

“You okay, hyung?” Jimin asks, and when he opens his eyes again, it’s to find them smoking, nearly nestled against each other.

“There’s uh, something we need to talk about.”

And it’s around a dragging glass of wine in that nice bar that’s also situated in the hotel, it’s sitting in the dim light of Japanese paper lanterns, where Yoongi feels the most at ease, that he recounts everything.

The way Caitlyn and he met, how they were pushed into each other. He tries to explain, under Taehyung’s blank expression but scrutinizing eyes, how they ended up officializing their relationship and living together, and he makes sure to convey through his tone just how much he couldn’t stand it.

He retells, with a lower voice, that there was nothing in her for him, and the words because I missed Tae too much stay bitter on his tongue without ever being said. He’s ashamed, when he addresses the part where they barely touched each other, how he ended up pushing her towards other men and how he ended up hooking up with strangers a handful of times because he’s never been able to feel anything, other than sympathy and platonic affection.

The more Yoongi talks, the more laughable he feels, even when he was so persuaded that it would be the right thing to do. Jimin and Taehyung, they listen. They don’t interrupt, and they don’t ask about anything. But Yoongi can perceive, and maybe a little too acutely, how differently they’re processing the story.

Jimin is taking everything in like it’s new information.

Taehyung suffers it like a drizzle of acid.

He talks about it then, that night when he was feeling too confused and broken apart and yearning for something he had lost, when he started drinking and that she somehow followed him in his fall
and that they had unprotected sex he doesn’t remember anything of. His gaze is cast on the table, on his glass that he doesn’t want to empty yet.

“When I woke up the next morning and that I realized what happened, I knew I had to leave. I knew that that place was destroying me,” he says, the memory still making his gut twist in discomfort. “And I left two days later. I came back here.”

He tells them he cut contact with her the moment he stepped in the plane. Then he pauses. He stalls.

“Want me to get us some more stuff?” Jimin offers, when the quiet stretches for unnaturally long.

Yoongi shakes his head, appreciative.

“Lemme just get this out.” Jimin shifts on his tool, throwing a quick glance at Taehyung.

And he brushes over the rest, because there’s no need for him to go in depth. They don’t need even the smallest fraction of the stress he’s been through in the past months. So he just spits it out quickly.

"She got pregnant around that time and wasn't sure if the baby was mine. So that's what I was doing at the clinic, last Thursday. Getting my DNA sampled so that we could know. She was calling for that." He raises his eyes to find a flicker of panic in Jimin's. "It's not me, I'm not the father," he rushes to say, wanting to reassure him.

And at this point, Taehyung is not looking at him anymore. He’s fixating something, just above Yoongi’s shoulder.

Yoongi expected it. It’s fine, he’s here and he’s not going anywhere.

"I felt like I needed to tell you. About her. Her situation is shit, right now. I offered my help, if she ever needed any."

"I'll go grab drinks," Taehyung stands before Yoongi can stop him, his stool screeching on the floor when he moves too abruptly.

He disappears in between people, fades under the poor lighting. Yoongi sighs. It’s like he fucked up again, when he was so sure he was doing things right. He empties his glass in one large swallow.

"I'm glad you told us, hyung," Jimin's lips are curved in a soft, comprehensive smile when tells him this. His bowtie is loosened up and the first buttons of his dress shirt, undone. He looks as worn out as Yoongi is. "Thank you."

That night, they have sex in the pool.

They glide and they move amongst slivers of light. They press soft, feathery touches to each other’s skin, to each other’s heart. They dance in a space that’s silent, but filled with breathy whispers and moans. Their lips search for each other’s, and they slide, smooth, unhurried. They take their time. That’s what they do.

Yoongi considers this the first time they really make love.

And even if Taehyung won’t look at Yoongi properly, even if his kisses are cut short, Yoongi doesn’t let it push him away. He expected this as well. It’s fine. He’s here and he’s not going
anywhere.

And Yoongi can explain to Taehyung a thousand times if he wants, that he never lived a day when he was away from him.
For the whole plane ride back from Japan, Jimin stared blankly out the window.

In a seat between Yoongi’s and Taehyung’s, he struggled with thoughts that he kept tossing back and forth.

There’s been a wide gap since the previous night, after the time they spent in the pub. Even in the pool when their bodies were pressed tight, he could feel it.

After hearing what Yoongi had to tell them, having felt cornered, in a way, threatened, he found he could never truly understand how Taehyung is feeling. How deeply that affected him, how hurting he was throughout those long minutes. There’s so many things Jimin doesn’t know about. Yoongi and Taehyung's memories together, he doesn't have access to them. Nor to their feelings, their love. He can only see how they evolved with time. But the intensity of it, how vital to were to each other, he has no grasp on it. At all.

Jemin is above the sky with a heart that aches and weighs a ton. He’s bearing sorrow that belongs to someone else. And if he used to think it should have been easy for Taehyung to just trust again, then right this moment, he’s not so sure of it anymore.

Δ

“You know what scares me the most?”

Namjoon hums, lips closed around his cigarette. They’re sitting by Taehyung’s favourite tank after one of Namjoon’s deals, the night chilly but heavy with humidity. It rained a lot since they came back from Japan. It rained a lot and Taehyung spent a lot of time being grey, too.

Tonight, Jimin is with Yoongi again.

Taehyung’s fine with it. It’s preferable this way.

He can’t offer much more than the facade of his bruised feelings. Whenever he thinks of that story Yoongi told them, about the truth of what happened in New York, the black hole inside his ribcage grows and pulsates, asks to swallow more of him. It makes Taehyung sick. He gets images and thoughts and it drives him to the brim of madness if he can’t snap himself out of it fast enough.

He saw and felt how careful Yoongi was, the emphasis he put on his lack of feelings for her. It's a well-intentioned, but Taehyung's mind willingly misunderstands things and contorts them too often. To keep himself protected. To prevent another fall.

So he gently pushes Jimin towards Yoongi. For now. As to not hurt him.
Jimin doesn’t object. There’s something in the way he looks at Taehyung that has changed, and he’s not as obstinate as he used to be, before Japan. That makes Taehyung wonder if they’re on their last miles, if they reached that place they were all expecting to end up at. Now he cherishes every goodbye kisses when Jimin leaves for Yoongi’s place, commits to memory every one of his smiles, just in case. That’s the best way to love, he thinks.

He breathes out his smoke, empties his lungs.

“I’m scared that I— That I might not see things go. Because –”

He draws a pause. He hesitates.

“Go on,” Namjoon encourages, patient.

“Because I’m scared. If I spend too much time with my eyes closed because there’s things that I don’t wanna see— I feel safe, when I can’t see shit.”

“We all do.”

“But what if me being like that—I mean, am I missing stuff?”

“Probably.” Taehyung lets his head loll to the side, studying Namjoon’s expression. “You see,” the older continues, “that’s your ego talking raw when you do that.” Taehyung waits, sucking up more smoke in his tired lungs. "You know what I mean, right? You seem a little confused."

“I’m not confused, I’m waiting for you to continue.”

“But you know what I mean?”

“I have an idea, but I’m still interested in hearing what you have to say about it.”

“Your ego. That thing that screams at you not to do some stuff or go to certain places because something in the past made you build apprehensions around them.”

“Mhm.”

“Your ego is usually a healthy mechanism. It’s there to protect you, to make you think twice. It’s sort of subconscious, right?”

Taehyung hums again, bring his eyes up to a charged-up sky.

“But if,” Namjoon takes a last drag of his cigarette, kills it on the concrete, “if you let it take control of you, and of everything you do, then there’s a problem. You’re supposed to be able to reason with it, but if it screams louder then everything else, then you’re a bit screwed. You with me?”

“Yeah.”

“Ego, when you let it be your primary ruler in anxiogenic situations, it just messes with your normal train of thought.” Taehyung frowns. "It takes things you hear or see, and fucks them up so that it’s easier for you to feel excused not to get near them. Does that ring a bell?”

Taehyung makes a skeptical noise and Namjoon chuckles.

“Okay, say,” he pauses, thinking, shifts and brings his knees closer to his chest, “let’s say I’m in love.”
Taehyung’s lips curl up at the corners, trains his eyes on Namjoon’s peaceful features.

“Are you?”

“I might,” there’s a soft laugh escaping him, a bit shy, a lot happy. “So I’m in love, right?”

“Right.”

“And that other person has something for me as well.”

“Right.”

“But let’s say that in a previous relationship, what I do here,” he gestures to the space around them, warm in light but cold with metal, “made things hard. Real hard.”

“Did it?”

“Yeah, it did. So, naturally, I’ll have that kind of apprehension, with this new person.”

And Taehyung did understand, before. He’s been familiar with that concept for a while. But the way Namjoon talks about it, it resonates with something deep within. Something that goes past his relationship with Yoongi and Jimin, that goes way back to a more tender time.

“And to a certain extent,” Namjoon continues, fiddling with the hem of his sleeve, “it’s justified, to feel like that. But if I push that person I love away because of it,”

“Then what are you missing out on?”

“Exactly.” Namjoon twists his phone in his hand after a few weighty minutes of silence, wakes the screen to look at the time. “In the end,” he stands and brushes his jeans clean, “you’re still the one to choose. You can let your ego win over you, if you want. You just have to be fine never knowing about the things it deprives you of.” Taehyung hates how precisely those words hit him, how easily they cut through him. He hates how he feels right now. “You staying here?”

Taehyung mutters a yeah, fetching his pack in his pocket, his lighter already snug in his palm. Namjoon acquiesces, give a short nod, and turns his back to leave.

“Hyung,” he stops him, and Namjoon looks at him over his shoulder. “I know we share the same circle of friends and everything, but if I ever wanted to buy you stuff again, would you sell me some?”

Namjoon looks away, further, in the dark crevices in between frigid tanks.

“Don’t do this to me,” is all he says before he walks away.

Δ

Jimin missed this, somehow.

He’s been longing for this without even noticing. Time with Yoongi.

And it has nothing to do with his feelings for Taehyung, or what happened in Yokohama. It's just
that while he can't forget about his relationship with him now that he's practically his roommate, sometimes what he has with Yoongi slips a little too easily from his mind. As if his relationship with Yoongi was only truly there when they were the three of them together.

Which has never been the case. Never has been, and never will be.

So for these days when Taehyung gently pushes him away and towards Yoongi, Jimin does his best to enjoy it, and to not let his cogitation eat at everything.

Yoongi’s fingers are dancing on his stomach, delicate and ephemeral.

The pair of them is swaying in this space they build whenever they have sex, lying on Jimin’s bed, in his parents’ house that seems too big, now. Night has long since fallen, and they’re watching some show they started watching together in the first days after they started this thing they have, but that they ended up forgetting, in the midst of their emotional storm.

But if he's honest, Jimin can't quite focus. His brain is still fogged up with the orgasm Yoongi ripped from him, and the warmth of Yoongi's naked body snuggled to his back is just tranquillizing enough to send him into hazy thoughts.

“Hyung,” he breathes, slow with the lulling of Yoongi’s breath fanning over his nape.

“Mhm.”

“I love you, hyung.”

Yoongi’s fingers still. The subtle push of his ribcage against Jimin’s spine vibrates in a weird stutter.

Maybe that should be scary.

Jimin said those words often, to someone who didn't really want to hear them. But he's never said them first. Maybe he should be mindful of Yoongi's silence, and fear it. But he doesn't. It’s Yoongi and Jimin is safe with him. And if he can’t answer, Jimin knows he won’t make him feel weird so he just nurtures his satisfaction of having been able to tell him.

The arm resting on his waist comes up his torso, firm, Yoongi’s heated palm finding a home close to his heart.

“I love you too,” he says, finally, his lips brushing soft just below Jimin’s ear.

And Jimin blooms with something tender, beautiful little tremors coursing his whole body. He smiles and lets his eyes slip closed, allowing sleep to tug him from this dream he's living to an unconscious one.

“Jimin-ah,”

Jimin barely stirs at Yoongi’s murmur of his name, comfortable.

“Jimin,”

There’s still something playing on the flat screen, but he registers it as white noise, ambiance.
Wet lips ghost over his neck, press gently under his jaw. Jimin gives easily, tilts his head in an appreciative manner.

“Mhm?”

Yoongi kisses the shell of his ear, Jimin tenses with a shiver. Lust is so easy with Yoongi and Taehyung. Never forced, or shameful. It’s enveloping, every time. It’s somewhere where he doesn’t need to think, to calculate. Free, in a way.

It’s funny how they made him realize just how noxious his two-years-long relationship with Youngjae was.

“Are you awake?” and then Yoongi curls his hips against Jimin, making sure he understands exactly what he means. And it’s instantly the only thing Jimin’s brain can focus on, the hard line of Yoongi’s cock in the cleft of his ass.

It doesn’t get any better than this, really.

“Yeah,” he pushes against Yoongi’s rhythm, nurturing the slow rocking of their bodies.

They go like this until they’re messily rutting into each other, that Yoongi’s length is sliding up and down his crack without ever going where Jimin really needs it to be.

“Hyung,” he whines, arching his back. He’s still loose and slick enough, he knows. “Hyung please —”

“Just like that?”

“Y-Yes, fuck—”

And there’s a push on his shoulder, forcing him to roll onto his stomach and then the steady pressure of Yoongi entering him, settling atop of him.

Jimin huffs in the pillow, liking the added weight. There’s always a fine mix of dominance and sweetness, when he’s having sex with Yoongi. Something that’s silently demanding, never too pushy but expecting of an answer that Jimin is happy to give. In contrast with Taehyung who usually talks a lot, who says in low rumbles how good Jimin is being, Yoongi is all quiet presence and confident, experienced hands.

He waits for Yoongi to straddle his thighs properly, his own body thrumming with lazy but sizzling lust. He arches like a cat, lifting his ass and Yoongi leans forwards, plants both palms on the small of his back to hold himself. And fuck if Jimin doesn’t find it to be one of the hottest things.

Yoongi rolls into him in leisured motions, patterned waves that make anticipation simmer low in Jimin’s stomach. And he expects him to go hard, to ram into him, so he braces himself. But it never comes.

Yoongi fucks him good and slow. He presses in to the hilt every time, powerful enough to have Jimin drag up the bed. He purposefully stops when Jimin starts pushing against him, carefully controls his pace, keeps it steady and never picks up. He keeps him on edge, on the very thin line there is between pleasure and oversensitivity until he’s trembling and that his knuckles are whitened up with how hard he’s fistig the sheets.
“Jimin-ah,” Yoongi breathes on his neck, sending tiny shivers to ripples down his back, “can I make you come like that? If I have you fuck the bed? Mhm?”

“Y-Yes—“

“Yeah?”

“Hyung—“

“You wanna come like that?”

“H-Hyung,”

Yoongi laughs softly, presses warm lips to the shell of Jimin’s ear, once, twice, and straightens.

He doesn’t go fast. He doesn’t snap into him like he often does.

Yoongi still fucks him good and slow, he has Jimin rolling his hips into the mattress, moans heavy on the sweat-coated skin between Jimin’s shoulder blades, kneads at his waist with hungry hands. He makes him come first, has him hump the bed until he’s twitching and milked up. He flips him onto his back, swallow the last of his whines as he tugs at his own cock, sucking at Jimin’s neck when pleasure overcomes him.

Jimin gives a breathy laugh when he collapses on top of him. He welcomes him in his embrace, closes his arms around his limp frame.

Jimin missed this. He missed this a lot.

Netflix is still buzzing in the background, but they don’t hear it.

Jimin is somewhere between consciousness and reverie, heavy with happiness and light with love. He’s drained. He’s sore and achy and strained. But he wouldn’t want it any other way.

Lying facing him, Yoongi looks soft. In a way he’s only seen him a very few select times. He’s giving Jimin lidded eyes, a gruff voice and gentle touches. Affectionate. Loving. He’s fiddling with Jimin’s fingers, absentmindedly rubbing them with his own, kissing them.

Jimin is floating. In and out.

"Thank you. For telling me," Yoongi whispers.

He looks at him and Jimin blinks and blooms again, soft, soft, a spring stuck in his ribcage.

“Were you doubting it?”

“Mhm,” he shifts, the sheets rustling as he makes a tangle of their legs, "not really. It's just that I did some shit, lately."

“Hyung,”

“And it wasn’t easy from the start, so I guess I was expecting you to leave before we’d even get this far.”
Jimin frowns. Even in this darkness, he can still see how Yoongi’s gaze darts away and that makes things that much worse.

“You were expecting me to leave?”

“I guess.”

“Why the hell would I leave, hyung?”

Yoongi huffs, intertwines his fingers with Jimin's in a pensive fashion, like he's thinking of the best way to put his words.

“We're difficult. Tae and me. You came in at the time that was the worst for us, and that did put you through a lot. Still does. It isn't proportional, Jimin-ah. I know that. And he knows that. It's a lot of shit for the happiness you're getting in return.”

That makes him smile, somehow. It stirs and frees a quiet worry he's been living with for weeks and weeks, one he kept to himself.

“Is that how you see it?”

“Am I wrong?”

“Yeah, hyung, you are,” he laughs, flopping onto his back momentarily before coming back again, leaving only the space of a breath between them. “Of course you are. I can’t believe that for months I was the one being scared of you giving up on me.”

And Yoongi's lips mimics his in his smile, only shyer, thinner. It speaks of something much more serious.

“That won’t happen. I’m much too fond of you.”

With burgeons in place of his thoughts and sun-like warmth blanketing his heart, Jimin cranes his neck and kisses him. He doesn’t think words would be sufficient or adequate, so he just kisses him and flushes the colour of cherry blossoms.

“And Taehyung,” Yoongi continues, “yeah, he flips inside out sometimes. But I know how he is when he loves, and that’s how he is, with you. And when he loves, he doesn’t let go.”

Jimin holds his eyes, hopes Yoongi understands.

“Did you hear yourself?”

“I know,” Yoongi sighs. He passes an arm under Jimin’s neck, pulls him against his chest and half on top of him. “I know but I can’t force it.”

Δ

Jimin comes home and there's the smell of Yoongi's cologne lingering on him.

It's night, it's deep darkness around and inside Taehyung and after waking up from yet another nightmare, Jimin comes home, gets on the bed and close to him, and he smells of Yoongi. And he
doesn't know what to make of it.

Taehyung is the home of a feeling of constant loss. He fears the things that could slip through his fingers. So Taehyung tries not to hold on to anything. Particularly beautiful things. Look but don’t touch.

But Jimin is one of the exceptions. He’s that stranger that came in from nowhere and threw Taehyung off, managed to see on the other side of his walls and now Taehyung is stuck. He loves Jimin and he wants to keep him close, but with his own heart around his, he’s scared it’ll eventually choke him.

Jimin.

Jimin who feels so close and yet so far. Jimin who smells like someone he’d be much happier with.

“What are you doing in the guest room?”

If Taehyung keeps dreaming of ending up alone, then maybe he should take the hint.

“Hey, you okay?”

He should be the one to draw a line. Cut things off.

“Taehyung?”

But he can’t. Taehyung can’t draw any fucking line because he’s in love and there’s no way he’ll be able to do that himself. Just like he hasn’t been able to draw one with Yoongi since he came back.

The bed dips. Jimin is scooting even closer to his back. Taehyung feels it to be like an earthquake.

There’s a hand coming to his shoulder and he startles, coming out of his state between black sea and blacker mind.

He opens his eyes, barely makes up Jimin’s features where he’s hovering over him.

“You okay?”

His ribs close up around his heart like a clamp and he brings a hand to his face, wanting to swallow back the lump in his throat.

“I’m fine,” his voice is rough. Shaky.

He makes a move to sit up but Jimin keeps him still.

“You’re not fine. Nightmare again?”

“I’m fine, Jimin, let me just—“

Jimin presses on his sternum, has him lay back down. And the touch is gentle, but to Taehyung it’s like a sack of brick has been placed on him, wringing his lungs.

He hiccups, searches for air.

“Okay, no—Taehyung breathe. Look at me. Breathe.” Taehyung forces his palm away from his face, tries to hold Jimin’s eyes. His hand rubs even circles over his shirt, and if he concentrates on it enough, it’s grounding. “In, out.” Taehyung follows him. He feels like a child. “Again,” he

It takes a few minutes of this but eventually Taehyung swallows, disoriented. He whispers an apology.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, Tae." Taehyung nods, but still feels stupid. "Can you please tell me what it's about? I want to help but I can't do much if I don't know what's going on."

“It’s nothing important. They’re just dreams.”

“Nightmares. They’re nightmares. They feel real, don’t they?” Taehyung nods again. “What’s happening in them?”

Vulnerable from their position, he grapples at the throw he brought with him to sleep, tugs it up his torso for some comfort. And Jimin notices. He’s starting to know him well. He lies next to him, head plush in the pillow and simply reaches to take one of Taehyung’s hands in his.

“You uh—leave,” Taehyung says after a while.

“Me?”

“It used to be only hyung. And now it’s you, too.”

“Why are we leaving?”

He shrugs, unsure how he’s supposed to voice anything with a knot forming around his windpipe.

“You just leave. You just take everything with you and you leave me behind. Even if I’m calling for you or that I need your help or that I’m fucking dying, you just fucking leave and— ah, fuck, I hate this.”

Jimin’s thumb presses on his skin, runs patterns there.

“You’ve been having those for a long time?”

Taehyung heaves out a sigh. He’s looking at the plain ceiling, but even this, right now, feels like too much.

“Since hyung left. It comes and goes. Sometimes I get a few weeks without them, and then that’s all I’ll get for four nights straight.”

There’s a low humming. Understanding and careful.

“You know that I’m here, right? That when you wake up, I’m right here? I’m not going anywhere, Tae.”

“It’s easy to say, I mean –“

"And hyung is not going anywhere either."

Taehyung wants to shrivel up, curl on himself and hide in the blankets. The words are teasing like a blue flame. They seem harmless and yet they’re the most damaging.

“I understand why it’s happening, and I understand that you’re scared. But believe me, we’re not leaving you.”
When he answers nothing, Jimin comes to rest his head on his chest, slipping an arm around his waist.

Taehyung listens to him fall asleep. He wishes it was this easy to believe him.

Chapter End Notes

talk about a messy chapter

so apparently ask.fm isn't hip anymore so i made this?
Jimin rubs at his hair with a towel and winces. His arms, his thighs, his shoulders, he's sore all over.

To compensate the fact that he pretty much missed two weeks of dance practice in a row, Hoseok made him work twice as hard. He didn’t allow any misconduct or lack of sync, glared at him whenever he would use shortcuts for moves. *Don’t half-ass it, Jiminnie*, he kept telling him and Jimin suspects he liked torturing him a bit too much. And if he's being honest, himself didn't dislike it at all. He can appreciate being pushed to his limits and then one step further, in a way he knows he can't reach by himself. Especially when it comes to dancing. So he simply grinned or bit his tongue, obedient. But now it's an hour later and he already feels like half his body is slowly liquifying.

He comes and goes between his room and the bathroom. It’s funny, how he lived here for years and years, but it feels foreign whenever he comes back, since he’s been with Taehyung most of the time.

They settled on here, once again. Not because Taehyung cast him out, but because Jimin is short of things to say when he’s being pushed away. That, and he tries to give him space.

*I got some errands to run*, Taehyung told him and Jimin could only nod. When he has errands to run, Taehyung asks Jimin to come. He knows it’s not that.

But he can’t shake him anymore. There’s no use. Shaking and shoving fragile things around just ends up breaking them. He can only wait for moments when he opens up, like the previous night, to try and make him understand what he doesn’t want to hear.

If it works, Jimin will only know the moment they will reach a breaking point.

His phone buzzes and he wakes his screen, smiles when he sees Yoongi’s message.

**Yoongi hyung:** i’m in front of the house

29-07-2016, 22:56

**Yoongi hyung:** hope you’re ready for me cause i’m not waiting

29-07-2016, 22:56

He savours the way arousal licks at his groin, flushes with a bit of misplaced bashfulness when he rethinks of just a little earlier, when he received a text telling him to prep himself. He starts typing a reply but the sound of the doorbell comes before he can send it, and he tosses the device on his bed, rolls a towel around his hips as he goes down the stairs. He's grateful, for once, for the recurrent absence of his parents.
The towel doesn't last long. It's the first thing Yoongi takes care of when Jimin lets him in, tugs at it and discards it on the wooden floor of the lobby.

Yoongi manhandles him, drags him to the nearest wall and presses him there, stomach on the hard surface.

“Did you get my message?” his breathes on his nape and Jimin pushes his ass to meet his crotch.

“Don’t be like this with me, hyung.”

He hears Yoongi undoing his jeans and he huffs a shaky exhale, stomach a mess of jitters.

“Like what?”

“Don’t underestimate my talent at taking a dildo up my ass even on such short notice.”

Δ

Taehyung gets tired of getting calls thrice a day.

It’s been a week, and it still hasn’t stopped. So when it rings and that he’s strolling down a crowded street at night, a cigarette hanging from his lips and alone because Jimin is with Yoongi, he decides that he’s fucking done and he picks up.

“What is it?”

His father lets out a fat chuckle and Taehyung seethes.

“I wasn’t hoping anymore. I thought I raised you better than that.”

“No, dad. No, you didn’t. What do you want?”

“What were you doing in Yokohama last weekend?”

“Why do you care?”

“Because it’s my money you spent.”

“Right. Okay, then. What answer would satisfy you?”

“The truth, son.”

“The truth wouldn’t satisfy you. Believe me.”

“Don’t force me to have you say it.”

“Fine. I was fucking two guys in the penthouse of a high-class hotel.”

His father scoffs. Taehyung hears too well the disgust in there.

“Don’t try to be funny. There isn’t much for you to do in the fanciest restaurant in Tokyo other than business or bringing a girl.”
Taehyung rolls his eyes, sighs out the smoke that was resting in his lungs as he turns a corner.

“Sure, dad.”

“And since I know you’re not good at business, then that doesn’t leave much, does it?”

“The heir of Kim Intl., bad at business. A tragedy.”

“The wedding is in two weeks. Bring her. Dress her well and bring her.”

“Bring who?”

“The date you took to that restaurant. I want to meet her.”

“Ahh,” Taehyung grins, tapping the ash off of his stick. “You want me to bring the person I’m dating to your wedding, dad?”

“That’s what I’ve been telling you to do for a whole minute, son. You can’t be that slow, can you?”

“Then I’ll bring the person I’m dating to your wedding.”

“Yes, son. Isn’t it easier when you just listen to me?”

“Oh. Yeah. Totally. I’m hanging up now.”

He cuts the call, pockets his phone.

And for the next hour that he will be walking, and for the time he will be at the refinery that night, he will fantasize about his father’s reaction to Jimin and him entering the ceremony with locked fingers.

There’s still the slightest tinge of discomfort, when Taehyung hangs out with Jimin's circle of friends. Maybe an ease he never really learned to have. Younger, he'd talk to everyone, but never really deepen any relationships, with the exception of the one he had with Yoongi.

But he’s adjusting. He still relies a lot on Jimin’s presence, but he’s adjusting.

Jungkook, particularly, makes things easier. He has an energy that Taehyung can deal with more easily. That fits more his, perhaps. Right now, they're all sitting around a huge table and waiting for their meals, and the kid is showing Taehyung stuff on his phone and this, and Jimin’s patient hand on his thigh and Yoongi’s reassuring glances, it's fine. He's feeling fine.

Over the course of the dinner, he starts loosening up. He’s had a couple of drinks, as did the others, and there’s an ambiance that’s building up. Warm and full of a weird pack dynamic. One that’s making him feel powerful. And maybe now he understands, the cockiness of the groups he found interesting and despicable at the same time, at school. It’s fun. It’s lively.
There's Jimin's best friend, Hoseok, who seems to get along well with Yoongi. They have a palpable chemistry, though it's a bit weighed with awkwardness or uneasiness. Hard to tell. They converse together and with Jimin and it's like they extended a bubble around themselves and Taehyung doesn't want to find it bothering, but he does.

So he slips his fingers in between Jimin's and looks away, focuses his attention back on Jungkook, who's sitting on his right. He listens to his conversation with Seokjin, finds it surprisingly deep. Then again, with Namjoon sprinkling wisdom here and there, it can hardly be any other way. They talk about work, about school. About the sacrifices one might need to do to get where they want to be. That sometimes, being willing to go through a rough patch might be the only way to access something that's so worth it, that it eclipses the suffering that had to be endured.

Jungkook gives slow, minute nods. Namjoon is silent.

Seokjin's words resonate with Taehyung, and he wonders if he's doing it on purpose.

“I'll tip the bouncer.”

Namjoon’s voice is calm next to Taehyung. It’s drowned in alcohol. Taehyung has never seen him like this. Which is still surprising, considering all that stuff he sells. Namjoon is quite righteous and careful, for someone who deals coke and ecstasy on the daily, who threatens when he needs to, who took fists and kicks more often than he should have.

“You know him?” Hoseok asks, walking lazy, pocketed hands and heavy eyelids. Unanimously, it was decided that they should continue the evening in a club of some sort and that's where they're headed right now, snaking between streets and dark alleys.

And at this point, Taehyung calculates that they’re all drunk or far into the tipsy state. Even Yoongi, who’s trailing behind with Jimin and Seokjin. Taehyung hasn’t met with drunk-Yoongi in over 18 months. So that promises some fun.

“I know a lot of people,” Namjoon says with a laugh.

“Right.”

“Still not sure it’s a g-good idea.”

Namjoon looks at Jungkook when he says this, outstretches an arm to pull him closer by his shoulder. Taehyung smiles. From the other side of this line they’ve formed, he can see Hoseok gently patting Jungkook’s back and smiling, too.

“Is it because you don’t wanna go?” Namjoon asks, in a tone just-between-them.

“No,” Jungkook trails the last syllable, stumbling and catching himself with a hand gripping at Namjoon’s waist.

“You skip school all the time but you’re pissing yourself about going in a club underage?” Hoseok says with a soft laugh.

Taehyung rearranges the collar of his shirt, glances back and at Yoongi and Jimin to find them looking relaxed and peaceful and it’s good, he thinks.
“No—Not exactly the same type of infringement, hyung.”

“I got you, Kook-ah,” Namjoon runs his palm up and down Jungkook’s back, and again. “You know that.”

The wind hits them when they come out of an alley and Seokjin screeches behind them, having Jimin splutters in his cutest laugh. Taehyung grins but doesn't look back. Alcohol is making his thoughts fizzle, but he works through them as diligently as he can. He’s fine.

The dancefloor blooms with colors, red and blue and green. There’s smoke, heavy, blurring up the space and people move around Taehyung in chopped motions. It’s hypnotizing. And a bit dizzying.

There’s a palm quickly running down the length of his back, and he recognizes it as Yoongi’s. His own grip goes slack on Jimin’s waist as he looks over his shoulder to find Yoongi eating him up with that feline gaze he has when he’s horny, before he passes by them and continues to navigate through the crowd, towards the restrooms.

Jimin looks up and at him, grinning, because he noticed. He always notices. He tiptoes like he wants to whisper something to him but Taehyung gets shoved from behind and he stumbles right into Jimin. He steadies them both, whips his head to the side to try and see who's pushing him. Jungkook mouths a sorry hyung with a smug smile before follows Yoongi and gets drowned in bodies.

He wonders, for a fleeting moment, if Yoongi perceives it too. That Jungkook oozes the same kind of energy than he used to, before New York happened.

Taehyung doesn’t like what’s between Yoongi and Hoseok.

There’s a moment of social respite, for him. All the others are talking amongst themselves in this circular booth they’ve settled in, and he’s taking a break, taking large swallows of his drink in the meantime.

He studies them, also. Yoongi and Hoseok especially. It looks too easy. Yoongi is invested in their conversation in a way Taehyung rarely sees outside of the ones he has with him or Jimin. He laughs and Hoseok laughs and it’s genuine and gleaming.

Taehyung knows Yoongi had been the one to helped him to fix things with his ex-girlfriend, who threw her out. Jimin told him. And that made Taehyung wonder for how long they’d been this kind of close. Because Yoongi never uttered a word about Hoseok before.

And Taehyung knows that Hoseok is Jimin's best friend, and he knows he shouldn't be feeling like he is, that he has no right to. But he's drunk and feeling woozy and his thoughts roll towards places he doesn't want them to go and he just, looks at them and feels like shit.

“Tae,” comes Namjoon’s low voice and Taehyung turns to him unnaturally fast. “You good?”

He nods and gives a thin smile, brings his glass to his lips.
Jungkook erupts in a booming laughter that almost has him choke on his liquid and he perks up.

"They never told you?" Seokjin, next to Taehyung, watches him with wide, amused eyes. Jungkook wildly shakes his head as he melts in the banquette and into Namjoon's side. "Really? After all this time?"

Jungkook reiterates his answer and Seokjin starts trembling with giggles too, under all the interested stares of the others.

“Oh no, hyung,” Hoseok says, but his lips are slowly forming a grin. “Tell me you didn’t tell him that.”

“But why didn’t he know it already?” Seokjin hiccups, half slouched onto Jungkook and making of them a pile of giggling matter. They’re cute.

“Why didn’t—Why didn’t you tell me you were each other’s first kiss?”

Taehyung’s eyes search the table to find Hoseok closing his eyes and biting his lip to try and not crack up and Jimin collapses onto him, just like he does when he’s laughing and feeling good. But Taehyung stiffens.

“Okay, listen,” Hoseok puts a hand over the table in a sort of pacifying motion, and Taehyung glances at Yoongi without meeting his eyes. He seems entertained and attentive. And not bothered. Much to Taehyung’s contrary. “We were young. So you were even younger, okay?”

“Yeah, but—“

“Do I need to remind you, Jeon Jungkook, that u-until, what? The beginning of this year? Talking about ho-holding hands grossed you the fuck out?”

Jimin passes an arm over Taehyung’s waist and squeezes, still happily shaking, and Taehyung shifts, gives him more space, wraps an arm around his frame. He warms up when he feels him cuddling closer, but his insides don’t loosen up.

“I nee-eed to know how that happened,” Jungkook wheezes, recovering but unmoving from his sprawled-out position.

“Is that necessary?”

“Very necessary, hyung.”

Yoongi reclines against the cushion when Jungkook says this, beer in hand, expression drunk and affectionate. With his elbow, he coaxes Hoseok into answering, gently poking his side.

“Hyung,” Hoseok looks at him, affronted. “It’s yo— Jimin we’re talking about.”

“Am I supposed to be mad that you kissed forever ago or?” Yoongi drawls.

“I mean,”

“I need to know, hyung,” Jungkook repeats, slurring his words even more.

“I wanna know too,” Yoongi adds, “it’s not that big of a deal, Seok-ah, just say it.”

Taehyung bristles at the nickname.
Jimin moves until he’s lying on his back, his legs welcomed by Yoongi’s hand when he half-throws them over his. He wiggles up until his head lays comfortable in Taehyung’s lap.

“I’m cringing so hard,” he whispers when Taehyung looks down and at him, when he combs numb fingers through his hair.

“It’s not cute or anything, I d-don’t get why y’all are so inter—“

“Hoseok-ah,” Seokjin straightens up, gaze serious, “say it or I’ll say it.”

“Oh my god,” Jimin laughs quietly.

"Jiminnie was fourteen and I was fifteen and we stole a bottle of soju from his parents' stuff and we were tipsy and we ended up kissing, ‘kay?"

“What the fuck?” Jungkook dissolves into a violent laughing fit again, helpless.

“Thirteen. I was thirteen,” Jimin says, only loud enough for Taehyung to catch it before he hides his face in his shirt.

Taehyung forces a smile, continues to play with soft strands of hair. He wants it to be soothing. But it’s more for himself than it is for Jimin.

He shouldn’t be feeling like that. But despite himself, Taehyung gradually starts seeing Hoseok as an obstacle.

There’s a shriek piercing through the night, echoing in between cold brick walls of the alleyway.

Taehyung jumps, even through how numb he is, his hand tightening around Jimin’s. It’s Seokjin’s who’s screaming, he realizes, when he makes a quarter of a turn to look back.

“Jeon Jungkook,” Seokjin threatens, but he’s way too intoxicated to sound menacing. “Jeon Jungkook put me down—You need to stop working out – Jeon—“

And then there's more confused sounds as Jungkook spins on himself with Seokjin stiff and defenceless in his arms, and this is, and Taehyung knows, not a good idea.

Jimin giggles at his side and Yoongi chuckles softly from where he is with Hoseok, a little further ahead. And Taehyung, he’s pretty much floating. He can hardly tell the difference between his own feelings and it’s good. For tonight, this is good.

Seokjin whines that he’s going to be sick and finally Namjoon intervenes, brings Jungkook’s frame to a stop.

"How is he still holding up?" Hoseok mutters with a smile in his voice, and that's a question that brushed Taehyung's mind, too. The kid did drink a lot. Almost as much as Yoongi, and Yoongi can definitely handle alcohol.

Namjoon stabilizes them, helps Seokjin down and then gently presses Jungkook forward with a hand on his hip. He says things Taehyung can't hear and Jungkook’s cocky grin melts into a tender smile and he nods, and they're all on their way again.
It’s a couple of corners later that Namjoon’s phone sings.

Taehyung barely registers the noise it makes, like the rest. Jimin is talking in soft sounds on his left and there’s not much else he can really focus on. He's getting sleepy and his moves sluggish, and he’d be up for a cuddle marathon right this instant.

But when they regroup to discuss where to go next, Namjoon is gone.

**You:** you ok hyung?

31-07-2016, 2:05

He sends this with a blurry vision, with clumsy thumbs. The answer comes quickly, and somehow in the mess of his mind, he finds it reassuring.

**Kim Namjoon:** Yes, don’t worry.

31-07-2016, 2:06

**Kim Namjoon:** Something important came up and I had to go.

31-07-2016, 2:06

**You:** a deal ?

31-07-2016, 2:06

**Kim Namjoon:** Yeah.

31-07-2016, 2:07

**You:** at thishour?wtf

31-07-2016, 2:07

**Kim Namjoon:** It happens. Some clients find it safer at night.

31-07-2016, 2:08
Taehyung wants to reply that they both know it’s a lie, but he figures that wouldn’t do any good.

Yoongi wraps a gentle hand around his wrist to bring him out of his daze and Taehyung looks up, stiffens for the fraction of a second when he notices that they’re all looking at him.

“Uh?” he blurs, and Jimin babbles about how cute he is through a laugh.

“What do you think?” Hoseok asks, relaxed and eyes heavy and for a beat, Taehyung hates how good looking he is.

“I didn’t hear?”

Hoseok laughs a pretty laugh, something sunny like Jimin’s and Taehyung squints, on the defensive.

"We were uh, thinking about a way to save Jungkook's ass," he continues, "since there's no way his parents' are going to let him live if they find out how slammed he got." Taehyung nods. "Jiminie was thinking of bringing him back at his and sleeping there with him and we wanted to hear your thoughts?"

"You, where're you going?"

Hoseok makes a dismissive move with his hand that rubs Taehyung the wrong way.

“Unrelated. I’m fine. I got a place. I’m going back there. So?”

Taehyung glances at Jimin, unsure of the part he has to play, and why he’d be against him going back home.

“It’s fine?” He looks at Jimin again. “Are you fine with that?”

“Yeah, of course,” he says, flushed and tired and beautiful.

“Then it’s fine?”
“Great.”

Chapter End Notes

Part 2 of this mess next week!

My birthday is actually on Monday so I might be away for a couple of days, I apologize if I can't reply before a while.
Everyone, have a nice week, be safe and take care, yeah?♡
Happy New Year everyone! I wish 2018 can bring you all the beautiful things you deserve and that whatever you're working hard for blooms with you <3 Be healthy! I love you all very much and thank for being with me through this, always. <3

It's deafeningly silent, when Yoongi and Taehyung get into the apartment. There's just the muted sound of the few cars passing in the streets below, and the clear, high sound of Tuxedo's bell when he comes their way. The rest of the city is asleep.

Yoongi flicks on the light of the entryway and crouches, gives the fluffy kitten a rough scratch on the head that he accepts gleefully. Watching, Taehyung's lips melt into a stupid smile. That's a nice sight. He's glad he agreed on keeping him.

Tonight again, he's in here with Yoongi for no pertinent reason. They have no good excuse. But for once, Taehyung’s brain doesn’t trip on the idea, doesn’t erupt in questions and doubts. He lets it be.

Yoongi shakes his Converses off and Taehyung does the same. Without a word, their fingers lace and they walk, unsteady, down the corridor. They take a shower, where the water is lukewarm but Yoongi’s lips are hot, and they don’t bother putting on clothes when they get out. Yoongi has never really been comfortable with being naked in general, but he is with him. And Taehyung is glad that this, at least, hasn't changed.

The air is a bit tense, a bit heavy when they fall in bed, each on their side. Taehyung knows it’s the weight of the things they don’t say and of the inevitable but right now he doesn’t feel like he can handle that properly. Now, and never, probably.

The room is spinning when he scoots closer to him, and he smiles, keeping his eyes shut. He lays his head onto Yoongi's stomach, slithers an arm around his waist and squeezes, revels in the soft huff and the gentle fingers carding through his hair that it earns him.

His body goes lax, sung to sleep by the rise and fall of Yoongi’s chest, and the strong, steady rhythm of his heart. It’s like Taehyung is getting heavier with every passing second, when comatose comes and pulls him in. It's fulfilling. And bittersweet. Tonight was one of those nights he’s not ready to say goodbye to.

“Taehyung-ah,” Yoongi’s fingers rake soft trails onto his scalp and he fights through this huge, peaceful cloud drifting across his mind. “Tae,”

And then there’s a loud sound, coming from far in the apartment. And then giggles. A lot of them.

“the fuck,” he groans as he shifts onto his elbow.
There’s a pained yelp, some laughed apologies. Then more harsh, brutal noises. He whips his head towards Yoongi, questioning.

“Jimin,” he answers and it makes sense, but it doesn’t at the same time. “Jimin, and Seokjin hyung, and Jungkook.”

“Ah.”

“Are ---” comes Jimin’s shy, inebriated voice from where he’s peeping through the door, “you guys asleep?”

"T’sup baby," Taehyung sits, crosses his legs. Yoongi's hands coming to rub his back makes it even harder to keep his eyelids open. It's still pitch darkness in the room and he longs for the tranquillity of a nightmare-free night.

“I uh—” he chuckles on his syllable, there’s more noises in the background and Taehyung can tell that Jungkook and Seokjin are bickering somewhere in the living room. “Lost my key?”

“Lost your key,” Yoongi repeats with his tone filled with a tired sort of amusement.

“I—Yeah? Don’t ask me how though.”

There’s a short silence, then Seokjin and Jungkook cracking up, like they have something to do with it and Taehyung can’t help but melt into a grin, too.

“How did you lose it?” Taehyung teases. He makes a move to stand, groggily throws his legs over the edge of the bed before he goes to grab Yoongi and himself some clothes.

“Fuck you,” Jimin bites back, but he’s smiling and walking a little funny into the room. “So is it okay? If we sleep here?”

Taehyung shrugs, then somehow figures that Jimin might not be seeing him.

"S’fine," he croaks, followed by a breathless groan when Jimin wraps around him like an octopus.

“Why is hyung still there, by the way?”

“I can hear you, Min Yoongi.”

“Jungkook didn’t want him to leave,” Jimin speaks into Taehyung’s chest.

And Yoongi hums and dresses, leaves the bed and the room altogether, flicks a light on as he joins them.

4:49.

That’s what Taehyung’s phone reads. It’s low on battery, very much like he is, but by some miracle, they managed to stay up a bit longer, sprawled on all the squishy surfaces in the living room.

Except for Taehyung. He takes comfort in the stiffer floor, in its cool sensation against his cheek.

He puts his device next to him, thinks through the fog that he'll lose it under the coffee table or the
couch or something and he rolls over to look up. The four of them continued talking in lazy words, and about things that only gets talked about when friends are drunk. And then Jungkook passed out, all lengthy on the couch with his head in Seokjin's lap and his legs over Jimin's, and Yoongi is in the single sofa chair, with Tuxedo curled up on the arm of it. He guesses it's some kind of cute scene. *It's a shame though,* Taehyung thinks, *that Cannelle keeps hiding under the furniture even after all this time.*

His mind flickers with a memory of a few months ago, on one of the first nights when Jimin and he got drunk together to work on their project. He moves onto his back and lets the vague, precious images warm him up.

It’s just a bit later, when Jimin is steadily dozing off and that Yoongi and Seokjin’s conversation falls into a lull, that they set on getting some sleep.

Jimin pouts when Yoongi shakes him awake, and Taehyung coaxes him towards the bedroom as Yoongi gets some blankets for Jungkook and helps Seokjin to settle in the guest room.

Taehyung is glad, that he got to hold onto this night just a little longer. Today was a good day.

He slides closer to Jimin’s body under the sheets, hears the slick sounds of his and Yoongi’s lips pressing together. Languid and leisured.

Then he hears soft padding in the corridor, quiet grumbling and then nothing.

And if anyone else noticed, they don’t mention it.

Δ

Jimin does notice.

Not when they’re all in bed with the sun starting to peek through the window and that he’s kissing Yoongi good night, but rather when he wakes a full five hours later with a body screaming for the bathroom.

His feet slide across the laminate flooring, his eyelids are sticking together and his vision is unfocused but he still notices it. Right when he shuffles past the door of the second bedroom.

He freezes, the heel of his palm pressed in his eye socket.

Things aren’t how they left them. Jungkook is not on the couch anymore. He’s snuggled up with Seokjin in the king size bed.

“’the fuck is this,” he whispers to himself, still unmoving. And for a couple of minutes he just stands there, his hungover brain struggling to process.

They look like they’re comfortable, though. Sleeping face to face with their legs tangled.

He swallows around the dryness of his tongue, confused, then proceeds towards the bathroom.
He’s sitting outside, knees bent up to his chest. The air has kept the freshness of the morning, the sky is a mess of patches of blue and splotches of grey. The ashtray lays abandoned next to him. He took a couple of drags of a first one but got too nauseous and ended up killing it in the glass receptacle.

He’s been there for a while, thinking of moving and starting to cook something for the others to eat when they finally wake up. But he’s just too comfortable with the chilly wind, the calming sway of Cannelle’s tail as she looks down to the street, and the image that’s still stuck in his head.

Jungkook breathing soft and peaceful against Seokjin’s chest, his fingers just shy under the hem of the older’s t-shirt.

Namjoon hyung: Yeah?

31-07-2016, 11:21

You: seokjin hyung and jungkookie

31-07-2016, 11:21

You: What do you mean?

31-07-2016, 11:22

Namjoon hyung: idk?

31-07-2016, 11:22

You: we ended up crashing at taes

31-07-2016, 11:22

You: and i found them sleeping together this morning

31-07-2016, 11:23
Namjoon hyung: Okay?

31-07-2016, 11:23

You: but i mean

31-07-2016, 11:23

You: they were pretty much, cuddling?

31-07-2016, 11:23

Namjoon hyung: Alright, yeah, and what is your question?

31-07-2016, 11:25

You: did i miss something?

31-07-2016, 11:25

You: are they together?

31-07-2016, 11:25

Namjoon hyung: Hum. Not that I know.

31-07-2016, 11:26

He waits for another text, this last one not fitting Namjoon’s way of conversation, but it never comes. So his thoughts drift again, they glide over a lot of things. On Yoongi’s open mood from the previous night, on Taehyung’s who seemed tense when they had this talk about his first kiss with Hoseok. And then, inevitably, they loop back around Jungkook.

He drank so much, and with so much ease. Like he's used to this kind of stuff. And Jimin can't help but wonder about all those things he's not being told.

You: hyung

31-07-2016, 11:37

You: youre not giving kookie anything, are you

31-07-2016, 11:37
Namjoon hyung: If by “anything” you mean drugs, then no, Jimin. I’m not.
31-07-2016, 11:42

He rereads the message twice, thrice. It gives him a weird, cold impression.

You: have i been rude or something?
31-07-2016, 11:42

You: i feel like i have
31-07-2016, 11:43

Namjoon hyung: No, don’t worry.
31-07-2016, 11:43

Namjoon hyung: I understand your concern. But he never asked, and I never offered.
31-07-2016, 11:43

Namjoon hyung: And I would very probably refuse if he ever was to be curious about it.
31-07-2016, 11:44

Jimin nods to himself, reassured by Namjoon’s grounded words and honesty. He answers something short but grateful, abandons his phone on the floor on the balcony and gives smoking another attempt.

He’s halfway through one when he hears shuffling inside, in the living room. He looks over his shoulder, meets Seokjin’s small but still pretty eyes through the mesh door and Jimin offers a smile that he’s immediately returned.

"'Morning," Seokjin whispers thickly as he sits next to him.

Jimin politely switches the ashtray to his other side, blows out his smoke in the opposite direction from where Seokjin is.

"'Morning, hyung."

“How did you sleep?” Seokjin crosses his arms over his chest, gathering some heat. And at that
precise moment, Jimin decides he should be directly tackling the topic with him.

“M’not bad, you?”

“That bed is really, really comfortable.”

“It’s brand new, it has to be comfortable.” He lets out a thin laugh, takes another drag before he continues. “Hyung,”

“Mhm?”

“Jungkook slept with you.”

Seokjin wriggles closer to the wall, leans back against it. He shakes stray strands out of his eyes and sighs.

“He did, yeah. Came to find me right after we all went to bed.”

Jimin is trying to be careful, because he might be stepping into a territory where he doesn’t belong. It sorts of is his business, since Jungkook is such a close friend. It is, but it’s not. It might just be misplaced curiosity. So he weighs his words.

“Is he okay?” he tries.

Seokjin frowns, and Jimin gets a surge of guilt that crawls up his stomach.

“Yeah, why?”

“I don’t know,” he kills his smoke, imitates Seokjin in the way he folds his arms around himself. The route he’s taking to ask what he wants to know is a touchy one. “He seems to need you around a lot. I was just wondering if stuff happened at home or something. Y’know, things he might not have told me.”

“Ah, I don’t think so. He was just really drunk and didn’t feel like being alone, probably.”

Jimin hums an understanding noise but doesn’t feel convinced.

“Am I reading too much into it?” he presses, after a few moments of dense quiet.

Seokjin lets his head loll against the hard surface until he’s looking at him, and he blinks lazily once, twice.

“Yes, Jimin-ah. You are.” Jimin breathes a soft okay in response, his doubts still coiled tight. “Should we work on some breakfast?”

He agrees drowsily, takes one last full inhale of chilled air before he follows Seokjin inside.

And he has to fight another wave of guilt, when they’re done and that he needs to rouse both Yoongi and Taehyung. Because Jimin has never seen but he does know, that the position he finds them in is the one they naturally take when he’s not there. Taehyung clinging to Yoongi’s frame, every parcel of his body screaming a sense of belonging.

“Hey,” he gives their tangled bodies a few gentle shakes until they stir. He feels bad, so bad. “Wake up, mhm?” Taehyung stretches at the same moment Yoongi does, looks up at him with feline eyes and a tired pout and Jimin smiles. He can see just how the previous night destroyed them and he’s glad there’s something warm waiting for them on the table. “Seokjin hyung and I cooked some
hangover food."
"It's school soon," Taehyung mutters, bent uncomfortably under the desk. He looks at the wire that's resting in his hand, unsure of its colour anymore given the lack of light, but he passes it through anyway.

“Crazy, right?” Jimin says from above. He pulls at the cable when he sees it peek from behind the wood then clicks his tongue. “Not the right one, Tae.”

“Fuck.”

They’ve been at it for what seems like hours, now.

The three of them went to buy a computer. Something nice and powerful to place in the guest room, that will hold all those programs Yoongi and Taehyung used to like a lot, not so long ago. And they’re currently struggling to install the whole thing, passing the wiring in the right places as for it not to be underfoot or get tangled. The experience, so far, has been frustrating and kind of damaging for his back.

He scoots back on his ass, tries to reach for his phone on the desk and Jimin hands it to him with a chuckle. He uses the torch, finds the right cord then slides it upwards and to Jimin, repeating the process. He’s rewarded with a bright sound, and he stretches out from where he’s sitting and taking place on the bed, instead.

For the past few days, Taehyung’s mind has been quiet. Mostly.

It’s been tame enough to let him enjoy every hour without overthinking, been docile enough to even have him take a look at some program applications for university without lashing at himself about how ungrateful of a son he is, and how stupid it would be to jump in feet first in a life filled with financial problems.

It's been so still, so peaceful, the hours following one another so smoothly that Taehyung hasn't, in any way or another, objected to Yoongi's nearly permanent presence. Because he hasn't left Jimin and Taehyung for longer than necessary, since that night with the seven of them. Only for his shifts at the office. Taehyung doesn't exactly know what switched, and where it did, how they found themselves in a semblance of life together, but he's feeling on the fence. In random moments, when Jimin will tilt his chin to kiss him or when he'll be staring at himself brushing his teeth, he'll be assaulted with doubts that he's getting tricked, trapped in their want to get a proper relationship. It will all rush through him for long seconds, and then he'll manage to snap out of it.

He doesn’t know if that’s a good thing, to let it happen without questioning them. But for now, everyone seems content.

Jimin squirms, bent in half over the desk as he fiddles behind the monitor. He huffs a strained groan and that makes Taehyung smile and lean back on his palms, staring at him with amusement.
“Taehyung,”

“Mhm,”

“Are you checking out my ass right now?”

He shrugs, unseen.

“Maybe.”

“Very busy, I see.”

“I’m admiring a fine piece of Art, I need all the focus I can muster,” he drawls, letting his gaze fall to the small of his back, and the line of Jimin’s boxer peeking from under his lounge pants.

“Admirably virtuous,” Jimin scoffs.

Taehyung stands and takes the single stride separating them, fitting his hands to Jimin’s hips. And on contact Jimin straightens and twist until they’re facing each other, coming to hold his wrists.

“Those pants though,” Taehyung says, low and rough.

“Nice, right?” Taehyung nods, holds his eyes. “But it’s a fine piece of Art so you can look, but you can’t touch.”

Jimin pushes his hands away with a teasing grin, stares for a fleeting second at the way Taehyung gnaws at his own lip and he goes back to whatever he was doing. Taehyung hums and follows his movement, comes close enough that his hips are resting against his ass and he gives his back slow, gentle rubs.

“Fuck off, Tae,” he laughs, and Taehyung bends over him, presses kiss between his shoulder blades. Jimin’s hands move awkwardly behind the monitor, and Taehyung’s lips linger where his collar rides low. For a moment, he revels in how easy it is to make him lose concentration. “I’m serious though,” Jimin says, but he still pushes back eagerly, “we need to finish this.”

And as if on cue, the front door is being heard, then the bright sound of keys being thrown on the small table against the wall. Taehyung lets out a petty groan and he slumps on Jimin, who huffs and then chuckles sweetly, going lax on the surface as well.

Yoongi gets in the room and mutters a skeptical okay when he sees them, and Taehyung eyes zero on the box that’s crowding his arms.

His fingers unclamp from Jimin’s waist, his chest gives a weird stutter.

He’s not entirely certain what made him agree to this. To Yoongi bringing here all of their old CDs of stuff they recorded together, the vinyl they liked and the Maschine. Not too long ago he was the one telling him to forget about all of this, and now it’s here, in his apartment. He might react badly. They all know that. After all, holding all of this in here is a silent confession that it still means something to him. That this mini-studio they’re building up, he’s willing to use it.

He backs away from Jimin, stares at the box. There’re faint tinges in his limbs, a dull throb in his chest. Yoongi’s eyes are careful on him, attentive. He swallows and takes it from Yoongi’s hold, puts it on the bed.

And with nostalgia tight in his throat, he places the vinyl prettily in the bookcase, cutting off the
sounds of Jimin and Yoongi working on the computer together. And then, he arranges the CDs on the shelf above the desk, in chronological order. The first one reads *hyung & taetae, january 28 2011*, and it makes him smile fondly, blurry memories resurfacing. The last one reads *us, december 15 2014*, and he looks at it for a moment, his brain shuffling through images and feelings, some very light, some cold and bitter. He remembers them recording it, angry and spitting the lyrics like it was salvation. And at that moment, that’s exactly what it was, to them.

And that was two weeks before Yoongi left.

Taehyung stares at the wall blankly, then down to Yoongi’s hand, nimble on the computer mouse. He can feel that he’s slipping into that zone he loathes and he looks at Jimin, meets his gaze and settles again. Breathes deep.

He wanders to his room, easily finds what he’s searching for in his t-shirt drawer.

He fits the last piece on the shelf. The album no.11 that he held onto with so much fervour. That he hid and then took out so many times that it barely made any sense anymore. That he hated so much but never could find the strength to throw it out because, on it, there’s the first and only love song that Yoongi ever wrote for him.

The collection is complete now.

There’s a hand coming to his back in a tender touch and Taehyung smiles.

It’s fine.

Δ

The click of the door was soft when Jimin and Taehyung got in the bathroom.

It’s not usually like that between them. They most often tiptoe around matters like those. Shared showers. Up until now, when the three of them were together, they’ve always showered separately. They don’t talk about it but they all know, that it might make things weird.

Tonight though, after dinner and a couple of beers, Jimin said he was going to go in, and Taehyung chirped that he’d go with him. And when they offered Yoongi to come as well, more than knowing that the space is way too cramped for three bodies, he refused because he was fine with waiting his turn just to have that warmth spread through him again. The one he blooms with whenever Jimin and Taehyung bicker, when they kiss, or when they talk and their voices drop low in coziness.

Sometimes he still can’t process what’s happening. Loving two people together as much as he loves them individually.

The water is turned on and it acts like a white noise to Yoongi’s brain. He reclines back in the mattress tiredly, his hand holding his phone coming to rest on his chest. A sigh finds its way out of his lips. He likes it a lot, this new room. He wasn’t told, but there is definitely something emotionally important for Taehyung in here. Just from his constant zoning out and silences, Yoongi knew. But what they did is beautiful. The vinyl, the photos he got printed to put on the walls, all the setting up they did with the computer. And Taehyung adorning the shelves of their old stuff.

He lifts his phone to eye-level, wakes the screen and starts fiddling on his social medias. He hears the
muted sound of Jimin giggling and his lips curve up in a tender smile. Then he can tell that they’re talking, their voices reverberating in the echo of the shower, but he can’t decipher anything.

And then, a moment of quiet. And a voice. Jimin’s. Singing.

He sits up.

The notes are shy, unsure and he keeps them in his chest too much, like he’s scared of letting go. They’re just a little too high, maybe, from what he can hear from the grain of his voice. But Jimin makes them flow together beautifully nonetheless, smooth and gentle, he makes them twirl, makes them float. Yoongi closes his eyes just so he can see them dance.

Comes Taehyung’s richer tone, his notes waltzing with Jimin’s.

Yoongi’s lungs deflate and he stands, accepting the knot of nostalgia and sadness that forms in his throat. He presses his back to the bathroom door when he gets to it, slides down until he’s sitting on the floor, and he listens.

It’s not perfect, but it is.

They play around each other and they adjust, they harmonize, in this like in everything else. Jimin seems to stall in certain places, his power faltering like he wants to stop but Taehyung coaxes him to continue with the way he doesn’t relent. He can picture them so well, close to each other and under the stream, eyes shut and mouths moving around one of the most beautiful things he’s ever heard.

He exhales long, his heart squeezed up in between his ribs. It hurts. Not that they’re in there and that he isn’t. It hurts, because they’re ingrained in a life that’s not really their own, when what he hears could be so much more. It’s beyond ridiculous, when he thinks about it. All those superficial things they’re holding onto, for the sake of a mind free of guilt that shouldn’t belong to them either.

They glide through what Yoongi assumes is the bridge, and no matter how much he expected that high note at the end of it, his skin still blooms in goosebumps. His head rolls back against the door.

Yoongi doesn’t know the song. But he decides right then and there that it’s one of his favourites.

And when they’re done, that even from where he is, Yoongi feels how full their silence is, he makes his way back to the new room, sits half his ass on the computer chair, and starts writing.

Chapter End Notes

very short but soft?
Choi Gayoung: Good afternoon, Taehyung. I was simply wondering if your father had told you about the wedding?

05-08-2016, 15:39

You: yes he did

05-08-2016, 21:37

He only decides to answer her when he knows dance practice is over for Jimin and that he's waiting for him to text his plan for the night, like he said he would.

Choi Gayoung: Great! Will we be seeing you?

05-08-2016, 21:38

You: do you think i have a choice

05-08-2016, 21:38

Choi Gayoung: Do you not?

05-08-2016, 21:39

You: as my future mother

05-08-2016, 21:40

You: thats kinda funny that you have no idea about my relationship with my dad

05-08-2016, 21:40
He sees a notification from Jimin pop at the top of his screen but prefers to wait it out and go through this conversation he's having with her before he can clear his mind and refocus on him instead.

**Choi Gayoung:** Taehyung…

05-08-2016, 21:41

**Choi Gayoung:** Please don’t consider me a mother. It is not what I’m here for. I don’t wish to act as a kind of replacement of some sort.

05-08-2016, 21:41

He struggles his next exhale out. His thumbs glide over the letters, wanting to answer to stop spilling bullshit on this relationship they don’t have but before he can send it, he receives something else.

**Choi Gayoung:** I am not comfortable with that, and I highly doubt that you are.

05-08-2016, 21:42

**Choi Gayoung:** You’re all prickly and I can understand why. I will be more than content if one day, you’re comfortable enough to reach out to me first.

05-08-2016, 21:42

**You:** we’re not gonna be friends

05-08-2016, 21:42

**Choi Gayoung:** I can understand that as well.

05-08-2016, 21:43

**You:** and yes, i will be at the wedding

05-08-2016, 21:43

**You:** with the person im seeing, just like dad wants

05-08-2016, 21:43

**Choi Gayoung:** I’m glad! I can’t wait to meet them!
He stares at the last message for a few beats, and doesn't answer. He drops his phone onto his lap and throws his head back into the plushness of his couch, and breathes still for a minute. She makes him feel helpless. Frustrated and helpless.

Cannelle suddenly jumps from the floor to land on his thighs and he tenses, her unconfident claws stinging at his skin through his sweatpants. He greets her with a few rough scratches behind the ear, like he knows she likes. She’s lost some weight, since she got with him in April. It’s not much, two or three pounds, but even this little shows a lot on her tiny frame. Maybe his heart is a biased, but he thinks she looks younger by the day.

He grabs his device again and unlocks it, his fingers gentle in her soft fur.

**Jimin:** we’re going out for a beer, hoseok hyung, yoongi hyung and me, you coming?

05-08-2016, 21:40

He looks at the cat kneading at his leg and he sighs, uneasy.

He’s still stuck with this ill feeling towards Hoseok, even when he’s well aware that it’s probably only his vicious imagination. Taehyung has no right to find him threatening, anyway. If something was to ever happen between Hoseok and Yoongi or Jimin, he would have no say in it. It feels like it sometimes, but in reality, they’re still not together.

Cannelle finally curls up on his thighs, her purring growing louder.

**You:** i think id rather stay here

05-08-2016, 21:50

**You:** but thanks for inviting me

05-08-2016, 21:51

**Jimin:** you sure?

05-08-2016, 21:51

**You:** yeah, its chill

05-08-2016, 21:51
Jimin: you sound pissed?

05-08-2016, 21:51

You: im not, i swear

05-08-2016, 21:52

And he isn’t. He’s just not willing to be battle against that part of his brain again tonight.

Jimin: ok

05-08-2016, 21:52

Jimin: we probably wont be back late, since i gotta be at the office early tomorrow

05-08-2016, 21:52

He replies a vague agreement and picks Cannelle up, brings her to the kitchen with him and he picks a glass that he fills with soda and the tiniest bit of alcohol.

Δ

“I can go with you, if you’d prefer,” Yoongi offers.

There’s something about Jimin leaving him alone with Hoseok that’s unnerving. Not in itself. Hoseok is a friend. A good one. It’s just that he doesn’t want to play in chords that used to be painful.

“If you wanna come home, then come home, hyung,” Jimin stands from the booth, gathering his things before he glances back to see if Hoseok is on his way back from the restrooms. “But I know you were anticipating some chill out time, so.”

“You know why I’m saying that, Jimin-ah,” he says, voice tired.

“I know,” and Yoongi can see how Jimin would like to bend and press their lips together, but refrains, respectful how Yoongi’s boundaries. “I’m fine with it,” he shrugs. “You should stay, though. I mean it.”

Yoongi gives a slow nod, wanting his words to soothe him. It only half works.

“You’re leaving?” They both turn to look at Hoseok, who’s walking slow, wiping his hands on his jeans. “We just got here?”
Yoongi gazes down at the table, where their three glasses are still clean and the pitcher is still full.

“Yeah,” Jimin gives a dry laugh. “Sorry about that.”

Hoseok agitates his hand in the air in a *no need to* gesture, then wraps himself around Jimin in a quick hug.

“Did something happen or?”

Jimin shakes his head.

“I have a meeting tomorrow morning, and I don’t know,” he pauses, pondering. “Taehyung seemed a little off when I texted him earlier.”

Yoongi’s eyes meet Jimin’s, and between them float a kind of worry that has him frowning. He takes his phone out.

"You: tae"

05-08-2016, 22:13

“Oh, okay,” Hoseok’s voice runs small, understanding. “Keep me updated?”

Jimin smiles. Not a full smile like the ones that give him the prettiest eyes and the cutest pull of lips. It’s more reserved. Cautious.

And at that moment, Yoongi wonders if they’re tiring Jimin out. Taehyung and him.

“I will,” he pats at Hoseok’s shoulder firmly, then a gentle hand, coming to rest just under Yoongi’s nape.

"Taehyung: yeah?"

05-08-2016, 22:14

Hoseok sits across from him in the booth and starts filling up their glasses. Yoongi keeps his eyes trained on Jimin’s back until he’s reached the door and exits the place.

"You: what are you doing"

05-08-2016, 22:15

Because he knows full well that directly asking him how he is is a guarantee of euphemism.

“You okay, hyung?” Hoseok asks, pushing Yoongi’s drink his way. “You’re worried, aren’t you?”
Taehyung: im looking at some stuff for uni, why
05-08-2016, 22:15

He sits back in his seat, rationalizing.

“It’s okay,” he mutters. “I think he’s okay.”

Δ

Jimin still hasn’t gotten used to it. Unlocking Taehyung’s apartment with his own key.

He steps in, meets dim lighting and takes his Timbs off, lazily fiddles with his foot to arrange them neatly next to the shoe rack. And save for the rumbling of the laundry machine running and air conditioner buzzing, it’s silent. But not like the place is empty. More like a busy kind of quiet.

He rearranges the strap of his gym bag on his shoulder, and he pads all the way to Taehyung’s bedroom, not wanting to worry about the littlest things.

Taehyung’s surprised, when he sees him appear in the doorway. Jimin knows, because even if he doesn’t make any weird sound or even if he doesn’t jump in his chair, his chest stutters and his fingers freeze above his keyboard.

Taehyung slides his headphones off his ears and rests them around his neck, slowly flaps his laptop shut.

“You’re early,” he says, with a roughed up voice that had seemingly been singing.

“No need to hide your porn,” Jimin says with a smirk, going to drop his bag next to the bed, and that earns him a choked laugh.

“It wasn’t porn,” he cranes his neck and Jimin meets him halfway, pecks his lips.

“Uh huh.” He kisses him again, lingers in that softness for a little longer until he realizes that he’s tasting sugary alcohol on his tongue. He straightens, scans over the desk until he finds it, Taehyung’s favourite glass to drink his vodka. “You’ve been drinking.”

“Oh? Ah, no. Not really.”

“There’s no need to lie about this either, Tae, you taste like it,” Jimin frowns, searches Taehyung’s features.

"It was soda with a drop of vodka. One glass. Like an hour ago. Chill."

And that makes Jimin’s tensed shoulders slowly go more lax.

“You stress out whenever I say I’m not hungry, so I’m allowed to stress out whenever you drink alone.”
Taehyung purses his lips, pondering.

“Fair enough.”

“What were you doing that you don’t want me to see?” Jimin continues, sitting on the edge of the bed and patting at his thighs until Tux climbs on him. Jimin likes him a lot, even if when he pets him for long enough, he’s reminded of that afternoon where they found him, and that fight he created.

“Nothing important.”

Δ

Well into their second pitcher, Yoongi is overwhelmed with self-consciousness. He and Hoseok have been talking about his relationship with Taehyung and Jimin for a while. And he, with a churning stomach, realizes he hasn’t really talked about it with anyone, not even Seokjin, until today. Until Hoseok gently pushed him to.

It’s exposing, and a little awkward, maybe, to voice his thoughts before a neutral advice. Hoseok didn’t make him feel judged, when he talked about how he’s struggling to deal with having left Taehyung for a whole year. He didn’t give any ambiguous comments when he said he wished the three of them would have sex more often. There are no hints of insinuations or doubts, when Yoongi utter in soft tones that he’s happy that Taehyung seems willing to accept him more. There’s nothing of that. Even when Yoongi knows very well that their story isn’t a fluffed up one, and that they’re three. Three people in love.

“We’ve been talking about me a lot,” he says after a large gulp of amber liquid.

Hoseok shrugs.

“I talk all the time, so it’s nice to have someone talk, for once.”

“How’s it going?” Yoongi asks, breaking a short silence between them. Hoseok’s eyebrows shoot up in question. “Since you had her leave, I mean.”

“Ah,” he looks down, at his fingers around his glass. “Well. It’s quiet.”

He smiles when he says this, but Yoongi knows better than to believe it.

“And how you doing?”

“I’m—“ his eyes fog up for a beat, then he meets Yoongi’s stare. “Lonely? But that’s fine. Some days I really like it. And my apartment’s clean for the first time in a really long time, so there’s that.”

“Jimin told me you haven’t spent much time on your own in the past years.”

“Yeah,” he slouches back in the booth, “it always happened like that. I’d go through a breakup and then somehow, I’d meet someone and go from there. So that’s new. Having my time for me, doing my things, not worry too much about how I can fit my schedule around someone else’s.”

“It’s different.”

And Yoongi can hardly even relate. He’s just unwillingly brought back to this condo in New York
that felt like death every damn day.

"It is. And it's funny, but I always envied Jimin for that." Yoongi holds his eyes, an invitation to go on. “Serious relationships. I mean, that doesn’t mean that they were perfect. Let’s be real here, his ex is an asshole.” He pauses, gauges Yoongi’s expression. “He told you about him, right?”

“A couple of times. He never lingers on the subject more than necessary.”

“So you don’t know the whole story.”

“I’ve been told enough to know that he made Jimin feel so disgusting that he developed disordered eating.”

“This amongst a lot of other things. It’s been a long way for him to get back on his feet. How’s he now? I can’t check up on him as often as I used to.”

Yoongi takes a sip, and rethinks of moments, of conversations, and he synthesizes.

"He’s better than when I met him, I think. He’s pretty much living with Tae, now. And that’s the kind of thing he is very sensitive about, so he takes good care of him.”

Hoseok nods, a tender smile pulling at his lips.

"That's nice," he says. "I'm glad he's met you both."

Yoongi hums, that flame inside his chest brightening him up, making him warm and content.

“And Nami,” Yoongi continues, wanting to move on. His cheeks might be colouring with a stupid love-blush again.

“She’s nice. She understands me well, I think.”

“And where are you going with that?”

"For now she's a friend,” Hoseok says with confidence. He thought about this a lot and it shows. "She's my boss, also. I wanna get acclimatized to that life I'm having, then we'll see. Maybe."

Yoongi gives an agreeing noise, and picks up the pitcher to fill their glasses again.

He hasn’t known Hoseok for long, and their friendship started like a fucking wreck. But he became fast, so scarily fast, one of the few persons he’d give a lot to see happy.

Δ

“Did hyung say when he’d be back,” Taehyung sucks his finger into his mouth, licking the chocolate syrup off of it and Jimin stares.

“N’no,” he’s completely zoned out as Taehyung mixes their chocolate milk, transfixed and swarming up with lust when he repeats the motion with more intent, and keeping his index in for longer. “They’re not exactly comfortable together anyway? Since – Since they kissed and everything.”

“Since they kissed,” Taehyung repeats.

“Please tell me you knew.”

“Was I supposed to know?”

“He told me he’d tell you.”

“Nice. How long has it been?”

“It’s uh—Fuck. Why did I say that?”

“How long?”

“I don’t know, last month or something.”

“Or something.”

“That night you fucked yourself up at the refinery and Namjoon hyung found you.”

“Cool.”

Taehyung focuses back on the two glasses, filled to the brim. There’s anger in the way he moves and Jimin feels himself blush with guilt. He draws closer, rests a hand on the small of his back.

“I mean, it made him realize some stuff? Tae –”

“It doesn’t really matter,” he cuts him. “For me, a least. It’s not mandatory for me to know those things.”

“Don’t say that.”

“We’re not together,” he looks at Jimin, there’s this emptiness in his orbs that he doesn’t like at all. “No one cheated.”

”No, but for him it was a little bit of the same.”

“Yeah well,” and Taehyung loudly drops his spoon on the counter, startling Jimin, “maybe that’s the fucking problem.”

Jimin frowns, watches him disappear in the corridor and towards the living room. He follows.

“What is?”

“You both playing that little game.”

“What the fuck are you on about?” He gets in the room, sees Taehyung pulling the mesh door open. “Stop fucking running from me.”

And Taehyung does stop. He slides it back shut rather harshly, fishes his cigarette pack in his pocket and lights one right there, inside, like Jimin knows he hates doing.

“Talk to me,” he urges him, wanting his tone mellow but it comes out with sharp edges anyway.

“It doesn’t matter.”

“It does matter,” he takes a step towards him, inoffensive, and can’t help but get a bit sucked in how
good Taehyung looks when he's angry and blowing out smoke. "We don't talk enough about that stuff and it's important to me because I'm trying to understand you."

“What for? To continue getting deeper in this relationship that won’t go anywhere?” And Jimin looks at him, a bit lost, with a pressure too heavy on his chest and crushing his lungs to even begin fighting it. “You know what pisses me off the most? When I think about it?” He waits for an answer that Jimin doesn’t give. “I feel like I’m getting tricked. Like hyung and you are trying to make me believe that I’m fine with being with the both of you.”

Jimin huffs out a bitter laugh.

He knows anxiety. And he knows how choking the fear of being hurt again is. He knows that words get twisted as much as the thoughts, that sometimes the grey zone becomes too overwhelming and too close to blackness to really see things properly.

“We’re not trying to trick you, Tae. You’re doing that for yourself.” His voice is rough, barely tamed. He gets closer. Taehyung doesn’t budge, takes another drag. “You naturally fall into this relationship just like we do, it’s just that once in a while something inside your brain fucking screams at you that you’re scared.”

“You can’t blame me for that,” he averts his eyes, blows out towards the patio door a diaphanous cloud.

“I know I can’t blame you,” Jimin studies the set of his jaw, the perfection of his forehead and his brows as he frowns. He softens. “But I can tell you that you’re not as scared as you think you are.”

Taehyung shrugs, orients his body towards the currents of fresh air filtering in.

“Too bad, I’m the only judge of this.”

“Tell me the difference between loving me and loving hyung? I don’t get it.”

“You didn’t abandon me for over a year.”

“He was scared, Tae. Fucking terrified. You know that, right?” Jimin sees his orbs clouding up, sees how he falls in his own thoughts. "Did you even talk about it enough for you to know the whole story?"

“It doesn’t matter either. Anyway, you can’t love someone you don’t trust, can you?”

“Stop doing that. You’re doing it again. You’re trying to change the subject. Hyung spent that whole year in New York thinking you were better off without him.”

Taehyung scoffs but doesn’t add anything. So Jimin takes it as an invitation to go on.

“Your father kept telling him to fuck off whenever he had the occasion. He told hyung that he was ruining you, over and over again. Your grades, your attitude, he was using all that against him.”

Taehyung’s eyes slip shut, and his chest, very slowly, heaves around his air.

“I had— suspicions. About that.”

“Yeah. And hyung was offered that job abroad but he refused it, at first. Because it made no sense for him to be apart from you. But your father, he worked so hard to guilt-trip him, that hyung started believing what he was saying. He ended up thinking that your disinterest in school and those
depressive moods you were slumping into were because he was influencing you with a life he
couldn’t give you. Now he knows better. He knows that it wasn’t it. But at that moment, he was
brought to believe that. And when the incident happened, he just—” Jimin draws in a deep breath,
struggling to find the right way to say it. Taehyung’s throat bobs and Jimin feels his chest constrict
around his heart. “He just wanted you to be happy. But he fucked up instead.”

Rubbing his nose in a nervous gesture, Taehyung moves and gets outside, leaves the door open
behind him as an invitation. Jimin takes it. He leans on the railing next to him, and he’s offered a
cigarette. He takes this as well.

And for a while it’s just this. That deafening silence between them. And Jimin just lets it be. He
knows Taehyung has caught the quiet. So he looks down, to the few people wandering at night, and
when he gets bored, up to the sky. It moves angrily, in pretty shades of greys and coal, clouds
sparsely hiding the moon.

“I hate how I feel,” Taehyung breathes out to the night. “I know I fuck things up, in my mind. But
for me, right now, the three of us, it—it doesn’t seem doable. I just can’t see myself trusting him
again.”

Jimin brings his cigarette to his lips, takes a thoughtful drag from it.

“Do you think it’ll come back?” in his peripheral vision, Taehyung shrugs. “Because you love him,
right?”

And Taehyung’s lack of response is the closest he'll get from an honest answer. He smiles to himself
when he hears him sigh.

"I don't know. Some days it's fine, some days it's not."

Taehyung taps his ash off, meets his eyes.

“What would help?” Jimin asks, his voice dropping to more of a sultry rumble, and in the silence that
lingers, tension starts building up.

“Your lips. On mines,” Taehyung exhales a thin stream of smoke, his stare gliding down to Jimin's
mouth, wrapped around his cigarette. "That would help."

“I’m serious,” he says, contradicting his smile.

“I’m serious too.”

“Tae,”


Δ
taehyung is not sleeping, when Yoongi gets back.

The front door clicks and he’s staring at the ceiling, his body lax and loose, his skin a little cold from
Jimin having drifted further on the mattress.
He knots up. Yoongi moves in the apartment, he can hear him talking to Tuxedo, assuming that he’s scratching his head from the sound of the bell.

Taehyung contorts in shards of anger and jealousy and sadness, when he rethinks of what Jimin told him. How Yoongi and Hoseok kissed, a month ago. He breathes, deep, wanting to regain calmness. *It made him realize some stuff,* Jimin said. And Taehyung tries to ground himself with that. He thinks it's somewhat unsettling, how Jimin seems to be dealing with it. How composed he is. But then again, Yoongi and he don't share the same history.

The bathroom door is being shut and quickly after, the shower starts running. Taehyung tenses again, rolls onto his side. Jimin is closer, like this, with his soft pout and silky strands of black hair falling over his closed eyes. He would want to reach, perhaps gently rake his fingers through his hair, but he knows too well that it would rouse him. So he stays immobile, studies the beauty in his features to the sound of the shower.

When Yoongi comes out and shuffles in the kitchen, Taehyung is replaying the conversation he’s had with Jimin in their post-orgasm haze. *You need to try to talk, Tae,* he was told in delicate whispers. *Whatever you think or feel, you can tell us.*

And finally, Yoongi gets in the room. His padding is light and careful. He too, knows how easily it is to wake Jimin. The bed dips, but it doesn’t creak. Taehyung can’t help but notice the smell of their shower cream, and neither can he stop his thoughts from sidetracking. He thinks of the possibility that Yoongi might be wanting to wash off Hoseok’s cologne from his skin, before he comes under the sheets with them.

Quiet, unmoving, Taehyung watches how Yoongi fits himself behind Jimin, how he drapes an arm around his waist to pull their bodies together. He listens to his careful stirring to get in a comfortable position, to his tired huff that he breathes in the crook of Jimin’s neck.

Then his eyes fall into Taehyung’s, and for a very short moment, he frowns. His hand that was folded against Jimin’s stomach outstretches on the mattress, wanting to reach Taehyung's forearm. But Taehyung doesn't move to accommodate him. He just holds his gaze and exhales long and drawn out. He's still too raw.

"Good night, hyung," he murmurs, because that's the best he feels like he can do for now.

“Good night.”

*We want to love you but if we never talk, it won’t ever work out.*

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**Chapter End Notes**

So I'm starting university on Monday? I've never been to university? I'm scared?

I'll try to keep this posting schedule because I like it, but it might become a little hard for me. I'll do my best and let's see how it goes?
Have a nice week everyone! <3
Chapter Notes

This is the morning that follows the last chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It starts when Jimin is tugging his jeans up to his hips. Yoongi and Taehyung arguing, in the kitchen.

It was sort of a calm morning, their routine following lazy handjobs under the covers. Then Jimin got to shower first, because he has to leave and meet with his father and several associates for some kind of unofficial meeting. So he prepared himself a quick smoothie while Taehyung and Yoongi were cooking something else, and went to dress in their bedroom.

And now this.

Taehyung has this despair in his voice and Yoongi keeps being derisive about whatever he's saying and it's just, hard not to step into it. He shouldn't. It's their relationship. But the tone of this conversation is something like he's never heard of them before. So he fastens the button of his jeans, grabs his t-shirt and gets closer to the corridor so he can hear them better.

"The onions were fine," Yoongi mutters, blasé.

"They weren't fine, obviously, if I took the fucking pan from your hand."

"They were, Tae, but you're –"

"Hyung, just—fuck off from around the isle? I'll do it. I'll cook."

Yoongi gives an angry chuckle, then Jimin hears the drag of his feet as he moves, assumedly, away.

"You're fucking snappy and it'd be fun if you'd tell me what your problem is."

Taehyung says nothing and just continues his shuffling, turbulent in the way he moves the pans and pots around. Jimin pockets his phone after looking at the time, then grabs his wallet on one of the nightstands.

"Taehyung," Yoongi tries, with that same bite in his voice, just a little less irritated.

"What?"

"Did I do something? Why the fuck are you like that?"

"I don't like it. You and Hoseok. It gets on my nerves. Happy now?"

Jemin's eyes go rounder where he's staying still in the doorway, and then he winces when Yoongi breathes out a laugh.
“Well, that’s a funny one,” he rasps.

"Funny, right?" there's the sharp sound of a plate being placed on the counter too roughly.

“Yeah, you being scared of losing someone you apparently don’t love is pretty ridiculous.”

Jimin curses under his breath, closing his eyes. Another harsh sound, a utensil, a wooden spoon maybe, thrown in the sink. He walks down the corridor, unsure, knowing he really should go and that he’s already late.

"What do you want to hear, hyung? That I love you? Fine. I love you." Jimin freezes in the middle of the hallway, his lungs paralyzed for a long second. From where he is, he can see the both of them, as immobile as he is and standing at each their side of the island and the whole thing looks like it needs to disappear. "I love you, okay? Even when I started being with Jimin I knew you were still in there somewhere." He shrugs. "So I've been loving you for years. Is it good? Are you happy with that answer? Does that give me permission to be jealous?"

And in the dead silence that follows, Jimin starts existing again. There's a soft, fond smile on his lips as he enters the kitchen to get his smoothie on the counter. His eyes go back and forth a couple of times, quiet but not so secretly satisfied with the outcome of their fight. He turns off the stove before he tilts his bottle to drink a large gulp of the sweet substance.

“Tae,”

Before Yoongi can continue, Jimin slides in. With their stares locked on him, he perches on tiptoes to kiss Taehyung, half grinning when he feels his hand coming to rest heavy on the small of his back. Then he skirts around the isle, cups Yoongi's cheek and presses his lips onto his in a touch that seems to momentarily steal his breath.

Jimin wanted those kisses to be gentle and understanding. Because he’s so, so proud.

He heads to the door, grabbing his backpack on the way and swinging it over his shoulder.

“This better be settled by tonight,” he singsongs, his grin surely audible.

He takes a deep breath, once he’s sitting in his car. On his own, but not feeling as alone anymore.

"You're not very often at home, these days," Jimin's father says with a warm voice. He's writing a check for the meal they've just had with the associates, and now it's only the two of them sitting at the otherwise empty table.

Jimin nods, on the edge of shy. There’s the low press of guilt in his belly but he ignores it. He made that choice knowingly. And he’s not regretting it.

“I know,” he mutters when his father stands. His hand is in his pocket, tight around his phone and he’s itching to text Yoongi or Taehyung to feel around the situation. But it wouldn’t be polite, even if the meeting is over.

“You found someone?"

"Yeah," and now he's smiling, anticipating his return to Taehyung's apartment.
“Is he treating you nicely?”

Jimin watches his father readjusting his wool sweater over his dress shirt, preparing to leave, and he imitates him. He would want, like many times before, to correct him and tell him that he’s having two boyfriends, but he refrains from doing so. Their identities, also, will have to wait a little more.

“Yeah.”

“Good,” he gets a pat on the shoulder that warms him up, that fills him with affection.

Jimin follows when they exit the restaurant, thanking the staff one more time on the way.

You: how did it go
06-08-2016, 12:24

He types it frantically the moment they’re sitting in the company’s car.

Yoongi hyung: as well as it could go
06-08-2016, 12:28

Yoongi hyung: given our situation
06-08-2016, 12:28

You: what happened
06-08-2016, 12:28

Yoongi hyung: not much else, to be honest
06-08-2016, 12:29

Yoongi hyung: i tried not to press on it too much
06-08-2016, 12:29

Yoongi hyung: i know it would have rushed him
06-08-2016, 12:29
He stares at his screen, hopeful. Inside, he’s dancing with butterflies. The prettiest of them all.

**Yoongi hyung:** he didn’t

06-08-2016, 12:30

He breathes out a long, relieved sigh. He can see his father glancing at him in his peripheral and he quietly soothes his worry with a shake of his head.

**You:** that’s nice

06-08-2016, 12:30

**You:** what are you doing now

06-08-2016, 12:31

Δ

Yoongi looks down to his chest, where Taehyung's head is resting. He idly pets his hair for a few deep breaths, before he picks up his phone again and starts replying.

**You:** we’re napping

06-08-2016, 12:33

**You:** i guess

06-08-2016, 12:33

He thinks he can already tell what Jimin is going to say, or what he’s going to assume of what he’s just said. But they didn’t have sex. Yoongi didn’t want this to be their instinctive solution whenever they’d pour feelings onto each other.

When the door clicked closed and that silence engulfed them, he searched Taehyung's eyes. For any imminent backlash or for the coming of his usual emotional wall. There was fear in them, instead.
Perhaps a hint of regret.

Yoongi didn’t add anything. After all, he got what he wanted from their fight. So he just outstretched his hand for Taehyung to take and led him to the bedroom, arranged them so their bodies were flush. And as naturally as he always did, Taehyung half draped himself over his side, an arm secured around his waist.

“I don’t like it, hyung,” Taehyung reiterated, in a voice so low Yoongi barely caught it.

“I know,” he whispered back as he carded his fingers through his hair gently. “But he’s a friend.”

“Jimin told me you kissed.”

He stiffened, taken aback, before guilt flamed up in his chest again, and burned the whole of him from the inside.

“We did kiss. And that was a mistake. Both for me and for him.”

Taehyung moved up, and Yoongi allowed himself to hold his gaze, finding in there much more than any words could convey.

“I don’t trust you.”

It hurt him. Such bluntness and honesty. Yoongi shrivelled up at his words. But he knew they were coming. It was just a matter of time.

“I understand.”

And then, when Taehyung tilted his chin to kiss him, Yoongi let him. He let him lick his lips and claw at his shirt. But when the tension shifted, he stopped him. That wasn’t what he wanted for them, at that very moment.

And even right now, over two hours later and in the warmth of the sheets, he wouldn't want it.

The moment Taehyung pressed his lips to his, Yoongi drowned in doubts. And he hasn't resurfaced yet.

Jimin: so you ended up not eating breakfast

06-08-2016, 12:34

He remembers the food they were halfway through cooking, sighs. He hopes the cats haven’t felt adventurous and climbed on the counter.

You: pretty much

06-08-2016, 12:34
Taehyung stirs, his chest expanding harshly around air. Yoongi waits for him to settle in again. He’s been going in and out of sleep for the greater part of the time they’ve spent in bed.

It’s funny, but more than that it’s sad, that Yoongi is feeling the way he is, right now.

How he should be glad and relieved that Taehyung finally admitted that he still loves him. How light he should be, feathery and all bright between his ribs. How hope should be so grand inside that it would be almost painful but instead, instead Yoongi is fearful.

What if happiness isn’t ahead, for us. What happens if it’s all in the past?

He thinks, but doesn't say it. Not even to the quiet that's been his companion this morning. Because it might break this very, very fragile rooting they have. Taehyung and him. After a whole childhood and flowery moments of love, the only things that remain at this very moment is Taehyung's acceptance of his own feelings and Yoongi's willingness to work and be worthy of them.

But even with Jimin's efforts, and lately his own, Yoongi isn't even sure he can make Taehyung happy. He's afraid that the scar he's left won't ever heal enough, no matter how hard he tries, for Taehyung to really want to be with him again.

It’s stupid. Yoongi loves Taehyung and he craves for the three of them to work. But apparently those same feelings he had just before leaving for New York still lingered in the back of his mind.

Jimin: ill get us something on the way back?
06-08-2016, 12:35

You: sounds good
06-08-2016, 12:35

He puts his phone beside his hip, tightens his hold on Taehyung and tries to let sleep grab and pull him in. But it’s not working. And when there’s faint buzzing against the mattress he sighs, feeling defeated.

Jimin: hyung
06-08-2016, 12:42

Jimin: pushing taes buttons this morning until he said it
06-08-2016, 12:42

Jimin: did you do it on purpose?
06-08-2016, 12:42
Again, and for one time too many, guilt crawls up his spine. The good intentions were there. But the mean probably wasn’t the right one.

What’s done is done. He learned the rough way that some things can’t be taken back.

You: yeah, i did
06-08-2016, 12:43

Taehyung doesn’t know if he’s thankful or vexed that no one talks about it when Jimin comes back from his meeting. There was too harsh a cut, between that fight they had and the moment he woke up to the smell of takeout. He shouldn’t have slept. That made everything seem unreal. Dreamlike. And it doesn’t allow him to feel any better about what he’s been able to tell Yoongi.

Listening to Jimin’s advice didn’t do much for him, after all.

They eat in a thoughtful silence, heavy with glances, on the balcony.

Then later after that, when rain has started to pour in strings, they head to the mall. They sip on cold beverages as they go from store to store, stopping when something strikes their fancy. It’s a laidback atmosphere between them that he likes a lot. It reminds him a bit of that nebulous period when he was in his early relationship with Jimin, and that they would hang out in that same unified energy.

“I think I should get a new backpack,” Jimin mutters, as he goes through a rack of clothing. “School is in like, two weeks.”

Yoongi hums a response that Taehyung doesn’t quite register. He blanks out. He’s brought back to the previous day, when in a haze, he rushed to fill forms on his laptop and when he, for the very first time, took advantage of his father’s influence to his own advantage.

He takes his phone out, checks for new emails. None.

He starts regretting.

He’s evasive, Jimin notices. Taehyung is evasive and he spaces out more often than he usually does.

He’s not harsh in his ways, but for the whole afternoon, he kept his words to himself. He ate in silence, though he seemed attentive, and cut his sentences short whenever he had to say something.

Once they made it back to the apartment, he went to smoke on his own, showered and went straight
to bed.

"You okay?" Jimin murmurs as he gets in the bedroom. He sits next to Taehyung's form, runs a tender palm on the length of his arm. Taehyung hums a positive sound, looks at Jimin with clear and awake eyes. Jimin glances at the clock on the nightstand. "It's really early."

“I know, I'm just tired.”

He doesn’t ask if it has anything to do with what happened that morning.

He pads back to the kitchen, finds Yoongi emptying the dishwasher. They’re three now. It’s getting too long to do everything by hand.

He snakes his arms around Yoongi from behind, wraps around him until he stops moving. They sigh in unison, their ribcages pressing together and Jimin rests his forehead between his shoulder blades.

It should be a happy day, and it is. But there’s a palpable bitterness that he doesn’t know what to make of.

“I’m scared I pushed him too much. And that he ended up saying stuff he didn’t want to say.”

It’s talked in a wispy voice, filled with affection and concern. Yoongi’s words vibrate right into Jimin’s chest and that makes him smile. He gently nuzzles his shirt, willing the first tendrils of sleepiness away.

"I get you. But Tae wouldn't have said it if he somehow didn't want to. You know that."

“What if he’s regretting it now, that it’s why he’s been so zoned out for the whole day.”

"He, just like you, probably needs time to process and actually go through his feelings, hyung. Tae hasn’t been fixed. This situation hasn’t been fixed. You both made a huge step this morning, I think. But I'm starting to know him well enough to tell that he still won't want to be with you."

"I know,” Yoongi twists in Jimin’s hold until he can finally embrace him properly, leaning his hips on the counter behind them.

“We still have to be patient.”

A moment passes in silence, and Jimin lets himself relax in Yoongi’s arms, his thumb running patterns on his waist.

“There’s still – A chance that it might not work, Jimin. Ever. I want you to know that.”

Jimin melts into a grin before he huffs out a laugh. He presses his lips to the base of Yoongi’s throat, follows the length of his arm with his hands until he can lace their fingers.

“Glad you caught up. I’ve known from the start,” he says as he pulls him towards the living room.
The rest of the evening is one like they don't have enough of. Tranquil. Carefree. It's a bit unsettling, maybe, that they're being together like this in an apartment that doesn't hold either of their names, but Jimin hopes it's a thing he'll have to get used to.

They converse in soft tones, they flow here and there in whatever they say, cuddled and half sprawled out on the couch, the streetlamps glowing through the patio door their only lighting.

After their third drink, Yoongi drifts onto the topic of Taehyung, and Jimin immediately falls quiet. He cherishes the rare occasions when it happens, getting glimpses of a past that seemed so perfect in its own way but grew to be a ticking bomb.

"Taehyung was this, excited, exuberant child, you know," Yoongi's lips pull into a thin smile as he says this, and Jimin can't help but mirror him. "The kind that's always smiling with too many teeth and annoys the fuck outta you sometimes but that you can't ever be mad at. That's how I felt about him, when we were really young. But he was cute. I always found him cute."

Jimin draws away from Yoongi’s body, repositions himself so he can look at him as he talks. It’s a beautiful thing, and he doesn’t want to miss it.

“Hyung,” he tries, when the lull stretches.

“Mhm.”

“How did you know?”

“How did I know what?”

“You were best friends, right? Together all the time,” that gets him another hum, and he continues. “Then how did you know you loved him more than that? Or uh, when did you realize that your feelings had crossed that line?”

Yoongi makes a pensive noise, head resting back on the cushion. His hand moves to Jimin's knee, rubs rhythmical circles there.

"I guess I've always sort of felt? That he was special to me. A special kind of special," he closes his eyes, like he's revisiting a cherished place. Jimin breathes long and slow, his eyelids getting heavier. At peace. "Y'know, I'd look at others, at my classmates, at how friends were supposed to be, together. At those limits between them. Even at how it was with Seokjin hyung before he left, and my feelings towards him. Tae and I, we just weren't like that. At all. And even when I tried having girlfriends, it just— It wasn't the same as when I was with him. I was longing for Tae all the time, I wanted to have him close and I did anything it took, for that. Then one night he kissed me and we decided that we were dating. Things didn't really change. We stayed the same. It was just us, growing up together."

There's a long stretch of silence, after that. Familiar and charged, where Jimin lets what he's just heard sink in. Yoongi makes the words pretty when he speaks them. And simply because of that, that story is as fulfilling to hear as it is painful.

"I never really asked myself if I liked him. I just knew. Just like I never had to wonder if I was attracted to boys or not. To me, it was just natural. If I liked Tae, then I could've liked other boys as well. So really, I didn't do much questioning about those things. I just got really lucky that Tae's gay," he laughs, it's endearing. "I don't know what I would've done. I would've been the perfect cliché of the dude who's forever in love with his straight bro."

And then it's Jimin’s turn to chuckle, albeit sleepily. He takes everything in with as much attention as
he can muster, wanting to keep all of this in his safest place, close to his heart.

Yoongi welcomes him back in his arms when Jimin comes to curl up against him. It’s getting late and they know, but they’re finding it hard to break the moment.

“That night, on Taehyung’s anniversary, before everything went to shit,” Yoongi continues, his voice so feeble it’s barely audible. Jimin makes a low, soft sound of understanding. “I asked him to marry me.”

Jimin sucks in a breath, ribcage tight. This story keeps getting more agonizing, it keeps getting more captivating. He loves it. He hates it.

“I asked him to marry me and he said yes, and 48 hours later I was fucking gone and across the ocean.”

The end of the sentence nearly dies in Yoongi’s throat and Jimin feels himself drop in his embrace, heavy, drowning in Yoongi’s own melancholy. He’d want to look up, but he’s afraid of what he’d find. There’s nothing to say to this. Nothing that can soothe him, or untie the knots Yoongi did with his thoughts and his feelings after the incident. He just needs to get it out, and Jimin knows. So he enfolds him, letting the affection in his silence speak for itself and he huffs when Yoongi tightens around him as well.

“He could have died—"

"Hyung, don’t go there again," he cuts him, aware that it's of no use to delve into that territory. Pain and regrets. Taehyung and Yoongi already have enough of those.

“I can’t fucking believe that I— Promise me one thing,” and Jimin doubts now is a good time to get in any kind of commitment, but he lets out a gentle what is it nonetheless. “Don’t let me forget it. How fucking stupid I’ve been.”

Jimin inhales sharply, detaches their bodies.

“Hyung,” he starts, stern.

And in the late comfort that’s flourished around them, Jimin goes to war with old, buried feelings.

Chapter End Notes

The support in the last comments was amazing you guys, I’m really grateful for that!♡

There's a chance that I won't be able to update every week, which makes me sad. But for those of you who would like to be updated on that, I'd suggest you check my twitter and I'll try to make sure to write on there if I can't make it! Have a nice weekend everyone!
I wrote this listening to TVXQ’s 9095?

There’s a ring at the door and Taehyung perks up, his glasses falling lower on his nose. His desk is crowded with paper, sheets filled with words or colours, with this scenery he likes to draw in thick, bleeding felt-pen. *Mom, dad, Taetae, hyung.*

It rings again, twice, in rushed succession. He glances at the clock next to his bed. It reads 5:31 and he finds it to be late, for someone to drop by his apartment. He stands and exits his room, follows the sound.

The moment he steps foot in the corridor, the light goes out.

He frowns.

His eyes won’t adjust to the darkness and it forces him to fumble in. He knows this place like the back of his hand but right now he feels like he’s lost all landmark. It’s a narrow, short path, but he’s scared of getting lost in what he can’t see.

His foot slams into something that makes a glassy sound when it hits the floor. A bottle. He listens to it roll about for a few seconds until it clinks with another one.

The doorbell resounds sharp in his ears this time. Someone is pressing on it with an urgency that Taehyung can feel under his flesh. It’s like cold fingers digging in his nape or a rough push between his shoulder blades. His stomach coils with anxiety, his skin gets hot, sweaty.

“Jimin?” He calls into an empty space. The echo of his voice screams at him that he’s alone.

He proceeds further, tries to reach for both walls for stabilization, but he can’t feel them. They’re gone and Taehyung is unsteady like he’s walking on a tightrope. One, two. One foot before the other. He accidentally kicks another bottle, and he’s been blinded but he knows. There’s more of them, now. They litter the whole path.

Doorbell, louder.

He stumbles on another. This one breaks under his weight. He hisses, the pain numbed and distant. There’s no blood when he grabs at his foot. It’s night wherever he looks, but with the next careful step he takes, he can perceive them. More empty, heavy bottles. Stacked up.

Hundreds. Thousands, maybe. Enough to swim.

He wants to get them out of the way, wants to get to that door and he tries to do that, hands tossing them to the side violently. The strident sound of the bell hammers at his brain a little harder every
time. It speaks his name in a deformed way, in an ugly murmur it tells him to *fucking hurry up*, like he’s not giving enough.

He’s panting now. Taehyung’s breathless and scared and the bottles just won’t go, they just keep coming and coming and coming and—

He cuts his palm on a glass shard.

He chokes on his air, grips at his hand and tightens to try and control the pain. There’s blood trickling down his forearm. It rivulets in pretty, deadly patterns. In that pitch black space he’s stuck in, he bleeds the prettiest, most radiant colour. A beautiful crimson that blooms on his skin and Taehyung watches it stain him and taint him and forgets about the emptiness around for a moment. It keeps coming out, his heartbeat thundering through the wound, but for what should be painful, it’s one of the most beautiful things Taehyung has ever seen.

He slowly breathes through his nose, recovering a sense of calm.

He doesn’t know how long he stands there watching himself bleed, but when he looks up, he’s facing a door.

“Fuck,” he breathes, and smears red on the knob when he twists it unlocked.

It’s day, on the other side.

It’s bright and sunny and peaceful. A plain that extends until the sky, blossoming with the richest of colours. There's flowers everywhere. It's pretty. So, so pretty. Taehyung loves flowers.

He walks, bare feet, in this free space. Not a sound, no wind. No rustling of leaves, no cicadas shrilling. For a long time, he does that. He wanders, he strolls about. But he’s not going anywhere. Even when he’s walking straight, he’s walking in circles. He recognizes this patch of forget-me-nots and those flared up daisies whenever he passes by them. It’s not bothering him.

Taehyung realizes he’s dreaming when he hears a soft, feathery voice. A woman’s.

“My baby,”

His mother’s. He looks around without seeing anyone, panic perched high in his throat. The sun has dimmed.

“Sweetie, what are you doing here alone?”

The sky fades to grey.

“Were you looking at the birds?”

On the ground, the flowers curl on themselves. They wither and they die.

Cold, slender fingers wrap around his own.

“You like birds, don’t you?”

Taehyung wants to snatch his hand away but can’t. He can’t scream. He can’t move on his own.

“You’ve always liked small creatures, haven’t you? My baby is such a sweet boy.”

Finally, he sees it. The shadow that’s standing next to him. It has no face, not really. Just blurred out
features in sepia. It sounds so kind but it kills everything around. Taehyung feels small. Helpless. His voice has been muted but he can still see and that’s the worst of it.

“Tae?”

Yoongi’s low tone, behind. Taehyung turns his head back, meets his eyes. He’s out of reach. He’s with Jimin. They’re side by side and their shoulders touch, they’re both dressed in white. Taehyung extends a hand, asks for help with lips that move but won’t let out a sound.

“Birds are very beautiful. And they can fly, too.”

Taehyung’s chest is crushed with fear. The whole plain is turning the colour of death. He’s being tugged away, and behind, Yoongi and Jimin don’t move. When he brings his head forward again, it lies there beneath. A fissure in the ground. A split in the earth. A gorge like the mouth of emptiness. Leading straight into nothingness. From his side to the other, a bridge. It's made of thin wood and frail rope and it sways to a wind that Taehyung longs to feel.

“Do you want to fly, sweetie?”

He shakes his head but his feet move, they drive him where he doesn’t want to go. And Taehyung, no matter how hard he wants to escape her hold, can’t.

He’s crying by the time they’ve made it on the first plank. It’s silent despair and frustration tangled around his heart, Cat’s cradle with a string made of thorns.

“Mhm? Mom can show you.”

The strain in his arm is on the edge of painful now, with the effort with which he's resisting. But it's useless. He lost control over himself a long time ago and now he's paying for it.

“Are you ready?”

He turns around one last time, and with swimming eyes, he begs the two persons he loves for help. They're still, unnaturally so. They're stiff and they share the same blank expression. Haggard. Dead like the rest.

The wood under him cracks, the bridge sways a little more. He holds his breath.

Jimin makes a move towards him and Taehyung blossoms with the tiniest spark of hope.

But Yoongi grabs at his hand. Yoongi keeps him back and with him.

“Always remember, sweetheart. Mom loves you.”

The plank cedes.

Taehyung never gets to fly.

He wakes with vertigo vibrating between his ribs. His limbs are heavy and spread weirdly around him, the silky sheets feel like sandpaper on his moist skin. His eyes are wet and his chest is wild, his throat tight with a voice that couldn't protect him.
He palms around on the mattress beside him, in search of Jimin’s body. But the bed is cold wherever he touches. There’s no one. There should be someone and there’s no one.

He sits up, worried and scared, the remnants of his dream still pulsating in his brain. His lungs stretch and deflate in a too-quick rhythm and his heart seems like it’s trying to escape him. To fly right out of his chest and leave him empty and hollow.

There’s rustling under the covers and he tenses, disoriented. And when Jimin's voice comes and that he softly breathes his name, Taehyung finally sees him.

On Yoongi’s side of the bed, plushed against his side.

And the gap, the fucking gap between Taehyung and Jimin’s body seems so wide, it’s a whole universe that stands between them and Taehyung shrivels and closes up.

“Tae?”

He brings his gaze forward again. Looking at what’s in front of the bed. Those walls that are still plain and that desk he spent so many nights drinking at, trying to replace the solitude by alcohol he’d drown his blood in.

Of course Jimin deserves more than that. Taehyung understands. He’s not going to argue with that because he wants what’s best for him. For him and Yoongi.

His mind is here and it’s there and it’s in this dying plain with a gentle, lethal hand around his. Then there’s a weight on his shoulder and he winces, lungs seizing up.

“Fuck, sorry,” Jimin whispers as he removes his hand. “Did it happen again?”

Taehyung throws the sheets off of himself and leaves.

Δ

Yoongi is roused by the way the bed shifts as Jimin sits.

He blinks his eyelids open to a room still plunged in darkness. He swims in confusion for a few moments where Jimin carefully moves next to him, until he hears Taehyung’s breathing cut and Jimin apologizing. His brain zeroes on that.

“Did it happen again?”

There’s violent stirring and Taehyung leaves the bed, his rushed footfall trailing towards the corridor. Taehyung quietly curses once he’s there, in a tone that bears so much panic that Yoongi sits up as well. He frowns, waiting.

The tap runs in the kitchen. A glass is roughly placed on the counter.

And just from this, Yoongi can tell that Taehyung is confused, because he doesn’t drink from the tap. There’s a pitcher of fresh water in the fridge. Taehyung, in his right mind, wouldn't do that.

Jimin sighs and Yoongi glances at him, at his tousled hair and perturbed expression. He swallows.
“Please don’t do this.”

It’s what Jimin says before Yoongi can ask any questions. It’s low and pleading. It wasn’t really meant to be heard by anyone, it was just a loud thought but Yoongi caught it still, and it worries him even more.

The bathroom door is being closed. And locked.

“No, fuck, Tae.”

Running a palm over his face, Jimin sighs a helpless groan. Yoongi’s tongue is too thick in his mouth and he still has this sore spot inside from that argument he’s had with Jimin just before bed, but still he finds the will to ask.

“What happened?”

“Fucking nightmare, again.”

“Again?”

“Yeah.”

“What do you mean, again? He has those often?”

They meet eyes. Jimin gauges him.

“You— didn’t know?”

“No?”

“Ah,” Jimin exhales long, carding his fingers through his hair and looking out to the corridor. “He’s been having those fucking horrible nightmares. They’re enough to disorient him for a while and he often— yeah, he often shells up after them.”

“The fuck?”

“He doesn’t want to talk about them most of the time,” Jimin drags himself until he’s sitting on the edge of the bed. “But from what he’s told me, it’s just, I mean, I wouldn’t want that kind of shit for anyone.”

Yoongi hears Jimin shiver when he finally stands, and he reaches on the floor next to the bed, holding out his own hoodie for him to take. Jimin shakes his head, gestures with his hands for the clothes that belong to him instead.

“Gimme mine, just for now.”

“Why?”

“Just trust me.”

He stretches until he can grab at them, huffs when Jimin accepts them. He’s groggy and still lost, but the pieces he’s being given are slowly starting to take their places.

“How long he’s been having those?” and the uncomfortable noise he gets in return does nothing good to him. “Jimin-ah,”
“Since you left.”

Self-hatred sinks a little deeper in Yoongi’s bones. Jimin goes through the door, and soon enough he follows, half dressed and teeth clattering despite the mildness of the night.

"Tae," Jimin speaks through the door, after having tested if it was locked with a slight twist of the knob. He glances at Yoongi over his shoulder when he gets no answer. "Let us in?"

They hear him shuffling, rummaging through the cabinets, they stay patient when the tap buzzes its noise for a long minute. There’s more moving around inside during which Jimin seems to be battling the envy to call him again, then the click of the door comes. But that’s it.

Jimin looks at him again, searching for reassurance, maybe. But Yoongi can’t give him anything. Yoongi is as lost as he is. More, surely.

He barely registers a tender, encouraging touch to his arm before Jimin carefully goes in, the room barely lit. He leaves the door ajar in an invitation that Yoongi isn’t sure he wants to take.

“Tae,”

At the softened ring of Jimin’s voice, Yoongi makes the decision not to go. The chance of making things worse is too high, if he goes in there. So he stays outside, freeing the way if any of them wants to come out. There’s a headache faintly making his head heavier, early hangover, and he shuts his eyelids, frowning in concentration.

“What happened?”

“You know what happened,” there’s a bite to Taehyung’s tone, the kind Yoongi remembers him using in the early times they were together, when his father wouldn’t get off his back and that he still had some strength to fight it.

“Yeah, I do,” Jimin strains his words as he seemingly sits, Yoongi imagines him on the cold tiles. “But do you want to tell me what was going on in it?”

“Same fucking stuff.”

“Tell me.”

“Hyung is outside and he’s listening.”

Yoongi seizes lightly, heart constricting painfully. At this exact moment, he feels like he doesn't know Taehyung at all. That all they every shared, he was locked out of it. That's he's the only one still staring at their memories and longing for a friendship, and a love, that he might have spoilt.

“You don’t want him to hear?”

A silence follows. Yoongi assumes he’s nodding, but then he continues.

“It’s weird, what I dream about. It’s fucked up and I’m not— He probably—“

“Let him hear. He wants to.”

Another stretch. He can sense that the three of them are still, standing on a thin edge. And he, for once, decides to be what makes them tip. He gently pushes the door to lean against the doorframe. He finds them sitting on the floor, next to the shower. Like kids sharing secrets. He aches, regrets a little more. He doesn't cross his arms over his chest, forces a neutral attitude on himself, does his best
to remain unthreatening to Taehyung’s feelings.

It’s the closest they’ve been of a relationship since he returned from New York. But it comes back, time and time again, that impression that Taehyung is slipping right through his fingers.

Taehyung holds his eyes for a few seconds and he seems scared, and Yoongi hates it. He hates everything that he’s missed and the invisible scars he left on him.

“I just remember a part of it,” he says, gaze dropping to Jimin. He sounds calmer. Yoongi thinks it’s good. Because himself isn’t.

“Say anyway,” Jimin encourages him.

“My mom,” and immediately, Yoongi scowls. He hasn’t heard him pronounce these words in years. “She dragged me towards a precipice. And you both wouldn’t do shit to help me.”

Jumin gives slow, understanding nods.

“And when you woke up, I was on hyung’s side.”

Taehyung takes in a sharp lungful of air, and suddenly he’s radiating so much uneasiness that it gets stuck in Yoongi’s windpipe.

“Whatver,” he says, fragile under the harshness in the word. Then he begins to move with lurking panic, standing and going straight through the door, brushing Yoongi’s shoulder in the process.

Jumin slumps on himself, exhaling long and tired.

It feels like rejection.

In the depth of the apartment, Taehyung takes his cigarettes and goes to find refuge on the balcony.

“Hyung,” Yoongi doesn’t let out a noise and just looks at Jimin, waiting. “Was his mother a good mother?”

“She’s still alive, Jimin-ah. They just cut ties years ago.”

“Wh—Fucking—“

“Why? He dreams of her often?”

“She’s the one killing him most of the time.”

Jumin doesn’t stay long after that. He joins Taehyung, calmly sits beside him. They nurture smoke clouds, drawn white on a starless sky and Yoongi just leaves them be. He stays where he knows Taehyung won’t see him. He pets Tuxedo’s head as he listens to them talk in low, fond voices.

“Me sleeping closer to hyung doesn’t mean I don’t love you anymore, Tae.” There’s a misplaced silence, then Jumin’s voice comes out in amused tones. “Yeah, first time I say it, I know, sorry the circumstances aren’t really nice. But I mean it.”

Yoongi smiles something delicate. Fragile. It’s good to hear. It’s the lightest of balms on that rash of disgust he’s having for himself. And then Jimin brushes over a subject that has Yoongi’s next exhale tremble tiredly past his lips, and sends his thoughts on a carousel once again.

On loop. Nagging at him. Always more demanding on the next turn. It’s inevitable. It screams so
loud inside that it drowns everything else around. It’s scary. It’s dark and it drips with regrets, with things he thought he could one day forget but that he knows now won’t ever go away.

He still hasn’t done it. He hasn’t apologized for any of this.
You: hyung
08-08-2016, 17:35

Kim Namjoon: Yes?
08-08-2016, 17:39

Taehyung shifts from one foot to the other, alone in the living room. There’s still the steady sound of Jimin’s knife on the cutting board, preparing some vegetables for the meal they’re cooking. Around him hangs an aura of secrecy, like he’s hiding something when he’s really not. He’s just uncomfortable with whatever it is that he’s doing, because Taehyung doesn’t really do that. Reaching out.

But the previous day had been fine, even after his nightmare. Yoongi was tiptoeing around him like Taehyung was made of glass, attempting to conceal a grey kind of feeling that Taehyung could see anyway. But it was fine. They had sex and it was breathy and soft, a lot of lips and lingering, warm palms. They ate outside with the cats and laughed through most of it, the ambiance darkening the slightest when the topic drifted on that girl Yoongi left in America. It came back easy though, Jimin working magic between them. Always. And Taehyung, after having spent a lazy afternoon with them, and after sensing that emptiness when Yoongi left for the evening, thought he shouldn’t let his cloudless mind drift back into storm.

Sometimes Taehyung accepts to believe in them as a whole.

And sometimes he doesn’t.

You: are you free tonight?
08-08-2016, 17:39

Kim Namjoon: Ah, hum.
08-08-2016, 17:40

Taehyung’s gut sinks with that hint of rejection, thumbs quick to glide over the letters and typing. He writes a sentence, deletes it.
Kim Namjoon: Well, I work until 7? And I have some business at the refinery.

08-08-2016, 17:41

Kim Namjoon: But if you’re down, then you can come with me.

08-08-2016, 17:41

Taehyung’s brows knit, thinking. Namjoon is meeting clients, that’s what he’s doing.

“Tae?”

“M’yeah?”

“Did you—Yo, did you go smoke without me?” Jimin pads down the corridor, and Taehyung meets his eyes when he appears in the doorway, sees the cute way he squints at him. “Wow, you look disgusting with your phone shining under your face like that. ‘The fuck are you doing with the blinds closed and the lights off?”

Taehyung chuckles airily, brings his eyes back to his phone.

“When are you leaving?” He asks, when Jimin’s arms circle around him and that his chest spreads warmth across his own back.

"Around seven," Jimin kisses his nape, lets his lips hover over the skin as he speaks. "Hyung gets off at eight, but I gotta go get Jungkookie first. I should be back early, though. Hyung's got a shift at like, nine, tomorrow." It presses shivers onto Taehyung's spine, with the ticklish little puffs he fans over the back of his neck. "Why?"

“I uhm—I’m meeting with Namjoon hyung a bit later.”

“Oh?” Taehyung likes that tone of his. Curious and playful. “Where you going?”

“He said something about the refinery.”

Jimin hums. He soothes both hands along Taehyung’s side and pulls back.

“Be prudent, yeah?” He’s out the room the next second, the jiggle of two tiny bells audible when he gets back in the kitchen. “I'll feed the cats?”

“Yeah, okay.”

You: im down

08-08-2016, 17:43

He doesn’t know what kind of bad stuff could happen anyway.
Taehyung understands, when he goes through a first transaction with Namjoon.

It’s short. Very, very short.

A couple of mumbled words from the other guy where they’re hidden behind a tank, a single sentence that Namjoon utters to assure him that Taehyung is non-threatening, the passing of two things that’s so easily, fluidly done, that he can’t even see what it is that’s going from a hand to another.

But it’s all it takes to light a weird fire under his skin. To send his heart thrumming just fast enough to make him feel hot. Just that levelled kick of adrenaline that’s making things that much better, but never totally satisfying.

It takes him a while, to come down from it. Taehyung thinks Namjoon might be interpreting his reaction as nervousness. His pacing and how focused he is on his cigarette. But Taehyung is really just trying to reason with himself and kill the anticipation about this other transaction they’re having in an hour or so.

“Let’s go,” Namjoon urges him away from their spot. “Let’s find a nicer place to wait.”

Jimin watches Hoseok move around the kitchen, and he feels light. Relieved.

It’s been an eternity, it seems, that they could be like this. The three of them, relaxed and open in Hoseok’s apartment, without Eunji’s invisible yet insistent presence.

Jungkook talks about school as he absentmindedly helps Hoseok cleaning around, and Jimin finds it endearing. He confides that he isn’t so sure, anymore, that he wants to continue to university. Jimin studies his frown, the hesitation in the way he puts a silence before every sentence, the seriousness and poise in his thoughts. The words he uses that Jimin never really heard from him before. It pokes at Jimin weirdly, without him knowing why. Namjoon hyung told me I should stay in school, Jungkook tells them, placing a glass in the cupboard, and Jimin agrees but thinks it’s not his place to meddle in.

They go over this, and a couple of Jungkook’s new photos that he shows them on his phone, and eventually they drift onto the topic of their upcoming dance competition. They share ideas about the still unchosen outfits, on certain transitions that could be changed, or group effect that could be added.

Hoseok doesn’t say much. But Jimin, as he intrudes in his cookware and that he just listens to him and Jungkook conversing, notices the small changes that are already there and vibrant in him. He’s calmer. So much calmer. He doesn’t seem to dread the beginning of the semester or university in general, like he used to. His apartment is ordered and clean. Some furniture has been moved as well. It’s him.

And as he puts down the three cups of hot cocoa on the table, Jimin falls in love again with that
glimmer in Hoseok’s eyes. The one that speaks about how he’s there, truly there. Jimin’s best friend
is not fully back yet, but he’s slowly returning.

He directs the conversation toward him, inquires about work and a couple of other things but Hoseok
cuts his answers short, and, inevitably, brings them back to the topic of Jimin’s relationship.

He starts spilling about that night he was alone at the bar with Yoongi, and Jimin perks up. He trusts
them. He does. He wouldn’t have left them alone if he didn’t. But he’s still curious about what they
share, and the reasons why it clicked so easily and fast between them.

Hoseok relates Yoongi’s ambivalence when he talked about Jimin and Taehyung and their whole
thing.

“I think it was a bit, complicated to process, right? For me. He told me all that stuff that I already
knew because you’ve been talking about them since freaking March or something. But it was from a
uhm— completely different perspective.”

Jimin offers an understanding noise, eyes fixated on Jungkook’s fingers around his cup and their lazy
drumming on the ceramic.

“For you,” Hoseok continues. "It was a lot of new things, at the time. And a lot of confusion and you
knew nothing about their past and I remember you often being angry, because of that. I still feel you
a bit like that, sometimes. Angry. Like you’d—you’d really like it to work out, right?" Jimin nods,
swipes his tongue across his bottom lip when the memories he’s brought back to make him uneasy.
“But from hyung, I felt mostly— Guilt? Worry? A lot of deep, dark, unresolved stuff. Like, you both
really aren’t at the same stage.”

Wincing from the inside, Jimin shifts on his chair.

“It’s not easy,” is all the manages to say.

“Oh, yeah, I know. I’m not doubting it for a second,” Hoseok lifts his cup to his mouth, indulges in a
couple of sips. Jimin wonders if Hoseok is taking interest their relationship as a mean fill one of his
own gaps. “I’m just telling you how I’m feeling this.”

“Sometimes I think that we might be doing too much and that it’s useless. Wha—Objectively, what if
Taehyung just isn’t ready to be in a relationship again? That the problem isn’t me. And it’s not
hyung. Just in general. Not ready.”

“I honestly wouldn’t be surprised, Jiminie. From the pieces I’ve gathered, for a whole year,
Taehyung wasn’t in a good place. And even now, maybe. It’s possible that he hasn’t been able to
heal yet. And I wouldn’t be surprised either if Yoongi hyung wasn’t ready, either.”

Jimin sighs. He can’t say he wasn’t expecting it, that moment when he’d have to confront this. It’s a
thought that’s been coming and going for a couple of weeks, now. But he always pushed it away,
because it’s just another thing that could have made the three of them seem impossible. But there it is.
It’s right where he can’t ignore it anymore.

“That makes me feel stupid.”

“You’re not stupid, hyung,” Jungkook says, close to a whisper. Jimin meets his stare, finds his eyes
to be shiny and bright. Reassuring. “Love is never stupid.”
The second transaction is even harder on his nerves.

The two guys are looking at him with a sort of menace that leaves him buzzing and smirking. They're in a different location, but one that isn't as concealed as the other one, close to a small tower where he's seen a lot of workers before.

For the whole exchange, Taehyung itches to say something, even though he’s a couple of secure meters back. His palms roll into fists and loosen again and again in his pockets. He’s jittery and ready to pounce, adrenaline lighting him up in the most pleasant of ways, one he doesn’t remember ever having felt before.

The closest thing he can relate this to, is arousal.

When Namjoon’s clients turn their backs and slither between tanks to leave, Taehyung heaves a lengthy breath.

"I'm sorry if that stresses you out," Namjoon tells him, his voice rough but grounded. He's still looking away like he's making sure that the others aren't coming back. "I didn't mean to. I should've told you to stay back there. It's safer."

“It’s fine,” Taehyung fumbles his pack out of his pocket, frantically brings a stick to his lips. “I don’t mind.”

Namjoon then glances at him, long and searching, then comes to wrap Taehyung’s shoulder of his arm, and brings him further.

For a very short moment, Taehyung wonders how Namjoon came to do this.

They end up sitting in a recluse corner where he doesn’t often go.

It’s nice. Namjoon’s solid, quiet, understanding presence.

So much, that Taehyung’s phone rings for the third time in his palm and he doesn’t feel any anxiety when he swipes to ignore it. And even when he gets the notification of a new voicemail, he simply switches the screen off, drops the device in his lap.

His father wants to talk about the wedding and the company and things Taehyung doesn’t care about. What he really cares about has been sitting in his emails for days and he’s too scared to open it.

“So,” Namjoon breaks their prolonged silence with an inquisitive tone. “Why did you wanted to see me?”

Taehyung shrugs. He knew that question would come, felt it lingering in Namjoon's behaviour for the two hours they've been together.

“For no particular reason,” he inhales smoke, breathes out a few feathers. “I wanted to go out and I like your presence.”
“I’ll take it as a compliment.”

“It is,” Taehyung smiles, finally coming down from his high. He goes lax, rolls his head back against warm metal. “So, what’s up?”

"Ah," Namjoon sighs the single sound, pauses for a few moments before he picks up again. "Nothing much, I guess. I’m probably getting somewhere but it’s so slow that I feel like I’m running in place," he chuckles and the whole sentence sinks into Taehyung's bones. "I'm loving someone and we’re different. A lot. It's difficult, sometimes. But we’re slowly working through it? So it’s okay. Then, my sister, she's doing amazing in school and she makes me really proud. Seeing her study and being a good student makes me want to go back to Uni even sooner. I told you about that, right? That I wanted to go back."

Taehyung stiffens, plucked away from his comfort.

“I think you told me, yeah.”

“Still not sure what I’ll major in, but fuck, I can’t wait.” Taehyung gives a thin smile. He’s happy for him, deep inside. He knows. But he can’t help the way he’s always brought back to his own life choices. “And how are things going for you?”

He swallows, taking his time. He’s choking with hesitation. Namjoon listens, when Taehyung talks. He has no reason to feel stupid or to hold anything back. He’s never made him feel like he was exaggerating or belittled his problems.

Namjoon has seen him in the lowest he’s been, in that whole summer he fucked himself up with hard drugs and vodka, and spent his nights stripped of emotions under that inked sky dotted in orange stars.

Taehyung thinks Namjoon has never seen a pretty side of him. They met when he was ugly and skinless, fragile and bony.

A year and then some later, Taehyung has nothing to lose, opening up to him. He breathes out gently, prays he’s not making a mistake.

“There’s uh—a lot going on? With Uni starting soon and Jimin and hyung and I don’t know.” He silences himself, the faintest hint of embarrassment licking at his gut. “I dunno where I’m at.”

“It’s been like that for a while, hasn’t it?”

And normally, those words would have Taehyung shrink and fall into defensive stance. But coming from Namjoon, they sound harmless. Caring, even.

“Yeah.”

“What’s keeping you from moving forward, Taehyung-ah?”

“The past, probably,” Taehyung breathes out, sounding defeated.

“That’s not it. What’s keeping you from moving on? We talked about it not too long ago.”

Puzzled, Taehyung frowns, glances at him.

“Memories? The things I can’t forget? I’m—“
“It’s you. You’re holding yourself back. Why do you think that the three of you can’t settle down?”

Taehyung pulls on his cigarette, fills his core with dark clouds. Namjoon hasn’t said much more than a couple of sentences and he’s already deeper in Taehyung’s brain than he manages to get himself.

“I’m scared of trusting him again,” he says, following Namjoon’s lead. “And I can’t do anything about it. When he’s there, and even when he’s not? One moment I’m fine and things are okay, and the other everything comes back rushing and I wanna clam up and never fucking open again.”

“It takes time, Taehyung-ah. Healing is a decision, yes, but more than that, it’s a process. You can’t force it.”

Taehyung would want this to be true. He’d like if it didn’t sound so fake and so forced to his ears. Like it wasn’t the easiest thing to say to someone like him.

His thoughts float around this for a long stretch of time, in which Namjoon attempts to soothe him with a different conversation.

But then Taehyung notices that he keeps thinking of those transactions and that there’s still that dark, low buzz nestled in him. And that he doesn’t really want it to fade.

He stops somewhere on the way back, finds familiarity in the way his hand wraps so perfectly around this new bottle.

He turns the key in the ignition of his Audi, the brown bag in the console.

Taehyung wonders if he even ever wanted to heal in the first place.

Δ

Fold once widthwise, then twice over itself.

Jimin puts the towel on top of the others. It’s strangely cathartic, doing the laundry. He’s sloth-paced, leisured. He’s been lost in thought and he doesn’t really mind. The apartment is quiet, eerily so, and somehow that puts him in the same mood he was in, the last time Taehyung woke up from a nightmare.

Sort of sluggish, but with a brain exacerbating every detail.

He replays the images he has of that night, Yoongi’s tentative at being compassionate and Taehyung balking, the colder air outside and the emptiness filling the streets. He thinks how of it keeps getting longer for Taehyung to calm down, after one of those. That they had to chain smoke for nearly two hours before his voice would be stable, and his hands not as agitated. He rethinks of how his nightmares, when Taehyung talks about them, seem gut-twisting. Nothing gore or macabre. Not really. But it’s silently violent. It seems soft on the eyes but hard on the core.

Especially when his mother is in them.

Jimin perks up, halfway through folding a t-shirt.

Another puzzle piece takes its place.
He drops the fabric, grabs his phone in a haste and doesn’t bother feeling bad about how he’s just cutting through an unfinished conversation.

You: hyung
08-08-2016, 22:44

You: taehyung, he fears abandonment, doesn't he
08-08-2016, 22:44

You: tell me i understand right
08-08-2016, 22:45

Yoongi hyung: mhm?
08-08-2016, 22:46

You: his mother leaving when he was young
08-08-2016, 22:46

You: his father being emotionally AND physically absent
08-08-2016, 22:46

You: you leaving
08-08-2016, 22:46

You: tae is scared of people abandoning him
08-08-2016, 22:47

And if he’s right, things just got that much trickier. Because it’s visceral, for Taehyung to feel like that. To search for reassurance in loneliness, because it guarantees that he won’t suffer disappointment and the void an absence could create.

It’s in the seam of his consciousness, now. It's anchored deep within, a knot of sorrow that if one was to follow of it a stray strand, they would find its origin in his mother deserting when he was a child.

Yoongi hyung: yeah i did think about it
08-08-2016, 22:47
**Yoongi hyung:** but even if it’s this, i don’t know how to work around it

08-08-2016, 22:47

Jimin groans. He types *its not working around it, its working with it* but his phone buzzes with a new message before he can send his, and he immediately opens it, apprehensive when he sees who’s the sender.

**Namjoon hyung:** Jimin, Taehyung left some time ago. I don’t know if he’s home already, but.

08-08-2016, 22:48

He frowns, thumbs gliding over the screen in search of something to answer.

**Namjoon hyung:** He did some business with me earlier. Meaning deals.

08-08-2016, 22:48

**Namjoon hyung:** And I hope I’m wrong, but I think he liked it.

08-08-2016, 22:48

**Namjoon hyung:** Maybe a little too much.

08-08-2016, 22:48

*He’s never wrong about that kind of stuff, Jimin thinks.*

**Namjoon hyung:** So maybe check how he’s doing when he comes back?

08-08-2016, 22:48

**You:** i will, hyung

08-08-2016, 22:48

**You:** thank you

08-08-2016, 22:49
Namjoon hyung: And maybe write back to me to tell me how that goes.
08-08-2016, 22:50

Namjoon hyung: I’m not exactly worried, but it’s been itching at me since he left.
08-08-2016, 22:50

You: will do
08-08-2016, 22:50

He combs his hair back with his fingers, a ball of tangled feelings starting to press anxiously in his stomach.

He sends Yoongi the text he kept drafted then opens his chatroom with Taehyung.

You: are you on the way back?
08-08-2016, 22:52

You: can you please grab me some jjinppang somewhere?
08-08-2016, 22:52

You: im starving
08-08-2016, 22:52

He sends the last two messages to soften the edge of his abrupt inquiry, although he is starting to get hungry again.

With a busy mind, he sets on taking a quick shower, leaves his phone on the sink vanity and undresses.

It’s not long after he comes out that he hears the front door opening.

He lets out a relieved breath, ruffles his hair a couple of times with a towel then securely wraps it around his hips. He steps out of the bathroom, and the apartment is still quiet, save for the two tiny bells resounding in the corridor. Cannelle swiftly passes by him and heads to the bedroom in an alerted strut and Jimin’s keeps his eyes on her as she goes, then he frowns.

“Tae,” he calls, gets no answer. “Tae, you okay?”
There’s very light movement in the entryway, then a light that gets turned on. Jimin shuffles until he can actually see Taehyung near the door and he freezes. His brain flatlines and his lungs wring themselves out.

Standing too straight and with eyes somber than blackness, Taehyung’s father is staring right back at him.
“Of all the things I expected to see when I’d come here, you definitely weren’t one of them, Park.”

It’s biting and bitter, with a hint of disgust. Jimin swallows but hardly processes anything. His fingers come to grab at his towel like it could provide some comfort or reassurance, but it doesn’t. And he stays paralyzed there, under scrutiny.

Taehyung’s father chuckles. It drips poison. He takes a couple of steps in, looks around like he’s interested, even peeks into the living room, both hands in the pockets of his Burberry trench coat. He stops at safe distance from Jimin, but to him, it feels suffocating.

"Not offering anything to drink, not even inviting me in, more than having poor quality management, Park Alliances also has a mannerless heir,” Jimin tenses, his ribcage set afire with humiliation and that stupid urge to bite back. But he’s not having the upper hand right now, so it’s better if he keeps a low profile. “Not that I’m surprised."

Taehyung’s father looks down and at his feet, where Tuxedo is curiously inspecting his boots and he clicks his tongue, roughly pushes the cat away with a careless foot.

Jimin clenches his teeth, closes his eyes.

“Mr. Kim,”

“What are you doing in my apartment? Are you living here?”

His fists go tighter in the plush material around his hips, enough to hurt.

“Taehyung should be here soon so—“

“Answer me. Are you living at my expense? In my furniture? Eating my food?”

He makes Jimin feel more pathetic with every passing second.

“N-No, I—,”

“I want you to leave. You have nothing to do here and I’m not paying for a useless brat to live under my roof. And you wouldn’t want to harm your daddy’s company, would you?” They hold each other’s eyes for a moment that’s painfully long, and in which Jimin refuses to look away first. “Tell my son that I came to visit, yes? You at least have a mouth to do that, don’t you?”

Jimin watches him laugh dryly one more time and then turn his back on him.

He barely registers the door when it clicks shut, and figures there’s no real use in locking it anymore.

He heaves out a breath that shakes through him whole, uncurls his hands from the towel. They’re sore. He’s sore. There’s a ball in his chest, immense and trembling and threatening to spill from his lips in the form of screams.

“Fuck,” he whines, staggering his way to the bedroom, every fibre of his muscles slackening and
making him feel like he isn't much more solid than jelly.

He dresses in a haste and with shaky hands, anxiety still swimming at the surface. He looks around, considering leaving, and how much time it would take him to gather all his belongings. They’re here and there and everywhere, scattered fragments of this life he’s been sharing with Taehyung for the last month.

He gets his duffel bag, finds his clothes and throws them in. He’s so absent, so blinded with anger and stress, that he accidentally picks some of Taehyung’s shirts in the process. He moves around the room, brain a freight train until he—

“What the fuck am I doing,” he hisses, cursing once more before he empties the bag on the bed and sorts the clothes again, putting them back. “I’m not fucking leaving, fuck that shit. Fuck him.”

Even amidst of this, there’s still underlying worry about Taehyung’s whereabouts and he lets out an overwhelmed sound, making it back to the bathroom. There are two messages waiting on his phone.

*Yoongi hyung:* used the wrong word, but that’s what i meant

08-08-2016, 22:57

*Tae:* of course yeah, i should be back in 30 ish

08-08-2016, 23:04

Jimin looks at the digital clock on his device. 23:23.

He contemplates calling Yoongi, in fear of Taehyung not having put his cellphone on Bluetooth in the car, as per usual. For a minute or two, he stares at his screen, conflicted but needing to talk. But then the front door is heard again.

This time Jimin chokes on his air, coils inside and out and nearly slams the door of the bathroom shut. He locks it, as delicately as he can manage but it still makes an easily audible click. He doesn’t know why Taehyung’s father came back in, but there’s no way he’s enduring another minute alone in his presence.

He backpedals until he hits his ass meets the vanity, and he leans against it, silent.

He glances back down to his phone, writes off the idea of calling anyone. So he scrolls through a couple of things, grapples at anything that could ease the discomfort.

“Hum, Jimin?”

Jimin's skin rises in goosebumps at Taehyung's voice, his shoulders drop and relief lodges itself in his throat in a choking way.

“Jiminnie? You okay?”

“That’s not 30-ish, that’s 20-ish,” he whines, melting against the counter.

“Oh, uh, s-sorry?”
He fixes his hair nervously, his skin feels clammy.

“Whatever.”

“You okay? You sound off?”

“It’s just—” he heaves a cleansing breath, his body lax, "something bad happened."

“Bad? Can you open the door?” Jimin bends until he can reach the knob and unlock the door, he doesn’t feel like moving, still coming down from his anxiety high. Taehyung opens and comes in cautiously, a worried frown knitting his eyebrows. “What kind of bad? Are you okay? Did something happen to you?”

There’s a faint, rhythmical buzzing grabbing at Jimin’s attention, and he knows it not his own phone because it’s held too tight in his palm.

Taehyung ignores it. Jimin can’t.

“Your father just… dropped by, I guess.”

“… My father.”

“Yeah.”

“He never once came here after having signed the lease, so I’d be surprised. Are you sure it was him? I mean—“

“He came in with a key, Tae. What the fuck? Why are you even doubting me?”

“O-Okay, alright,” Taehyung makes a move towards him and Jimin doesn’t want to flinch but he does, reactive and hurt. “I’m sorry, baby.”

“D’you think I’d make up something like that? D’you think I had fun?”

"No, no of course not," Taehyung clicks his tongue, take his still ringing phone out of his pocket, annoyedly takes the battery out and throws the dismantled parts on the countertop. Far. "Okay, talk to me."

“What the fuck do you want me to say?”

Jmin lets him twine their fingers, lets him closer even when there’s this irritation behind Taehyung’s softness. He follows him to the living room, accepts the uncomfortable position he puts him in, forcing him to sit face-to-face on the couch.

“Tell me what he did that put you in this state.”

"He told me to leave. He knows who I am," Taehyung gaze goes sombre, curtained with anger, and something that’s harder to place. It's not directed at him, but Jimin shrivels under it. "And I lied and said I wasn’t living with you and I’m sorry but—"

“You’re fine. I understand. Did he touch you? Threatened you?”

“I—N-No. Just told me to leave, and that he didn’t want to put money on a useless brat like me.”

Jmin willingly tones down what he’s been said and skips the part involving Tuxedo. Taehyung gives a slow nod and purses his lips. A little too composed for anger.
“Okay,” he says, leans into Jimin’s space and kisses him, almost chaste.

Then he’s up and exiting the room, the sound of him reassembling his phone coming the moment after. There’s a long empty stretch in which anxiety starts creeping into Jimin’s insides again and then Taehyung is spitting a loud *fuck*, followed by the dull sound of plastic colliding with a hard surface.

“Tae,” Jimin tries, unmoving, fragile. He feels stupid for still considering taking the door, feels weak for letting fear control him so easily.

“I’m sorry, Jimin,” his footfall doesn’t go further than the corridor, the kitchen maybe. “He kept calling me for the whole evening and left me a message telling me he was gonna come here. But I just ignored him and didn’t take it. Fucking—I’m really sorry.”

His vision blurs up, staring at the material covering the couch. Jimin is almost twenty, but right now he feels like he’s five.

“I bought the jjinppang you wanted. Join me?” Taehyung says, rummaging through crinkling bags and cupboards.

And Taehyung’s nonchalance ignites something petulant and desperate in Jimin, something that screams a need for reassurance.

“So you’re gonna go on with your life like nothing happened?” he lets out, louder than he intended and the noise in the kitchen stops.

“What do you want me to do?”

“We can’t just swipe this under the rug, Taehyung.”

“Come here, will you?”

“No.”

“Jesus, Jimin, come on. Walk your ass here.”

“How can you talk to me like that with whatever the fuck just happened?”

He hears Taehyung groan, hears his assertive padding entering the living room, then he feels the contrasting, gentle touch of his hand around his wrist as he helps him up.

“Come on,” he whispers, “we’ll sit and we’ll eat and we’ll talk it out.”

And Jimin, as he already did so often, lets him take him wherever he wants.

He ends up with a place around the isle, Taehyung sitting across, and a still-warm bun placed in front of him. Taehyung looks at him expectantly, like he’s wanting Jimin to take a bite right this instant and Jimin just doesn’t get it. How Taehyung’s cloud of frustration could come and go so quickly. How he’s acting so calm when Jimin still has trembling hands and a too-fast heart rate.

“What do we do?” He slices in, when Taehyung’s stare becomes difficult to bear.

“There’s nothing to be done,” he shrugs and that frays Jimin’s nerves even more.

“Why don’t you fucking care? Am I not supposed to leave?”
Taehyung chews a couple more times before he straightens on his stool.

“I think,” he swallows. “I mean, my dad’s a piece of shit but I think you’re overreacting.”

“What the fuck? Overreacting? He told me to fucking leave, Tae,”

“Do you wanna leave? Because I don’t want you to leave.”

“M’kay, yeah, cool, and if he comes back?”

“Well if he comes back that you’re still here, he’ll just whine some more, babe. What do you want him to do?”

“He might know.”

“About what.”

“Us.”

“And?”

“He might try and ruin my father’s company, that’s what he can do.”

“With that?”

“Obviously, Taehyung, what the fuck.”

“How d’you want him to do that? Park Alliances’ heir is gay! ...With my son!” And Jimin can’t help the breathy laugh he lets out at Taehyung’s tone and ridiculous hand gestures. “There’s no way in hell he’s gonna go there. And if he ever tries to out you, I’ll step up and tell people we’re together. I’m not scared of that.” He nods at Jimin’s plate. “Now eat.”

“I can’t.”

“Jiminie.”

“I’m not hungry.”

“You literally texted me you were starving less than an hour ago.”

“Well that was an hour ago.”

“Jimin, you know I still get worried whenever you won’t eat.”

“It’s fine,” he sighs, wants to believe himself. “I’m through with that.”

“No one is really through with that and you know it.”

“I ate dinner, it’s not like I’m gonna die.”

“Why are you—“ Taehyung sighs, slips his eyes shut to regain some composure. “At least half of it? Then I’ll eat the rest if you really don’t want it.”

And Jimin, after losing to the decisiveness in Taehyung’s stare, ends up eating half of it. And then the whole thing. Because he was, in fact, truly starting to get hungry.
Jimin can’t sleep.

He tossed and turned in the bed for a while, then stopped when Taehyung spooned him, in fear of waking him.

But he can’t sleep.

The plain darkness behind his eyelids or the nightstand that’s feebly lighted by the glow coming from the window, they’re the same torture. There’s not even the smallest of pulls. Not even a few minutes when he feels numb and zoned out. He’s just so very fucking there and awake and tired of it. That’s not the type of things that happen to him. Ever.

It’s hard to understand, because Taehyung did work on him enough to have him feel safe with the whole issue with his father. He told him not to worry as they emptied the dishwasher. Got them sidetracked and making out against the fridge, whispering in perfectly chosen words about how he liked living with him. Had them take a long, hot shower and overly-pampered him, lathered his hair and rubbed his back soothingly with that shower cream he knows Jimin likes so much.

Jimin felt light and happy, when Taehyung had them crash into bed earlier than usual.

But now it’s over an hour later and he’s on the thin line between screaming and crying.

He heaves a long sigh, carefully tries to extract himself from Taehyung’s hold. Might as well spend time doing whatever in the flat, meanwhile. Anything would be better than this blank misery. He inches forward, close to the edge of the mattress, even the softness of the sheets getting on his nerves. And when Taehyung’s arm starts to slip away from his waist, it tightens right back up and brings him back in.

"You're not sleeping?" Taehyung asks, his syllables trailing and his voice gruff, thick with dreams.

“I’m sorry I woke you up,” Jimin’s is crystal clear in comparison. “I’ll just go and do some stuff but you can go back to sleep.”

“Why are you not sleeping?”

“I can’t.”

“Why?”

“Tae, it’s fine, I don’t want you to fuck up your night because of me.”

“Are you still stressed out because of what happened?”

Jimin buries his face in his pillow, groans.

“I don’t know what’s up. It’s just not happening.”

Taehyung hums, rolls onto his back and away from Jimin.

“Want me to tire you up?”

“Mhm?” Jimin frowns, confused.
Then he hears the drawer of the nightstand being slid open and inside and out, he flares up. He chuckles, says something dismissive, but in truth finding it as cute as he finds it arousing.

The cap of the bottle of lube pops. Jimin’s exhales hitches.

“I’m serious though.”

Jimin doesn’t object much when Taehyung coaxes him to remove his lounge pants and what’s underneath. He doesn’t object much when he’s being pulled until he’s straddling his chest. He gives in easily, keens, when Taehyung looks at him sleepily from under his lashes, when he loosely wraps his hand around Jimin’s cock. He’s not sure where Taehyung wants to take this, but it’s making a good job at taking his mind off things.

Jimin lets Taehyung stroke him until he’s a panting mess, brain fuzzy and eyes screwed shut. He lets him add a finger, then another, appreciates the tenderness in his lips as he presses them to the insides of his thighs. He fucks himself on Taehyung’s hand until he’s tensing, pleasure scorching its way through him, he throws his head back with his soft mouth hanging open, and then it’s all gone.

He gasps mutedly, abruptly brought back to reality, eyelids cracking open to another type of darkness.

“Turn around,” Taehyung grips Jimin’s hips, encourages the movement, and Jimin tries not to focus too much on how warm the lube he got smeared on his waist feels.

Disoriented and a little frustrated, he obeys and awkwardly shifts on the bed until he’s the other way around, instinctively bending and pushing the covers off Taehyung’s body to take him in his mouth. Because that’s what he thinks Taehyung wants.

“Up,” he’s being told and he just stills, not quite comprehending. “Come up,” Taehyung repeats with a voice that’s rougher, that too-easily makes him shake with anticipation.

Fingers dig in the meat of his thighs and pull him up, up, until Taehyung’s head is right between his legs. Then he understands.

He straightens and brings himself away, on one side of the bed, sobered up.

“Don’t,” he squeaks. “I’ve never—Oh my god, Tae, please don’t.”

Taehyung chuckles in a dark sound, and Jimin, even after all these things they’ve done and the places where they fucked, finds himself blushing.

“Park Jimin never got his ass eaten?”

“No? Is—Is that mandatory? Is that some rite de passage or something? What’s the—“

“I’m surprised hyung didn’t do it, he eats ass real good. Just like he sucks dick.”

Jimin shudders, feeling hot, his gut tight. The thought makes him stupidly aroused, even through how embarrassed and apprehensive he is. His skin tingles wherever Taehyung trails his fingers in patient, wanting patterns.

“I don’t know, Tae, it’s not—I’m not—“

“It’s really too bad that I’m starting to know when you really want something,” he finds an easy grip behind Jimin’s knee, pulls him closer, and closer when he meets no resistance.
Jimin swallows. His heart is thundering in his chest. It’s a heavy beat that rhymes about novelty and uneasiness and desire, and the tiny part of his brain that wants to stop this from happening drowns under a wave of arousal.

“Tae,” he gripes with uncertainty one last time before he’s harshly brought down.

“Stop whining and come here.”

Taehyung laves around his hole until Jimin stops holding himself so rigidly, he gnaws at the meat of his ass and fucks him with his fingers until he’s loose and trembling, he licks into him until his hips sway into the touch, asking for more.

Jimin is then pushed until he bends, Taehyung’s silent demand for him to suck on his cock. He lets his throat be fucked, his whole body lax and willing, hands knotted in the sheets. He revels in the praises Taehyung feeds him in between hoarse grunts, loves how pleased he sounds and this rhythm of push and pull they’ve found for themselves.

And when Jimin moans high with his mouth full and that he’s panting harshly through his nose, Taehyung cuts him off, manhandles him so that he’s sitting on his cock and riding him with his back facing his chest. He doesn’t give anything that Jimin can’t take for himself. He lays very still with tight fingers on Jimin’s waist, guiding him down, forcing him to do all the work.

“I’m tired,” Jimin whines when his thighs are burning with too much strain for him to continue. His voice cracks pitifully on the last syllable and it earns him a snicker.

“Good. That’s what we want.”

And if Jimin stills, if his overwhelmed and impatient brain attempts the smallest of rebellions, Taehyung kicks his hips into him. Once, it’s all it takes to set him in motion again.

In an idle moment when his eyes are screwed shut, splotches of pastel blues and white behind his eyelids, Jimin wonders how Taehyung could go from asleep, to poised in his assertiveness and restraining him like he’s doing, holding his wrist behind his back to stop him from touching himself.

“I want you to come like that,” he growls, slowly starting to pump himself into Jimin.

“Ca-an’t,” he breathes out, the fire under his skin ravaging him whole. “It hurts, I can’t—“

“You just gotta tell me to stop and you know I will.”

But Jimin doesn’t want him to stop. He wants to feel that contradiction, the one that makes his gut twist deliciously. He wants to feel used, he wants to feel loved. And Taehyung knows how to amalgamate both flawlessly. He shakes his head and repositions himself, offers more of his ass so he can take Taehyung deeper and he arches his back just how he knows makes him look good.

He gets fucked until he’s struggling to breathe, sweaty and hazed out, lying with his back pressed atop of Taehyung’s chest. His hands are free but he’s being driven into so roughly that he can’t find something coherent to do with them, so he sets on finding purchase on the arms Taehyung snakes around his torso to keep him still.

His throat is tight, his eyes wet, being edged for too long.

“I can’t come, Tae—it’s not—“

Taehyung hisses and quickly presses on Jimin’s pelvis to tilt his hips back, adjusting the way he
thrusts into him. It doesn’t take long before Jimin’s tenses and sobs, the stimulation making him fight Taehyung’s hold, only for it to strengthen around him.

His orgasm looms onto him fast and powerful, violent as it shatters through him and he wails, too loud between the walls of the apartment. His chest stutters his air in and out, the waves blistering and hardly bearable until they milden, becoming a dull throb and tingling limbs.

He melts into Taehyung’s body, shaky, worn out. He’s taken through it, calmly, with warm touches on his stomach and up his ribcage.

Taehyung kisses at his neck, breathing harshly against the skin, he trails his lips and suckles on it, in what he knows will be blooming tomorrow. Jimin wants to hate him. And how easily he wrecks him.

“Did you come?” He says this and then smiles. His voice is scratchy, his throat feels tender. He loves it. He hears a sound that’s answering him in negative then Taehyung pulls out and Jimin winces. “I can suck you off,” he offers, rolling onto his side next to Taehyung, careful not to lay in the come that had pooled on his belly. He reaches, nimble, gives Taehyung’s cock a few strokes before a gentle hand comes to stop his.

“It’s fine,” Taehyung sighs, shifts on the bed and kisses him, lingering. And again. “I’ll go get us something to clean up.”

Jimin can’t sleep.

His body is numb, like jelly in between the sheets, but his brain won't shut off. Whenever his eyes are closed, he sees vivid colours, dancing and dizzying enough for him to rather keep them open. His limbs are heavy and twitching minutely from fatigue and he doesn't know what's going on but he's this close to screaming.

Jimin just wants to fucking sleep.

He thinks of Taehyung’s booze stash, of a long bath. The couch, even. Or somehow finding a way to rip another orgasm from himself, for more hormones he’s already lulled with. But he’s just staying immobile in this bed, with a body that barely responds anymore but with thoughts that won’t leave him the fuck alone.

He sighs and makes another attempt at leaving, but he's too slow and clumsy and the next moment Taehyung is inhaling long, resurfacing.

"Fuck," he whispers when a palm roams up his back.

"Still not sleeping?" Taehyung groans, stirring. “Should I take it as an insult?”

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to wake you again.”

Taehyung imitates Jimin in sitting up, the sheet riding off his torso. He stretches and throws a glance at the clock on his phone, frowns in the harsh lighting. And just from the glimpse he gets at him, Jimin’s stomach fills up with despair.

It’s just shy of five. They’ve been in bed for over four hours.
“That’s weird,” Taehyung croaks, putting his phone back and rubbing his face with a rough palm. “How you feeling? Anxious?”

“I don’t really—No? I don’t think so?” He can feel his eyelids, and that strange weight they’re having, the dryness of his mouth, the sloppiness of his moves. “Maybe at this point I’m just too tired to sleep.”

Comes a pensive noise, then the jingling of a bell.

Cannelle jumps on the bed, warily gets closer, asks for a pet that Taehyung is prompt to give.

Jimin’s never seen her do that. She usually goes into hiding the moment he enters a room, only to come out an hour or two later. He offers his hand to her and she gladly accepts it, rubs against it with her loud purring being the most calming things he’s heard in what feels like an eternity. His brows knit in confusion, starting to wonder if he’s dreaming, when Taehyung gets out of the bed and out the room.

“Come with me.”

“I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“Cannelle is on the bed.”

“And?” he hears a cabinet being opened in the bathroom, then some shuffling in the drawers under the sink.

“She never does that.”

Jimin smiles weakly when Taehyung breathes out a laugh, scratches the top of the cat’s head.

“She used to, all the time. Before Tux. And before you.”

“Makes me sad.”

“Don’t be. She’s happier then she lets on. Now come here.”

He doesn’t move for another minute, just stays there sitting with her and tracing his fingers through her tortoiseshell fur. His breathing gradually deepens, his jaw slackens. She so easily eases his impatience.

“Baby,” Taehyung says, leaned in the doorway, and almost blankly, Jimin raises his eyes to him. “Come on.”

He squints through the white light when he gets in the bathroom. His legs are wobbly, and he has to brace himself against the vanity to hold up properly.

“Why—” But Taehyung doesn’t let him finish, lifts him up and sits him on top of the counter. Like his mother would do when he was a child. “What the fuck.”

They stare at each other for a short moment before Taehyung leans in and presses his lips onto his in a comforting touch. His eyes are red and puffy, much like Jimin’s. Just not for the same reason.

“You can take one of these.” He hands Jimin a small bottle with caplets inside, that makes too much of an excited sound when he manipulates it. “I used to take one almost every night, when hyung was
Jimin’s swallows, unsure if he should prod further.

“Why?”

“I couldn’t sleep at all. At least for the first two or three months. So I got those prescribed to me. They should still be good.” He gently takes the clear container from Jimin’s hold, searches around on the label. “Yep. February 2017. Isn’t 2017 the ugliest number ever? Geez.”

He knows what Taehyung is trying to do. How he’s trying to play down what he’s just said by abruptly shifting topics. But Jimin did register everything. From the glint of sadness in his eyes to the uncomfortable bob of his throat. *This, Jimin thinks, this and the nightmares can’t mix well.*

“They’re safe to take. They’ll help you fall asleep and then keep something stable for a good couple of hours.”

He nods. There’s nothing for him to lose anyway. He holds Taehyung’s gaze for a few seconds, tilts his chin up to ask for a kiss, that he’s granted.

“Only if you’re up for it, though,” Taehyung adds, too nimble when he removes the cap. “You know I don’t wanna force you.”

“It’s fine,” he shrugs. He’s not going to start demonizing pills when the sky is starting to light up and that he feels like he’s smoked too much weed. “I just really need to sleep.”
Taehyung’s phone reads 12:13 when he wakes up.

Sunlight has filtered through the window they left ajar, and the birds are chirping their mid-day songs, pretty but drowned in the noises of the cars. He blinks, feeling his skin raising in goosebumps where a soft breeze is brushing his flesh, and where the sheets left him naked.

He swallows, groggy, hugs Jimin’s body closer to his as he inhales a cleansing breath. He places his lips to his nape, curls his hips against his ass as he so often does, waiting for Jimin’s cute morning laugh.

“Jiminnie,” he whispers when he gets no reaction, nosing the hairs on the back of his neck. “Are you up?”

He presses himself against him once again, feeling the hard line of his cock between their tight bodies. Taehyung takes him in for a while, the steadiness of his breathing, the slow expansion and shrinking of his ribcage.

It’s somehow peculiar, to have Jimin sound asleep in his arms. He’s usually awake when Taehyung rouses, or his sleep is so light that the slightest of movements will have him stir and crack an eye open.

Taehyung smiles. Jimin must have been so tired, that the pill must have knocked him out.

He kisses his neck in more lingering touches, humping his ass in low, hard presses, liking how Jimin unconsciously begins to rock back into him. He mentally gets ready to leave the bed, but then Jimin makes a quiet noise in the back of his throat that reminds Taehyung of something.

_D‘you know what else I’d like to try? Being fucked awake._

_You still haven’t fucked me awake._

And then all those other times Jimin more vaguely hinted at wanting to try it, and Taehyung having him pout when he told him he couldn’t, because he was too light a sleeper.

He ponders. Considers.

But when he brings his hand to Jimín’s stomach, gentle, then further down under his navel and that he feels him shudder under his touch, when himself violently tingles with arousal just from this, he decides that maybe it’s worth trying.
He holds Jimin’s hips tight against his as he continues to squeeze his cock between them, the heat so good that it doesn’t take long before the nips he places at Jimin’s shoulder aren’t enough to muffle his moaning anymore.

“Fuck,” he breathes, hot all over, when Jimin blindly clings onto the contact between them and chasing his warmth if he leaves too much space between them.

Taehyung slides a hand to Jimin’s ass, and between his cheeks, gliding a finger over his hole. He gently tests the stretch, careful not to rush it too much, slips a digit in, then another. Easily, Jimin is still loosened up from the night before. Taehyung worries his lip, dizzy, struggling to get the bottle of lube he left on the nightstand.

He lets out a shaky exhale, burning with a kind of urgency he’s never really known before. He wants to fuck Jimin, wants to feel him whole and complete, but he’s also apprehensive of him waking before he can even get there.

He slicks his cock, pumps a loose fist over it, curses when it gives a harsh twitch at the thought of what he’s about to do. He dribbles some more onto his fingers, inserts two, then three into Jimin’s ass. It’s tighter this way, but still giving, and Jimin cants his hips just barely, chest stuttering.

“You’re so fucking hot,” Taehyung growls into Jimin’s hair, fighting his impatience to just push his cock in his ass.

When he deems him stretched enough and that he’s full of jitters, sweaty and eager, wanting, he gently lifts Jimin’s thigh so that he can scoot even closer, drives himself into him in a smooth, measured thrust. Jimin lightly stirs, frowns, but moves with him like it’s the only thing he could want. His body is so warm, feels so right around him and Taehyung’s huffs against his shoulder when he bottoms out, releases the stretch of his thigh, gives moist presses of lips to the skin.

He fucks him excruciatingly slow. It’s tight, cautious and affectionate but weirdly self-indulgent. Both his arms are around Jimin, holding him but allowing his shy, senseless movements, the sound of the lube more obscene the deeper he buries himself.

He wants to wander his hands along Jimin’s flesh, wants to knead at his ass, bite at his neck but he’s worried that it would rouse him. And Taehyung thinks it’s still too early for that.

He reaches between Jimin’s legs to find him hard and weeping, and he gives his cock light strokes, feathery touches. He falls into a pause as to delay his own orgasm, too riled up from how well Jimin responds to the teasing of his fingertips when he trails them up and down his length. In some sort of haze, he stares at Jimin moving his hips into his hand, then to the way he’s now panting, mouth parted and fists curled in the sheets.

“I can’t fucking believe you’re not waking up,” his fingers get firmer on Jimin’s cock, more precise, and he feels his chest quivers and his ass squeeze around him. “Jimin-ah—”

Taehyung starts working himself inside him again, times his thrusts with the glide of his fist. Jimin is shifting now, frowning, and Taehyung knows he’s getting close. He licks behind his ear, sucks at the lobe, drags this mix of tenderness and desire for as long as he can.

Jimin is something else. Taehyung has seen and has had sex, has seen and has been in love, but Jimin is just something else. Completely. And he reminds Taehyung every day and in a new way, just how amazing he is.

“Jimin-ah,” he whispers again, just a little louder. “You’re getting your ass full of cock and you’re
Jimin harshly clenches and gasps, scrabbling on the bed. His chest goes wild, short little puffs of air, and despite how tightly his eyelids are closed, Taehyung knows he’s awake, and he grins against his skin.

“Ah-ah, Tae—“

“That’s it, come for me,”

Jimin chokes on a moan and then he curls on himself, cock twitching in Taehyung’s hand as he comes, whimpering whenever Taehyung slides deep inside of him.

“I fucking swear to God, Park Jimin—“

Taehyung doesn’t let him come down from his orgasm, the urge to take him burning something possessive inside, and he forces him to roll onto his stomach before he straddles his thighs and fucks into him again. He sets a merciless rhythm, something that cuts Jimin’s breath but that’s barely satisfying this hunger he has to take him whole.

“Fuck—Tae wai-ait—“

“You’re too fucking good,”

He holds him down, their bodies crashing with one another in the mid-day hues, and Taehyung just takes what he wants, what he needs, Jimin’s choked little pleasured noises fueling him.

He can see the muscles of Jimin’s back straining, the white of his knuckles as his hands struggle to keep him still, can feel his legs tensed up under him, hear the overwhelmed thump of his feet on the mattress.

“I’m gonna—” Jimin whines, high pitched and shaky, and suddenly Taehyung slows down but stays languid, the assumption of what he’s going to say sending waves of scorching heat down his back. “I’m gonna come again,”

“Yeah?”

“I don’t wa—wanna, Tae, it’s,”

Taehyung smiles, impish, restrains him when he tries to straighten.

“Too much?” He growls between his shoulder blades, bent over him and Jimin’s jerky nod is that much more arousing. “Too bad, I feel like having you come around me again.”

He cants his hips against his ass to get a better angle, then puts his weight on Jimin to make sure he’s getting stimulation from his cock also being pressed into the mattress. And he fucks him until he’s sobbing, clamping around him, long and tight, before he tips over the edge and comes into the heat of his ass.

He withdraws almost too quick, cutting through the still lingering tendrils of pleasure, and he has Jimin shift until he’s facing him.

“Was that okay? How you feeling?” He asks, breathing still uneven and rushed, voice laced with concern. He brushes stray strands off his forehead, patient for the response.

And it takes a while for Jimin to react. His eyes are closed, he’s panting and sweat-slicked, cheeks
flushed in that rosy shade that suits him so well.

And then he smiles. Unadulterated, maybe a little shy. That smile he has, bright yet soft, when he’s feeling too much inside that it’s the only way it can come out. His eyes come open to meet Taehyung, and they’re glimmering and beautiful.

“Did you like it?” Taehyung asks again, lighter.

“That was—“ he rolls onto his back, combs his hair with his fingers. “Holy fuck.”

Taehyung blooms prettily, his arms reaching to him, because he craves to touch and hold and love, right now.

“God, I was scared,” he says, once he’s dragged himself closer. “Not gonna lie, I hesitated.”

“Even with how often I begged you to?”

“Yeah.”

“Like I’m – I’m a bit dead but I’m so glad you – You’re— gonna do it again, right?”

Taehyung chuckles, fond of Jimin’s wordless state.

“ Took you a pill, though, to knock you out enough.”

“I’m very willing,” he folds himself around Taehyung, winces slightly at how gross the sheets are. Taehyung makes a move to grab tissues, or anything to wipe them, but there’s an arm around his shoulder that keeps him still. “Thank you,” Jimin whispers, with, in his expression, something so tender and content that Taehyung flares up with happiness just from it. “Thank you for hearing me out and actually doing it.”

There’s nothing fitting to say to this, so he just kisses him.

Once, then twice. For a minute or an hour, Taehyung doesn’t count.

Taehyung only takes hold of his phone after he and Jimin are warm and clean from a shower, and when Jimin’s ringtone had startled them both in the middle of their breakfast.

He hasn’t touched it since the previous night. Honestly doesn’t touch it as much since he’s received that email. He still hasn’t opened it. But it’s tormenting him.

He finds nine missed calls, two texts asking him to call back, and the latest he got; a voicemail he’s yet to listen to.

“Ah, I’m sorry,” Jimin leaves his chair, gets to the living room with Yoongi on the other side of the line. Taehyung’s not sure why he’s doing that. He can still hear very clearly hear what he’s saying.

“No, I don’t know. M’yeah. We just took a shower and then went to bed.”

Taehyung’s fingers drum on the table for a minute, apprehensive. He lets Jimin’s gentle voice soothe him, lets the cute way he places his chopsticks on his bowl ground him.

Jimin’s here. No matter what, he doesn’t want to leave.
For a moment he got scared, when he came back. Jimin was upset, and understandably so. And he seemed to want to desert the place so bad that Taehyung crammed up with anxiety, that perhaps Jimin couldn’t see. He kept it at a low simmer, because he thought he couldn’t afford adding to his stress, and because the nature of it was too different.

Taehyung doesn’t care about his father, and the things that he might know.

But he’s terrified of losing Jimin because of him.

Just like he lost Yoongi because of him.

He finally presses the call button, brings his phone to his ear when the message is about to start.

It’s a simple message. Two short sentences. But they’re enough to have stress grip at his insides, and frustration sour the back of his tongue.

“The rat better be gone, for its own sake. Don’t wait for me to come clean up the place.”

Taehyung hangs up.

Jimin enters the kitchen then, his features more relaxed and peaceful, and Taehyung doesn’t even take the time to appreciate how beautiful Yoongi makes him, he just stands and begins clearing the table.

“How did it go with Namjoon hyung yesterday, by the way?”

“Uh, fine?”

He can feel Jimin’s eyes boring holes into his back from where he’s frozen mid-move.

“What are you doing?” he asks, when Taehyung fills the sink with their soiled plates and bowls.

“We need to go somewhere. You and me.”

“What?” Jimin’s tone drops and hardens with skepticism, as he watches him go back and forth between the table and the fridge.

“You’ll see.”

He walks past Jimin, coos at Cannelle on the way to their bedroom.

“Oh no, no. You’re not pulling that shit again.” Taehyung snorts at this. Admittedly, he’s already dragged an unwilling Jimin into his whims a couple times too often. “Tell me where we’re going.”

“Fine. But come here and dress your ass up. We’re going to the hardware store. We’re changing the locks.”
It’s a peculiar life he’s living, Jimin thinks.

Being heir to a big, reputed company, but not feeling as such.

Familiar with the finest restaurants in Seoul but being filled with this incredible contentment whenever he tastes one of his hyung’s food.

Knowing the sensation of wearing Saint-Laurent and Gucci but being much more comfortable in his boyfriend’s sweater, the one he knows he’s been keeping since ninth grade.

Having two boyfriends instead of a single one.

Boyfriends that he can’t call as such, four months into their relationship.

Having picked up smoking and actually liking more the ritual that the actual nicotine, because of said boyfriends.

Randomly learning how to change locks in an apartment he sorts of lives in, because CEO of main competitor company, and boyfriend-number-one’s father, dropped in on him half naked and ordered him to leave.

So much moved and changed, in the last year.

Since he got dumped and had to redefine himself, since he started university, met new people that became his friends, decided to pay for the rental of the dance studio, so that their troupe could go on.

It’s hectic, maybe. Confusing and overwhelming, sometimes.

But Jimin’s happy. More than he remembers ever being.

He takes his cigarette to his lips, pulls smoke in and closes his eyes, feels it sitting in his air pipe.

Jimin thinks that every component of his life, everything that he’s chosen, they’re worth fighting for.

He huffs into thin air, watches the fog meddle and melt into the grey of the clouds, in that fragile light that, once in a while, manages to peek through them.

He looks over at Taehyung, who’s leaned against the railing just like he is. Finds him looking far, further ahead to this dull scenery before them, brows creased but emanating peacefulness. Seasons have passed but some things don’t change. Jimin still finds him as beautiful as he did, the first time he saw him, sitting a couple of rows behind him in class.

“Pretty sure they were friends,” Taehyung adds, to a conversation Jimin thought was over.

“Yeah? What makes you think that?”
The wind blows, a warm gust fanning over them, and Taehyung’s hair gently sways on his forehead. Jimin can’t wait for autumn. For scarves and hot cocoas and much needed cuddles for warmth.

“My father seems to know yours a lil’ too intimately for them to always have been mortal enemies or something.”

“Maybe they used to fuck.”

“Oh god.”

"Maybe they fucked in the early nineties, on a brown faux-velvet couch with their nice haircuts and disgusting colours on the walls."

Taehyung scrunches his nose. Jimin cringes at what he's just said.

“What the hell is wrong with you?”

Jimin shrugs. With the nineties decor taken out, the thought isn’t as disturbing.

“That’d be fitting.”

“Just friends seemed fine to me.”

“I don’t see why friends would just, so drastically separate ways that they’d become adversaries.”

“Mhm.”

Jimin eyes the fuming stick slipping in between Taehyung’s wet lips, the class with which he manages to do something so harmful. He brings his own to his mouth, finds it unresponsive.

“My smoke died,” he mutters.

Taehyung chuckles, extirpates his lighter from his pocket and beckons Jimin closer.

“You’re still so bad at this,” he says, sultry, as he cups around Jimin’s cigarette and flicks the wheel. The flame licks at it and quickly starts burning through it, allowing a long string of smoke to disperse.

Jimin finds in himself no strength to bite back, today. He’s just satisfied with those butterflies dancing in his stomach. How lively and vibrant they still are. Even given everything.

“So if they had been friends,” he continues, settling beside Taehyung, their arms touching, “they would have started a company together. Not against one another.”

“And we would have been associates. Gay for each other.”

“Probably. But Yoongi hyung might not have been there, so I’m fine with how we are.”

Taehyung gives a muffled agreement, drowned by Jimin’s sudden want to have Yoongi pressed against him, his fingers between his own. I’m in Gwangju today, business stuff, he told Jimin that morning, I’m sorry I can’t be there when things are shit.

He takes his phone out with the intention to send him a message, his cigarette tight between his lips, but then he notices the vibration mode was off and the six unread messages from Jungkook.

He stares at his name on the screen, then at the deep chocolate brown of the balcony’s floor beside
his feet. Slowly, the conversation he’s had with him and Hoseok the previous night resurfaces and rolls his thoughts around, until Taehyung breaks his haze with an inquisitive sound.

“Tae,” he starts. It’s cautious. “Would you be with me, if I asked you? Like, in a proper relationship.” Taehyung goes more stern, pensive. There’s a glimmer of confusion in there that Jimin wants to alleviate, so he adds, “Ignore the whole context. If it wouldn’t imply anything for you and hyung, or for hyung and me. Would you?”

The charged silence that follows is already half of the answer and Jimin tries not to focus too much on the way his insides fall and turn to ashes. He takes a drag, lets the wave of pain ease off.

“I can’t imagine us to be some kind of other way, so I honestly can’t tell,” Taehyung says before Jimin can pick up the fragments of conversation.

“But we’ve been together before,” he says with a smile, aching but too fond of the memory.

Taehyung breathes out a laugh then, and Jimin realizes that he is as fond of that time than he is.

“It’s true. But it wasn’t the same.”

“Because of hyung?”

“Because of hyung. And your relationship.”

And at this, Jimin wonders how long the three could have gone on with that web of feelings they were in back then, where they were playing hide and seek and being unfaithful, but already in too deep into each other.

"Could you be scared? Of getting into a relationship?"

Taehyung glances at him and cocks a questioning brow. Jimin looks away. He’s so fucking scared of the answer.

“Maybe,” he finally sighs, along with the last swallow of smoke, before he kills the cigarette on the metal of the railing. “I don’t think so, but maybe.” And it’s a vague response, but it manages to mellow down Jimin’s fear. “I love you though, that’s what matters, right?”

“Yes,” he answers softly, promptly. No hesitation. Jimin closes on Taehyung, cranes his neck to kiss his shoulder.

Because it’s true. It’s a complicated maze they’re in, and some days it seems like there’s no way out. But as long as they love each other, the road will seem worth it.

“Won’t you say you love me too?” Taehyung pouts, and it’s almost believable.

Jimin chuckles, a filigree smoke seeping from his lips.

“I love you, you needy baby.”

It’s almost surreal, to be able to say it.

After how long he kept it inside, and how he grew scared that such beautiful words would shatter everything, if they were to slip from his grasp. How stressful they became, perched on his lips, on the tip of his tongue. Like they were the key to something or some kind of decision.

It’s so good, to hear himself say them.
He takes a few minutes to enjoy how it makes him feel, gravitating in Taehyung’s quiet space, and enjoying this as well.

He watches Taehyung light another cigarette as he kills his own, smiles softly as he picks his phone from his pocket again.

**Kookie**: hyung
09-08-2016, 17:32

**Kookie**: hyung
09-08-2016, 17:33

**Kookie**: hyung pls answer me
09-08-2016, 17:34

**Kookie**: hyung im alone n bored n im gon die
09-08-2016, 17:37

**Kookie**: hyuuuuung
09-08-2016, 17:42

**Kookie**: lol wyd hyung
09-08-2016, 17:48

**You**: fucking christ
09-08-2016, 18:09

**You**: how many times did you type hyung
09-08-2016, 18:09

**Kookie**: 6
09-08-2016, 18:09

**Kookie**: y
09-08-2016, 18:09

**Kookie**: u forgot how 2 count?
09-08-2016, 18:09
“The satanic child wants to hang out,” he says with a grin in his voice.

“You should go,” Taehyung says, amused. He straightens, stretches his arms above his head, just enough to have his shirt ride up his stomach and showing a little of the band of his boxers.

Jimin rethinks of that morning, in this most perfect way he got woken up and reflexively licks his lips.

“Uh, you coming?” he offers, sounding more composed than he actually is. “We’ll probably end up at the refinery or something.”

“I’m good,” he strains, still stretching.

“Sure?”

“Yeah,” and Jimin studies, searches him. He searches for the slightest lilt to his voice, or that veil that falls over his eyes when something is not quite right. Taehyung just looks pensive. Distracted, maybe. So he lets it slip. “I’ll probably do a thing or two for uni.”
“Oh god, that’s next week.”

“Yep.”

**You:** always so polite, i love it

09-08-2016, 18:13

**Kookie:** what can i say

09-08-2016, 18:13

**Kookie:** perfection is the most personal of arts

09-08-2016, 18:13

**You:** what the fuck was that

09-08-2016, 18:13

**Kookie:** namjoon hyung taught me that

09-08-2016, 18:13

**Kookie:** oKAY

09-08-2016, 18:14

**Kookie:** r we done with dat useless blabbering

09-08-2016, 18:14

**Kookie:** can we hang

09-08-2016, 18:14

**Kookie:** can we meet

09-08-2016, 18:14

**You:** why me though

09-08-2016, 18:14
It’s been a while since Jungkook texted him with that bratty side of his, and that he demanded for them to see each other.

Maybe too long.

And he’s not saying it, but he misses spending time with them as well. Jungkook and Hoseok.

He gets all fluttery and fond whenever he rethinks of this post-breakup period when they would just be together. Jimin could hardly stand being on his own so he would reach for their company without missing a day.

Silent homework on Hoseok’s worn out kitchen table, nights playing games without looking at the time. Those long ass conversations at dawn, dancing until they were only jellified limbs on Fridays, then eating ramyun at that cheap place near the studio.

Jimin’s still longing for that. He does think about it often.

But Hoseok got increasingly busy with the disc shop and school, works too much and studies a fair amount, tires himself out even when Jimin tells him not to.

And Jimin, he got caught up in a hurricane with the prettiest of names, and there’s not an ounce of regret in his blood. But he still feels accountable for how things are, sometimes.

As for Jungkook, he can hardly follow what he’s up to. He’s spending so much time with Namjoon and Seokjin, in new places and trying new things and barely telling him about it, that Jimin feels at a loss. It’s like there’s so much going on that he doesn’t know but that he should, but they’re missing the time to properly address everything.

Jimin squints at his phone, remembers the morning he found Jungkook and Seokjin cuddled on the guest bed. He sighs.

It’s uncomfortable, to think that they used to share so much of each other’s lives, and now Jimin can see, can notice how Jungkook is changing but can’t tell why.

You: we were together literally last night

09-08-2016, 18:14

Kookie: and
You: your spelling is particularly disgusting today

09-08-2016, 18:15

Kookie: ikr?

09-08-2016, 18:15

Kookie: i brainfreezed from a slushie a lil earlier

09-08-2016, 18:15

Kookie: maybe that was more critical than i thought

09-08-2016, 18:15

Kookie: i miss you hyung

09-08-2016, 18:15

Kookie: can we go somewhere?

09-08-2016, 18:16

You: i cant with you

09-08-2016, 18:16

You: tell me where, ill meet you there

09-08-2016, 18:16

“Uh?” Jungkook tries to look past Jimin, over his shoulder. “What are you doing here alone?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Jimin drawls, eyebrows furrowed, as he walks towards the booth where Jungkook is sitting.

“Where’s Taehyung hyung?”

“Ah, well I can leave if you wanna, I didn’t mean to disappoint you with my solitude.”

“Hyung no, please sit.”
Jimin does. He takes place across from him, feeling warm in his hoodie. They used to come here often, before. The food is good and the seats comfortable, and once the busy hour has passed, the waiters don’t mind them staying for hours. So they did that plenty of times.

“I’m just surprised,” Jungkook continues, his fingers restless on the table, “I thought you were with him.”

"I was. But as it turns out, we are two different living beings and can proceed to breathe even when a couple of kilometres apart."

“Sure, yeah,” he gives a teasing smirk then slides a beverage menu in front of Jimin. “You wanna drink something?”

“I hate when you’re like that. Did you order already?”

“Nah, I was waiting for you.”

Jimin cocks his head to the side. Jungkook always orders first, even when he’s aware that he’s going to be joined soon.

“You’re weird. Is there something you’re not telling me?”

“I don’t know, is there something I should be telling you that I don’t know I should be telling you?”

“You already answered me that before.”

“That’s because you asked the same question.”

Jimin sits back in the cushion, stares at him.

Jungkook is beating around the bush. There’s something he wants to say and he’s being awkward about it, Jimin can at least tell that much.

“Are you inviting?” He ends up asking, fists in the kangaroo pocket on his belly.

“Of course, yeah. Not that I think you’d need it or anything.”

"I'll take a deca mochaccino with a lot of whipped cream."

Jungkook snorts, then smiles, and there’s something new to it. A different curl to his lips.

“That’s so like you, hyung.”

“Well obviously. And what are you drinking?”

“A chai latte would be good.”

“A chai latte.”

“Yeah, a chai latte.”

“What the fuck. Since when?”

“Seokjin hyung is really good at them.”

Jimin looks him for a few seconds more, silent, shakes his head with his mouth curving into a grin. When Hoseok introduced Jungkook and him to Seokjin and Namjoon, he would have never
believed that they would become this close.

Jungkook is carefree, and he’s young with a mind that wanders here and there and back, grand ideas but lacking to fear of failure.

Seokjin and Namjoon, friends for so long already, have their feet deep in reality, sobered up, somehow, with eyes seeing greys as much as they see the bright cyan of the sky.

It’s odd, how well it works. But Jimin is not going to probe at it. He already feels bad enough for being so absent in their friendship, so his questioning doesn’t have its place.

“I’m kinda sad Taehyung hyung didn’t come though,” Jungkook mutters, planting both palms on the table to push himself up.

Jimin hums a skeptical sound as he watches Jungkook saunter away, too impatient to wait for the waitress to come to their table.

You: hyung
09-08-2016, 19:03

You: is it just me or kook changed a lot
09-08-2016, 19:03

You: in very littel time
09-08-2016, 19:04

You: little
09-08-2016, 19:04

Hobi hyung: not just you
09-08-2016, 19:06

Hobi hyung: i noticed that as well
09-08-2016, 19:06

Hobi hyung: why?
09-08-2016, 19:06

Hobi hyung: you worried?
09-08-2016, 19:07

You: not really worried
You: just curious

You: remember when he couldn't stand hearing me talk about youngjae

You: and even after that when id tell you about the dudes id flirt with when id go out

You: he could barely keep his ass sat

You: he would always just want to run out of rub his skin real bad

You: as if id give him the chills or itchy skin idk

You: and now he seems interested, whenever i talk about hyung and tae

He glances up, finds Jungkook still at the counter and talking with the employee there, and Jimin figures he still has some time before he becomes suspicious.

Hobi hyung: yeah well

Hobi hyung: he might have had other reasons why he didn't want to hear about your ex

Hobi hyung: youngjae is a fucking asshole

Hobi hyung: it was hard seeing you go through that shit, jiminie, not gonna lie

You: but even when it was good
Hobi hyung: oh you mean the first 4 months

09-08-2016, 19:11

Hobi hyung: and that 1 month break you had from being called names and being ignored for days at a time?

09-08-2016, 19:11

Hobi hyung: because he was scared that youd dump his stupid ass?

09-08-2016, 19:11

You: im not exactly sure why youre telling me all that

09-08-2016, 19:11

You: its not like i forgot or anything

09-08-2016, 19:12

Hobi hyung: you know that he still dances, right?

09-08-2016, 19:12

Hobi hyung: that he might be there at the competition

09-08-2016, 19:12

You: yeah i know

09-08-2016, 19:12

You: what dyou want me to do?

09-08-2016, 19:12

You: not go?

09-08-2016, 19:13

You: drop the whole team?

09-08-2016, 19:13

You: anyway we’re digressing
Hobi hyung: the fucking repugnance I have for this piece of shit

Hobi hyung: you wouldn't believe

You: it's over, hyung

You: I'm happy now

You: also you're the best hyung and I love you

Hobi hyung: I love you too

Hobi hyung: I'll be a snitch and tell yoongi hyung that you think I'm better than him

You: please do

"Who you texting?" Jimin nearly jumps out of his own skin when Jungkook's voice comes too close to his ear. He slaps his phone down on his thigh in an attempt to hide his screen. Jungkook grins and places the two mugs on the table. "Or sexting maybe?"

Hobi hyung: so yeah about jungkook
“It’s Hoseok hyung,” Jimin answers, thanking Jungkook for the beverage he brought him before he takes a sip of it.

“Mhm. He gets off work at 20, right? We should go get him.”

"It's Tuesday, so he's having the day off," he says distractedly, typing his next message.

"Tuesday? It's not Monday? The eighth?"

“Nope. Nine. Summer’s got you fucked.”

“Holy—Fuck, fuck—“

Jimin startles at Jungkook’s urgency, eyes riveted on him as he grapples to get his own phone in his pocket.

“Why? You forgot something?”

“N-No? Yea—A little bit, maybe.”

“What is it?”

“Something I had to send and I—fuck I fucked up.”

“And you had to absolutely send it today?”

“Y-Yeah, I kind of important so— Invite hyung? We’ll go get him if he wants. Lemme just finish this.”

Jimin looks at his own device, suddenly blank on how to use it, Jungkook’s sudden rush of stress having flooded over him as well.

You: uhm
09-08-2016, 19:19

You: im with him
09-08-2016, 19:20

You: you wanna chill with us tonight?
09-08-2016, 19:20

Hobi hyung: sure yeah
09-08-2016, 19:21

Hobi hyung: let me just jump in the shower real quick
09-08-2016, 19:21
Jimin feels like he’s 17 again.

Sprawled out on luscious grass at night, blabbering whatever to Hoseok and Jungkook, and maybe a little more lovesick than he’d want to admit.

Maybe what happened with Taehyung’s father hit him more than he thought. He won’t deny his apprehension of going back to the apartment.

Last time they came here, Hoseok was still smoking cigarette after cigarette, Jungkook was just discovering photography, and the trees were slowly crying their leaves one after the other. It’s been a while. A year almost. But Jimin still likes this place as much as he used to.

They have a part of the city spread below, endless sea of lights, and from this hill they’re perched on, the sky is equally as infinite. And even though they can’t see the stars, they still have the moon overhead, only a half but still beautiful.

Jimin lifts his phone above his face, checks the new message that just came in.

**Yoongi hyung**: just came home
10-08-2016, 2:11

He squints. 2:11.

“What the fuck,” he mutters to himself, not wanting to interrupt Hoseok and Jungkook’s conversation.

**Yoongi hyung**: you’re probably already sleeping but thought i’d let you know
10-08-2016, 2:12

**You**: youre heading at taes?
10-08-2016, 2:12

**Yoongi hyung**: ah
10-08-2016, 2:12

**Yoongi hyung**: no i thought that’d wake you
10-08-2016, 2:12
You: if you can, can you please go?
10-08-2016, 2:13

You: im still out and i dont know when i’ll be back
10-08-2016, 2:13

You: and if i can prevent him waking alone i will
10-08-2016, 2:13

“I honestly don’t think that it’s how it works, hyung.”

Jimin keeps staring at his phone, but his focus shifts to Jungkook when he hears him say this.

“You know I’ve been doing that too much.”

“Yeah, but you can’t just push her away? I mean, she’s been a good friend to you for a while now. She let you sleep on her couch and eat her food and—”

“I know that. Fuck, don’t make it worse.”

Hoseok reclines back with a huff, groans.

Yoongi hyung: i’ll go yeah
10-08-2016, 2:14

Yoongi hyung: also let’s discuss why hoseok is the best hyung and not me
10-08-2016, 2:14

Yoongi hyung: tomorrow
10-08-2016, 2:14

Jimin smiles, sends a winking emoji. His arm falls back down, dropping on Hoseok’s leg. He closes his eyes.

“Just tell her, hyung.”

“Tell her what? That I have no idea what it is that I feel for her but that I have this bad habit of just fucking with people and then suddenly bam getting in a relationship with them?”

Jungkook laughs airily, comprehensive. Jimin hasn’t seen that happening either, Jungkook opening up enough about love stuff to want to help.
“Yeah, that. Just gentler, maybe. Y’know, the two most important things in every relationship, and especially love, are respect, and honesty.”

Jimin makes a weird sound, something between curiosity and amusement, his eyes going from relaxed to wide open and he sits up, meeting Jungkook’s sleepy expression.

“Where did you take that?”

“Take what?”

“What you just said.”

“Experience.”

"What? What experience?"

Jungkook smiles and stands, walks away under Jimin’s and Hoseok’s confused gazes.

“Tell her, hyung. I’m sure she’ll understand,” he speaks louder, so that they can still hear him, even when he’s gradually merging with the darkness in between trees. “Needa take a piss—“

“Jeon Jungkook.”

“You’re not gonna follow me here, are you?”

Jimin hears the smile in his voice and it pinches at him even harder.

“That’s exactly what I meant earlier,” he says to Hoseok, tone dropping, before he throws himself onto his back again.

“I know. But he doesn’t seem to want to talk about it.”

“That or he just wants to torture me.”

“Don’t say that. Maybe it’s just not something that’s easy to say. He’s trusting us, so let’s trust him.”

Dew has formed, now. It’s resting heavy on the leaves, on the grass and it’s making Jimin’s hoodie humid and cold. He’s sniffling and his ass is wet even through his jeans, but that’s far in the back of his mind.

Very, very far.

The three of them made it to sunrise, somehow. But it’s one like Jimin doesn’t remember ever seeing.

The sky is aflame with the prettiest shades of orange and peach, so bright and with a sun that’s shining and fiercely climbing up a canvas that’s all its own. The whole scenery is drowned in a muted pink, the city, the mountains where they lay the farthest. It’s as if a film, a veil had been laid wherever Jimin takes his eyes.

His fists clamp and unclamp in the front pocket, fingertips numb. At this point he’s even afraid to blink, in fear of it disappearing.
“Why didn’t I bring a camera,” Jungkook mutters, breaking that stunned silence they had been in for stretched minutes.

“Your phone,” Hoseok says, his chattering teeth audible when he does.

“Not comparable. At all. Not even sure my Nikon would do this justice, to be honest.”

“Then look with your eyes.”

"Useful advice. Thanks, hyung. Hadn't thought of this."

Jimin’s lips curl at the corners. Some things never change. And he’s thankful for that.

What matters most, he thinks, is that they always remember that there’s someone to catch them, if they ever fall.

The apartment is bathed in warm light, when he gets in.

He shrugs his shoes off, his toes sore from having been frozen for too long, and he tiptoes in the hallway and towards the bathroom, where he’s anticipating a hot shower. Passing by the living room, he throws a glance in the direction of the balcony. A reflex.

And it’s barely past six AM, but Taehyung is there. There and sitting and smoking, enveloped in a blanket that he probably dragged from bed, with Cannelle in her loaf position under his bent knees.

“Hey,” Jimin says, after sliding the door open. Taehyung swiftly shuts his screen before he tilts his head to look at him.

“Hey,” he replies and Jimin hovers over him, leans and kisses him. “I thought you were crashing at Jungkook’s or something.”

“Might have been a good idea, but I wanted to aggressively cuddle and only you and hyung can give me that. Why you up?”

“Couldn’t sleep anymore.”

“Nightmare?”

“Went to bed early.”

Jimin finds Taehyung unusually cold. He frowns, brushes off those wary thoughts he’s having.

“Well I’ll be in the shower, you coming?”

“Yeah, lemme just,” he takes a drag, smoke seeping from the tip, “finish this.”

Jimin nods, gets back in and lets Tuxedo out.

He quickly peruses around the kitchen when he makes it there, looking for Taehyung’s favourite glass or for an emptied bottle. He feels stupid for doing that. But his memories of the time Yoongi and he found him wasted and drenched at the refinery is enough to keep him going.
Taehyung is not an early sleeper.

He doesn’t find anything, but an oddly clean countertop that doesn’t appease him in the least. Still, he goes to grab some clothes in the bedroom, careful not to rouse Yoongi, and gets to the bathroom.

There, Taehyung is waiting, his back to him and phone in hand.

And Jimin can only get a peek at what’s on the screen before Taehyung abruptly locks the device again. It’s only two words, and they could be anything, but they make his stomach swim with uneasiness.

*Acceptation of*

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Chapter End Notes

- it's chapter 50 whaddup
- very short but important chapter next week!
What Taehyung hasn’t told Jimin that morning on the balcony, is that shortly after he left to go meet Jungkook, his father was at the door.

At first, he knocked. Then rang. Only once.

After that came the few minutes where he tried unlocking the door with his spare key but couldn’t manage to. Taehyung stood on the other side, leaned on the wall of the hallway and arms crossed over his chest. Smug.

He wasn’t as smug though, when after satisfying minutes of silence, his father came back with two cops, ordering him to open.

He vividly remembers that mixture or annoyance and frustration that was dancing in his stomach when he had to let him in. Something brutal enough for him to want to act on it.

“Give me the new keys,” he was told when they got left alone, but he just scoffed.

“Get the fuck out of here, dad. I don’t want to see you in my apartment.”

“You seem to be forgetting who’s paying for all this luxury you’re living in, son. The lease has my name on it, therefore it’s mine to do of it what I please. So you better show some respect. The keys, right now.”

“If it’s yours, then I’ll let you live in it. I’ll free this place and you can have it all. That’s what you want, right? Possess everything. And then destroying it, because that’s what you do best.” Taehyung’s voice was calm, just like a sea before a storm. Inside was red, blotched and hateful. Violent. “You’re not getting those keys. It’s the last warning I’m giving you. Leave me the fuck alone before I decide you’re not going to hear from me ever again.”

His father laughed, ugly and mean.

“You’re becoming more and more like me, son.”

What he hasn't told Jimin that morning on the balcony, is that he couldn't stop the words from seeping under his flesh. He felt them crawling inside, spreading like ink in fine lines of the skin.

Because he sensed, in some place deep down, that they were true.

You’re becoming just like him, came from that voice in the back of his mind. You break everything you touch. You’re going to end up alone. Alone in a sea of people.
After that, Taehyung did drink.

He got out and bought a new bottle, one Jimin wouldn’t identify as missing since he wouldn’t have seen it sitting on the shelf.

But guilt was quick to catch up. Disgusting guilt that crept up his gut the moment he saw his reflection in the mirror of the bathroom. Jimin would know. Jimin senses those kinds of things.

Taehyung sobered himself up by cleaning the kitchen, throwing away the emptied bottle, washing the few dishes he used, wanting to erase all traces of this slow destruction he’s been engaging in.

But even now, almost a full day later, as he’s walking the dim-lighted streets after he’s parked his car in a safe place, he thinks Jimin might have caught up.

Taehyung feels trapped. A little more every day.

He’s got chains at his feet that he doesn’t know if he should love or hate, he’s got a treacherous heart and a sick, sick mind.

You: i wont attend the wedding, im sorry
10-08-2016, 20:10

It’s not like he was really planning on going, anyway. In fact, he had sort of pushed it under the rug of his overwhelmed brain. He hadn’t even invited Jimin yet.

He enters a small building, where he knows he’ll find what he needs.

Choi Gayoung: Oh, no. What happened? Are you hurt?
10-08-2016, 20:13

You: i cant stand breathing in the same room as him anymore
10-08-2016, 20:13

Choi Gayoung: What did he do?
10-08-2016, 20:13

And Taehyung finds her wording very interesting.
You: doesn't matter
10-08-2016, 20:13

You: im just not going
10-08-2016, 20:13

**Choi Gayoung:** Can I maybe try and convince you?
10-08-2016, 20:14

**Choi Gayoung:** Please?
10-08-2016, 20:14

**Choi Gayoung:** I’d be so glad to see you there, even if it’s just for 10 minutes.
10-08-2016, 20:15

Taehyung snorts, stalled in front of the rows of liquor.

That’s sad.

Pitiful.

That tone she uses almost makes him nostalgic.

He guesses that his father has already dropped the mask and let his inner asshole resurface. He also presumes that she knows, that she understands in what kind of black hole she’s stepped in, but she doesn’t know how to get out of there.

He sighs.

You: fine
10-08-2016, 20:15

You: but cant guarantee thatll go smoothly
10-08-2016, 20:16

**Choi Gayoung:** Ah, you just made my day!
10-08-2016, 20:16

**Choi Gayoung:** And don’t forget to bring him!
Taehyung stares at the letters, bubbling up with a confused feeling. Yoongi already has no choice to attend, holding such an important place in the company, so she’s can’t be talking about him.

She knows.

He cracks up a smile.

You: of course

His hands wrap around a tall bottle. He takes it to the counter.

He opens his chatroom with Jimin once he’s paid for his vodka and that he’s back out, under a sky heavy with clouds and breathing air that’s thick with humidity.

Taehyung longs for the dead colours of the refinery.

You: i know its a tad late

You: but what are you doing on saturday

Jimin: uh?

Jimin: well idk

Jimin: why, you wanna go on a date?

You: kinda
You: wanna be my plus one at a wedding?
10-08-2016, 20:44

Jimin: whose
10-08-2016, 20:44

You: my fathers
10-08-2016, 20:44

Jimin: wow
10-08-2016, 20:44

Jimin: probably in your top 3 of worst ideas youve ever had
10-08-2016, 20:45

You: ive had worse
10-08-2016, 20:45

Jimin: not going there
10-08-2016, 20:45

Taehyung slips through the hole in the fence. There’s something weirdly satisfying about coming here.

Every damn time.

He’s thinking of something to persuade him once he’s made it into the maze of tanks, and a message comes in from Yoongi. That makes him smile. Bitter.

Yoongi: i’ve been told not to invite anyone, else i would’ve invited him myself
10-08-2016, 20:53

Yoongi: but i’m glad you did
Taehyung thinks that from there, Yoongi works with him. Because it doesn’t take much coaxing for Jimin to accept.

And he knows that he shouldn’t be doing that. Or at least that he’s doing it for the wrong reasons. That he’s resentful and too eager to show everyone who he’s loving at night. That he’s too keen on angering his father, and thirsty for some kind of revenge.

But if it turns bad, so be it.

The wedding, and everything else.

Everything has to end one day or another, anyway.

You: are you still with hyung?
10-08-2016, 21:24

Jimin: yeah, why? when are you coming back?
10-08-2016, 21:26

You: good
10-08-2016, 21:26

You: then have fun
10-08-2016, 21:27

That night, Taehyung gets drunks, as much on cheap alcohol as he does on his thoughts.

He’s getting tired. He’s getting fed up with himself, intoxicating his being. He’s getting sick of this life he’s half living.

Maybe he should just be happy. After all, he’s got all he needs.

And in fact, on days when he’s better, he doesn’t quite get it himself, what it is that’s wrong with
him. And why the more he’s offered, the more he’s hurting.

Taehyung knows he loves, but he forgot how to do it properly.

Taehyung knows what he wants, but is too scared to reach for it.

Taehyung knows pretty things are ready for him to just look at them, but he’s keeping his eyes shut. Because if there’s a precipice waiting at his feet, then he doesn’t want to know the moment when he’ll step into it and fall.

That night, Taehyung roams around the refinery, deep and thorough, in search of something. He doesn’t know what. Anything would do.

That night, he runs into new people. In a crevice, behind a tank.

They all look as blown as he is, also in search of something that’s needed like it’s vital, but that has no name.

And when they offer him coke, he doesn’t turn it down.
Jimin doesn’t understand.

At all.

He doesn’t understand why Taehyung gets home in the middle of the night, and why he sleeps on the couch instead of in the bed with them, when less than 12 hours prior, he invited Jimin to be his date at a fucking wedding.

He doesn’t understand either, when Taehyung gives them the silent treatment and spends the majority of the day trying to be alone when they’re visibly three navigating the same space.

He nearly loses it, when he comes out of the shower that evening and that Yoongi tells him he’s gone.

No call, no text message does it.

Jimin thinks they should go check on him. Because he’s pretty sure to know where he is.

Yoongi says maybe I should leave instead, and Jimin doesn’t know what else to do other than just hold his hand and ask him to stay.

“I love you, please don’t go.”

He texts Taehyung the same thing.

He doesn’t get any reply.

For the entirety of two days, Taehyung comes and goes like a ghost.

He barely eats, barely lives with them.

He’ll talk and answer, but it has an off ring to it.

Yoongi still ends up at the apartment after work. And Jimin is still waiting for the right moment to
talk about things.

But it'll never come. Right moments don’t really exist. Instants just have to be grabbed and made as such.

Right circumstances, right situations, they're inventions of cowardly people.

“Tae,”

Jimin’s own voice resounds strange between the walls now. There’s been something so ill floating around all day, that he, much like Yoongi, wishes he could escape from.

The change was so abrupt and brutal, that he couldn’t even adjust. He’s standing in the hallway, feeling tight, he has no idea what’s going on or how to deal with it but he doesn’t want to see Taehyung passing that door again tonight.

“Mhm,”

“Where you going?” Jimin studies Taehyung’s bent posture and shaky fingers as he puts his shoes on.

“Just need a breather.”

And in instances like this, when Taehyung’s voice is grounded and that he’s not oozing that obscurity, Jimin doubts himself. He might be the overreacting, controlling boyfriend.

He glances over his shoulder and meets Yoongi’s eyes. He’s just a step into the kitchen, unmoving but expression wary. Jimin knows that it’s not that he doesn’t want to stop Taehyung himself. It’s just that the two of them are aware that if Yoongi were to intervene, Taehyung might react badly. And in the direction that's diametrically opposed to where they're trying to get him.

“Can you stay?” Jimin asks, a little stiff and clumsy. But Yoongi having this kind of urgency glinting in his gaze is enough reassurance for him to press further. “I mean, the wedding’s tomorrow and I don’t even know if we’re going together anymore? What’s going with that? What do you want me to wear? Shouldn’t we talk about this?” Taehyung straightens, his hair bouncing and splaying across his forehead, hiding his eyes. “You need a haircut.”

It slips out like it’s muscle memory, vestige of a time that wasn’t as porcelainized, where they could tease each other without every word bearing the weight of their whole relationship. He swallows, almost regretting.

“I know,” Taehyung whispers, shakes the strands away from his face. He’s smiling and Jimin lights up with the weakest spark of hope. Their eyes meet for a brief moment before Taehyung takes his above Jimin’s shoulder. To Yoongi, surely. “I could stay, yeah. I’m running low though,” he stuffs a hand in his pocket at this, takes out the red pack as some kind of proof. “So gotta go grab that real quick.”

Jimin nods. Taehyung’s easy acceptance is throwing him off. So he nods because it’s the only thing he feels like he can do.

But the moment the door is closed behind Taehyung’s absence, his eyelids fall shut, his throat bobs around his sadness.

“He’s not gonna come back anytime soon, is he?” He says, voice trembling.
Yoongi doesn’t add anything. Jimin guesses he wouldn’t know what to answer either.

And when he feels Yoongi wrapping around him from behind, he breaks.

**You**: hyung i need to ask you something
12-08-2016, 19:47

**Namjoon hyung**: What’s up?
12-08-2016, 19:50

Jimin stares at what’s inside the fridge for what seems like a long, long time.

It’s full. It’s empty.

He feels nauseous.

He won’t be able to eat.

He joins Yoongi on the couch, decides that for tonight he should skip dinner.

Taehyung comes home just when Yoongi and Jimin are starting to argue about Jimin missing a meal.

He’s been gone for twenty minutes. Thirty at most.

“You’re back,” Jimin says. His chest feels tight, his heart thrums a disastrous song.

“Well yeah, I was just at the corner store.”

Jimin doesn’t understand.

He wonders if that’s where they are now. If that’s how low they got, in as little as two days.

At random.

Throwing a dice with every sentence and seeing if that’s going to allow them further.

He keeps his eyes trained on Yoongi when he stands and that himself can’t root out from the couch.
He looks at him get to Taehyung, kiss him and getting through the corridor.

Like nothing’s fucking happening.

Like Taehyung isn’t just breaking apart and removing pieces of the puzzle they took months to properly place.

Like they don’t know he’s drinking and fucking himself up.

Maybe Jimin missed something.

Maybe there’s something he hasn’t seen or something he doesn’t know about.

Taehyung comes to him, presses his lips to his. It's gentle but it's over too soon for Jimin to think that it's quite right.

“What d’you want to eat?” Yoongi says from the kitchen.

Like Jimin didn’t tell him just five minutes ago that he wasn’t hungry.

Perhaps there’s nothing to be understood.

Perhaps it’s a rough patch.

Perhaps tomorrow they’re going to be fine.

But that night, Taehyung envelopes Jimin of his arms.

And while the warmth of it is the same, the feeling isn’t.

Δ

Taehyung is looking out the window, lulled by the soft tapping of the rain against it. He’s been at it for hours, it seems. Staring at the same darkness that’s living inside the room and out.

Jemin and Yoongi have been asleep for a while. Their breathings tell him that much. But Taehyung is still there with racing thoughts, slowly blinking, but not tired.

All the shit he’s been doing at the refinery the last two nights, it’s put him in his place. He knows now, that he’s running straight into a wall. But this time, he might not have the motive to try and avoid it.

He gently rolls off the bed, comes to stay at the foot of it.

He looks at them. They seem peaceful.

But Taehyung has been through enough to know that being asleep is a lie. He knows that one might look comfortable, relaxed, but inside he’s drowning in acid.

He lays between them.

He loves them so much.
But his constant failures at healing makes him not worth the fight.

Δ

Jimin wakes first. As he normally does.

He's made it to one side of the bed once again. Or more like Taehyung found his way between him and Yoongi. He tries not to think too much about how absurd it is for him to do that and yet still deny his need to be in a relationship with Yoongi again.

Jimin stares at the ceiling, at that large expanse of white that looks empty the more he keeps his eyes on it. Everywhere in the apartment, the colours are plain. The walls are dead. Only the studio makes exception. That room the three of them filled with a bit of themselves.

For a few breaths, he thinks he can comprehend this whole space through Taehyung’s brain. How depressing, how drab it is. How empty.

He tosses and turns, unwilling to get up, to let go of this moment. Of the three of them. And with one of Taehyung’s hands in between his, he falls asleep again.

Chapter End Notes

So it's been a year. 52 weeks of posting every Saturday. That'll probably sound anticlimactic, but to celebrate, I'll be taking the next week off. A lot of stuff is coming, so I want to take extra time and make sure everything is as good as it can be. I hope you all understand! I love you very much and I'll see you on the 24!
The start of the day goes as it should.

Everything is back in its place, though in a very fragile equilibrium. Yoongi feels it, deeply. He’s pretty sure they all can.

He wonders if that’s all Taehyung needed, for someone to ask him to stay.

They go out for lunch, and it’s lighthearted. Jimin is still cautious and it shows, he’s more reserved than he usually is, and Yoongi can’t blame him. They don’t need any conversation to solidify the fact that the last few days went to shit. And Yoongi doesn’t need much more than this to see how it shakes, how it fucks Jimin up when Taehyung turns into a ghost with them.

If Yoongi had been there when Taehyung’s father dropped in on Jimin, maybe things would have been different.

Surely, they would.

In the middle of the afternoon, they make it to Jimin’s house to get his suit, then back to the apartment.

They dress up, lazy, they kiss and they make out on the bed for too long. Jimin giggles under Taehyung’s teasing touches and at his attempt at taming his hair, and Yoongi stays back and just lets it sink in, tries to burn it in his memory somewhere. It’s soothing. Jimin’s laugh has always had its way into Yoongi’s heart. Calming and reassuring. If Jimin is smiling, then things can be okay.

Yoongi just hopes it’s not one of the last times they’re able to be like that. Together.

Taehyung catches the quiet when they’re in the company’s car on their way to the hotel where is held the reception.

Yoongi knows what he’s doing. He’s known him for so long, been loving him with his whole being for so many years, that his own mind can almost drift in the same place as his.

_We don’t give a shit about what your father’s gonna say_, he wants to tell him. _I’ll be there to catch you both if anything happens._
Instead he reaches to take his hand and is met the slightest of recoils. Taehyung twines their fingers but leans against the window, farther from Yoongi.

Come back to us.

Don’t go.

Δ

The rush of adrenaline that Taehyung gets when the doorman opens for them, when he gets in the hotel ballroom knowing Jimin is right behind him and that Yoongi is closing the march, is brain-numbing. Just a little less intense than what he felt when he sold drugs with Namjoon or the high he’s overcome with after a line of coke.

He feels the gazes, one after the other, landing on them, the questioning, the doubt growing heavier as they make their way through the crowd. The chattering is still too loud for him to hear what they’re whispering about, but Taehyung knows that in about 20 minutes, it will have brushed past most tables.

Isn’t this Park Alliances’ heir with Mr. Kim’s son?

Yeah, he’d tell them, fuck yeah he is. He looks amazing, doesn’t he?

Because Jimin does look out of this world, with his black suit, black shirt, black shoes and red bowtie, his hair swept to the side a little messily.

I’m in love with him, and he looks fucking delectable.

Taehyung hears Yoongi scoffing just behind, and the next moment he’s catching up, having them walk side by side.

“All gaping like fishes,” he says, arranging one of his cuffs and this, along with all the little habits he has when he’s wearing a suit, and how fierce he looks all in black and white, never fails to set Taehyung’s lust ablaze.

“Well have you seen yourself?” Taehyung squints, trying to locate Gayoung. After all, she’s the only real reason why he’s here.

“Don’t think that’s why they’re staring.”

“That’s why I’d be staring, to be honest.”

Jimin chuckles and Taehyung slows down, allows him to take a place between him and Yoongi in some protecting fashion, when he knows fairly well that the hurt they’re risking here isn’t physical.

He can at the very least appreciate the decoration. Probably the only thing that's been left to Gayoung’s care. The light is warm, the main colour neutral and prettily accented with blues and purples. Tables are dressed in long tablecloths that hang heavy, nearly touching the floor, and atop of them, gold-plated cutlery. There's flowers centrepieces, tall vases that hold white roses and blue orchids, and some more here and there in the hall. Surprisingly, the whole place has a very personal aura to it.
His focus gets broken when Yoongi stops a waiter and takes two glasses from his tray, offers one to Jimin, but then hesitates before taking a third one and passing it to Taehyung.

That’s funny.

“Hyung,” Taehyung’s tone is warm but bright with an urgency that he might be the only one to understand. He doesn’t want to stay here for longer than necessary.

“If you can’t avoid it, enjoy it,” Jimin says with a sly grin, but Taehyung’s not stupid, he sees the way his eyes go back and forth between his glass and his lips.

There’s something deplorable about it, but Taehyung can only blame himself for it.

He doesn’t get why he’s doing the shit he’s doing, the ghosting and the drugs. Getting fucking wasted. He’s feeling lost. Not confused. Lost. Past the stage of possible salvation. It’s fine. If it can bring the three of them the finality and the push they need to finally be clear about what they are, then Taehyung doesn’t mind.

He’s been wanting Yoongi and Jimin to be together for a long time, anyway.

The guests are asked to take place, not long after that. For some kind of toast or maybe another tradition he’s not too familiar with because he stopped believing in marriage a year and a half ago.

They need to make it almost to the front of the room, near the small stage and the newlyweds to find their seats. Taehyung notices how Yoongi is looking at another table, and he glances at it too, only to notice that this is where his Yoongi’s father is sitting, a free space at his right.

Taehyung’s father assigned Yoongi to another table.

“Hyung,” Taehyung says, low, the voices around slowly dissolving into a polite silence.

He pulls Jimin's chair, waits for him to sit before he pushes him to be at a comfortable distance from the table. The tiny place card in front of him reads Kim Taehyung’s guest. The other attendees nearby have grown quiet, their eyes drawn to the three of them like they’re magnets.

“Not going there.”

Taehyung stalls. Yoongi sits next to Jimin, a seat that’s identified with the name of an important potential contributor. Taehyung was supposed to talk business even on such a day.

He swells. Taehyung’s whole ribcage swells and his heart puffs up with a feeling that’s as tender as it is scorching.

He takes his seat, excited and abrasive, maybe too confident. And when the man comes and reclaims his place, the excuse Yoongi gives him and the ease with which he manipulates him to go settle somewhere else has Taehyung lick at his lip with a pleased smile and reach for Jimin’s thigh hand under the tablecloth.

It’s the last time he’ll be with them like that, so he enjoys it.
He revels in his father’s expression when he finally sees them. Gets high on it.

He’s just starting his speech, tone mellow and falsely enthused, when he lays eyes on Taehyung. And then on Jimin.

It’s almost imperceptible, how he falters. Taehyung’s father is so used to talking in front of crowds, dresses with his politician attitude in meetings and everywhere else, really, but Taehyung still sees it.

He leans back in his chair, smirks, and enjoys it.

And he can tell that Jimin blooms with it in his own way as well, from the sudden kick in his breathing and the stressed adrenaline he emanates.

His father goes about his speech without looking at them again.

But when Taehyung meets Gayoung’s gaze, it’s only to find her pretty and beaming, even moreso when she notices Jimin at his side.

Taehyung doesn’t feel bad. Or guilty. He probably should. He’s the heir of one of the biggest companies in Seoul, he should act like a fucking grown up. But he’s too over it to care. His father, university, whatever the fuck is the concept of money, himself, his relationships. He’s losing control over it all and he doesn’t really mind.

It lasts for something close to an hour, the entirety of the speeches. Close friends, parents, relatives, even Yoongi’s father get their five minutes on that stage, talking about how beautiful the spouses are together, with the spotlight on them and a mic that’s too loud.

Taehyung, the groom’s son, was never told to write anything of the sort. He doesn’t get invited to improvise one either.

Probably better that way. He would have found the subtlest words to blast his father. And it’s a fucking weird wedding anyway.

Everyone piled and lined up for mandatory congratulations the moment the MC announced for them to stand and continue to appreciate their night.

And Taehyung, who just wants to get a hold of Gayoung for two minutes before leaving, is growing restless.

“How are you feeling?” Taehyung asks, leaning in Jimin’s space. He noticed how fidgety he was getting, scrolling on his phone for the past thirty minutes and cheeks flushed despite his calm expression.

They’ve been waiting, the three of them around a tall, round pub table, for the crowd to dissipate. They’ve been through a drink, and they’re well into another now. Yet only a few courageous, or curious, persons came around for a bit of a conversation. They never acknowledged Jimin with
something other than their eyes though. It was mostly for Yoongi, and when they came for Taehyung, he deflected them towards Yoongi as well.

Surely the awkwardness of this whole thing is becoming difficult for Jimin to bear.

And while Taehyung is feeling bad for having them linger here, he’s also thankful for the extra time he has to just, stare at them and at how hot they look, dressed up and half blasé.

“I’m chill, why?”

“Good,” he smiles, keeping himself close, so that he knows Jimin can feel his breathing fanning over his neck.

“Why?”

“Cause I intend to fuck you out of that suit the moment we get back.”

Jimin’s lips melt into a grin and he shakes his head, disbelieving.

“Fuck off,” he whispers, feigning interest in his Twitter feed.

Taehyung thinks it’s amazing how Jimin has so little to do to make his head spin with want. With a quick glance, he takes in their surroundings, gauging how long they still have to endure this stupid music and those fake laughs, and how many gazes, if any, are riveted on them.

“The trousers just down your thighs at first and I’d bend you—I don’t know. Over the table maybe? The counter?”

He sees Jimin’s chest stutter weirdly, fingers clamping around his phone before he shrugs.

“Sure, yeah, whatever.”

“And I’d leave the bowtie on you, because—Actually you know what? I think I’d tie—“

“Fucking—“ he firmly nudges his elbow in Taehyung’s stomach. “Stop that.”

Taehyung bites his lip. It's not much but for now, it's satisfying.

“I wanna kiss you,” he continues, making himself barely audible.

They’ve been fairly tame since they got here. Not that Taehyung particularly cares if anyone labels them to be together, but he knows Jimin does. So they’ve been acting on the edge of platonic for the whole of three hours now, and he’s itching to feel them. To touch them. Make up for the times he got slammed in the past two days, and for the ones to come.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Really bad.”

“That’ll have to wait, sir.”

Taehyung chuckles darkly.

“You’re not helping your case, calling me like that.” Jimin hums a dismissive sound, shifting on his feet. Taehyung loves seeing him like that.
He lifts his glass to his mouth, takes a hefty sip and as he puts it down, meets Yoongi’s eyes. Shines in them something fiery and hot that he gladly returns. He doesn’t think that he’s heard what he’s been saying with Jimin, but surely he sensed their mood shifting and flaring up, and wordlessly followed them in the fall.

“Jiminie,” he holds Yoongi’s eyes, lust scrabbling up his belly.

“Stop threatening my sanity and go find your father’s girlfriend so we can leave. She just went out the back door.”

“Oh,” Taehyung’s thoughts shatters and he perks up, studying the whole place. There’s still a heap gravitating towards the front, assumingly for her. “Where?”

“The arch right there,” Jimin gestures to it until Taehyung spots it. “There’s a door behind the curtain.”

“Why the hell would she leave in the middle of — I’ll be back. Don’t move from here.”

Yoongi huffs a laugh.

“Where d’you want us to go?”

Taehyung mutters a right as he passes by them, slithering amongst bodies until he can slip behind the thick piece of fabric. It’s an emergency exit, just like he expected. But no alarm went off, like it was planned for her to want out.

He lands in an alleyway, humid and darkening with the sunset. He can hear cars passing not too far, impatient honks and tired motors, so he figures there must be an opening to reach the street.

But he doesn’t have to make it there.

“Taehyung?” a thin voice sings.

He whips his head back and his gaze falls into hers.

Gayoung with her long gown, white, too white in the dirty shadow she’s standing in. And after a beat he notices it, the orange light that shines near her fingers.

He smiles.

“You came out to smoke? Really? In the middle of the congratulatory part?”

“Addictions,” is all she says, offering him a very narrow and thin envelope in which are carefully placed three sticks.

He takes one.

“You sure it’s only that?”

He lets her light his cigarette, hanging through her smoke-filled exhale for the answer.

“It’s not,” she breathes, her tone dipping in sadder vibrations. “I’m second-guessing.”

“You could have run,” he says, humourless.

“That’s not how it works, Taehyung.”
“That’s exactly how it works. If something scares the shit outta you, you can just run.”

She keeps mum for a moment, her gaze trailing the walls around them.

She looks so delicate, with soft curls purposefully loosened out from her updo, with colour feathered around her eyes and that tiara glimmering even in dimmer light. It clashes harshly with how she keeps her arms crossed over her chest and that cigarette held steady in between her slim fingers.

Something tells Taehyung that this, the ceremony and the dress, that day that’s so overdone, it’s not really her. And that maybe she’s realizing it.

“I love him.”

It’s sad.

It’s the same story that happened 20 years ago. Repeating itself.

Taehyung bites his teeth. He breathes, in, out. Sadness and anger, they make the deadliest of mixes in the hollow of his ribcage.

“Do you?”

“I won’t allow you to doubt it.”

Taehyung wishes there was at least a little more conviction in her voice.

“Do you love him? Or do you love the man he was when you met him? Because I can tell you right now, if you want, which one he truly is.”

He sees her close her eyes, he sees her brows knit together too tightly for a day that was supposed to be her most beautiful one.

Unforgettable.

She turns, towards the wall of the building and away from him, takes a step or two. But she doesn’t mean to go anywhere. She’s just trying to hide that she’s tearing up.

Taehyung isn’t sure what’s making him ache the most. Gayoung crying on her fucking wedding day, or how she looks exactly like his own mother when she was fighting to find a reason to stay.

Sometimes he wonders what life would have been if he hadn’t cut her out of his life.

“Listen,” he takes a drag, weighs his words. Even if it doesn’t really matter anymore. He does it for her. “I can’t tell you that I know how you feel. But I can tell you this.” She turns her head to the side, a way to show that she’s listening. “Don’t— Don’t be scared to leave. If you’re not treated the way you deserve to be treated, just dump his ass. No matter what you built together, your projects, what he promised you or what he says you owe him, get out of there if you need to. You’re not going to be less of a person without him, contrary to what he might like to tell you. You don’t owe him your mental health and your wellbeing.”

He pauses, lets everything hang in the dense air of the alley.

Between his own ribs, it's becoming messy. He wants to comfort her, soothe her broken heart, but just as much, he wants to scream, get off his chest these memories that got mangled over the years.

His father neglecting his mother’s presence. Time and time again.
Her gentle hand in his short hair when he was a kid and that he’d nap with his head in her lap. The warmth with which she’d reassure him when he’d wake up crying from a nightmare.

The light of the sun looking dead on her skin when she’d stare out the window of the living room for hours.

The songs she’d sing to herself in the shower, thinking Taehyung couldn’t hear when he was just outside the door and listening.

The discordant music of her bottles of pills when she, in the morning, would take them all one after the other. Five. He remembers.

The sound of her sobs, when she was pulled outside of the house by her own mother and her brother.

The phone ringing too loud, too often, in the house, echoing against every wall. His father cursing at it, picking up to drown her in insults that made Taehyung cry, perched on top of the stairs, Yoongi’s tiny hand in his.

Her car that Taehyung would avoid when it was parked in front of his school.

Waiting for him.

He never went.

He just ignored it until it stopped being there.

And then months ago, her worried voice on the other side of the line, when he was bedridden and feeling too weak and shattered from Yoongi’s desertion to reject her.

It’s all distorted, playing in hues of red or sepia, in Taehyung’s mind.

“Always remember who you are and what you’re worth, and don’t let him kill that.” He pulls on his cigarette one last time, smoke filling his lungs and making him feel full, before he throws it to the ground, finding no bin around. He steps on it. “I still want to see your photos.” And as he pulls the door open, readying himself to confront what’s inside again, he glances at her over his shoulder. “You know where to find me if you need anything.”

Tense.

His whole frame is tense as he navigates the room. Fists tight, jaw clenched.

The guests have dispersed again, some seem to be leaving already.

“Let’s go,” he tells Yoongi and Jimin once he’s made it to them.

Jimin looks at him, expression concerned.

“You okay?”

“Yeah.”
He’s not.

They move to the main entry in a hurried, domineering pace, his brain only focused on how to get there and on Jimin and Yoongi’s presence behind him. Everything else, shut off.

His suit is starting to feel wrong on his body, limbs heavy and thoughts in a fog and he’ll need to find a way to subdue this loathing he has inside, bubbling up to be something worse.

“Taehyung.”

He stops in his tracks. He doesn’t know if he should laugh or cry.

Of course he’d get stopped when he’s so close to fucking exiting the place. Of course his father would do that.

“Go,” he tells Yoongi and Jimin. “Go and I’ll find you.”

They walk past him without a word, and Taehyung keeps his eyes on them until the tall doors close behind them. Even then, he remains unmoving, gaze lost in the space between two women leisurely talking.

“What was Park doing here?”

The sentence is, in structure, relatively polite. But the tone used, low and hissing disgust, is what has him wired up. He can’t stay here, he can’t have that conversation for too long. He’s pulled too taut.

“He’s the date you wanted me to bring, dad.”

He lowers his volume, cautious of the sea of bodies they’re in.

“You’re not seeing a man, Taehyung.”

“Oh, I’m not just seeing Jimin. Do you wanna know what else I do with him?”

Taehyung takes his eyes to his father’s, finds them in little, annoyed slits.

“Keep your mouth shut. You’re embarrassing.”

“Good. Remember what I said about keeping your nose out of my ass?”

“You’re treading on thin ice, son.” He smiles, and Taehyung despises it. He still has the nerves to pretend that they’re having a good relationship. Appearances. That’s what his father is made of. "Be careful with that potty mouth of yours. I don’t want that rat near you ever again. Do you hear me?”

“And if I don’t listen?”

“I won’t support your deranged behaviour any longer." Taehyung laughs at this, crystalline, dripping hate. “I’ll cut everything off from you and you know I can.”

And sharing the same poisoned grin, Taehyung moves until he’s staring right back at him, too close for comfort.

“Do it then. Stop barking and fucking do it, dad.”
Yoongi’s chest stutters, his air trembles out.

He lets his eyelids fall shut, fingers deep in the flesh of Jimin’s thigh. It’s so warm, his own skin, Jimin’s skin, Taehyung’s hands on his hips, it’s burning and addicting, too much and not enough.

“Bend,” Taehyung growls behind him.

Yoongi swallows and obeys, Taehyung’s order itching at him in that way he still can’t really identify. He shifts, fits himself further between Jimin’s legs where he’s lying on his back on the kitchen’s table. He leans forward, balancing his weight. Yoongi welcomes Jimin’s small fingers as they splay on his chest, meets his hazy eyes. He’s is beautiful. Flushed and sweaty and patient, malleable. Quiet. Perhaps he can feel it, too. What’s going on.

Taehyung’s cock nudges at his hole and Yoongi holds his breath, hips involuntarily curling, driving his own cock deeper into Jimin and ripping a moan out of him.

“More than that,” Taehyung pushes on his back and Yoongi falls onto Jimin’s body with a strangled whine.

His skin erupts in goosebumps, then buzzes with warmth. Mixed embarrassment and arousal. His feet are kicked a little wider and he drops his forehead against Jimin’s chest, feels his rushed heartbeat.

Taehyung’s rough. The way he talks, how he touches them, the words he uses. And it’s not that Yoongi doesn’t like it, because he does. It’s just that it’s different. It feels different. There’s something unsaid floating between them, something that tastes a little off. But he's too caught up in his pleasure, in the sensation of Jimin gently tugging at his hair, in the vibration he feels through his ribs whenever Jimin moans in the back of his throat.

There’s something that’s out of place but he’s too overwhelmed to grasp at it and say anything.

Taehyung pushes his cock in, slow but steady. Wanting and possessive.

And Yoongi kills any sound he could be making with lips pressed tight against Jimin’s flesh.

This, along with the clenching of his heart.

Yoongi leaves the bathroom, uncomfortable with the fresher air that meets his bare torso, but even more with the wall of lethargy he reaches the moment he steps in the hallway.

Taehyung was already outside when Jimin and Yoongi went to shower. He was still there when Jimin went back to the bedroom, and he doubts he’ll be in now. Taehyung is on the balcony and smoking, closed off. Frigid.

Jimin is sitting on the edge of the bed and looking out the window, when Yoongi goes to find him. He's as silent as Taehyung is, bearing the same ache, Yoongi knows. Just in another way. Just processed differently. He's shrouded in darkness, with only a sliver of light coming from outside
that's kissing his silhouette, drawing it in the purest of ways.

“We’re losing him,” Jimin says. It’s merely above a murmur. Maybe something he’s telling himself. But it pierces through Yoongi like a blade. “I don’t know what to do, hyung, but we’re losing him.”

Yoongi stays the night. Because even if he is trembling inside with the urge to flee this discomfort, he just knows he can’t leave. Not after all of this.

So he holds Jimin’s hand until he falls asleep, listens to Taehyung’s breathing until it’s stable and deep.

But he, for the whole night, never gets pulled in.
Yoongi sets his jaw when he sees the messages, pays whatever he grabbed for them at the grocery store and feels too off to even try and fake a smile at the young cashier.

He still has to drop by his house before he returns, to get a few papers he has to work on before the following day. Then maybe, he could go back.

**You**: don’t blame yourself
14-08-2016, 11:16

**You**: did he say where he was going
14-08-2016, 11:16

**Jimin**: no
14-08-2016, 11:21

**Jimin**: and he didn’t say when he’s gonna be back either
14-08-2016, 11:21

**Jimin**: i just don’t know what to do anymore
14-08-2016, 11:22
Jimin: you felt it, right?
14-08-2016, 11:27

Jimin: how he was with us when we came back yesterday
14-08-2016, 11:27

He reads this, stalls before the front door.

Of course he remembers. Obviously.

There’s no way he can forget that fucking confusion between arousal and discomfort that kept running him over breath after breath.

No way he can forget the touch of Taehyung’s hands, one that’s supposed to be viscerally familiar but that felt so foreign at that moment.

The three of them broke, last night. Taehyung atop of him. Jimin under. And him in the middle. A fragile architecture collapsing on itself.

Something happened at the wedding. No one needed to be told. But Taehyung grew that sphere around himself, opaque and dense, and he’s hiding within. Unattainable. They’re at the crossover. It fell onto them faster and more violently than Yoongi thought it would, but it’s here. And there’s no use in trying to avoid it.

He gets in, quiet.

You: you know i did
14-08-2016, 11:43

“Yoongi?”

His lips pull up, in spite of himself.

“Yeah, mom.”

Her padding comes his way, quick, light, and the hug he lets himself being wrapped in is soothing. They did see each other the day before, briefly talked but nothing more than that, because weddings move slow, but they move faster than it seems and they didn’t have time for something other than a few words. And Yoongi’s been away a lot. He’s aware.

She asks questions about Jimin, with a motherly kind of curiosity. Why he was there, what he really is, to Taehyung. Yoongi can tell she’s guessed more than she lets on, and he tells the truth. Mostly. Gently. In a way that won’t satisfy or allow her to draw any clear conclusion.

Especially now, Taehyung and Jimin, and him, they don’t need the labels or the noise.
Jimin: what am i supposed to do
14-08-2016, 11:44

Jimin: do i leave?
14-08-2016, 11:45

Jimin: maybe he just wants to be on his own for a while
14-08-2016, 11:45

You: you’re better with those things than i am, jimin-ah
14-08-2016, 11:59

Jimin: im not, i just go with my feeling
14-08-2016, 12:01

You: that’s what i’m saying
14-08-2016, 12:01

Jimin: im worried about uni
14-08-2016, 12:02

Jimin: its starting tomorrow
14-08-2016, 12:02

Jimin: and im scared that he’ll let himself spiral down
14-08-2016, 12:02

Jimin: because he hates it
14-08-2016, 12:03

Yoongi can’t help but huff out a laugh, alone in his father’s office.

That’s exactly what he did, over two years ago. Willingly ruin his education. Hating what he was forced into so much that even writing a paper made him stiff with anger, walking the corridors of the university wearing the dead version of himself over his own skin.
Jimin still isn't done with what he's saying, so meanwhile, Yoongi opens the filing cabinet to retrieve what he came here for in the first place.

He feels stupid, sometimes. Often. He wanted to avoid this company so badly just a few handfuls of months ago, loathed the lifestyle and the twisted values of this world with loaded fervour. But no matter how hard he resisted and what he sacrificed, the quicksand still managed to swallow him.

Jimin: i think itd be amazing for him to drop that major
14-08-2016, 12:03

Jimin: fucking honestly
14-08-2016, 12:04

Jimin: but he was reticent to do it
14-08-2016, 12:04

Jimin: and now im worried hes gonna do it the wrong way
14-08-2016, 12:05

*There’s no good or wrong way to escape something that’s torturing you, Yoongi thinks. You just need to do it.*

He takes the manila folders he needs, slips them under his arm a little carelessly so he can type an answer.

Jimin: i dont wanna leave hyung
14-08-2016, 12:05

Jimin: i dont understand whats going on but i want to help
14-08-2016, 12:06

Jimin: i love him
14-08-2016, 12:06

Yoongi’s own sadness pinches at his heart when he reads this. He stares at his screen. It’s a little surreal, how fast things turned.

You: i know you do
I do, too.

Jimin: i don't want to give this up
14-08-2016, 12:07

Jimin: im not ready for that
14-08-2016, 12:07

You: i know
14-08-2016, 12:07

You: get ready
14-08-2016, 12:08

He doesn’t linger unnecessarily after that. He packs a few pieces of clothing, thinking well. He
doesn’t know if they’ll be of any use.

He goes to the living room, kisses his mother on the cheek with a promise to come back soon, but
isn’t sure if he'll be able to honour his words.

Yoongi is aware he’s away a lot. But his parents aren’t asking much about it. He’s aware of that as
well.

“Work well,” she tells him with a smile, and Yoongi realizes that ultimately, it’s what truly matters to
them. He weakly smiles back.

Exiting the living room, he observes that sensation inside of him, the relief he’s filled with when he
thinks of the way her drinking habits have softened, and how better she seems to be. How both his
parents are changing and getting closer like they should have already been for years.

It’s just a pity that they had to leave a graveyard of memories behind them to do so.

Jimin: what for
14-08-2016, 12:08

Jimin: ?
14-08-2016, 12:10
He takes place behind the wheel, the keys of his Cadillac loose in his hand, and he throws the folders on the passenger side.

You: i got what i needed here
14-08-2016, 12:16

You: so i’ll come pick you p
14-08-2016, 12:16

You: up
14-08-2016, 12:16

You: and we’ll go somewhere
14-08-2016, 12:17

Jumin: for a change of scenery
14-08-2016, 12:18

You: for a change of scenery yes
14-08-2016, 12:18

Jumin: i need to feed the littles
14-08-2016, 12:18

Jumin: i’ll be waiting for you outside
14-08-2016, 12:18

For a couple of hours, Yoongi and Jimin play pretend.

They sip on their cold-brewed coffee and iced cappuccinos, and they act like nothing’s wrong. Like nothing is crumbling under their fingers, or that the silence that reigns between them when they’re alone isn’t painful enough to suffocate them.
They’re not a couple. There’s no real couple between the three of them. But for now, as they talk with Hoseok and Seokjin, they feel better when they act like they are. It fills a gap. Allows them to momentarily shrug off the awkwardness of their situation.

But the moment they will be out of here and alone, it will all fade.

Hoseok notices.

He keeps glancing between Yoongi and Jimin for the whole time they talk with Seokjin about the wedding, and Yoongi tries to ignore it.

"I feel really bad for not being able to attend," Seokjin says. He sounds genuine. He got invited as a friend of the family but had to decline because of obligations out of the city.

“I don’t think you missed much, hyung,” Jimin tells him, mindlessly playing with his emptied plastic cup.

“Hyung,” Hoseok’s whispering voice pulls at him and Yoongi looks up.

He stares at Hoseok with a questioning gaze, that he’s returned. He reads in there some sort of concern. He shakes his head.

Hoseok lets it slide when silence takes over the table, not wanting to attract attention. Yoongi shouldn’t be so relieved, but he is.

He wouldn’t know how to tell him.

Δ

It’s all a little grey. Or at least that’s how Jimin feels.

His surroundings, the conversations, it all feels a little hollow. There’s nothing inherently different, he knows. The whole world hasn’t changed just because Taehyung has flipped inside-out. But the confusion, the longing and the melancholy lacing Jimin's thoughts is what's twisting every detail.

“I’ll go get another one of these,” he says as he stands a bit abruptly, gesturing to his empty cup. He’ll buy and probably won’t even drink it. He’s starting to feel nauseous. “Anyone wants anything?” He turns to Hoseok. “Hyung?”

He’s noticed Yoongi and Hoseok’s silent conversation, their glances and their tiptoeing around each other. And Jimin normally wouldn't care, but today it makes his teeth grit. He won't be able to play for much longer. He's never been good at pretending.

They all decline his offer. Too politely. Seokjin seems to sense the discomfort.

“Hyung,” Jimin leans on the counter, trying to get Namjoon’s attention. “Hyung,”

"Yeah?” Namjoon looks at him over his shoulder, hand frozen on the bottle of syrup he's emptying in a smaller one.
“I’d take another one like this,” he says, not quite remembering everything Namjoon put into it. “It was pretty good?”

Namjoon grins, brings his focus back to his task.

“Give me one sec, I’ll start it up for you.”

Jimin watches him move around, deft but with a hint of clumsiness here and there. He’s definitely gotten better in the past months. He remembers the mess he would make just to serve a latte and how that would make Seokjin’ smile so fond.

“Hyung,” he hands Namjoon his card when his beverage is standing pretty on the counter, looking delicious even under the layer of nausea.

“Mhm?”

"Taehyung—" He hesitates. Namjoon is the only one who knows their relationship is slewing and with whom it's fine to talk about it. Yet he's still hesitating. "He—"

“I asked around a bit when you texted me the other night,” he rips the receipt from the printer, slips it down next to the cup. “Not many have seen him. And the ones who did aren’t really commendable people.”

“What d’you mean?”

Namjoon’s eyes flicker over his shoulder and Jimin feels someone approaching behind him. His stomach turns with anxiety.

“Let’s talk later, yeah? I’ll text you tonight and you can come back here, it's a deserted place when it gets past eight anyway. We'll talk then.”

Jimin nods with an absent mind and gets away with his thoughts in a whirlwind.


He flushes, flashes an embarrassed smile to the lady who’s still waiting behind him.

Yoongi’s gaze is trained on him for the whole way back to the table. His cup is wet with condensation, cold in a way that makes Jimin even more uncomfortable.

As expected he won’t be drinking it.

Δ

For the whole trip back, Yoongi is floundering in his own poisonous thoughts. He can sense that Jimin is, too. He’s quiet and leaned against the window, seatbelt forgotten.

It's beautiful, outside. Late summer colours, early sunset, clear sky. But Yoongi's eyes don't see it. His hands are firm on the wheel, his mind is somewhere else.

He recognizes the way he feels as the same emptiness he was full of when he was in New York. The same loss scorching at him, making him stressed and forcing his brain to scrutinize every event to
find flaws, grasping at any hope of solution.

“Jimin-ah,” he tries, resting a palm above Jimin’s knee. “What did Namjoon tell you that you made you weird like that?”

Anything is better than this silence.

“I don’t know, what did Hoseok hyung tell you to suck up your attention like that?”

“To s—what?”

“No one was fucking blind around that table, hyung. We noticed how secretive you two were being.”

“We weren’t being secretive for fuck’s sake, we were just—“

“Something between the two of you, right?”

“Don’t break us, Jimin.”

“I’m not breaking us, what the fu—“

“I’m serious. We’re all we have to keep this ship afloat.” Jimin sighs long and exhausted next to him. “Hoseok’s just worried. We weren’t trying to keep you out of it, it was me trying to avoid the topic altogether.”

Jimin doesn’t say anything. He breathes even and oozes a kind of tension that Yoongi can relate to, but he doesn’t speak. He just lets his hand meet Yoongi’s on his own thigh when a while has passed.

It’s funny how after five months, they’re still as fragile as a house of cards. One down and it all collapses. Then again, there wasn’t much else to be expected.

The three of them, from the start, were each other’s crutches.
Caitlyn texts him shortly after they're back to Taehyung's apartment. He takes the time to answer properly, because he swore to himself that he would be there for her. But it feels like too much.

Taehyung replies to two or three of his messages but goes quiet as soon as Yoongi asks when he’s going to be back.

Jimin and he eat on the balcony and it feels stupid. Overwhelmingly foreign. Like they're borrowing someone's place and trying to live a normal life in it.

“I’ll have to go home to get some stuff for tomorrow,” Jimin says, the evening wind stealing the smoke from his cigarette.

His head is tilted against Yoongi's shoulder, his body pressed close and Yoongi is welcoming in the way he holds him. It's the sole thing he seems to be doing right.

“You’ll come back after?” he takes the stick from Jimin’s fingers when it’s offered to him.

“Where am I supposed to be going?”

Jimin is becoming as easy to light up as Taehyung is.

“Why are you being like that?”

“I’m frustrated.”

“Yeah well there’s no need to piss on me because of that, I’m as frustrated as you are.” Jimin scoffs and stands, his next comment very obviously swallowed back. “Jimin,”

Whatever dishes they used is picked up, the door is slid open, letting Tuxedo out.

“Jimin,”

“What?”

“Come here,” Yoongi tilts his chin up, asking for his lips.

Jimin's eyelids fall shut, his chest heaves around a cleansing breath. He humours him, crouches and kisses him, very lightly. And it's fine, Yoongi thinks. The softness, the feeling is still there.

“I’m at a loss of what to do and I hate it,” he murmurs in the thin space between them. “I don’t understand what I did, hyung, it’s just—"
“Don’t take it all on you. We’ll talk. We’ll wait for him tonight and we’ll talk.”

“I’ll try and be quick,” is all he says, tone dull, before he straightens and gets inside.

Jimin only remembers he was supposed to drop by the café when he’s in his Audi and cursing about how he dropped his phone in the small set of concrete stairs when he came out of the house. Now the whole screen is shattered in tiny little webs. He can’t see shit, can’t do shit on it. So he just shuts it off.

Then he figures, when he glances at the digital clock in his dash, that now could be a good time to go.

Seokseok: hyung
14-08-2016, 20:23
Seokseok: can we talk?
14-08-2016, 20:24
Seokseok: theres no one here and we’re still open for over an hour
14-08-2016, 20:24
Seokseok: drop by if you wanna?
14-08-2016, 20:24

Yoongi looks at the messages for a while and ponders.

Maybe opening up to someone about what's going on would loosen those imaginary hands he's got rolled around his neck. Maybe it'd help with the clouds and the lack of light even when he's got his eyes open. Maybe just, getting out of this situation and be by himself for a moment, perusing new vinyl like he hasn't done in so long, maybe taking a few steps back would help going forward.

You: yeah okay
14-08-2016, 20:29
He opens his chatroom with Jimin.

**You:** hoseok asked me to talk
14-08-2016, 20:29

**You:** ill be at the disc shop for a little while
14-08-2016, 20:30

**You:** tell me when you get home?
14-08-2016, 20:30

Δ

Namjoon tells him about the sparse people frequenting the refinery, at night.

“Some of them are perfectly fine,” he says, “and some others aren’t.”

Jimin helps him clean around as they converse, as to not fidget as much. He realigns the tables that have been moved, does the same with the chairs. One after the other, like an easy puzzle.

Namjoon talks about that particular section, isolated and well hidden, where things aren’t as peaceful.

“They mostly buy coke and methamphetamine,” he adds with a hushed voice, fiddling with the coffee grinder, and it sounds cold, pragmatic. Jimin shivers. “That’s the people Taehyung hung out with.” Jimin momentarily stills, a freshly cleaned glass in his hand. “Only once, apparently. But that was the day I asked, so I don’t know if he did since then.”

He empties the dishwasher, placing glasses and cups in perfect lines. He can feel Namjoon's stare on him, on his back, studying his response and working with it. Namjoon is good with people.

“Jimin-ah,”

But he perhaps can't fully understand Jimin's reaction. His silence, his sadness. Taehyung usually isn't like this. Jimin knows he'd rather spend time on his own, that he's not too fond of superficial connections with others. Much like Yoongi. So what Namjoon is telling him, it already means a lot on its own.

Jimin doesn’t notice when Seokjin and Jungkook come in. He just lifts his eyes when he hears Namjoon locking the front door of the café, and they’re there, sharing with each other things Jimin can’t hear. He bristles.

He feels lied to all the damn time.

“Him being there doesn’t mean that he’s into their stuff,” Namjoon picks up with a lowered voice when he gets behind the counter again. “So don’t overthink it.”
“It’s a little hard not to, hyung. I mean, have you ever hung out with those people?”

“Actually, yeah, I did,” he throws Seokjin and Jungkook a glance, then refocuses on the two Matchas he’s whisking. “Someone I saw for a while was friends with some of them. I stayed clean. They offered and I refused and they didn’t push me or anything.”

That doesn’t make him feel any better. Namjoon and Taehyung, the strength in their personalities, and their convictions, they’re very different. He reaches for his phone in his back pocket, wanting to write about this to Yoongi, and it’s with a thumb catching in a rough crack in the screen that he’s reminded that he might as well throw it in the nearest trashcan.

“It used to be such a calm and soothing place to be. I’m not too sure what happened,” Namjoon mutters to himself before he turns to Jimin.

He plucks him out of where he’s rearranging the pastries and brings him to sit to the two-person table that's closest to the counter. Jimin looks over his shoulder, finds the other two unperturbed, discussing something that has both their expression turn into something serious.

“You know,” Namjoon rests the cups in front of them, takes place across from him. Jimin smiles, thin and bittersweet. He assumed those were for Seokjin and Jungkook. “Most times Taehyung did come to me, it was to talk. Like, really talk. About things that were on his mind, or sort of asking for advice but not really? He did that a good couple of times.”

“Why does he talk to you but not to us?” Frustration bleeds through his tone, hardly reigned in.

“Because it’s you he needs to talk about, Jimin-ah. Maybe he thinks that I don’t know, but I know.” Namjoon’s expression is almost fond now, gentle and tired. Jimin rolls a hand around the ceramic cup, wants for its warmth reach him.

"That doesn't make me feel better, hyung."

“I’m not trying to make you feel bad or anything, I’m just telling you that he cares. Whatever he’s doing right now, I know it’s throwing you and Yoongi hyung off, but just know that he cares, and that he always did.”

Δ

Taehyung is about to pass out. He took the stairs tonight. For the whole of the 13 floors. Just for some added torture.

He’s on his back, the whole place spinning, heart in his throat and low in his gut at the same time, pathetically sprawled before the door that gives on his floor.

Not much more to go, he thinks, but he just can’t make it.

He didn’t have to drink a lot. Maybe half of what he normally needs. But he’s not eating as much and he’s not sleeping as much and it makes things easier.

He welcomes that voice that whistles to him, when it comes. It still screams at him, forces his thoughts to venture in dark places, but it’s fine. He’s getting used to it.
He’s pretty sure he’s blacked out once or twice, and he can’t even remember how he’s made it from the refinery to here. Someone probably took pity on him and got him sent here. After all, Taehyung is starting to pick up fights with them a lot, asking for that adrenaline buzz he’s missing from the times he sold stuff with Namjoon. And they’re surely getting tired of him as well.

Like everyone is.

After a while he crawls along the floor, hoping with half a mind that no neighbour finds him like this. He manages to stand, and he leans on the door, manages to unlock it.

There’s no one.

Save for Tuxedo’s bell, there isn’t a sound. The lights are off. The place feels cold.

He’s alone.

He shouldn’t be this surprised.

That’s what he wanted. That’s what he meant to happen.

*Keep them away. It’s safer.*

He ends up spilling everything out.

Hoseok just stands there and listens, like he always so wonderfully does. He nods minutely, adds a thing or two, seeks to understand.

Then they talk. He coaxes Yoongi into seeing things differently, he helps him understand Jimin just a bit better. It works, for a while. Then the rest is just oil thrown into water.

Hoseok shuts the lights of the store off and Yoongi peeks at this phone, frowns at the absence of message.

“I was surprised you didn’t bring him,” Hoseok says, and Yoongi knows he’s referring to Jimin. “I texted him at the same time as I texted you but he didn’t answer, so I thought he was with you.”

“He didn’t answer?”

“Nope.”

“Fuck. His phone is probably dead or something. I should probably get going.”

“Sure, yeah.” And for the first time in their short relationship, Hoseok hugs him. It’s brief, slightly awkward and graceless, but affectionate enough for Yoongi to feel and accept it. “Take care, mhm? Of them but also of yourself. You need forgiveness too.”

That last sentence gets stuck with him, quickly takes the form of a lump clogging his throat.
He gets a call, on the way home. His Bluetooth interrupts his music and he startles, lost in thought.

*Caitlyn*, the caller ID reads.

He sighs, musters some patience, and answers. Because her calling gives him a weird impression.

"Hey, Cait."

"Hey."

"You okay?"

“I’m good, yeah. I’ve been getting rest in this cottage where they won’t find me before a while, so it’s all well.”

“I’m glad to hear that.”

“To be honest, I was calling for you.”

“For me?”

“Yeah. You seemed off when we texted earlier so I thought I’d catch up a little.”

Yoongi remains in a confused silence for a moment, until she calls him up on it.

He blabbers about things, about the company and the projects that have been set in motion, then they drift onto the topic of the baby, and how her pregnancy is going. There’s the subtlest hint of happiness in each of her sentences, and it comforts him in a strange, alien way. She asks about the boyfriends and he stiffens, dodges the whole thing altogether and she can probably feel it, but doesn’t poke at it.

He stays parked in front of the building until they’re done with their conversation, still filled with guilt about what happened with her and unwilling to rub it in Jimin’s or Taehyung’s face.

It smoothly gets to the usual conversation closers and he’s lighter, but also relieved to end this. It never gets easier to reconnect with that part of him that was in New York.

“And Yoongi,” she says just before they hang up, “you left everything that you had here for him, so don’t let him go.”

His heart clenches, his eyes scrunch closed and his head lolls against the headrest.

“Promise me.”

“I won’t let him go,” he croaks.

“Good. Take care, now.”

“You too.”

And the call is cut.

He finds Jimin sitting on the bed next to Taehyung’s sleeping form, a laptop in his lap.
“I blew up my phone,” Jimin says, tone apologetic. “I’m sorry if you texted me, I couldn’t see shit.”

“It’s okay,” he leans in, kisses him, pours in there as much affection as he can.

“Where were you? You sound rough?”

“I’m fine. I was with Hoseok.”

Jimin squints.

“Okay?”

Yoongi shakes his head. He doesn’t want to talk anymore. He just wants to bathe in quietude, hold Jimin and hold Taehyung and just be here, keep very very still.

For a long time.

“He was already sleeping when I got here,” Jimin informs him when he notices how Yoongi is staring at Taehyung. “Sleeping or passed out, I’m not sure. He’s drunk.”

“We missed our chance.”

“Yeah,” Jimin’s eyes dart away, they fixate out the room and into the corridor. “There’s things I need to tell you about.”

“In the shower. Tell me then.”

Yoongi couldn’t work on these papers he went to fetch in his father’s office. They will be turned in late.

But it doesn’t matter anymore. This fucking company is what killed them.
M

Jimin wakes alone. Which rarely ever happens, because he sleeps so lightly, and he's so easily disturbed that even the most cautious of movements will rouse him.

He twists, looks at the clock on the nightstand. Almost nine. Yoongi already left for work, so that can only mean that the soft rustling in the apartment is from Taehyung.

"Come with me get a new phone," he splutters the moment he enters the kitchen, still groggy but feeling the need to grasp at Taehyung while he can. "I dropped it last night and the screen's done."

He gets nothing for about a minute, or at least sufficiently long to start feeling ridiculous. Taehyung pours coffee into Jimin's favourite bowl, adds the three spoons of sugar he knows he likes, then the creamer. Stirs.

"Sure, yeah," he says as he puts it on the island, expecting Jimin to take place there.

Taehyung doesn't look sick, even with how much he smelled of alcohol the previous night. But he does look tired. Fucking exhausted. And the bags under his eyes, the dullness of his skin, they're only the superficial part of it. Jimin sits. Enters a minefield.

"My class is scheduled at one and yours at three, right?" Taehyung nods, turns his back to him and grabs himself a cup. "So we could go before? You're better with phones anyway."

"I was surprised when I woke up," he cuts, confusing Jimin.

"Why?"

"Because you and hyung were there."

He doesn't know how to interpret Taehyung’s tone. If he’s upset about it, or if he’s trying to say something else using badly chosen words. Jimin lifts his coffee to his lips, takes a large swallow of warm liquid.

"Of course we'd be there."

Because Taehyung talks like he’s not the one avoiding and deserting them every fucking day.

It goes well. Surprisingly so. If Jimin was hopelessly naïve, he’d say that it almost feels like the first times they were together. They look for clothes here and there, they grab lunch, they get Jimin a new, more performant phone.

They even hold hands, once or twice. And it feels good, Taehyung bigger hands around his smaller one. But it also feels wrong. Doing this is like pretending there’s nothing going on and like they
shouldn’t just sit and have a serious conversation.

But Jimin lets it happen, because it lets him hope a little more.

And then just before they leave the mall, Taehyung receives a text that makes his eyes fog up. His fingers untangle from Jimin’s and he types something quick.

“What is it?” Jimin asks, after sucking in some iced lemonade through his straw.

“There’s a meeting next Monday. And I need to be there.”

“Oh.”

The first one since the wedding. The first one in a long time.

Things have been going on with Taehyung’s father but they haven’t really been told about it. Jimin struggles to find the words to support or comfort him.

And when he comes back from university, Taehyung isn’t there.

T

He leaves begrudgingly.

Yoongi is still comatose in the bed, more tired than usual.

And Taehyung came back in the middle of the night and he slept on the couch. Again.

Jimin closes the door and thinks of why he’s doing what he’s doing, attempts to get some motivation from the fact that he doesn’t dislike his major. That he doesn’t hate the prospect of taking over the family business. If he doesn’t recenter himself, Jimin might just stop going and focus on fixing them instead.

It’s gnawing at his from the inside, disassembling him piece by piece, and he just longs for the quietude of that semblance of peace they had before.

Once in his car, he grabs his phone, opens his chatroom with Taehyung and does this thing that’s taking him a little more courage every day.

You: lets hang out after my class is over?

16-08-2016, 7:32
Yoongi takes a shower that doesn’t make him feel any cleaner.

He puts his suit on, adjusts his cuffs, tightens his tie.

He gives waking up Taehyung a try, but when the younger stirs on the sofa, when his shirt rides up his stomach and that Yoongi sees the start of a bruise blossoming all across his waist, he shuts off.

Paralyzed, for a minute. Standing stupidly still in the living room.

He ponders if he should tell Jimin or not. Because this could be anything. It could be him missing a stair, it could be—it could be a lot of things.

You: i think tae got hurt
16-08-2016, 8:22

You: he’s bruised up and it looks bad
16-08-2016, 8:22

Yoongi just wants to run.

He wants to fucking take to his heels and escape how uncomfortable he’s feeling under his own skin. He wants to get somewhere where he’ll be able to breathe, where his lungs won’t be crushed and stepped on at any given moment and by any too-sharp assault of emotions.

But more than that, he wants to Jimin to feel good and Taehyung to be well. This, more than anything.

He doesn’t know how to deal with that. Loving Taehyung had always been so easy, so natural, that now he’s seeing him put himself ablaze and he can’t seem to move anymore.

He doesn’t know where to begin.

Jimin takes a while to answer, so instead Yoongi texts Seokjin, he texts Namjoon and Hoseok and even Jungkook, anything to keep his mind from wandering too much, and to clean the images of Taehyung’s marred skin from being his eyelids.

He scribbles on a pad. Anything and everything. Pretty words and bloody ones.

He loses a whole day of work like that, anxiously glancing at the pile of folders that's growing on his desk. But it doesn't matter anymore.

This fucking company is what is killing them.
He tiptoes around Taehyung like someone places featherweight steps on a barely frozen lake. He doesn't dare to touch him, he knows what he's hiding. Yoongi's message didn't surprise him in the slightest. *It could be anything though*, he said, but Jimin is not stupid.

They can't stay that way for long.

If Taehyung is like this because of his own person, or if he is like this because of him and Yoongi, Jimin doesn't know. But he doesn't want to try leaving to see if that's going to be of any help.

Taehyung meets with him in early afternoon, and in a light mood. He never declined when Jimin asked for them to spend time together, but he'll shy away from the apartment when he's not prompted to stay.

*It's the place, maybe*, Jimin thinks. *Amongst other things.*

The thought flutters in his mind for long. For the whole time he's with Taehyung and talking about this and that. There's no need for him to drive with him to school but he does it anyway.

Just for the modest kiss he's given.

Δ

Knife in between his ribs, a fire in his stomach, vines strangling his heart.

His eyes see grey and his lungs pump in copper, little pieces of metal that hurt his throat.

His head is spinning. Macabre carousel, but with the same bright lights above.

His side flares up again, his air leaves his body. He wonders how long they will keep kicking at him.

They only come sparsely now, the feet against his frame. Like some sort of badly orchestrated dance.

He closes his eyes and waits.

Taehyung wishes he could dance too.

Δ

W

Taehyung can't not know what he's doing. Surely he's too smart for that, too great an actor.

Usually, the white noise of the shower in the background is soothing, to Jimin. Helps him sleep just a tad longer or at least drift in and out until he really needs to get up.

Usually. Not this morning.
He rolls onto his side, looks out the window. He repositioned himself so that his head is where his feet should be, and it’s stupid, perhaps, but he feels better this way.

*You might want us to leave. Maybe you just want to end things but don’t know how to tell us so you make sure we get fed up and leave by ourselves.*

But if you don’t want of us anymore, there’s no reason for you to stay when we ask.

For a week now, he’s been trying to understand what Taehyung needs. Adjust himself to it. But he, apparently, doesn’t know him that well.

It’s 20 minutes before Taehyung leaves for university, and he needs to decide. He either confronts him, completely ruins his chances to see him home tonight, but in exchange might comprehend him a little more.

Or he finds whatever excuse he can summon for them to spend time together, and maybe, maybe manage to have him with them around the table for dinner.

He tears up.

After Youngjae, Jimin swore to himself and to Hoseok that he would always put himself first, wouldn’t allow anyone to step on him and use him. Break him. So he became someone who doesn’t beg. He holds on, he tries. Gives his best in most spheres of his life. But he doesn’t beg people to stay around if they want to leave so badly.

There's no need. People come, people go. He swore he wouldn't lose himself to anyone anymore.

But right now, as he looks out at the patches of silver sky, he feels too helpless to be angry about the way he’s slowly drifting.

The shower is turned off and Jimin puts a t-shirt on, the wind coming from the window a tribute to the approach of September. He wipes his eyes dry with the back of his hand. He’s trembling and scared, but his teeth are held tight together with resolution.

The bathroom door hasn’t been left ajar like Taehyung normally does since Jimin started living with him. But it’s unlocked. The sound of the fan kills any noise the door could be making but he gently opens it nonetheless, not wanting to be too harsh, and even before he can whisper anything at him, his eyes fall onto his back.

Bruises. Larger than Jimin’s fist and of violent reds and purples. Over his ribs, blanketing his waist. Worse than ecchymoses. Wounds.

And Jimin stalls there, mute and watching as Taehyung continue putting his clothes on without noticing him. He knew they were there, he shouldn’t be so shocked. He shouldn’t be so hurt.

His chest remains cramped around his heart for too long and before he cracks, Jimin slips out and blankly makes it to the kitchen, pours coffee into a cup and listlessly sits around the island.
“I’m off,” Taehyung’s hair is still wet and dripping on his hoodie, his bag slung over his shoulder.

Jimin looks at him as he fills his thermos with coffee. He's in this weird state of derealisation, like he's watching a movie instead of living his life.

Taehyung kisses the top of his head before he leaves and Jimin tries not to shiver.

He spends the rest of the morning with Hoseok. Because he can't stand the feeling of loneliness even when there's someone else in the room.

Hoseok probably senses that Jimin needs the distraction, so they don’t talk about it. They do the things they used to do before Yoongi and Taehyung, and it feels good. Just slipping out of that mood, pushing away those bruises from his own mind and just enjoy Hoseok’s company.

They're outside around the pool and sipping on a cold beverage, discussing the upcoming dance competition, when Jimin receives the first message.

**Namjoon hyung**: Jimin?
17-08-2016, 12:39

**You**: yeah?
17-08-2016, 12:39

“I think renting a bus would be uselessly expensive.” Hoseok tells him. He rakes a hand through his hair, his sunglasses momentarily reflecting the sun above them and Jimin squints. Hoseok never had money. Not in the way Jimin does, anyway. But he has this way of holding himself, those little habits that could fool anyone into thinking the contrary. “I mean, we’re not *that* many.”

“So we’d take our cars? You, me, Sejun, Shinwoo, if we take four kids each, should be fine?”

**Namjoon hyung**: University has started, right?
17-08-2016, 12:41

**You**: yeah! on monday
17-08-2016, 12:41
“Who’s that?”

“Namjoon hyung.”

"Ah. So yeah, in theory that should be fine, but I think that a two-hour ride with five people in a car might kill me."

“Then we’ll ask Jae too.”

“We could do that, yeah.”

**Namjoon hyung:** Taehyung has classes?

17-08-2016, 12:42

**You:** yep, hes in right now

17-08-2016, 12:42

**You:** why?

17-08-2016, 12:42

**Namjoon hyung:** Because I don’t think he’s going.

17-08-2016, 12:43

**Namjoon hyung:** I see him an awful lot for someone who has classes to attend.

17-08-2016, 12:43

Jimin zones out, Hoseok’s voice becoming a fuzzy murmur.

Of the time they spent together, Taehyung never once mentioned anything about the content of his classes or about any of his professors. Hasn’t complained about the students like Jimin knows he would do.

“Of fucking course he’s not going,” he spits.

“Uh?”

“Taehyung.”

“Yeah?”

“He hasn’t been going to school. He’s been pretending since Monday.”
His texts to Taehyung go unanswered for the whole afternoon. But that’s nothing new. He’s getting used to the absurdity of what’s happening.

He doesn’t bother going back to the apartment, he knows Taehyung will avoid it because Jimin is having the day off. He stays with Hoseok instead, sucks up his attention and his time and doesn’t feel guilty about it. Hoseok never makes him feel bad about those kinds of things.

When it’s late enough though, he messages Yoongi. They’re not talking as much lately. And it’s the worst thing they could do to themselves, but Jimin can't say he doesn't understand the reason why.

**You:** where are you

17-08-2016, 18:16

**Yoongi hyung:** home, waiting for you and tae

17-08-2016, 18:17

And Jimin scoffs, because he was right.

**You:** come with hyung and me?

17-08-2016, 18:17

**You:** i think we need to talk

17-08-2016, 18:18

**You:** and i thought we could go to the refinery

17-08-2016, 18:18

**You:** to maybe bring a certain ass back home

17-08-2016, 18:18

**Yoongi hyung:** let me finish something and i’ll meet you there

17-08-2016, 18:21

Δ
Taehyung never thought he’d be standing here. He dreamed of this, too often to count.

His tipsy mind tends to do weird things. Like going back to the apartment because he knows Jimin wouldn’t stay there alone, grabbing that stupid piece of paper, and bringing it here, on these steps, under the mid-day sun.

Days pass and the more Taehyung realizes it. Alcohol is the best remedy to his cowardice.

Δ

Yoongi is starting to feel raw from how anxiety is eating at him.

For the whole day at the office, he’s been apathetic and unresponsive to his coworkers and he could tell it annoyed instead of concerned them.

And when he exiled himself in a café to grab lunch, he thought it was good, because they never loved him and he never loved them anyway.

And then later he was still the same, when he was alone in the second bedroom and fiddling on the computer, feeling caged up and ready to scream at the lightest of scratches to his emotions.

Yoongi knows it’s the way his body talks desperation, and he’s this close to entering a fight or flight response. He forces his eyes to stay open, because if he closes them for too long, he might get scared of the dark.

They don’t find him, at the refinery. Not near his favourite spot, not around this place Namjoon apparently told Jimin he was seen at, not anywhere else.

The three of them spend the greater part of their evening looking. They pass cigarette after cigarette between one another, stressed about what they could find, they talk, they whisper, they worry.

They don’t find him.

Hoseok says it’s of good omen. Jimin tries to smile.

Yoongi knows it’s just because Taehyung has found another place to hide.
Waking up in the middle of the night because the front door is being unlocked has become almost normal for Jimin. The reeling footsteps and the doubt that they’ll be three in the bed for what remains until the sun goes up. He wonders if it will stop hurting with time.

Jimin sits on the mattress as Yoongi gets ready for work. He follows him with blank eyes. In and out the room, adds the suit, adds the tie, tries to tame his hair. He looks as lost and torn as himself is.

“Have a good day,” he inches on the bed, quickly glances at the empty space next to Jimin. “Keep me updated?”

Jimin nods, melts in the warm touch of Yoongi’s hand on his cheek. His throat fills up with regret, eyes with wet sadness. Soft lips press on his forehead and he’d want to hold onto that feeling for much longer. Because this, at least, still feels real.

He hears Yoongi waking Taehyung up in the living room, hushed words in a rigid voice. He’s angry. And Jimin understands, but that doesn’t hurt any less.

There might be no way of keeping Taehyung intact without breaking the three of them.

They attend together the only class they have in common this semester. They sit next to each other like they used to do some months and fewer problems ago, and Taehyung doesn’t listen to anything that's being said. That's nothing new though, Taehyung has always been the kind of student that could afford minimal effort, because his grades were good anyway.

They come out and Jimin stretches, nonchalant. Taehyung has another class scheduled right after this one, and he’s curious to see how he’s going to lie to him.

He walks him all the way there.

There’s a silent agreement between them. The unanswered texts, the nights spent on the couch, the alcohol and whatever else he’s taking. They’re both aware of that. But they mutually avoid the topic. Like they’re waiting for something to happen. A trigger. Or someone with a much clearer mind to force them to look into each other’s eyes for real.
Taehyung kisses him before they part. It hasn’t lost its softness or the affection. But Jimin can feel the wall, thick and shielded in front of him.

“I’ll see you later,” Taehyung says, and Jimin doesn’t believe him.

Taehyung walks down the hallway, towards where his classroom is. And then Jimin scoffs.

Taehyung turns right when he should have turned left.

---

You: hyung i need to see you
18-08-2016, 13:41

Namjoon hyung: Sure. I get off at 3 though.
18-08-2016, 13:47

You: its fine, whenever you can
18-08-2016, 13:47

Namjoon hyung: Why don’t you come here meanwhile?
18-08-2016, 13:51

Namjoon hyung: I can prepare you something and we can talk after?
18-08-2016, 13:51

Δ

The world trembles under his feet, a little more with every step. It’s unsteady, disorienting. He knows he’s going to trip and fall soon, and it’s not as scary anymore.

Leaned on a stone wall, cigarette burning away between his fingers, he observes Jimin getting to his car, then texting someone. Yoongi probably. It would be great if the two of them could stay as close. Taehyung has been wanting that for the longest time.

His mind has dark edges now, a narrow field of visionfield.
“He asked me and I said no.”

“And you don’t know who that could be?”

Namjoon leans forward, over the table. He looks drained and Jimin surely isn’t helping with his passive-aggressive tone.

“Selling drugs isn’t a gossip party, Jimin. But I feed my sister on the back of people like him, so I know how that works. And someone’s providing for him.”

“So there’s no way to know?”

“Jimin-ah, listen,” Namjoon sits back, rearranges his glasses on his nose. Seokjin’s laugh resounds in the busy ambiance of the café and his eyes flicker to the counter before coming back to Jimin’s. “It doesn’t matter, who’s selling what to him. It really doesn’t. Taehyung is numbing himself, you have to understand that. The alcohol, the drugs, the isolation. He's probably dealing with too many things or too many feelings, and he can't or he's scared to take care of them. He's smart, he knows what he should be doing. But he's not acting on it. And that, that should be telling you a lot.”

“I know that, but wouldn’t stopping him from getting fucked up all the time help?”

Namjoon takes a sip and the leisureliness in the motion makes Jimin impatient.

“That’s not the root of the problem.”

“But—“

"I'm sorry, you know that I love you but right now I think I need to be rough on you." And that shuts Jimin up. "You and hyung are feeding his destruction. You think that Tae is a big boy, but I can tell you, he got stuck much before what happened with hyung. So right now, the more slack you give him, the more he’ll use it against himself. Because to him, that freedom means it doesn’t matter to you if he’s there or if he’s not.”

Jimin swallows thickly, averting his gaze. Being told he still doesn’t understand Taehyung is painful. Obviously the efforts and the parts of himself that Jimin put into this haven’t been enough.

Through the window, he looks at one of the last days of summer. He didn’t see it go by. He just remembers the roughness of the river as he went rode it down.

It makes sense. And he doesn't know why he didn't get a grasp on this before.

“I know that you might be too deep into all of this to see things the way I do,” Namjoon continues, his voice dropped low and comforting. “But hold onto him. Don’t give up trying to talk. It’s worth it.”

“It’s just, I feel fucking stupid, hyung—”

“Don’t. Love is never stupid.”
The smell of meat is what welcomes Jimin into the apartment.

Then comes the soft sizzling noise and the vibration of two voices. From this distance, anyone would think it’s a normal conversation, two lovers quietly talking as they cook a meal. But Jimin knows better. Taehyung’s voice is too sluggish and the ends of Yoongi’s words are too sharp.

"Hey," Taehyung throws at him when he leaves the kitchen and heads towards the bedroom.

“How was class?” Jimin’s fists are tight, his throat is sore from trying not to cry.

“Good.”

Jimin smiles and bites his lip, annoyed. He doesn’t take his shoes off before he joins Yoongi.

“He won’t stay,” it’s muttered, meant for Jimin only.

When their eyes meet, it’s only for the whole of a second but it’s all it takes for Jimin to understand him.

“Where you going?” He calls for Taehyung.

It's something aggressive, that comes deep from within his chest. Maybe out of his usual behaviour. But it's good. That's what he wants.

“Oh, uh, I got a few things to do, and stuff to buy.”

"You could stay here instead."

Taehyung reappears, looking perplexed by Jimin’s tone. He shuffles between them, grabs something in the fridge and walks down the hallway, to the front door.

"I can't."

Then Jimin gets to him, sensing Yoongi tense up as he does. He waits for Taehyung’s eyes to meet his before he continues.

“Taehyung,”

“It’s sort of important, Jimin, I can’t—“

“Your ass is not going past this door tonight.”

Taehyung whips his head to him, squints.

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me.”

“What’s wrong with you?”

“I’m getting tired, Tae. So we’re stopping this bullshit. You’re not leaving tonight.”

“I got stuff to do.”

“You’re lying. And you, and me, and hyung, we all know it. You can stop now.”

“And if I leave, what’re you gonna do? Run after me?”
“Don’t have me do it.”

Taehyung stares right back at him, with a darkness that Jimin doesn’t recognize. They stay like that for ridiculously long seconds and Jimin just wants to laugh, because Taehyung is still trying to play a game.

“Fuck you.”

Taehyung throws his backpack to the floor, hard enough for Tuxedo to jump and for Jimin’s insides to coil up. He storms back to his bedroom and shuts the door.

Jimin ends up sleeping on the couch that night, because he can’t stand the cold between the sheets. But at least, Taehyung is safe.

Δ

F

Jimin: i gotta leave for school
19-08-2016, 13:51

Jimin: then i have a diner with my dad and an important associate
19-08-2016, 13:51

Jimin: so i wont be back until late in the evening
19-08-2016, 13:52

You: alright
19-08-2016, 13:54

Yoongi blanks out at his screen, unsure if he should ask, but he’s being answered even before he can send his question.

Jimin: i think tae fell asleep again
19-08-2016, 13:57

Jimin: he still hasnt talked to me
19-08-2016, 13:58
He sighs, dazedly looks at the columns of numbers on the computer in front of him. He hates them a little more every day.

**You:** what you did yesterday was good, jiminie

19-08-2016, 14:00

**You:** don’t doubt yourself

19-08-2016, 14:00

**Jimin:** trying

19-08-2016, 14:04

He leaves his desk, folders in his hold, takes the elevator up to a place where he will never belong. He hands his work to his father’s secretary, that girl who’s been keeping her eyes on him since he came back in March. She smiles unnaturally bright, her expression flirty and Yoongi can’t even scoff like he used to.

“When are you coming to work on this floor with me?” She interpellates him just as he makes his way back.

Taehyung’s father opens the door of his office then, their gazes meet for a breath, a heartbeat maybe, before he walks away. So short, but it crawls over Yoongi’s skin, tries to get in but he doesn’t let it. He looked at Yoongi with as much disdain as he always did.

“Never.”

**You:** i’ll try to get off earlier, cant promise anything

19-08-2016, 14:21

**Jimin:** this is becoming

19-08-2016, 14:33

**Jimin:** tiring

19-08-2016, 14:33
Taehyung is on the couch and watching some series on Netflix when he gets home. Yoongi’s chest slackens around a relieved breath, only for the moment after to surge at him with nostalgia.

He’s sitting with his knees to his chest and his arms around them, and it throws Yoongi in the past in a harsh way. It brings him to late teenage afternoons when Taehyung would sit like that on his bed, silent and sad and hungry, because the few times his father was there for dinner, Taehyung couldn’t eat until he’d agree to swallow those damn pills. The maid would sneak in some food in the evening, or sometimes Yoongi would. But it’s something he could never forget, how Taehyung used to fight.

“Hey,” the only response he gets is a brief glance. He doesn’t insist and allows himself a long shower, where he thinks and tries not to sink. Then he puts on his lounge clothes to the buzzing noise of the TV, pets Cannelle’s head despite her obvious recoiling and goes to lean in the doorway of the living room. “Come cook dinner with me.”

“Where’s Jimin?”

“Take your phone, ask him.”

“Why don’t you just tell me?”

“Because that’s not a game I’m willing to play. If you wanna know about him, ask him. Now come with me.”

Taehyung cuts himself on a knife.

He’s chopping bell peppers and his hands are shaky and his shoulders hunched. But Yoongi just wants to give him a chance and trust him, but the blade misses and it slices his index.

The wound is engorged with blood the following second and normally Taehyung would hiss and suck it in his mouth or at least wrap his other fist around it to deal with the pain but now his whole body just flops forwards on the kitchen island, his forehead on the surface, not a sound, not a stuttering breath.

Yoongi frowns, abandons his own knife on the board.

“Tae?”

“I don’t get it,”

“What? Tae you’re bleeding, just—“
Yoongi gently brings him to the sink, opens the water so it can run on his finger and he watches it as it reddens and disappears down the drain. The warmth of Taehyung’s body collides with his then, his nose comes to the crook of his neck, their chest pressing with one another’s as they pant softly.

“Why are you still here?” Taehyung’s words break against his own skin, angry but pleading, and Yoongi circles an arm around his waist to keep him steady.

“Why would I leave?”

“Hyung,” Taehyung brings his wet hand to the front of Yoongi’s shirt, grips at it hard enough for him to feel the pull. His voice is trembling and Yoongi can feel him slip through the cracks.

“What is it, baby? Tell me how you feel.”

“Please leave.”

Yoongi’s vision blurs up for a beat and he swallows back the ache, his own fragility laid bare. He knows what he’s trying to do. He turns off the tap and holds Taehyung closer instead of letting go, instead of allowing him to believe his fears.

“I don’t want to.”

“Please,”

“You need to tell me why you want that,”

“N-No, just—“

“Okay, okay, let’s just go and lie down until Jiminie gets home, yeah? We’ll eat then.”

You: please get back home as soon as you can

19-08-2016, 18:27
Saturday morning is spent in bed. With patient and confused silences, with shy touches that started losing their intimacy. They did talk the night before, after Jimin got back. Not nearly enough but with tones and words that allowed Yoongi to feel less underwater.

What they are at this moment, is still too heavy for him to completely let himself relax or take anything for granted.

“Just—a tiny bowl, that'll be fine.”

Yoongi raises his eyes to Jimin, his ladle halted mid-pouring. He searches his expression but can hardly refute him. It’s a little hard to push Jimin to eat when himself lost appetite somewhere along the last week.

“We didn’t have breakfast, Jimin,” he tries, finishing to fill the bowls with fuming soup.

Jimin leaves his place around the island to find another in Yoongi’s arms, his embrace seeping fatigue. It’s uncannily similar to that moment the previous night, when Taehyung was bleeding more emotions than blood.

“Then I’ll eat more rice.”

Yoongi hums and kisses behind his ear, uses his free arm to bring him closer.

“Is my soup that bad?”

There’s a gentle giggle against his shoulder, tiny hands pressing harder on his back. Against him, Jimin feels tired. Much more fragile than before.

He wonders if Taehyung sees that, too. If he noticed that love made the three of them sick in as little as ten days.

Δ

It’s in the late afternoon that glows over the balcony, cigarettes in between their fingers and after over half an hour of silence, that Taehyung decides to speak.

“I only attended class once, this week.”

Jimin looks at him. “I know,” he says as Taehyung takes a pull.

"And I'm not sure I'm gonna go anymore." And he isn't quite sure how to respond to that. "I thought that maybe I should leave."

“Drop out?”
“Leave here.”

Jimin then looks at Yoongi, a quiet demand for help. But Yoongi’s gaze is fixated on the balcony’s floor and won’t budge.

“Where to?”

“Anywhere. I just don’t think I can stay here.”

What about us? Jimin lets it sit on his tongue until it becomes sour.

“I mean, are you thinking of leaving the country, or?”

Taehyung shrugs, pushes smoke out through soft lips.

“Maybe.”

Jimin’s heart thuds loudly against his ribs, a lump of regrets and fear in his throat. His eyes go from Taehyung’s profile, down his arm, they follow the length of his body until they find the same floor Yoongi won’t stop staring at.

"Maybe, or my mother owns a beach house in Busan with her husband. And I thought I could go there."

“Tae,”

“It’s nothing against you.”

“I know.”

But it feels like it.

He’s torn between trusting and countering him. He glances at Yoongi, still finds him unresponsive but Jimin knows better than to assume he’s indifferent. And between the words he refrains from saying and the calm breaths he struggles to get in, he remembers what Namjoon told him, about how Taehyung understands freedom as abandonment instead.

“Tae, I’m not really someone who begs, b—“

“I’ve seen you beg before.”

Jimin laughs humorlessly. The memories of them making love seem so distant, like a dream he only half remembers or a movie he’s seen half asleep.

“You know what I mean.”

“M’yeah.”

“I’m not gonna beg you, but please don’t go.”

“I can’t stay here.”

“What are you running from?” Jimin’s voice pitches up, all his bottled emotions trying to get out at the same time.

“Me. The me that’s living this life, Jimin. I can’t go—”
Yoongi abruptly stands and disappears inside.

“Hyung,” Jimin calls, but he doesn’t come back.

And he stays unmoving, cigarette consuming itself to the butt as he, sitting side by side with a ghost, collapses inside.

Δ

Taehyung dreams of a kite, navigating a maroon sky. Its string is made of thorns, pretty ones. Its frame is covered in black silk that glistens softly under the light of a sad sun, moving back and forth between stars it won't ever touch.

It keeps getting higher, closer to a salvation and perhaps a few heaps of fresh air. The clouds pass by like sailors on a calm sea and there, below, is a place when it never wanted to belong. A personal hell it wanted to escape so bad, slave to the moods of the winds.

Up, up and away.

Then comes the lack of sound, the emptiness. For a short moment, it feels nice. Great. A relief. But then the whole space fills up with loneliness. No more clouds and no more wind, no more tiny hands holding onto its string.

The kite floats and is still. But in a place where you’ve made yourself alone, do you really exist?

Lightning strikes and pierces through its silk. It hurts but maybe it asked for it.

It revisits the sky in reverse, up to down and bleeding dreams in maroon, a colour no one will ever see.

Taehyung falls and crashes onto the ground, wings frail like paper, burnt at the edges like an old parchment.

But they’re still there.

He’s still there.

Δ

Jimin is roused by the sound of the tap running in the kitchen. He straightens on the couch, dislodging Tuxedo from his lap and he groans. Netflix is still running on the TV, Yoongi is still curled up in the armchair across the living room.

But the stillness in the air, the way it weighs, Jimin knows what happened.

“Taehyung,”

He walks to him, despite this resistance inside that screams at him to stop hurting himself. Taehyung
is hovering over the sink, head sunk low between his shoulders and it makes Jimin ache the same way it always does.

Argument or not.

“Tae,” he repeats, closer. He presses a palm to his shoulder blade, cautious and encouraged by the lack of recoil. “You okay?”

“Yeah.”

He runs his hands along the planes of his back.

“Nightmare?”

Jimin tries.

Jimin never stopped trying.

“It was fine this time. I’m just—I’m tired.”

He nods, purses his lips even when he knows Taehyung can’t see him.

“Let’s go to bed, then.”

The day goes fine. Good, even.

A mean tantalization of the times they used to have together.

Until Taehyung receives a call right after they’re done clearing the table.

From there it all goes to shit.

“It’s his father,” Yoongi grits but Jimin already knew that. Taehyung saves that kind of vocabulary for one special person.

Jimin listens to him arguing over something himself doesn't understand, bribes of information he can’t quite get a grasp on. It's over when Taehyung yells at his father to fuck off and throws his phone on the coffee table in the living room.

Jimin stiffens, air suddenly pregnant with agitation and doesn’t utter a word as Taehyung starts moving around the apartment. He’s keeping to himself, mind and body far from theirs, until Yoongi leaves the sink and follows him to his bedroom.

From there there's the rustling of things being moved around, angry words in sad tones and this is all Jimin allows himself to take.

He shuts off.

His eyes fall blank in the sharp, straight lines of the counter, in the white of the walls. His fists are tight in the bottom hem of his shirt to stop them from shaking.
He’s going to be sick. If this doesn’t stop, Jimin is going to be sick.

Taehyung comes into the kitchen and goes straight to his booze stash. Jimin feels his gaze on him but ignores it.

“Stop doing that,” Yoongi tells him. He’s about to break too.

“Don’t tell me what to do.”

“Leave the vodka there, Tae.”

More anger lingering. Jimin is starting to get dizzy. He walks back until he can lean on the kitchen island.

“Shut up hyung.”

He closes his eyes.

“Watch your fucking mouth. You’ve been shitting on us for a week now and I’m through with that. Stop drinking. I’m serious.”

Jimin crouches, hides his face in his hands.

“The fun thing about this is that if you’re not satisfied, you can just leave, right? You don’t live here anyway, do you?”

Silence falls. The purest of them all, amongst their shattering.

“You’re right. I don’t.”

Then Jimin only registers the jiggling of Yoongi’s keys, and the sound of the front door as it closes.

He stays like that for a long, long moment, scared to open his eyes. Scared to see that there’s only the two of them in this room. That what he’s been terrified of for months finally happened.

“Jimin,”

Taehyung’s voice comes from the other side of the kitchen, through harsh breathing. He sounds fragile, unsure.

But he can’t really hear it anymore. There’s only his deafening heartbeat, that yells to him in unsteady rhythm everything he’s just lost.

He shakes his head. Stands.

“I could never choose, Tae. Not four months ago, and not now. Don’t ask me to choose. I’ll never be able to.”

He doesn’t stop Taehyung from going out that night.

Because while he’s alone, Jimin grabs a few of his own things.

And leaves.
Yoongi doesn’t sleep.

He rehashes everything. New York. The first time Jimin called him hyung. Taehyung’s bluntness when he kissed him first, five years ago. That molecular cuisine restaurant they went to. The sun in Jimin’s eyes when he laughs, the way he collapses onto people when he does. Taehyung’s stillness in moments of pain. The loss in his mother’s eyes when she looked at his father, his whole childhood. That sensation he used to have when they would record songs together. Sweet, liberating. Camille. His report cards that kept telling him how much of a disappointment he was. Jimin’s kindness, his soothing understanding. The outlet Seokjin found for himself, how good he is, with Namjoon and Jungkook, the sadness Yoongi felt when he moved to China. Taehyung, crying, because his father had hung up on his mother again.

All the things he’s lost, and all the things he’s found.

He spends hours walking, in the refinery, on campus. Near the café.

Unconsciously, perhaps, he expects to see Taehyung.

And perhaps, after too long, it’s because there’s something he finally feels ready to say.

Δ

He’s too sober.

And it feels ten times worse than those kicks to the gut or the comedown after a line of coke.

The apartment is as empty as it was last year. It might be over. All of it.

Jinim won’t return his texts or his calls. Yoongi’s phone is off.

He wanted to spare them so badly.

It should be a success. But it feels like a failure.

Taehyung keeps spacing out.
People around him talk business and profit and statistics and this time again he can’t stay focused. He would’ve left long ago; every bit of information is sitting in his throat and making him feel ill. In fact, sprawled in his bed and feeling empty, he contemplated not showing up at all. But he still came. Dressed up and hair combed. Maybe there’s still a remnant of docility in him after all.

Yoongi is there, also. Silent and closed off, sitting across from him around the meeting table. He’s got bags under his eyes, very similar to his, Taehyung thinks. His skin is paler than usual, his jaw tighter.

Their gazes meet, he’s the one who looks away first.

Taehyung scoffs, rather loudly. That’s what it has come to.

He doesn’t apologize when he gets annoyed stares. Nor when his father asks him if he has something to add. He gathers his things and stands, walks to the door with too much attention on him but it slides off him like water off a duck’s back.

He lights a cigarette in the elevator down, on the way out throws the jacket of his suit in the nearest trashcan.

Yoongi’s voice gets to him when he’s made it close to his Audi, squinting through the drizzle. He doesn’t stop in his tracks but goes to lean on it instead.

Taehyung’s feeling cold. The kind of hollow sensation that could come out of his chest and eat him. A void, shaped like his own person.

“Tae,”

His hair is dishevelled, his tie loose, his breathing ragged. Taehyung thinks he looks good, he thinks he looks lost.

“You should have stayed inside,” he tells him.

“It doesn’t matter to me. You know it doesn’t.”

“You’re going to miss some very important stuff.”

Controlled mocking. Yoongi’s never been very tolerant of it.

“I’m not here for a war. Let me talk, for once.”

Taehyung gives an after you motion with a fuming stick between his fingers, his other hand tight around his phone in his pocket.

“I’m sorry. For everything that happened.” Taehyung’s ribcage seizes up. His vision fills with clouds, goes unfocused. “I’m sorry for leaving. And for abandoning you here. For not growing a spine earlier and texting you. For this late apology. There’s a lot of reasons for what I did, but none of them are justifying enough.”

Taehyung throws his cigarette to the ground, crosses his arms over his chest.

“I’m sorry,” Yoongi repeats.
Yoongi takes a step towards him and Taehyung goes electric, stressed and angry and recoils.

“Are you done?” he croaks, fumbling to grab the door handle. There’s an earthquake that’s been set off in his entrails, reaching his limbs and his thoughts, and then his heart. It still beats stupidly, tired but unrelenting.

“Tae,”

He drives away without looking through the mirror because he doesn’t think he could stand the sight.

Taehyung knows why and how Namjoon finds him.

But he looks at him approaching, his nonchalant strut and calm aura, and accepts him. That’s how it’s been for the longest time. Namjoon and Taehyung and the towers of orange stars.

“You don’t have to stay with me,” he says, taping his ash off and watching it stray with the wind. The concrete isn’t comfortable as he lays on it. But any other place, right now, would be as miserable anyway.

“There’s people I need to meet with in half an hour, but to be honest, I prefer having you with me than knowing you’re with those other people.”

Taehyung huffs a laugh.

“They’re fun.”

“If beating the shit out of you is what you call fun, then I guess they are, yeah.”

“I asked for it.”

“Sure you did.”

He doesn’t remember Namjoon ever talking to him so dryly, and he manages to bristle even through how numb he is. He keeps mum for a while, thinking of places he could go, thinking of school and they could be beautiful things, but they don’t light up anything in him. No tiny spark of hope or relief, like Jimin and Yoongi have ignited in him so often. Taehyung can’t feel it, can’t see it anymore. And it’s becoming suffocating.

“That’s kinda bad.”

Namjoon rips his eyes from his phone, turns to Taehyung.

“What is?”

"Knowing that only reason why something is not working out, is you." Namjoon gestures at him to follow him, and he does, very slowly. The clients are probably almost there, and even this doesn’t flare up his gut with adrenaline like it used to. "I know it's because of me. I know that I love them, and I know I'm too fucked to be able to forget whatever happened."

Namjoon glances at him as they walk, encouraging him to continue. They’re getting deeper, in a
more isolated place.

“So I’m stuck here, with all this fucking stuff inside and I can’t get it out, because it’s all twisted and it comes out *wrong*.”

“Taehyung-ah,” Namjoon stops them just shy of the edge of a tank, so they can talk without being heard or seen. “There’s only so much I can say until I overstep a boundary and intrude in your relationships. But just remember that as long as you’re not ready to fight for the people you love, you’re not deserving of them.”

He lets it sink. Down his entrails and into his bones.

He did fight. Just not hard enough.

He felt and lived through everything backwards.

Namjoon prompts him towards the spot, and Taehyung recognizes the two guys. The ones he saw yell at Namjoon, one evening. The ones he knows have the bad habit of leaving bruises if he’s not docile enough.

Taehyung has been walking in reverse through every day for over a year now. And the moment he realizes it, is when he’s already dipped a foot in the precipice.

He hardly registers what’s going on.

Doesn’t really listen, doesn’t really look. There’s at most four meters between him and the other three, but he feels a mile away.

Taehyung’s stomach is tight, he’s nauseous. He’s spacing out in the lines of the background, hazed.

Until the voices start getting more agitated. Then, he snaps out of it.

He brings his eyes to them, specifically to the hands fisting at Namjoon’s collar. His chest stutters, his thoughts freeze and fizzle.

“You piece of shit, get your hands off him,” he hisses as he strides over.

“T—“

He hadn’t seen it. The pocket knife. But now it’s pressed at the base of his own neck. He pushes his air out, keeping still, eyes down to it. Fear fills his veins, poignant and vivid.

“What did you say?”

He licks his lips nervously.

“If you get your hands off of him, *is* what I said.”

“Taehyung,” Namjoon growls and the aggressiveness in it makes his skin crawl.

The guy in front of him cock his head, smirks. “Yeah? If we get our hands off of him, we’ll have to get them on you, though.” The blade presses further, the tip stinging until it burns. Taehyung closes
his eyes. “You want that?”

And he thinks, amidst of the mess inside, that Namjoon might have a chance to get out of here if Taehyung plays the right way.

So he shrugs, ignores the strain of the knife on his flesh.

"Wow, Kim," the guy glances at Namjoon, "you've got yourself some good rug, huh?" Then back at him. "There's a lot of things I could do with you, if you're interested."

Taehyung laughs. He breaks out in a sweat.

“Fuck you,” he grits, grasping the guy’s wrist.

He sees the second knife too late.

It all happens quick, in a blur. Hands on him, gripping at his clothes, low voices hissing, muted curses and then the hard feeling of the ground, pellets digging in the palm of his hand.

A strangled cry.

The rushing footsteps of two silhouettes running away.

Then Namjoon falling next to him, chest wild and body trembling.

His hands, moving frantically. Feeling around his body for his phone, maybe.

And then blood.

So much blood.

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Chapter End Notes

So part 3 is now done! Man, that one was long. I feel a little bad for doing this because of the cliffhanger, but I need to take a break for a week or two. If you want to be updated you can check my twitter [here](#)

Thank you guys for everything and I'll see you soon! ♡
Taehyung falls to his knees, empties his stomach in the toilet.

He’s trembling and moist from sweating so much, there’s blood drying on his hands, on his shirt, in his hair.

He wretches again to the remembrance of Namjoon’s weight on him as he helped him to his own car, to the stench of copper in the air and the wet, slippery sensation of blood on his skin. He refused to look at it. He knew it would trigger the monster of panic hiding within his ribcage.

“You can’t tell anyone,” he was told in a broken voice as he was settling Namjoon in the passenger seat.

It seemed like every time Taehyung blinked, there was more red smeared on the flawless interior of his Audi. Blood on money, the truest of contrasts.

This is sick.

This is sick.

“Hyung,”

“If you tell the police I’ll get busted, Tae, you can’t tell anyone, you hear me?”

And there was more fright in those words than in the way he was pressing at the wound near his shoulder, so Taehyung just frantically nodded, with a brain that could barely think.

“Promise me,”

“But hyung,”

“Promise. Me.”

Taehyung bit his teeth, grappled at the seatbelt and buckled Namjoon in.

“I promise.”

He straightens and sits on the tiles, his upper back against the door of the stall. He brings his knees to his chest and hugs them closer.

Taehyung drove way above speed limit, in the silence of his own fears and the quiet sound of Namjoon’s panting.

He looked at the hospital’s personnel take over, unwilling to let go but aware that there was nothing more he could do.

Namjoon stayed inside a room for a long time, and Taehyung waited, impatient for the sound of the door opening or the rumble of a voice, sitting and bent on himself, wishing that could make him disappear.
“He lost a significant amount of blood, but nothing vital has been damaged. He’s going to be fine,” the doctor said.

“I’m gonna be fine, Tae,” Namjoon said.

But that doesn’t change anything.

That doesn’t make it better.

Nothing will.

It goes in one ear and out the other. It’s a serious wound, deep and precise, and Taehyung has learnt enough to know that just two inches lower could have taken his life.

He stays there for a few minutes, his head pounding. His body feels completely unattuned to his brain, and this whole building takes him back in time. The walls, the smells in the air. It all renders him helpless.

Then, when his legs permit it, he stands and splashes his face with water, rubs dried blood off his skin, and returns to sit near the room where Namjoon is kept.

He staggers when he’s let in, eyes blurring but he fights it.

It’s not about him now. Taehyung can’t make it about himself.

“I’m sorry,” he blurts out and Namjoon looks at him, lying under white sheets and plugged up, a sling holding his left arm. “I’m so sorry hyung, I—“

“Stop it.”

He fills his lungs in, casts his eyes down. The nurse glances back and forth between them, noticing Namjoon’s dry tone, before she finishes taking his vital signs and excuses herself, closing the door and leaving them alone.

“I didn’t wan-ant her to hear,” Namjoon wriggles until he’s sitting. “It’s stuff that happens. I had been lucky so far.”

“If I hadn’t been a jerk, it wouldn’t have happened.”

Namjoon nods to the chair that’s beside the bed, Taehyung takes place in it. He cleaned up and has been resting for a little over two hours now, but Taehyung can see just how pale is skin is, the purplish tone of his lips, the weakness in his moves. He’s calm, bears softness in his eyes, but Taehyung can’t mute the beeping of the machine that follows his agitated heart. He looks too intimate with death.

“That’s not true. They wanted something and I didn’t give it to them. They were going to use that knife anyway.”

“But—“

“I tried to push the other guy off. It has nothing to do with whatever you said.”

“Of course it does,” desperation permeates his words, his emotions bubble up. “I shouldn’t have come closer, hyung,“

Namjoon chuckles then hisses, and it frails up Taehyung’s insides even more.
“Why do you insist on taking the blame? Why do you want so badly to be the guilty one? I’m telling you that I caused this. I shoved the guy. So stop hitting on your own head.” Taehyung swallows back the humiliation and remains silent, gaze sliding to the window. “Did you text them?”

“N-No, I—“

“Might give you a break.”

He sighs. Namjoon is feeling it. He’s feeling how Taehyung is fidgeting to leave. How he’s drowning inside and that he needs out. Comes a wave of shame for that, also.

He sends Yoongi and Jimin the same messages.

You: something happened and namjoon hyung is in the hospital
22-08-2016, 15:53

You: room 503
22-08-2016, 15:53

Their silence stagnates in the air and it presses on him, makes him want to curl up and become small. He’s not relieved. He still can’t get the idea of everything being his fault out of his head.

Min Yoongi: i know, hoseok texted me
22-08-2016, 15:56

Min Yoongi: i’m on my way
22-08-2016, 15:56

Min Yoongi: you ok?
22-08-2016, 15:56

“Hyung,”

You: yeah
22-08-2016, 15:56

“Mhm?”
His throat bobs and it’s painful.

Jimin: i know, everyone texted me
22-08-2016, 15:57

Jimin: im stuck in traffic for now
22-08-2016, 15:57

Jimin: and my phones low on battery
22-08-2016, 15:57

Jimin: but ill be there as soon as i can, okay?
22-08-2016, 15:57

Jimin: wait for me
22-08-2016, 15:58

He rubs his thumb over the screen, unable to answer.

“Is it okay? If I leave?” he finally pushes out. He knows there’s no need to specify, that he’s being understood even with very few, with Namjoon.

“I think,” he leans back, and the stuttering sound of his breathing has culpability folding around Taehyung’s neck tighter. “That leaving is good, if it means that you’re gonna come back a better, stronger person.”

Taehyung swallows. He needs it. So much. He’s long since lost contact with a part of his reality, he’s been searching for salvation in drugs and alcohol and avoidance.

Now Taehyung knows that what he’s been running from, truthfully, are the parts of himself he’s too scared to change. From those slivers of life he’s unable to let go of. From that fear of people leaving him.

The door abruptly opens on Jungkook. And then on Seokjin.

“Hyung,” Jungkook squeaks. His eyes are red-rimmed, he’s sniffling. Taehyung watches him come close to the bed with a desperate energy, frowns as he bends to cup Namjoon’s cheeks of his hands and gently presses his lips onto his. He squeezes from the inside again. Of course. Of course they’re together. He should have known. “Hyung what happened?”

Namjoon’s features contorts, even under the soft touches.

“Jungkook-ah, don’t put pressure on him.”

Jungkook glances at Seokjin when he says this, then at Taehyung before he draws back and sits on the edge of the bed instead, rubbing at Namjoon’s waist with a careful palm.
“Hyung,”

“He had a knife and I made a bad move,” Namjoon brings his free hand atop Jungkook’s, tries to be reassuring. His tone is kind and mellow, maybe a little tired. But it holds so much affection that Taehyung feels out of place. “I could have been much worse, honestly. This sling and a lot of sleep and I’ll be fine.”

Seokjin makes a discreet gesture to get Taehyung’s attention and he shifts his eyes to him. *Are you okay?* he reads on his lips and his head motions a confusion of *yes* and *no.*

He’s overwhelmed, he can’t see straight.

*I need to go.*

*I have to leave.*

*I need to—*

“Go and do it, Tae.” Namjoon says when he sees him stand. “But don’t do it alone.”

He takes the stairs down, trying to grasp at the sensation of every step under his feet. Maybe he shouldn’t be driving in that state. Maybe he should have stayed a bit longer, to calm down. To wait for Yoongi and Jimin.

But he decides not to.

He gets in his Audi, starts the engine. He did notice Yoongi’s Cadillac, in the slot right next to his.

This is long overdue.

\[ Δ \]

Uneasiness.

Yoongi is submerged with it the moment he enters the room where Namjoon is.

It’s the sick color of Namjoon’s skin, it’s the fragile way he holds Jungkook’s hand, implicitly explicit. It’s the silence that lays thick over them, even when Hoseok joins them. It’s Taehyung’s absence.

He asks a few questions with a worried tone, to which Namjoon replies with too much composure. Like he expected to end up here, or that this whole incident was an answer he was waiting for. But for the most part, Yoongi stays quiet with his keys warm in his palm because discomfort is itching at him.

It’s in moments like these, when he can so clearly see how remote he is from their bubble, that he realizes how disconnected he still is from others. How the progress he thought he made with friendship isn’t as apparent as he would’ve liked.
He looks at his phone. Jimin still hasn’t answered his previous messages.

You: are you near?

22-08-2016, 17:02

He sends this, more as a mean to focus on something other than what’s oozing under his skin than to actually get a reply. He knows Jimin is on his way, and that there is no use in being impatient right now.

He wants to type something to Taehyung, ask if he’s already left, but gets a new text from him before he can do it.

Taehyung: im leaving this place

22-08-2016, 17:03

Taehyung: if you want to come with me ill be t

22-08-2016, 17:03

Taehyung: taking the road in an hour

22-08-2016, 17:03

“What?” he mutters to himself, but it’s sharp enough to have Hoseok glancing at him.

You: what do you mean you’re leaving?

22-08-2016, 17:03

“What is it?”

Yoongi raises his gaze to Hoseok, just a short eye contact before he focuses back on his phone and gives a vague shake of his head.

“Taehyung just sent me something weird.”

“He told you he was leaving,” says Namjoon. A statement, cutting through his own conversation with Seokjin. And those simple words have his flesh erupt in goosebumps. “Is he asking you to go with him?”

“Y-Yeah but,” it hasn’t even been a minute since he sent his message, but the lack of response makes him apprehensive and restless. He presses the call button, wants to excuse himself in the corridor but
he hits voicemail before the first ring. “His phone’s off.” He gives it a second attempt. Then a third. “His fucking phone’s off.”

“You should go.”

“I’m not going anywhere, Namjoon-ah. You’re here and wounded and—why the fuck did he need to be selfish today of all days—”

Namjoon chuckles, it has Yoongi’s jaw go tight.

“He’s not being selfish, hyung. He’s reaching out.”

“He’s running away.”

“If he asked you to come, that’s because he’s not.”

“What? Namjoon-ah,”

“Hyung,” and Yoongi turns his head to Hoseok, flames up with guilt when he sees him gesture to calm down. “You told me Taehyung had been less than well, these past few days. That’s he’s been avoiding you and Jimin and his apartment. So honestly,” Hoseok glances at Namjoon and back, “do it. Even if you have to stay and fight until you’re standing before a pile of ashes, just do it. Otherwise you’ll regret it.”

Yoongi takes a cleansing breath, aiming to keep his volume low. No one in the room needs the supplementary stress.

“I’d feel stupid leaving Namjoon here.”

“What more do you want to do for me, hyung? I’m okay, I’m safe. And you can always text me if you’re worried.”

“That’s not it,”

“I know it’s a delicate situation, I’m not taking it personal or anything. But please go, before he thinks you don’t want to go with him.”

He tries to call again, once he’s on the road.

Taehyung, and then Jimin.

He doesn’t get through.

You: just got at tae’s

22-08-2016, 17:29

You: please come as soon as you can

22-08-2016, 17:29
The front door is not completely shut. Either a sign of patience or desertion.

Yoongi gently pushes it open, unsure what to expect, what he will, or won’t find inside. He can hear a lot of movement in the depth of the apartment, probably Taehyung’s room. It’s abrupt, rushed. It seeps panic.

Then Taehyung dashes down the hallway and into the kitchen, and Yoongi is still there, frozen a single meter in, taken off guard. The cupboards are being opened and closed, Cannelle trots out of the room, ears flat on her head.

“Tae,”

Everything stills.

Taehyung emotions are so palpable in the air, so violent, that Yoongi can feel anxiety starting to fist around his gut. He’s becoming nervous.

“Hyung?”

Their eyes meet a few seconds later, when Taehyung appears in the doorway.

“Do you really need to do this?”

But that question is useless. Taehyung’s condition tells him everything. His alarmed expression, how unfocussed he is, how he doesn’t seem to know what to do with his own hands.

“Y-Yeah, I just— I can’t—“

“Okay. Let’s go then.”

Yoongi doesn’t keep track of the things they pack. It’s done too messily for him to.

They’re in a haze, the both of them. They move in automatisms, a little rough. Like they know what they’re doing, like it’s normal. But they’re running blindly.

For the second time in his life, Yoongi is doing this.

“Where we going?”

Taehyung doesn’t say anything. And Yoongi doesn’t really mind. They’re feeding each other’s state, pulsating with fear and panic.

Another duffel bag is taken out.

Taehyung stuffs it with whatever falls under his hands. It’s a little bit of this, it’s a little bit of that. It’s goes too quick for Yoongi to process anything so he just helps him, with this urge to scream he got
stuck in his windpipe.

He takes the first bag to the entrance while Taehyung tears through the bathroom. The bottles being moved on the counter and in the cabinets resound so sharp to Yoongi’s ears, it clashes with the numbness in his fingers and the weakness in his knees.

Tuxedo cautiously approaches and smells the foreign bag and Yoongi just stares.

For a long time.

“Taehyung,”

No answer.

“Taehyung,”

The noise continues in the bathroom, unperturbed. Yoongi closes his fists, itching to grab at anything, any object that could make him feel real and existing. Like this is happening.

“Taehyung,”

“What?”

“Come here.”

And Taehyung does.

“What?”

But as he says this, his eyes dart down. And he understands.

Δ

Jimin never really liked hospitals. He figured a long time ago that it gave off the same vibe to most people. Cold and clinical, impersonal. So much pain stuck between four walls. So much happiness and so much sadness.

He hesitates in front of the room he’s been indicated, short of breath from the stress weighing on him.

Namjoon is asleep when he gets in. He’s pale, grey. Like someone who’s lost a lot of blood. One of his arms is held secure against his torso, the other is connected to a transparent bag, his fingers interlocked with Jungkook’s. His whole frame is moving in quiet trembles.

Jimin swallows, eyes watery.

“What are you doing here?” Hoseok asks in a harsh whisper. It rubs Jimin the wrong way.

Jungkook perks up, he looks like he cried a lot.

“What do you mean what are you doing here?” He keeps his tone low, but he’s frowning, vexed. He places his backpack on the floor next to the door.

“You haven’t checked your messages?”
“My phone’s dead.”

“You should check it.”

Namjoon stirs lightly, making the thin sheets rustle. Jimin clicks his tongue at the same time Seokjin places a palm to Hoseok’s shoulder to shush him. He looks tired, distressed.

“Jimin?”

He tries not to flinch at how weak he sounds.

“Hi, hyung. H—“

“I’m serious though, you should really check it.”

“Can you just,” Jimin asks for Hoseok to stop with a gesture of his hand, and he gets closer to the bed.

Ignoring Seokjin’s and Hoseok’s argument in the background, he takes a seat. He knows he can’t hold onto Namjoon’s consciousness for long. That surely he’s exhausted, that he needs to recuperate. So he keeps it short. In yes or no questions. He doesn’t touch him either, not an encouraging pat or a gentle rub, he’s much too scared of hurting him.

On the other side of the bed, Jungkook looks dazed out. He doesn’t utter a word, just looks quietly between them, thumbs running on Namjoon’s skin.

Eventually, Jimin says something that makes Namjoon smile, and he warms up, strangled with emotions.

He’s thankful Life allowed this moment to happen.

“Jimin-ah,” and he hums at Hoseok. “Check your phone?”

“Why are you like this, hyung? Seriously. Cut me some slack.”

“You should listen to him, Jimin.”

And it’s the gravity in Namjoon’s voice that makes Jimin uneasy.

“Why? What’s going on?” and when no one gives, he continues. “Does someone have a charger? I didn’t take mine with me.”

Simultaneously, Hoseok and Jungkook move. Hoseok fetches in his own backpack, Jungkook in what seems to be a bag that was brought for Namjoon, settled beside the bed.

“Thank you,” Jimin accepts what Jungkook hands him, and finds the nearest outlet.

There’s the faint sound of a kiss behind him when he bends to plug his phone that pokes at him weirdly. Then another one. He frowns in confusion.

It’s only when he straightens and looks back, that he really sees the way Jungkook is holding Namjoon’s hand, and that he understands the emotions in his eyes.

“Hum,” his confusion transpires through his posture, and surely in the fixed way he’s looking at their twined fingers. “Did I miss something?” He looks at the four others in turn, quietly pleading for an answer until his gaze gets hooked in Jungkook’s. “Are you two together?”
“Hyung,”

Jimin doesn’t fully understand that sensation that overcomes him when he hears Jungkook’s careful tone. A concoction of humiliation, of relief, of incomprehension, of contentment. It twists around his gut and makes him breathless for a still second, crawls up the skin of his neck and to his cheeks, reddening him.

“the fuck?” he squeaks.

“I’ll explain eventually, I promise,” Jungkook says. He combs his hair back with his hand, but it falls back on his forehead as messily as it already was. “But fucking please, look at your phone.”

With fuzz for a brain and static for his thoughts, Jimin does.

Yoongi hyung: are you near?
22-08-2016, 17:02

Tae: iml eaving this place
22-08-2016, 17:03

Tae: if you want to come with me ill be t
22-08-2016, 17:03

Tae: taking the road in an hour
22-08-2016, 17:03

Yoongi hyung: just got at tae’s
22-08-2016, 17:29

Yoongi hyung: please come as soon as you can
22-08-2016, 17:29

He looks at the clock at the top of his screen. 18:19.

“What the fuck?”

“We didn’t think you’d show up at all,” Seokjin says, leaning back in his chair like he’s relieved. “You should go,”

“I don’t th—”

“Yoongi didn’t want to at first, either. But we’ll stay here and we can still talk, that doesn’t change.
So it’s of no consequences to us or to Namjoon’s health if you leave now.“

“But it will be to Taehyung, if you don’t take the hand he’s offering you.”

“What if they’ve already left? Taehyung wrote that he was leaving in an hour, and it’s past that already.”

“Text them,” Jungkook whispers, “tell them to wait for you. They won’t leave, they love you.”

Before leaving, Jimin told the four of them he loved them. Just in case. He doesn’t know where Taehyung wants them to go and for how long. So he needed to tell them, to feel safer within himself.

Once in the car, he plugs his phone with the charger Jungkook lent him.

He tries to call both their phones, gets not response. Taehyung’s phone is off, Yoongi’s just rings forever.

They won’t leave, they love you.

You: im sorry hyung i just got the messages
22-08-2016, 18:29

You: im on my way, wait for me
22-08-2016, 18:29

Jimin unlocks the apartment with his spare key, takes a step in.

His heart sinks.

Emptiness. An eerie sense of absence.

Nothing has moved, the furniture is still there, the fridge and the air conditioner are still humming their steady sounds, but the place feels deserted.

“Tae?” he tries, but then he looks down and sees nothing in the shoe rack. “Hyung?”

Tuxedo comes his way, his tiny bell singing gently and Jimin’s throat closes up.

“Taehyung?”

He looks at his phone. Nothing.

“Hyung?”
He quickly looks into the living room, then speeds down the hallway to the kitchen and peeks through the doorway. It’s only a glance, but he notices them. The cupboards. Carelessly left open.

The bedroom is messy. The sheets that Jimin washed the day before are wrinkled all over, like things have been moved around on them. There’s clothes on the ground, drawers pulled out, the door of the closet is ajar, teasing with the truth.

He checks for notifications on his phone. Nothing. He calls, one, twice. Nothing.

Something heavy presses on Jimin’s ribcage, aching and making it harder to breathe.

He carefully opens the closet, stares at what’s inside, helped through the darkness by the last timid rays of sunlight. What he wants to see isn’t there anymore.

Taehyung’s duffel, and his own.

It looks like someone came in and fucked the whole place up.

It looks like they were too rushed to go.

It looks like they were too fucking rushed to wait for him.

He forces his sore throat to swallow, fights the blur distorting his vision.

“Tae?”

It’s a murmur now. Because he knows it reaches no one anyway.

He walks back to the bathroom, turns the light on on another silent, empty space.

Jimin shakes his head, wants to inhale but doesn’t manage to. Pain is burning its way through him, flaming up his nerves, his thoughts. His feelings. There’s no room left for anything else.

His arms fall limp at his side, he licks his lips. He stops thinking. He finds refuge in the second bedroom, doesn’t even flinch when his brain takes him back to the first time he got in here. Jimin sits on the floor next to the bed, his quiet phone in a hand, his keys in the other.

He doesn’t understand.

He doesn’t even know what he did wrong.

Tuxedo walks to him with stealthy paws, curious eyes. Jimin chokes, a muted sob passing his lips.

They left without the cats. He thought they loved them.

Then again, he thought they loved him too.
Jimin stays there for a while, on his back and staring at the ceiling, with that sensation in his chest that he's been carved, dug into until he was hollow and hyaline. Tux has rolled up on his chest, radiating warmth through his shirt but it doesn't reach him. Jimin's cold. Cold with a bed that he won't share with them anymore, cold with his fingers that can't hold theirs anymore.

He blinks. His eyes are uncomfortably dry.

Jimin sinks into a limbo of memories, some beautiful, some difficult to go through. Instants he should have cherished more, perhaps. Words and voices he should have loved a little more. Presences he thought he could bathe in forever.

They didn’t reach forever.

Taehyung fell and Jimin tried to hold onto him, tried to hold his hand and bring him back up but Yoongi fell too. And now Jimin doesn't know if he's still at the top of the cliff or at rock bottom. But he knows he's there alone.

He rolls his phone in his palm. He called Yoongi and Taehyung in turn, a minute or so ago. Nothing. Just misplaced hope.

When he hears the front door, he thinks he's imagining it. That particular sound always made him jitter, in anticipation or apprehension. Another part of his limbo, that’s what he thinks it is.

But Tux scampers off and Jimin’s skin goes electric at the realization.

Rustling of plastic bags, that precise way Yoongi makes his keys roll in his palm.

He sits up.

“Jimin?”

Air comes rushing back into him and he breathes, long and deep as his eyes well up.

“Jimin-ah?”

He sets his jaw, fists tight as he stands.

He collides with Taehyung as he passes through the doorway, shoves him off harshly enough to send him against the facing wall in the corridor.

“I thought you were fucking gone!”

Taehyung recoils when Jimin yells, Yoongi stands frozen a few meters away.

“Hyung got your message, why would we go without you Jimin, what the fuck.”
“Then why did no one fucking answer me?”

“I’m sorry, Jimin, I was driving, I didn’t see your calls—“

“Fuck you. It’s not hard to look at your damn fucking phone, I thought— I was so sure that you left —”

Taehyung’s arms wrap around him and he doesn’t fight it. His body surrenders and he softens in his hold, not wanting to cry but feeling it leave him nonetheless.

"We didn't mean to scare you—"

“Where were you?” he asks, cutting his words. His voice is scratchy, muted in Taehyung’s shirt.

"Pet shop. I needed some stuff. I don't know how long I'll be away so I'm bringing the cats."

And that anger Jimin felt when Tuxedo came to him slowly releases his thrumming heart.

He sees Yoongi go by, holding a reluctant Cannelle in his arms. He grabs the pet carrier where Taehyung keeps all the cats' things, shuffles back further in the apartment until Jimin can only hear him struggle to coax her into it.

Taehyung’s hands are unsteady, shaking against his back. And as he calms down, he notices just how tense the atmosphere is, how it vibrates with this urge to get out of here.

“Should I pack?” he croaks, drained.

“Everything’s already in the car.”

“But did you take me some—“

“I packed for you. I knew you’d come.”

The road to there is silent.

Yoongi offered to drive and no one objected.

Taehyung asked to be in the back with the cats, and no one objected to that either.

The buildings are only vague shapes streaming through the window on Jimin’s side. They’re already out of Seoul.

We’re going to my mother’s cottage, Taehyung said as he entered the address in the Cadillac’s integrated GPS. And Jimin stalled for a second, confused, before quietly complying. That’s the only communication there’s been between them since they got in the car.

There’s only the low purring of the engine, Cannelle’s distressed noises and their little bells ringing as they move in the cages. No music, no conversation like he knows they should be having.

He keeps making his phone twist in his sweaty palm. He’s still waiting for Hoseok to reply to him, to give him some news on Namjoon’s state.
Today is one of those days. A first stone. The birth of either a foundation, or a grave. Where time isn’t as real anymore. Where minutes add up but have no worth. It’s just an amalgam of instants, bleeding into one another.

Jimin’s been anticipating and fearing this moment for months.

The scenery changes with the dipping of the sun, a warmer light washing over the highway and the cars travelling alongside them.

Air that's fresher, saltier is coming from the rolled-down window. He knows they're headed to the coast. The GPS indicates 37 minutes to go, and every time the number drops, he gets more apprehensive.

He doesn’t know what made Taehyung snap. He still doesn’t understand what happened in the last week or so, the reasons why he dissociated. Doesn’t feel quite over that fight they had the previous night, and that sight of Yoongi leaving, nor the weight of his own backpack when he went through the door like a thief. He hasn’t heard the full story of what happened to Namjoon yet and struggles to place his relationship with Jungkook in a past that he knows.

Or thought he knew.

Jimin continuously feels like he’s missing things. Like he’s the fool everyone is lying to, or the weakling they’re all trying to protect.

His eyes drop down to his lap, his phone still lifeless in his hand.

It’s a tiny house, weakly standing on the beach.

The exterior is of a tired blue, the windows and the door used to be white. The paint is cracked in most places. The wood holding it is bare and worn out, the balcony behind is frail, small. The planks of it are too spaced up, or they're slowly breaking apart.

But it’s one of the most beautiful places Jimin has seen.

Even over Tokyo, over Paris.

Blue and white and the colour of the sand. The constant, gentle wind. The sound of the waves.

The interior is strangely comforting. Soft hues, few furniture. Just the essentials. A large bed, a rudimentary fridge, something to cook on, a wooden table, two chairs, an old couch.

He breathes easy but he notices how Taehyung stalls in the middle of the room.

Jimin hasn’t been told a lot about this place. Or about Taehyung’s mother in general. He spent so many months thinking she had passed, that this feels a little surreal. But he understands better now, some things Taehyung said, or did. The way he perceives things sometimes.

And seeing this, the whole place and how different is it from what he grew up in, is a clear enough
depiction of how his mother is living now.

Not much money. But it was a fair trade for happiness.

Yoongi gets the carriers in, places them on the floor beside the bed. Jimin meets his eyes, sees just how fogged up they are as well. There’s a kind of confusion around him. Internalized. A silent energy he oozes as he moves. And Jimin just knows that making it here didn’t solve anything.

“We got no food.”

Taehyung says this and Jimin slides his gaze to him. The line of his shoulders is still tense, his ribcage is expanding and shrinking in quick little jerks.

“I’ll go, if you want,” Yoongi rushes to say.

Jemin hates seeing him like this. Acting on culpability.

“No, I’ll go. Let’s finish unpacking and I’ll go.”

Jemin needs time to process.

Δ

Yoongi shivered when they entered the shack. He wasn't expecting this to feel so familiar. A tiny place, but a warmth powerhouse. Soft and soothing.

Just like Taehyung’s mother.

He doesn't hold that many memories of her. But she’s kind, in the images he still has. Kind, calm, melodious. A harsh contrast to his own mother. This though, he remembers well.

So when Taehyung blanks out and visibly hides within, Yoongi understands. And he doesn’t expect of him to fight it. The nostalgia. The pain. The ringing of the phone that haunts Yoongi just as much. This is the closest he’s been to her in years.

Jemin closes the door behind himself, then comes the low sound of Yoongi’s Cadillac. He’s thankful for what Jemin did. He’s thankful for Jemin.

“Tae,”

Yoongi voice hits the walls like he’s talking to no one. He gets no acknowledgement.

Instead Taehyung continues to stare right through the large, glass door that gives on the beach, and Yoongi continues to stare at his back. For a minute. And then two. Because Yoongi doesn’t know how to pick him up without breaking him.

He gave the last he could give, when he apologized this morning.

So under his lost gaze, Taehyung makes it to that door, opens it and slips out. His hair catches in the wind, his shirt, overlarge on his frame, is chaotic around him. For a moment, he’s dazed up with how bewitching this is. The sky, afire and violent as the sun descends, the sea there, reflecting the fire above and taking more than half the horizon, the sand, the ghostly way in which Taehyung walks.
Slow and solemn, closer and closer to the waves.

And suddenly Yoongi’s whole chest constricts.

He runs outside, down the balcony and onto the beach, his feet made unstable by the giving sand.

“Tae,”

He doesn’t know why it makes him so uneasy. It just does.

He calls his name again, his voice stifled by the sea that’s screaming louder. And then, when Yoongi’s caught up with him, Taehyung makes a gesture with a hand. Doesn’t look back. Just asks him to stay away with that gesture. Smooth and unthreatening at first glance, but harsh in signification.

“Where are you going?”

“I don’t know, I just wanna walk for a while.”

“Taehyung,”

“I’ll be safe. I promise.”

Yoongi swallows, the wind comes to a lull. He doesn’t like this. After what happened to Namjoon, and that rush of adrenaline with which they packed and came here, Yoongi is tired and his mind agitated with worry.

“It’s gonna be dark soon, I don’t think—"

“Hyung,” but Taehyung has always been a little wild, a force that, once upon a time, he could pride himself in being able to dance with. But not anymore. They’ve grown out of each other. “Let me go. If you love me.”

So Taehyung goes.

And Yoongi watches until he’s disappearing behind a cliff. And then for a while more, thinking it could appease the emptiness he feels inside. He gave what he was asked to give, tried to trust, and yet he still has this pressure, low, deep down, that he’s doing everything wrong.

For a year and a half, 600 days, he never stopped feeling guilty.

Jimin cries, when Yoongi tells him.

It’s not anger. It’s not resentment. It’s everything else.

He’s exhausted and Yoongi knows. He’s seen him deteriorate. Felt him weakening in his arms with every added day Taehyung kept auto-destructing.

He holds him, with a heart that’s equally as tired. For hours they sit on the balcony, on an old but comfortable long bench, and they nurture a peaceful silence. Knowing. Loving. He takes his hand in his, kisses his temple. That’s the only thing he feels like he can do in this situation they’re in.
Yoongi feeds the cats then lights up a bonfire on the beach, just a few pieces of wood to give them a sense of purpose.

And for Taehyung to see them from afar, to remind him that they’re there and waiting.

They don’t sit next to it. They watch it from where they’re cuddled and enveloped in uncertainty.

As he rubs his thumb over Jimin’s wrist, Yoongi plays on loop those few seconds that morning, when he apologized. When he finally was able to let the words go. Bared his wound and acknowledged Taehyung’s. Asked for forgiveness. He rethinks of that dead weight dropping in his gut when Taehyung turned cold on him and left him without proper closure.

And now they’re here.

Because Taehyung freaked out.

Because Namjoon got stabbed.

He sighs, his brows furrowing as he closes his eyes. Holds Jimin tighter against himself. He hopes it’s going to be fine. For Namjoon. For them. He hopes they haven’t just brought their situation to a different place.

“I’m feeling weird,” Jimin whispers over the crackling of the fire. It’s a beautiful accompaniment to the sloshing of the waves.

Yoongi twists to get them in a better position, his ribs starting to feel sore under Jimin’s body.

“What do you mean?”

“The place. I feel weird here.”

“You don’t like it?”

“I do like it. But it’s a place I don’t know, and we’re in someone else’s stuff— Taehyung’s mom’s stuff and it’s just— I didn’t even know she was still alive until a week ago?”

“Yeah, I get what you mean.”

“And nothing feels right. What happened to hyung and Taehyung is just—fucking— and then we follow him to Busan on a whim just to get abandoned on the beach to worry our asses off. The reason we’re here is sad and I feel bad about it. Such a pretty place, and we’re ruining it.”

“Don’t say that, baby,”

“Should I let go, hyung?”

Yoongi’s stomach coils at Jimin’s words.

“Don’t.”

“We’re all fucked and broken, I mean, maybe—”

“I apologized to him this morning, don’t let go now.”

“What for?”
“You know what for.”
Jimin’s fingers tighten around his, gentle and supportive. That seems to calm him down.

“And what did he say?”

“He wasn’t in a good place. The fight we had yesterday, the meeting. He didn’t react well and I can understand why.”

“But what did he say?”

“It doesn’t matter much, what he said. I just needed him to know that I was sorry.”

Yoongi sees a shadow crossing the fire’s light as he finishes his sentence. He watches it float through the wooden bars of the balcony’s railing, Jimin growing still and quiet at his side. Taehyung sits in the small set of stairs, his back to them. Even in the darkness he looks collapsed, hair a mess, his head hanging between his shoulders.

A minute passes like this, where no one knows what to do. Which hand to give, what word to say.

Then Taehyung starts shaking, rough jerks of his frame, hands coming to hide his face as quiet sobs leave his body.

“God, Tae,”

Jimin stands and Yoongi follows. Everything else vanishes.

It doesn’t matter if Taehyung spent 13 days trying to destroy everything he could, if they lost appetite because they were so full of worry. It doesn’t matter what they tried and how they failed. The things they said and the ones they should have. It doesn’t matter if they wanted to give up, if they doubted themselves and this love they share. Taehyung’s father doesn’t matter. Neither does those companies they’re enslaved into.

What matters now, is this moment.

Together to they sit with him, they put him in the middle. Because they know it’s where he really seeks to be. Taehyung lets them, accepts their touches and that support he never wanted to get used to. Surrenders.

They enfold him and, silently, bring him to a more serene state. They hold still in this space that’s so fragile, incomplete yet perfect.

For most of the night, they exist where they belong.

In love.

Chapter End Notes
I usually try to answer most of the comments but last week's chapter got so many that I got overwhelmed and panicked a little? Obviously that's never a bad thing and I want you guys to know that I'm always thankful for every comment I get, and every kudos♡
We passed the 2k kudos mark and it's a little surreal to me. So thank you guys! And I'll work harder on the comments for the next updates!
Morning brings warm air, a blinding sun. He can see it even from behind his eyelids, that scorching white on the walls, all that light coming from outside.

He rolls onto his back, carefully pries his eyes open. The thin curtains are swaying in front of the opened windows, the sea is still living and powerful.

"'Morning," comes Jimin’s voice beside him, feathery, breathy. Yoongi gropes about on the mattress, in search of warmth. In search of Taehyung. And when only Jimin's fingers wrap around his, he frowns. Doubt is still so vivid and vibrant in him. "He's out smoking on the balcony. He's okay."

He turns his head to the side, noticing the space between his body and Jimin's. He nods, gives his hand a light squeeze. Jimin's so beautiful, as eerie as what's around. Lying on his side at an arm's length away, his silky hair, his sleepy eyes, all that love that shines in him. So much love, that Yoongi isn't even sure he deserves it, after all this. He doesn't dare to smile, doesn't want to assume that they're okay, now.

"Come here," he says instead and closes his arms around Jimin when he comes to snuggle against him.

For a while they remain like that. Maybe it's the fear of what's going to follow, the edge they slipped from the previous night when Taehyung shattered in their hold. Maybe it's the refusal to let go of this feeling they have here, dreamlike, otherworldly. As if they stepped into another reality. It's nothing like the time they went to Yokohama, when they, for the first time, felt that tiny flicker of freedom.

Here there isn't the constant fuss of the cars, there's no voices of strangers. There's no fight for attention, no bright neons and meters-large ads flashing wherever they take their eyes. Here it's raw. Nothing superficial. No place to hide. It's just them. That makes it that much more frightening. And if one of them was to leave here, if they fight and separate, then it's going to be final.

He kisses Jimin's hair, sighs when his waist is being held tighter. He knows too. They're both scared.

Time drags them through the day. It's sluggish but peaceful. It's just one big conversation of silence that they have, sat in the kitchen, or outside. But Taehyung accepts them, just like he did the previous night. He utters no word about what they all know and avoid and Yoongi doesn't feel like pushing him to do so. The questions that linger can be answered later.

Months, years, maybe.

If it goes well, they might be graced with that.

In late afternoon, after they've talked with Seokjin and Hoseok, they put the harnesses and the leashes they bought on the cats. It sets for a lighter mood, to watch them squirm in it. Taehyung still
bears sadness in his eyes but he does smile, bright, and Yoongi's heart flutters in his chest.

They take them to the beach, but never too close the water, they sit with them and allow them to hide under their bent legs for calm moments in the shade. Taehyung has them play with tiny branches, with dried up algae. It's good to see him like that. Yoongi believes their lives would have been different if only Taehyung had been allowed as little as a cat companion in his childhood.

He's happy they're able to do that now. Even if it's over ten years overdue.

They have a lot to catch up on.

Yoongi goes down the set of stairs, his bare feet liking the tepidity of the sand.

His eyes are not leaving Taehyung’s silhouette, haven’t for a while. He’s sitting just a little further. Close to the rising tide, shape backlit by the flourishing sunset.

Taehyung chose to stay on the beach when they brought the cats back in, but it’s been over an hour and a half and he’s still there and Yoongi kept looking at him, felt like he needed to get to him. You should go, hyung, Jimin whispered, wrapped around his back, I think he needs you. And it didn’t take much more than that little push to set him into motion.

He takes place next to him, wanting his presence undisturbing. He crosses his shins, breathes in deep. Taehyung is playing with the sand the same way he did the few rare times they experienced the beach together. Years ago. His fingers are drawing mindless patterns in the malleable texture beside his thighs, pressing and digging, then filling the holes back up.

“I’m tired,” Taehyung says, acknowledging him.

He doesn't make eye contact, keeps his stare to the horizon. To the pinks and oranges ripping the sky and the sea sharing the same colours, just for a sliver of time.

“I know,” Yoongi says, gently. He plucks himself a cigarette from his pack, then offers one to Taehyung, who shakes his head.

“I know this place is pretty, but I’ve been feeling dead for days, hyung, I can’t see it anymore.”

“See what?”

“Beauty. Tangible or not. What’s sane. What isn’t. It’s just, all gone. I know things but can’t process them properly. My thoughts are barely mine most of the time and it gives me this—sensation of being in a borrowed body. I hate it.”

Yoongi zones out. His skin rises in goosebumps. He takes a drag, appreciates the familiarity and clings to it.

He knows that feeling Taehyung is talking about. Intimately. It was ephemeral and a long time ago, short episodes when Taehyung was there and unconsciously helping him up.

And today Taehyung has someone to be with him the way he was with Yoongi, back then.

It’s Jimin. Not him.
Because he hasn’t let him get close enough to allow that, since he came back.

He watches Taehyung close his fist around a handful of soil and throw it further away, the way a child would do.

“What happened with Namjoon?” he risks.

He notices the slight flinch that moves through Taehyung’s body, the way his eyes shoot to his feet. If Taehyung wants to turn him down, he will. But he might also need to get this off his chest.

Yoongi doesn’t know what else to do anyway, other than try and tear apart the hurt that’s weighing on him.

Taehyung says nothing for a few minutes but Yoongi knows he’s heard and knows it’s the time he needs to retrieve everything within himself. He doesn’t force anything. Just gambles at placing his hand atop of his stilled one.

Taehyung then spreads his fingers for Yoongi to slip his own in the thin spaces, which he does. And he tightens.

I’m here.

“T—I honestly don’t remember much,” Taehyung’s voice is broken, feeble and bare. “I got no clear visuals of the scene. I’m sorry I can’t help more than that.”

“Don’t apologize, baby,”

“It’s very, blurry? Like it didn’t really happen? It’s fucking me up. But one of the guys started—being rough with him? And shouldn’t have stepped in but I did. The next thing I can properly remember is the waiting room at the hospital.”

Yoongi nods, aware that Taehyung might not be seeing him. He takes his cigarette to his lips, lets the words sink in.

“I don’t know what to do anymore, hyung.”

“About what?”

“You and me.”

For a second, he’s perplexed by the abrupt change in subject. But then something drops onto him, heavy enough to choke him. Anger. Resentment. Regret.

“What do you mean?”

“It’s easy to lose someone. You hold onto them too loosely or too tight and they leave. I’m—I don’t know. I’m stuck, I guess. Because I’m scared to try with you again. And I can’t let you go either. But you already know that.”

“I do.”

“I’ll never really understand why you left that day, hyung. To what extreme you were driven to make you think it was a good idea to leave me alone in that hospital room.”

Yoongi licks his lips, throat tight, guilt compressing his chest.
“I’m so sorry, Tae,”

“I know you are. And I know that you loved me just like I loved you and that you must have fought hard against yourself to step into that plane. So there must have been a good reason.”

“There wasn’t.”

Taehyung meets his eyes. They mirror fatigue, they’re red and glazed over. But no rejection. And Yoongi is grateful for that.

“There was, back then. Otherwise you wouldn’t have done this.”

“It doesn’t justify anything.”

“You’re hard on yourself, aren’t you? More than I am on you.”

“I deserve it.”

“If I,” Taehyung’s hand slips away from Yoongi’s, “if I work on myself, hyung, if I commit on healing and accepting things,” he stands, looks down at Yoongi, “you have to work on yourself too. Because the way we are, right now, it’s never going to work. We can’t go anywhere like that.”

Yoongi’s eyes water, sight blurry as he looks at Taehyung removing his shirt, then his pants.

*What does this mean for us?*

“What are you doing?” is what comes out. He gets nothing in return. “Tae,” he calls again, but it’s just a fragile plea. He knows it won’t stop him.

Taehyung walks into the water, remnants of waves coming to crash on his skin. There’s nothing remotely reassuring in what’s happening, but when he looks over his shoulder and sees Jimin in the patio door watching just like he is, he takes a deep breath. They’re here. Looking out for him.

Yoongi stares at the still vivid bruises along Taehyung’s ribs, dusky patches draped across his waist, his thighs. He aches a little more. He doesn’t know how it happened, doubts he really wants to hear it.

He bends his legs, brings them closer to his chest after killing his cigarette in the sand.

There’s something tragically beautiful about what Taehyung is doing, about the untamed force he exerts as he cuts through the water. With those colours that match hell as much as they talk of a flourishing spring, playing on the smoothness of his shoulders, glistening in his hair. He trails his fingers on the surface, feathery, controlled touches.

He’s grown so much.

For so long Yoongi considered them as one, their thoughts, their feelings. Their way of dealing with hardships.

It’s heartbreaking to realize he was wrong. Memories he must mourn. But it’s also mesmerizing, intriguing.

When he’s far enough that water reaches his hips, Taehyung dips, disappears under a wave. Yoongi’s air catches in his lungs, eyes nervously raking through the horizon, waiting for him to emerge.
He comes up, even further then he was. He’s facing the sky, keeping still amongst a sea that moves in fierce iridescence. He gets lost in the scenery, unmoviing and seemingly contemplating, and Yoongi falls in love all over again.

Of the Taehyung who speaks through his silence, who sways him with the simplest of gestures.

Of the Taehyung who taught him, a long time ago, that it was okay to open up, to let his guards down when there’s only his dearest ones around.

Of the Taehyung who always loved so hard, boundless, selfless.

Of the Taehyung who kept saying he was fine on his own, but without fail reached for his hand.
And held it. Tight, tight. That never let go.

Yoongi was the one who did that.

And he’s not going to let it happen again.

A few minutes pass, during which Yoongi floats between himself and that sea he’s facing, imagining a way the three of them could work. Fantasizing. Taehyung then dives again and he perks up, alert.

This time when he resurfaces, it’s closer to the coast. Yoongi goes breathless when their gazes meet.
Taehyung rakes his fingers through his hair, strands dripping and jaw set, eyes warm with something carnal.

Yoongi feels it burning through him, consuming his guilt and his resolve, and he follows him in this shift of mood. He’s beautiful. Entrancing. And when Taehyung takes the first steps out of the sea and that he drops to his knees, Yoongi lets him crawl to him. Expects him. Cups the back of his head when he’s close enough and pulls him in for a kiss.

It’s desperate, clingy. Ravaging and rough. Like they haven’t touched each other in years, two lovers finally meeting again. Droplets seep through his clothes, stingy, uncomfortable and he tenses, breath itching against Taehyung’s cold lips.

He’s being pushed and forced to recline though he offers no resistance, knows too well the urge in Taehyung’s fingers as they grip at his shirt. The one he hasn’t felt on his skin for so long, in his bones, and in his heart. This urge that carries a feeling that’s as old as their story.

The sand is still heated and supple under him, the last parcels of the day fading behind the horizon, and he shifts, accommodating Taehyung as he straddles his hips. His fingers find an easy place at the base of his thighs, the flesh moist and cool, but soft under his touch.

When their lips part, Yoongi remains stunned, eyes closed, for a few seconds. And when he blinks them open, it’s only to fall in Taehyung’s tender ones, just a few inches above.

“\textquote I missed you, hyung.\"”

He searches his stare, tingling with hope. Taehyung brings his hands to Yoongi’s cheeks, delicate now, and he says it again.

“I really missed you a lot.”
Jimin’s mouth twists in a tight smile, looking at Taehyung and Yoongi lost in each other on the beach before he turns away, squeezes his eyes shut.

“Why would this make me cry,” he croaks, pressing the heel of his palm into his eye socket.

This is happy.

He crosses the tiny room until he’s in the bathroom, sprinkling his face with water to ground himself.

I should be happy.

Jimin knows this moment belongs to them. It’s their part of the story, their part of the relationship, but he wishes he were there with them, when they finally caved into each other.

It’s bittersweet, somehow.

Δ

Yoongi senses Taehyung start to tremble under his hands, quick little jerks of his ribcage. Through the haze enveloping them, the stops the slow grind of their hips, tries to gently push him up. But Taehyung stiffens, resists.

Yoongi knows what’s happening.

They break apart and Taehyung goes to hide in his shoulder, drops all of himself onto him. Asking for comfort. Yoongi’s throat closes up.

“Tae,”

“I’m fine,” he whispers, tone weak. Yoongi hears too clearly how he’s trying not to break into sobs. “Let me go through this. I need it.”

He wants to tell him he doesn’t need to cry, but he’d be talking through his hat. He has no right to tell him that. That would be selfish. Because the truth is that he always hated seeing Taehyung in tears. When he was five, when he was 15. Today is no different.

“Okay,” he breathes, unfolds him. He feels helpless.

He keeps him close to his own body, safe and wanted. Taehyung fights through it, leaving soft pecks to Yoongi’s neck, then more lingering ones, his trembling gradually melting into unsure touches. Yoongi gives content sighs, letting him deal with it the way he sees fit. And then when their sternums are moving in hurried breaths and that their hips have found a rhythm again, he slips his hands to the small of his back, slowing him down.

“Taehyung-ah, you wanna go?”

Taehyung nods in his neck, his fingers slowly letting go of Yoongi’s shirt.

“Let’s go then.”
Jimin presses his palms to his face one last time, cold rivulets trailing down his jaw and his neck in a refreshing contrast on his warmed skin. He turns off the tap, brings his eyes to his own reflection, brushes a few wet strands away from his face.

He wonders where he’s supposed to stand now.

The patio door is being opened and he whips his head back, surprised, then steps out of the small room.

Taehyung gets in, with his hair half dried from the maritime wind, jeans undone and torso bare and coloured in darker colours, golden skin still pearled with translucent droplets. They stare at each other and Jimin stuns under the intensity of it, feeling him approaching and closing on him.

He throws Yoongi a short glance, finds him looking as feline as Taehyung, his orbs dark with want and it suffices to send him spiralling.

“I want you,” Taehyung rasps and Jimin just dumbly nods, despair clawing at him from the inside.

When Taehyung’s curves his palms around his cheeks and that their lips meet, when Yoongi’s touch wraps around his waist and his nose comes to his neck, when the last minutes of their old relationship becomes the first minutes of this new one, this acceptance Jimin feels at that very moment, it’s what he’s been waiting for for months.

“I love you so much,” he murmurs into thick air, to no one specifically but to the both of them.

His eyelids slip shut when Taehyung kisses him again, pliant as he tries not to yield under those harsh emotions washing over him. He’s being lifted, Taehyung’s arm hooking under his thighs, and brought to the bed where Yoongi takes over.

In a mess of hands and shallow breaths, his clothes are taken off and he’s being laid on his front. Yoongi works him open, whispering soft praises to him, caging his body with his own and Jimin can just arch his back prettily and offer himself. Yoongi’s tone in moments like these always made him weak and fluttery.

He drops his head in the mattress. The opened window lets in colder air that makes him shiver, that makes him feel electric and he gives a soft hiss, fingers clamping in the sheet beneath. He can hear Taehyung’s breathy groans next to him, the wet presses of lips on Yoongi’s skin, can feel him moving around the bed, unsure of what’s he’s doing.

“Kiss me,” comes Taehyung’s voice to his ear and he straightens, hazy and feeling heavy, vision blurry. The gaze he meets is nothing short of loving, so different from this cold box they’ve been stuck in for the past two weeks. Jimin shivers when Yoongi nips at his shoulder then tilts his chin, offers his mouth to Taehyung.

They make out, almost too lazy for Jimin’s needy state, their tongues touch in this teasing way that makes him want to whine. His whimpers die between their kisses, his thighs tense with how vibrant want is shining within and with brows furrowed, he tries to press his body against Yoongi’s.

“Can you get up?” Yoongi rasps, giving his waist a light pat, and he, docile, nods and obeys,
breaking contact with Taehyung.

He’s quivering all over, arms straining on such an easy move. He’s a little numb and overwhelmed, anticipating. He doesn’t want to think too much of the signification of what happened on the beach, if that was a kind of promise, if things are better, now. He wants to stay grounded in, experiencing this, experiencing them. Too many times he thought of days or moments as their last together.

But he’s through with that. Jimin is tired of living every instant fearing it might be swallowed by their problems the second after. He’s going to love them like they’re ephemeral, always, because people come and they go and it’s too easy to lose someone in the depth of time. But he knows now, after four months, weeks of insecurities and sometimes despair, but also after all this love and hope, that he’s not going to let go. He can’t. He’ll be the mediator to their pain if he needs to. Until they’ve healed, and that their hearts have found their perfect harmony again. The new one they’ll have found for themselves.

He swallows, blooming with so much, with things that are too hard to put into words.

Taehyung makes a move to slide under his shaky frame and Jimin makes room for him. He’s unused to that position, but likes seeing him like that, on his back and thighs brought up, likes that he can fit between them like Taehyung usually fits between his. Yoongi’s cock brushes against the soft flesh of Jimin’s ass then lightly nudges at his hole and his eyes roll in the back of his head, skin buzzing.

“Are you good?”

Jimin eagerly nods at Yoongi’s question, huffs when his large palm on his back pushes him so he’s chest to chest with Taehyung, their mouths meeting, wet and sloppy.

Yoongi presses into him at an excruciatingly slow pace, bent over them and groaning in satisfaction. He takes both of Taehyung’s hands, interlaces their fingers and brings them just beside his head. Jimin feels trapped. In the best of ways. Caged and owned and wanted.

Belonging.

Those moments when there’s no wall between them so very rarely happened that it feels a little surreal, after how close they were to break.

The thrusts come and he feels them too well, with the limited amount of lube they used. They didn’t bring any, sex probably the last thing on their mind when they came from the hospital, so they had to use those tiny packets Jimin takes around in his backpack.

“Fuck,” he chokes, forehead coming to rest on Taehyung’s collarbone.

He breathes in short little puffs, body adjusting and hips moving in smooth undulations, his cock pressed against Taehyung’s, squeezed between them. And for a few seconds, he wonders how they’ll manage to stretch him for Taehyung to come in as well, with a slide already that rough.

“Jimin-ah,”

He shivers, Taehyung whispering so close to his ear making him flare up.

“Jimin-ah, i—if you want, I’d like you—fuck me?”

He goes rigid, surprised. His ribcage stutters and his mind clouds up with arousal. He whines, long and low.
“Only if you wa-ant, though, I know—”

“Lift your hips,” Jimin demands, bringing himself up, Yoongi shifting slightly to allow them to move. “Lift your hips for me.”

Taehyung tilts his pelvis and Jimin slithers a hand in the tight space between their bodies, holding his eyes, wanting to smooth a digit around his hole, wanting to finger him. But it’s slippery already.

“I already prepped, you can—”

And without break eye contact, Jimin fists his own cock, and drives himself into him. His lips fall open at the sensation, one he only felt a handful of times before but that was always laced with something darker and uncomfortable. But this feels right. It feels good, hot and welcoming and perfect. No pressure, just the desire that’s enveloping them, and the mutual want of it.

“Oh g-god,” Taehyung moans under him but Jimin is breathless, drowning in them.

From there, control slips out of him. He moves the way they move, he follows them and their rhythm, lets Yoongi push him further into Taehyung’s warmth. He hears the way they talk to each other and about him, in hoarse voices and fiery words, he hears their choked little sounds when they move in that harmonized passion. But Jimin’s silent. Too lost in everything. He breathes shallow, quaking limbs, overflowing heart, overdriven senses. In his haze, he recognizes the sensation of their lips on him, Yoongi gnawing at his nape, Taehyung placing wet kisses to his jaw, under his ear.

He doesn’t last long, with his skin too sensitive everywhere they touch, with Taehyung writhing under him, with Yoongi praising him and telling him how good he feels. Jimin comes with a strangled cry, thrusting hard into Taehyung one last time, and pressing as deep as he can reach.

He takes a few moments to catch his breath, for his lungs to recuperate and his muscles to loosen up. Yoongi is moving is shallow motions inside of him, and it’s bordering on too much, but Jimin has always liked it. Being brought further every time. He pulls out with a hiss, skin clammy with sweat, and he props himself on his elbows.

He gives Taehyung’s lips a few tender kisses, sighs when Yoongi rubs his back with a heated hand.

“You wanna go again?” Taehyung asks him, between satisfied exhales.

Jimin takes a few seconds to consider, and truthfully, he’d like to. But there’s something he’d like to do even more.

“I wanna watch?” his chest quivers when Yoongi’s cock slide into him at just the right angle. “Just like you did in Yokohama. I’d like that.”

He perceives the wave of stress that courses through Taehyung then, see his throat bobbing and feels the urgency in his fingers as he gently wraps them around his bicep.

“Not gonna leave, I’ll s-stay—ah, fuck—I’ll stay on the bed with you, but I feel like—I dunno. Is that okay?”

Taehyung’s eyes leave his and shoot up to meet Yoongi’s. Jimin knows he’s putting them on the spot, but he also knows it might be an important thing for them to do. Try to find intimacy in their three-person-relationship. Something that will only belong to them.

They can’t be the same couple they were two years ago anymore, but they can’t only be a couple when Jimin’s there neither.
Yoongi’s hips come to a stop, Jimin’s own wanting to roll back against him still. He allows himself to rest his head on Taehyung’s chest for a brief moment, noticing the silent conversation they’re having, and how the decision will remain Taehyung’s.

“Oh-Okay.”

It’s emotional in a way Jimin can’t quite place.

It lacks the hostility there used to be in their interactions, it’s poised and slow and careful.

At first, Jimin awkwardly kept in a corner of the mattress, sitting and draped in their emotions, unsure what to do of himself. Until he realized that they were so far gone into each other, that they were so accepting of this moment right here, that he was the only one to feel weird about it.

He watched Taehyung ride Yoongi in the most non-sexual way he had ever seen. It was just a sway, their way to dance, and Jimin could imagine them to be like that, before. When they used sex as a mean to love instead of to solve things.

He watched them kiss, tongue at each other’s lips, until arousal burnt bright in him again, having him fist at his own cock. It’s beautiful and meaningful in a satisfying way.

Then Taehyung straightens, back arched and head thrown back, a muffled whimper passing his lips. His skin is glistening, as much from the sun he caught in the few hours they spent outside today than from the effort he’s putting at moving in Yoongi’s lap.

“Are you gonna come inside me?”

Yoongi’s fingers dig further into the flesh of Taehyung’s hips.

“D’you want me to come inside?”

“Y-yes, please, hyung, ah—”

And Yoongi urges him back down and against his own chest, demands for a kiss that he’s granted.

“I love you,” he says. It’s whispered close to Taehyung’s mouth, aimed at him perhaps, but Jimin still catches it, feels it vibrate in his bones all the same.

And Taehyung doesn’t respond, just breaks into sobs that’s more heartbreaking than everything Jimin has witnessed in the last months, no matter how joyful that moment is. Jimin’s hand stills on his own cock, eyes too wet. And mesmerized, he looks at Taehyung come under Yoongi’s touch and crumble under these feelings they hadn’t been able to pour onto each other in a long time.

Yoongi gives him room to breathe, soothes his palms down his back just long enough to guide him through it, before clutching his waist. He fucks him in forceful but lingering thrusts, Taehyung shaking through soft whines, tired but giving. Then Yoongi falls apart, eyes squeezing shut and body tensing before he shudders, pressing his lips to Taehyung’s hair to quieten the broken sound that escapes him.

Jimin slips his eyes shut as he listens to them come down, their rushed breathings in duet with the sound of the waves coming from outside. Comforting, in some way.
Suddenly everything is very still, motionless. The veil is slowly lifted, it’s coming to an end. This feels like a dream they’re waking up from.

But he’s not as scared of it anymore. He knows he shouldn’t be. Because this time it feels different. Different from all those other times where Yoongi and Taehyung cut through the fleshiest part of their tenderness with their pretense. There isn’t a bitter emotion underlying their silence as they continue to hold onto one another.

The door is still open.

Surely no one is going to run out.

Yoongi flips them on their sides, the bed shaking with their agitation. Taehyung makes a small noise in the back of his throat when Yoongi pulls out and Jimin’s body goes lax, lungs deflating and core flooded with contentment at how careful and affectionate they’re being.

“Come here,” Taehyung pleads, making Jimin swell from the need that’s seeping through his voice. He trails his gaze to Yoongi, anticipating his reaction, his approbation. “Jiminnie,” Taehyung repeats and Jimin finally snaps out of it.

“You sure?” The last thing he wants is to intrude.

The both breathe a confirmation in the same words, and Jimin flutters, his emotions vivid and blooming.

Jimin loves every facet of Yoongi’s, every one of Taehyung’s just the same. But those, especially. It’s the novelty, maybe. But he could stand and watch them be, just be, and he wouldn’t get tired.

Taehyung gets crowded between their bodies and he doesn't try to escape. He sighs and accepts Jimin's arms around his waist, Yoongi's legs tangled with his.

Perhaps, Jimin thinks, perhaps this time it's gonna work.
It’s a few days that pass like that, the sea, the sand and their lost souls.

Yoongi has long since stopped trying to make his father understand the reason of his absence, and he, just like Taehyung, abandoned his discharged phone in a corner of the shack.

He's sitting outside, in the stairs giving on the beach, the two leashes around his ankle so that the cats won't escape. He brings his cigarette to his lips. It's not as satisfying when it's that warm and sunny outside.

A little further, following the outline of the sea, Taehyung and Jimin are walking. Hand in hand. A slow perambulation that speaks of the infinity of time. They’ve been doing that a lot. They talk and they pick up tiny shells, pretty and smooth rocks that they put in a small box. Yoongi knows where they’ll put it. He knows they’re going to use it as a testimony of these moments they’re flourishing through.

They’re in light clothes that catch in the wind like sails of a ship, their hair unkempt because they don’t need to keep up appearances, but they're serene and bright even through their lows and that makes them the most beautiful.

Particularly Jimin, who’s floating in one of Taehyung’s overlarge shirts. He always looked the best wearing those. And tonight, when the air will have freshened up, that they’ll be silent and comfortable around a bonfire and that Jimin will have put on one of Taehyung’s sweater, Yoongi knows he will have the same thought.

Jimin, he finds, isn’t that different inside wealth than outside. He’s never been really picky to begin with, gentle and willing to compromise. Yoongi imagines it has to do with the stability he found in what he’s doing. The fact that he's living his own life, and didn't have to hide who he is, even in front of associates or new clients.

Taehyung, well Taehyung was never really meant for the sky-high life. He wears luxury like only few can, but always did it because that’s what he was taught. Because he hadn’t been offered anything else. Never really had a choice, wasn’t allowed to decide for himself. Younger, Yoongi wanted to give him that kind of freedom, but couldn’t. And felt responsible for it.

Still does.

Yoongi has a lot to let go of. Probably much more than he expected.
It's strange how days and nights melt together now that there're no responsibilities tying them to their time. They live on the rhythm they see fit, be it the sun or the moon reigning on the sky.

Today is particularly cold, with the wind shaking up the walls and the rain singing in the windows. Jimin is crammed on one side of the bed, drowsy, with Taehyung and Yoongi sleeping beside him. His thighs are sore and his skin still buzzing from how rough they were with each other, making love and emerging at the same time.

His phone vibrates in his hand and he swiftly unlocks it.

He’s aware that he’s the only one who still has a tie with the outside world. That Yoongi and Taehyung got to the point where they got so fed up with everything, that they just had to cut any mean of contact and enter radio silence.

So he’s the one relaying the updates about Namjoon’s state, because he knows they’re still worried and that they want to know.

Hobi hyung: i went to see him yesterday and hes better
26-08-2016, 13:13

Hobi hyung: hes home and he moves around just fine
26-08-2016, 13:13

Hobi hyung: and he can sleep now, but still needs the meds
26-08-2016, 13:14

Hobi hyung: but im not too worried, his mood is great
26-08-2016, 13:14

You: man thats good to hear
26-08-2016, 13:14

Hobi hyung: and jungkookie is always with him so
26-08-2016, 13:15

You: yeah about that
26-08-2016, 13:15
**Hobi hyung**: hes in good hands  
26-08-2016, 13:15

**Hobi hyung**: yeah what  
26-08-2016, 13:15

**You**: did you know? about them  
26-08-2016, 13:16

**Hobi hyung**: yeah i did  
26-08-2016, 13:19

**Hobi hyung**: ive known for 2 weeks  
26-08-2016, 13:19

**Hobi hyung**: 3 maybe  
26-08-2016, 13:19

Jimin frowns. He fights that sentiment of betrayal crawling up his stomach.

**You**: wtf?  
26-08-2016, 13:19

**You**: why did no one tell me  
26-08-2016, 13:20

**Hobi hyung**: because you were having it rough with hyung and tae  
26-08-2016, 13:27

**You**: that doesnt mean that i dont care about my friends anymore  
26-08-2016, 13:27
Hobi hyung: i know that
26-08-2016, 13:28

Hobi hyung: thats not how they meant it either
26-08-2016, 13:28

Hobi hyung: its just a touchy subject for them
26-08-2016, 13:28

Hobi hyung: and when they finally decided to talk about it, you were overwhelmed
26-08-2016, 13:29

Hobi hyung: so they didnt wanna add a layer
26-08-2016, 13:29

**You:** what do you mean ‘finally’
26-08-2016, 13:29

**You:** how long have they been together
26-08-2016, 13:30

Hobi hyung: almost 4 months now
26-08-2016, 13:31

“What?” he spits, half-whispering as to not rouse the others.

**You:** WHAT?
26-08-2016, 13:31

**You:** youre fucking with me
26-08-2016, 13:31

Hobi hyung: im not
Hobi hyung: so don't worry I felt like a monster as well for not realizing

You: well I did notice something

You: but I thought it was with Seokjin hyung

Hobi hyung: it's a bit complicated

Hobi hyung: so you should ask them

Jimin drops his phone in his lap. This is no better than having been told when Taehyung kept running away at night. It's as intense and confusing. He thinks it's worse, even, because he had to be told in a mismatched context.

You: I feel bad

Hobi hyung: I know, I do too

You: all those times he asked me questions and I didn't answer

You: or avoided it

You: because I didn't think he was being serious
Hobi hyung: its fine jiminie

And Jimin wonders if it’s really that healthy if they kept it hidden for so long.

Hobi hyung: and how is it going for you now

Hobi hyung: yesterday you told me it was getting better

Hobi hyung: and hyung stopped answering my texts like 2 days ago?

You: yeah, he and tae threw their phones in a closet

You: theyre tired

You: id say its still going okay

You: i just dont know how long this situation will last

You: not really sustainable

They will run into that wall one way or another.
What now.

But they’re not ready for that, yet.

Hobi hyung: and youre missing uni

26-08-2016, 13:47

You: yeah but thats the least of my concerns

26-08-2016, 13:47

“Jimin-ah,”

“Mhm?”

Yoongi rolls away from Taehyung and towards him, manages to drape an arm around his waist even with the way he’s sitting.

“What’s the time?”

“Almost two.”

Jimin eyes him, waiting for something else that doesn’t come. Yoongi falls back asleep as fast as he woke, with a serenity in his features that Jimin likes a lot.

This, this is how they should have started.

You: i’ll find a way to catch up

26-08-2016, 13:48

Hobi hyung: and hows taehyung?

26-08-2016, 13:53

You: hes okay

26-08-2016, 13:54

You: hes been having nightmares a lot and hes jumpy

26-08-2016, 13:54

You: but hes dealing
“Hyung,” the words are aimed at Yoongi but Jimin tilts his chin up nonetheless. Taehyung’s voice is relaxed, there isn’t that tired ring to it anymore but his fingers have started nervously digging in the sand. “We’ve been here for a week.”

“M’yeah.”

The sun has just set, having the sky fade to a deep blue, and they should be headed inside to cook dinner. But the more time passes, the more they find it difficult to let go of moments like those.

“You should probably go back.”

Jimin’s stare swiftly goes from Taehyung to Yoongi and back. Attentive. What grows between them is a sort of wariness, exaggerated precautions. He didn’t think Taehyung would be the one to address the elephant in the room.

“Go back to do what?”

“I wouldn’t want you to get in trouble with the company because of me.”
A weighty silence. Jimin takes his eyes further, where Cannelle and Tuxedo are resting, their tails calmly tapping on the ground.

Maybe Taehyung is testing.

Or maybe he’s trying to minimize the damages of what he might still be thinking is his fault. This whole situation between them, and then what happened with Namjoon.

“I don’t care about that, Tae.”

“Hyung.”

“I don’t care for how long I have to be gone. I already—”

“But it’s your job, you can’t just—”

“I already told my father I was on leave. Now if your father wants to fire me, then so be it. I’m not leaving until you leave.”

Taehyung then glances at Jimin, long and searching. Asking.

"Nope," Jimin breathes, barely a murmur against the breezes that keeps brushing past them. "Not leaving either."

Taehyung sighs and reclines back, accepts Jimin’s fingers when they slip between his.

Jimin knows. Jimin understands. There’s still too many unsaid things, too many unshed skins of remorse. Yoongi and Taehyung are not fixed.

It takes time.

But when Taehyung abruptly wakes from a nap on the couch that evening, when he gasps for air, when he’s confused and trembling and sweaty and calling their names, Yoongi goes to him and holds him. For a long time.

“I’m right here,” he says. “I’m not going anywhere. I promise.”

Δ

Taehyung blinks his eyes open, only to squeeze them shut again with a quiet huff.

The light is already so bright at this time of the day. It's seven in the morning, he finds, when he picks Jimin's phone from the floor and takes a peek at the digital clock on the screen.

The bed creaks when he leaves it, his feet not feeling quite trustworthy as he walks. He shivers, chest bare and still groggy. He makes it to the beach, to those few meters where the waves come to die. And he stares, straight ahead.

Such soft and pretty colours for the most violent and powerful of forces, one that's never mistaken. He drifts into the immensity of what lays in front of him, earth and sky blending where no one can see.
Then for a while, the sound of the water sloshing is appeasing. It’s a slow cadence, predictable and grounding, allowing his brain to find a balance.

Until its rustling starts being too similar to those vicious whispers he keeps fighting.

*You’re not fine.*

*You’ll never be.*

*Give up. You’re wasting their time.*

*When they could be happy.*

He closes his eyes and frowns, lets the flare of pain it creates dissipate as he breathes.

It’s true, that he still frays sometimes when Yoongi touches him. That he bristles and wants to push him away. Because it feels too familiar and he hates it. He spent too much time longing for it in a past of desolation that when his head feels grey, the warmth of Yoongi’s skin on his own makes him sick. It’s true that once in a while, seeing him and Jimin makes him want to disappear, even when they’re looking at him with arms outstretched. It’s so much, and at the same time, not quite enough.

Taehyung hasn’t stopped being scared.

He’s just stopped running.

But his thoughts haven’t. And he’s aware that they might be there and walk side by side with him like an old friend for a long time. He supposes he’ll have to accept them, those soliloquies inside his head.

He breathes deep, feels his lungs expand between the cage of his ribs.

It’s over now. There’s no use in suppressing anything anymore.

*People will keep leaving your side, just like you’ll keep leaving theirs,* Jimin told him the previous night. He was held tight against Taehyung’s chest, his drunk fingertips fluttering on the sober skin of his waist. *But that doesn’t mean that you’re unworthy, or that you’re not important. That’s just the way it is. People share and people grow, but parting might be necessary to continue growing.*

And Taehyung knows that. Objectively, he does. But the way he feels it is different.

*So what’s gonna be enough to make you stay forever?* he sighed in Jimin’s hair, alcohol making his tongue loose.

*I’m more me when I’m with you.*

Taehyung frowns, the peace of that moment sloshing away with the next wave breaking at his feet. He lightly sways to the mood of the wind, the sun warming his cheeks, blinding him even through shut eyelids. As the days go by, he’s becoming in sync with this place. It speaks to him like nowhere else ever did, and when he happens to be staring at the worn-out couch or the dull colours of the bedspread, he presumes it’s because it belongs to his mother. That it’s because he can find himself in the soul she gave the cottage.

And he, with a hesitating mind, tries to imagine what he’d be like, if he’d left with her so many years ago. Perhaps leaner, kinder. Perhaps he’d still be dyeing his hair pretty colours, the ones Yoongi would like the most. He’d know how to live modestly, would have grown up with at least two cats
and a dog, would have had to work to pay for tuition and wouldn’t get much sleep, but it would have felt worth it.

Now the only positive thing he can find in the studies he’s done is having met Jimin.

And as if on cue, hands gently come to his waist, slide until they’re joining on Taehyung’s belly. Jimin.

“Why are you up so early?”

A soft whisper, soothing like gusts of salty air. Taehyung shrugs.

“Just felt like being on the beach for a while.”

“Mhm.” Jimin nuzzles his shirt, the way he does when he's up but still half-sleeping. "I'm glad we're here."

Leaning back in his embrace, he quietly agrees. It’d be so easy to stay here for a lifetime. Just the three of them to nurture, not a worry in the world.

But he knows about the coldness that's waiting for them to return.

He lets Jimin interlock their fingers and pull him back toward the house.

“I brewed coffee,” he says.

Taehyung cracks a tired smile. And when he looks up to see Yoongi leaned on the railing of the balcony with a smoke between his fingers, waiting for them with affection lighting up his features, Taehyung realizes that this warmth will never let him feel the cold if he allows it to reach him.
It’s been a week.

Seven whole days isolated, missing school, meetings, missing dance practice. But Jimin doesn’t regret it in the slightest.

Every morning is a little gentler, every touch more honest and open. There’s something insouciant and free in the way they live, day to day, eyes away from the clock. He’s never known that. Sure, he’s had some timeless nights with Hoseok and Jungkook, but the following mornings were always a harsh return to reality. It was never really like this.

His phone buzzes on the kitchen table, and, lazy, he glances at it from the couch before he brings his gaze back to the window. Both hands around his cup, he brings it to his mouth, takes a sip of hot cocoa. Even this isn’t as addictive as it used to. He can leave his phone in the bedroom and forget it there for a day. It feels good.

It vibrates again, twice in quick successions. He contemplates ignoring it, but if it’s from or about Namjoon, he wants to know.

“I’m sorry sir, but you’ll have to leave your seat,” he says to Tuxedo, who’s rolled up, unbothered, in his lap.

It takes a few nudges to make him yield, and he jumps off, stretching like he’s been napping a whole day. Jimin doesn’t think he’ll ever stop feeling bad for disturbing Cannelle or Tuxedo’s peaceful comfort. He grew so attached to them and to this soothing effect they have on him that he can hardly picture his life without them now.

He stands and bends to scratch at the kitten’s head, and he hears the soft notes of Taehyung’s laugh coming through the white noise of the shower. Jimin smiles. It’s such a tender sound, that love between Yoongi and Taehyung.

Kookie: hobi hyung told me youre feeling bad for not noticing
29-08-2016, 9:54

Kookie: pls dont feel bad, its my fault
29-08-2016, 9:58

Kookie: when youll be back, lets talk bout this?
29-08-2016, 9:58

You: well yeah
29-08-2016, 10:00

You: i feel like ive let you down

29-08-2016, 10:00

You: as a friend

29-08-2016, 10:00

You: and as your hyung

29-08-2016, 10:01

Kookie: you didnt

29-08-2016, 10:01

You: you dont owe me anything from your personal life

29-08-2016, 10:01

You: but if you wanna talk about it, ill be happy to listen

29-08-2016, 10:02

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“I think the cashier is getting suspicious of me,” Yoongi drawls, closing the door behind himself and taking his shoes off. There’s Jimin’s quiet rustling in the kitchen as a mean of welcome. "She looks at me and I know that she wants to ask stuff like why are you suddenly here every damn day since last week? Or what is this copious amount of lube for?"

He takes the grocery bag and brings it to the other room. But it turns out that the noise wasn’t Jimin, but rather Tuxedo playing on the table, his white-gloved paw giving Jimin’s glasses light shoves. Inching them closer and closer to the edge.

Until they fall.

Tuxedo perks up, eyes bright and playful, tail kept straight up and attentive.

“You tiny asshole,” Yoongi ousts him off. “Stop that.”

He grins when the cat scrambles off, thinks that keeping him was one of the best decisions he’s ever made. And as he bends to pick the glasses from the floor, he catches a glimpse from outside through the patio door. In between the bars of the railing he sees them, far and sitting so close they create a single figure.
He sorts the food in the pantry, in the fridge, and Jimin’s favourite lubricant in the worn-out nightstand.

The wind is insistent today. Even more than usual. It stirs up the sand and it catches in clothes, so when Yoongi gets on the patio and that the perfume of the sea envelops him, he sighs. He doesn’t know what’s awaiting once they leave this haven they made for themselves. So every breath is taken like it’s precious, a fond memory to be kept.

Quiet, he steps onto the beach. The sand is still darkened by the rain that keeps coming and going, but there’s a shy sun peeking through dense, steel painted clouds, making the scenery something made of dreams. And as he approaches Taehyung and Jimin, he’s careful, not wanting them to notice him. Not just yet. He wants to remain a silent witness to their breathtaking beauty.

Jimin’s head is resting on Taehyung shoulder and there’s this sphere of intimacy around them. It still feels so new to Yoongi. Openly loving them and looking at them love each other. They have something to themselves. It’s different than what Yoongi has with Taehyung and what he has with Jimin. But it’s equally as tender and fond. He’s not really envious. Nor does he feel neglected. Instead it calms him, lets him know things are alright. There’s no place for skepticism anymore; he belongs with them.

When he’s close enough, he finally picks it up. Through the wind whistling in his ear, the soft melody of their voices. Singing. Following and adjusting, like they’ve done this a billion times. A whole lifetime.

He sits a meter or so behind them, incognito still, and desirous to keep it as such just for a little while more. Yoongi closes his eyes, lets his body rock to their notes. Then he frowns, despite himself. What they can’t have still hurts.

Then he imagines how it would have been to write for them. To have his words float through their lips and vibrate against the music he would have created for them. To spend hours recording, making out on the bed when they’d get too tired. He’s thought of this so often. Too often.

He has a dream he knows he won’t ever be able to fulfill. And it’s weighing him down.

It’s probably too soon to have them hear what he wrote and recorded when he was alone in the apartment and missing him, missing them. Over two weeks ago. But it’s on his phone, imperfect but raw and honest. And in this respite they’re in, he’d want to share it.

But he focuses back on them, their voices and the salty air. Sunlight brightens the back of his eyelids and he breathes in, breathes out. If he were to lose everything, Yoongi at least knows one thing; he could live off that, hearing them sing.

Δ

Jimin’s laughter resounds crystalline, sharp and beautiful in contrast to the hushed voices they’ve been using. He shakes softly against Taehyung’s chest and it’s always been a contagious sound, the non-physical way of twining their fingers. So Taehyung, in response, smiles.

The room spins a little when his lids are shut so he keeps blinking them open, focuses his stare on the plain ceiling and the stray strands of Jimin’s hair that poke in his visual field. They were fine with him drinking tonight. Taehyung has been reasonable, because he knows it worries them, and because
the third glass started tasting sort of like poison. Alcohol has become a wound, perhaps. A fear.

That lighter state of tipsiness feels good though. Jimin and Yoongi are more intoxicated than he is but it’s fine. He didn’t have this urge to compete or to keep the glasses equal like he usually does.

So when Taehyung heard them starting to make out on the bed beside him, he didn’t get this stinging in his chest he used to erupt with. He accepted it, rolled with it. Did not think about why Jimin wanted to ride Yoongi instead of him tonight, or why their kisses lasted longer. He relished in Yoongi’s soft moans when he sucked him off and on the warm wetness of Jimin’s mouth on his neck when he lost himself in the scorching heat of Yoongi’s body.

And that was enough.

He can’t do this forever.

Backtrack.

Hide.

Jimin whispers something Taehyung doesn’t quite catch, focus brought to the sound of the patio door being closed.

“Didn’t hear you,” he says, still half listening to Yoongi’s footfall coming their way.

“I said ask him.”

“My memory tells me he’s not into cross-dressing.”

“I think he’d be— willing to try? He’d do pretty much anything for you. You know that.”

The words strike him in a weird way, rendering him silent. His fingertips flutter up and down on Jimin’s spine. Taehyung is soft, soft, but he’s wearing a frown.

“What made you laugh so loudly?” Yoongi slurs when he enters the bedroom, Taehyung’s sweatpants hanging from his hips.

Jimin giggles and Taehyung’s stomach is suddenly searing with sadness, his hand stills. The mattress dips as it welcomes another body.

“Tae was—” Jimin laughs again, twisting towards his warmth, “he was telling me about his fantasy of you wearing a skirt.”

“Hyung,” Taehyung breathes, interrupting the beginning of Yoongi’s amused sentence. His eyes go unfocused. He doesn’t know why now of all moments. Perhaps because he finally learned that it’s in darkness that light shines the brightest. “Why didn’t you tell me my father was being an asshole to you?”

Jimin’s chest stills against his side, Yoongi swallows his words.

The bed creaks tiredly under Yoongi’s movements, but the silence is worse. Much worse.

“I—I know I should have. But at that time I thought I could handle this on my own.”

The answer comes easier than he expected it.

“I would’ve sided with you, hyung.”
“I know, baby. I wasn’t even worried about that. But you were already so stressed—”

“He lied to you.”

“I know.”

“Whatsoever it is that he told you, he was lying.”

“I know. But back then it felt plausible. Because your father is good at talking, and all the things he blamed me for, from his mouth, they seemed real.” Yoongi shifts again, rolls onto his side so that he’s moulded against Jimin’s back. “I ended up so persuaded that I was pulling you in my own misery when all I wanted was for you to be happy. Tae. And if I was the one keeping you from that, then it made sense for me to accept that job in New York.”

Taehyung’s chest is trampled with emotion, his throat tight. Jimin’s small hand is closing into a fist on his belly. He’s quiet. Like he wants to disappear. But Taehyung wouldn’t want him to be anywhere else.

“Look at me,” Yoongi’s voice drops, and reluctantly, Taehyung drops his head to the side. The eyes his meet are glistening with a beautiful light, kind and honest. “I’m—if leaving you was the worst decision I’ve made, then—then coming back was the best one. I—never stopped loving you. Not a minute. Not a second. I spent every fucking day loving you a little more and hating myself a little more and if I need to prove it to you—”

“It’s fine, hyung,” Taehyung croaks, words thick with sadness. On the skin of sternum, a hint of wetness.

“It’s not—”

“It’s fine, it’s over. I understand.”

“You understand what?”

“Why you did it. It’s fine. You’re forgiven now, hyung, it’s just—”

“Tae,”

“You sh—” Taehyung pulls Jimin tighter against his side, Jimin holds onto him like he’s the one crumbling. “I love you, hyung, and you should know that it’ll never change. But I can’t—We can’t—”

Taehyung pauses there. The knot in his throat keeps expanding, his vision is blurring but the doesn’t want to cry. Not when hope is so vivid in Yoongi’s eyes.

“Forgive yourself. We can’t do this thing with the three of us if you don’t, hyung. The way you—act around me is not totally honest because you still feel guilty and I just—I hate it. I can’t stand that expression you get sometimes, like the only thing that comes to your mind when you look at me is New York and the life you had there.”

“That’s not true, Tae,”

He lets his eyelids fall shut, the tremble in Yoongi’s voice too hard to bear.

“I know it’s not, but can you understand that I—that my brain understands it this way? Every. Fucking. Time. And it hurts to think of those other people you touched and kissed and felt, and that
life you left here, and the memories, and the things we promised to share forever, that’s what I feel like you’re thinking about when you look at me. All the broken things.”

It all gushes out. The emotions, the words he kept turning and remodelling in his head to find the perfect way to say them. Taehyung breathes in, continues.

“That talk about getting married, I could never forget it, hyung. There isn’t a single day where I don’t think about it.”

Slowly, Jimin climbs onto him. His tears are muted. And helpless. He folds his arms close to Taehyung’s waist, straddling his thighs, his head resting close to his heart. Surely he can hear its thrumming now, it’s worried, anxious beating.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t—I don’t want you to apologize, you’ve been sorry for long enough.” He soothes his hand down Jimin’s back, his sentence pending until he’s mustered enough courage to open his eyes and slide them towards Yoongi. “But let go of it. I’m letting go of it, so let go of it. There’s nothing that can be changed.”

“I know.”

Silence weighs, after that. Like a heavy blanket. In an almost shy manner, Yoongi scoots closer to them. He threads his fingers with Taehyung’s, has them rest between their bodies.

They remain like this for lengthy minutes, eternizing that moment of drunken vulnerability. There’s heat, in Taehyung’s chest. One that was familiar years and years ago. It’s so powerful, on the line of painful, beautifully violent, it’s alive and loud and it makes Taehyung want to scream but he tears up instead. His thoughts, his emotions seem to have no beginning and no end, red and raw and up at the surface. Close to where everyone can see them.

He can’t quite put a name on what he’s feeling. But he knows it’s good.

“Are you still afraid of us leaving you?”

It’s just a little deeper in the night, a little darker. Jimin is still atop of him, numbing his ribs, pressing on his lungs, but Taehyung doesn’t mind it.

Jimin’s question doesn’t strike any sore emotion. Maybe it should. But he’s visited those thoughts so often that they are as special as rain on a cloudy day.

“I’m always afraid.”

Beside them, Yoongi looks asleep. He’s having this expression of his that Taehyung loves so much. At peace. His breathing is still too shallow for him to have drifted off but it’s enough to have them whisper like he shouldn’t be disturbed.

“You know we’re not going anywhere, Tae.”

“You can go wherever you want, baby. I’m not trying to tie you down.”

“No, Tae. That’s not,” he straightens up, settles his hips down onto Taehyung’s. “Listen.” His skin is
bare and heated, pretty in the soft glow that comes from the outside. “You really have to hear us, too. Or else you won’t know how we feel and it’s never gonna work. We—”

“It’s not like—”

“Let me finish,” Jimin’s brows furrow and Taehyung forces an exhale out. “We don’t want to leave you. We don’t plan to, either. I know that it’s, hard, you and hyung and me. It's intricate. Touchy. And it's easy to fall in patterns because of that, if we don't talk properly. But I want you to understand that hyung and me, without you, it just can’t be. We discussed it too many times and he doesn’t want that. And I don’t want that. We’re us because you’re part of it, Tae," he lets hang a short pause, eyes glistening and tone low. "And you best believe that if one day we part ways, we'll have fought hard and found no other solution. Okay?"

Taehyung swallows, eyes captive in Jimin’s dark ones, palm moist against Yoongi’s.

“Hyung left.”

He tilts his head so he can look at the ceiling instead. It’s a shameful thought. It’s something that’s been answered already. Yoongi apologized, explained. It’s shameful when it comes out but they’re the memories his brain keep supplying to him.

“I knew you were gonna say that,” Jimin says with soft teasing in his voice. “Yeah, hyung left. But he also came back. And you know why. You know it wasn’t over. There’s still something in you for him. Just like there’s something in him for you, Tae.”

“And there’s something in Jimin for each of us.”

There’s a sliver of silence after those words, ephemeral enough for Taehyung to know that Jimin glanced over at Yoongi and gave a tired, thankful smile.

“I understand why you’re scared. The reasons behind the way you act. But Tae, the pain of someone leaving should never outshine the nice things you shared. If they have nothing left to offer you as a person,”

“Then there’s no reason for them to stay,” he completes.

“Exactly. I love you, Kim Taehyung. I didn’t accept to choose cat toys on a random Friday and redid a whole fucking room just to leave you. If you want of me, I’ll stay.”

“You know I do.”

“Then don’t push me away anymore.”
It’s only the eighth day, 180 hours. But it feels like it’s been forever.

Happiness is timeless.

But Yoongi knows it’s just an illusion.

Reality still stands outside those walls.

And it’s waiting for them with a blood thirst.

Taehyung has been quiet since they woke up. But they became used to it. He still smiles when Jimin laughs and doesn’t avoid eye contact or touches. He accepts Yoongi’s lips when they press on his, though he’s not particularly eager.

Healing. It’s the only proof they haven’t stopped living by the second. That their lives are still spinning to the same rhythm as everybody else.

They run out of cat food late in the afternoon.

Yoongi offers to go, because he can see how sleepy Jimin is, and because he likes to drive his car on these new roads more than he’d care to admit. He needs this time away from the cottage. To stay grounded.

“How can I come with?”

His hand has a weird twitch around his keys when Taehyung says this. His voice is weak with disuse, akin to shy.

“Mh’of course,”

It’s difficult not to sound as stunned as he is. Taehyung didn’t leave this place in a whole week. Only ever wandered the beach. And swam the sea, when the wind was kind enough.

He shares an amused glance with Jimin, who’s on the couch. Tux rolled up in the hole of his bent legs. And in silence, Taehyung puts his shoes on and opens the door before Yoongi could be the one to take the initiative. He’s unsure if he should be expecting something. A conversation. Or admissions. Perhaps that leaves him a little stressed, but he promised he wouldn’t run from any of this anymore. So he won’t.
The closest clinic isn’t far. A dozen of minutes at most. But they’re driving slow.

He puts his flasher on, checks his blind spot before he changes line, meeting Taehyung’s eyes in the process.

“Is there something you wanted to talk to me about?”

He asks this in an almost passive fashion, mellow, struggling to find the balance to express interest without being too blunt.

“You don’t need to be so careful when you talk to me, hyung.” Taehyung’s voice is hiding a smile but Yoongi mutters an apology nonetheless. “You’re doing it again.”

Yoongi gnaws at his bottom lip to hide an annoyed grin. He huffs through his nose, feigns to concentrate on the road ahead.

“If you keep treating me like porcelain, then that’s what I’ll continue being.”

"Yeah, but I can't just ignore everything and talk to you carelessly."

“What I mean is that if you keep acting overprotective or guilty around me, then I’ll keep being reminded of why you’re feeling like that.”

“Mhm.”

“And that doesn’t do us any good.”

“I know but—”

“I asked to come with you because I like looking at you drive.”

His lips fall shut, he swallows. He remembers a younger Taehyung saying this. Time and time again, throughout the early months after Yoongi was gifted his very first car. He remembers how feverish their kisses were afterwards, how hungry Taehyung was for his hands.

Yoongi looks to the side. For a handful of seconds, they stare at each other. Many years have passed since then. They melted into each other and then grew apart, but they still don’t need much to understand one another.

His palms leave the gear stick, goes to lay soft on Taehyung’s thigh.

Taehyung threads their fingers.

It’s all in all very quick. A curt nod to the lady at the front desk, that Yoongi gives as well. Very little searching or perusing. Even from a couple of meters behind him, Yoongi still manages to feel how closed-off Taehyung is, just on the edge of nervous.

Being cut from the outside world always roughed him up.

Taehyung pays in cash and hesitates a breath or two before he keeps the receipt and stuffs it in his
On the way back, they decide on grabbing take-out. It’s an easy decision. An offer and an agreement and that’s it. Low voices and the sound of the purring engine.

“You wanna call Jiminie to ask what he wants?”

“About that,”

Yoongi waits for the remainder of the sentence but it never comes. He parks his Cadillac, squints a little at how unkept the building looks.

“All about that?” He urges before he turns to Taehyung.

And he’s met with mischievous eyes, a teasing smile.

“Do you have a phone?”

He sighs in a gentle string of laughs, hitting his head back against the headrest.

“Fuck.”

The way Taehyung wheezes beside him unfurls something raw in him, fragile and sore. It’s more than them being dumb together, it’s this understanding they have of each other. This loathing they share for the company, for what they were forced to grow into. They didn’t need to discuss abandoning their phones. They just did it. They just got too tired.

Yoongi’s smile feels overwhelming bright on his lips, the throaty sounds Taehyung makes when he laughs still warming them alive.

And then just as he expects it, through the irrepressible laugh comes a sniffle, too loud and clear for Yoongi to ever ignore.

“Taehyung-ah,”

“I’m fine, hyung,”

“You’re not,”

The giggles slowly die, just as Yoongi’s expression melts into something more serious.

“I am,”

“Stop lying.” Admittedly a little roughly, Yoongi tugs on the handle to slide his seat back and make more room. “Come here.”

It’s weird, perhaps, in the parking lot of a family restaurant and under the light of a falling sun. Where people can see them, stare at them.

But as Taehyung climbs over the console and into his lap, Yoongi shushes everything else. He might never get to say it, but Taehyung’s nose on the crook of his neck, his chapped lips above the collar of his shirt, the wetness that salts his skin, it’s enough to soothe him. He circles his arms around his
waist and pulls him in. Breathes out a long sigh with brows furrowing.

I need you.

I love you.

He holds him tight like this for a long time, until Taehyung’s body falls lax against his and that’s he’s starting to nuzzle his shirt instead of clutching onto it. Yoongi loosens, but doesn’t let go, rests his forehead to the side of Taehyung’s throat.

And Taehyung seems to understand, slithers his arms up and then around his shoulders.

Too few times he was the one asking to be held. It had nothing to do with not needing or wanting it. But Yoongi being the eldest kept thinking he was to be able to handle things on his own, that Taehyung was benefitting more of that physical comfort than he did. He always tried no to lean on him too much or too often and rarely ever cried, no matter how much they shared, the things they talked about, how much they loved each other.

The dependable half.

They grew together in houses of broken dreams, of dried up tears. They held hands braving walls of cold minds, fought the claws of everyone else’s will. They sang and they laughed in the darkness, at night when no one would hear them. Power, greed, they have no ears. They have accusing fingers.

Yoongi pretended to manage because he had to.

Because Taehyung had always been the one bearing the most, and Yoongi wanted to be the relief.

The saviour.

He asphyxiated himself in the process.

“Hyung,”

A frail whisper, a scream at Yoongi’s shameful frailty.

“Let’s just— stay like this for a while?”

Taehyung gives a small nod, slightly shifting for more comfort before he sighs, melts in the embrace.

“Okay.”

Δ

The soft sound of the Cadillac, the sharp thud of the doors. The lilt in Yoongi’s voice when he talks about something that makes him excited. Taehyung’s amused little noises of acquiescence. Jimin smiles, relaxing in the worn-out plush of the couch. It went okay.

It’s admittedly unsettling.

Jimin fell in love with people who are now slowly dissipating, changing a little more every day. Some of their traits that were so salient, so attractive to him bloomed into something more poignant,
muted but much deeper. Taehyung still has that attitude that makes Jimin feel like he’s alive and burning. Yoongi is still a quiet kind of force, magnetic, an energy that makes him feel safe. But it’s not really the same. Jimin has seen the flaws underlying every flicker of passion, the fears and the reasons. He understands them.

And now, the three of them are the way they should have been from the start.

The front door opens and Jimin slides his gaze away from his phone and onto them. They look loose and messy, like a weight has been lifted off their shoulders, paper bags crinkling as they laugh about something Jimin doesn't quite catch, struggling to take their shoes off.

It takes a few seconds. Glances meeting but never unlocking.

Yoongi dumps the bags down on the floor before he rams Taehyung into the opposite wall. Jimin’s stomach drops. Beautifully. Taehyung’s fingers find their way in Yoongi’s shirt, twisting in the fabric as they kiss. It’s hungry, full of unrestrained want that Jimin can feel even with the meters separating them and he, in spite of himself, senses his breathing quicken.

One of Yoongi’s hands fall between them, where Jimin can’t see, but then Taehyung hums a low moan and he can so easily imagine the weight of a hand on his own crotch. Jimin’s skin grows hot with arousal.

“Fuck,” Taehyung rest his head back against the wall as Yoongi’s mouth latches onto his neck. “Fuck, hyung,”

“Mhm,”

“The food, the cats’—” he hisses, back arching off the surface. Now Jimin can’t see it, Yoongi’s hands disappearing in the front of his pants. “The cats’ food is still in the c-car.”

Comes Yoongi’s airy laugh, his relentless behaviour.

“Don’t care,”

Taehyung’s lips stretch into a grin, his eyelids fall shut. He grapples at the back of Yoongi’s shirt, trying to tug it up.

“Take that off,”

“Don’t be a brat.”

Jimin sees him bite at his bottom lip, the way he does when he feels like teasing.

“Hyung,” he chides again.

But Yoongi just groans and harshly undoes Taehyung’s pants to take his cock out, giving it long and slow strokes. It cuts Taehyung’s air just as much as Jimin’s.

They eventually stumble until they’re disappearing into the bedroom, moves choppy and excited, light in the way they are with each other.

Jimin can’t say he isn’t grateful. Because in some way, what happened between Taehyung and Yoongi is what allowed him this happiness.

He fell in love with a couple. Although a broken one. It never was easy, to try and find where he belongs in this. In something that was already so strong and everlasting.
“Jimin-ah,” Yoongi calls from the other room and he grows hot inside. “C’mere.”

It was never easy.

But somehow they manage to make it work.
“I’m not—”

The first words come out quick, a rushed breath. They intrude into their conversation in a weird way, slightly out of place. Jimin glances at him, his chopsticks in mid-air.

Taehyung is tempted to backtrack. Swallow back this thing he’s kept secret for weeks, unable to truly believe it. Also, maybe, just a little scared of the consequences.

“I’m not gonna continue admin,” he finishes, eyes darting down to his bowl.

“It’s fine,” Jimin mutters around his mouthful. Yoongi gives a soft hum. “You don’t like it. You shouldn’t do it just to please someone.”

“I know,” he breathes. Jimin’s tone is soothing, what he means is kind. But they only make Taehyung more apprehensive.

“What is it?”

But Yoongi knows. When he says this, Taehyung looks up and at him, aware of the shift of atmosphere.

“I’m not gonna continue admin,” he inhales, “because I got accepted in vet school?”

Under his gaze, Yoongi’s lips ease into a bright grin, one that slowly flushes his cheeks.

“No way!”

The old chair Jimin is sitting on screeches on the floor as he pushes himself back and Taehyung flinches with a remnant of nervosity.

“No fucking way!” Jimin chides again, voice even more honeyed and joyful.

The next second, Taehyung finds himself with a lapful of Jimin, with affectionate hands at the base of his neck, holding him still so they can look at each other properly.

“Tell me you’re not joking,” he says.

His eyes are shining, pretty and loving and Taehyung can feel the weight of his feelings on his skin.

“I was given uh, special permission, to switch programs this late because of my grades. And because my father is the CEO of Kim Intl.”

“Because of your grades, Tae,” Yoongi emphasizes. Just like Jimin, he’s trying to be sweet, but Taehyung knows it’s only half the truth.

“When?”

“Mhm?” His eyes dart back to Jimin’s.
“When did you find the time to fill all those papers?”

He gives a confused sound, a small shrug. It’s hard to tell. Some things he remembers, but most of it he doesn’t. Too high, too drunk. Too sad.

"Here and there," is what he settles on answering.

Jimin’s lips come onto his, understanding.

"I'm happy you did it," he speaks in the thin space that subsists between them. The suppleness of his voice makes Taehyung’s flesh rise in goosebumps. "I'm proud of you." He kisses him a little deeper then, with leisured touches of tongues and little sighs. "Really."

He swallows. In his chest is stuck a tempest of emotions, left untended to, messy, but his body flares up still, and his hands grips onto Jimin’s waist more firmly.

“I don’t,” Taehyung pauses when Jimin inches further into his lap, anticipating what’s to follow. What he's doing is not meant as teasing or overly sexual. Just an overflow Taehyung can relate to. “I don't think I'll be able to do it this semester though.”

“Why not?”

“I already missed over two weeks. Vet sciences are rough, hyung.”

“But you’re a top student,” Jimin fiddles with his shirt, a childish kind of impatience, “pretty sure you could manage to catch up.”

“That’s if they let me in at all.”

“Try anyway? What’s there to lose?”

Jimin makes a soft, agreeing noise. Yoongi crosses his arms over his chest, but it does nothing to conceal the small smile that won’t leave him.

“I guess,” he sighs.

Taehyung feels light. Sort of dizzy. Maybe I’ll make it. He licks his lips, subduing the discomfort of tearing up. Jimin’s thumb starts running in collarbone, Yoongi’s eyes search his.

Maybe it’s really happening.

“And if it doesn’t work out this semester,” Jimin begins, voice as grainy as his own, “there’s always the next one.”

Taehyung’s breath is quick, his heart is chanting fast even with the post-orgasm lethargy that’s supposed to be settling onto him.

Jimin is looking at him pleadingly, eyes lidded and unfocused, frame jerking in a rough rhythm. Both lying on their sides and facing each other, Taehyung can’t do much more than cup his cheeks and whisper to him about how good he is. The state Jimin is in is close to hypnotizing, pulling him in and twisting his gut until arousal crawls up again and makes him jittery.
Yoongi shifts on his elbow, coming to mouth at Jimin's shoulder from behind and Taehyung feels beneath his fingers how the slight change is having Jimin quake, sees how his eyes slip shut and his brows crease.

"Fuck," Yoongi hisses. His fingers press into Jimin’s waist a little further.

"H-Hyung."

Taehyung loves when Jimin whines like that. Unrestrained. Unabashed.

"Mh—Yeah?"

"Hyung, just—"

Jimin cranes his neck to the side to look up at Yoongi. His lips drop open, shiny and red, and he seems breathless, unable to speak. His skin is wet from a lot of things, his hair a mess and Taehyung thinks it’s very honest. Jimin lets go when they have sex, gives himself wholly, doesn’t try to bury things under his actions. The most sincere person he’s ever met.

Small fingers come around Taehyung’s wrist, frantic in the way they tighten and release him.

"You like it like that?"

Jimin nods at Yoongi’s question. He’s eager, curling on himself ever so slightly. Taehyung licks his lips.

"Hyung’s cock is filling you up good?"

"A-Ah, fu-yes, yes, yes fuck,"

Yoongi groans, and the sound of skin hitting skin accelerates, grows harsher. Taehyung then drags himself down on the mattress, hands brushing Jimin's chest as he does, gently rubbing at his nipples until he's low enough so that he can kiss his hipbones and at that sensitive spot in the crease of his thigh.

There’s a light pressure on his head, restless little tugs at his hair. Jimin bucks his hips towards him, seeking touch that Taehyung doesn’t grant him just yet. He glances up instead, meets Yoongi’s focused and nearly debauched stare.

"You’re looking at me hyung, aren’t you?" He doesn’t get any response but he knows he’s right by the stutter in his panting. He licks the underside of Jimin’s cock, kisses under the head with spit-slicked lips. They both give an airy moan and Taehyung feels like he's been entrusted all the power in the world. "Fuck my mouth, hyung, if you want it so bad."

"Ah fuck," Jimin's fingers tangle in the strands more tightly, almost rough.

Taehyung takes an inch or two of cock between his lips, grips at Jimin’s hips to slow him down if it becomes too much.

And then Yoongi thrusts forward into Jimin’s body, and Taehyung feels his cock slide in and deep past his tongue. He squeezes his eyes closed, tries to regulate his breathing.

Taehyung can’t tell how long it lasts, that weird push and pull of their bodies. He’s high and in a sort of daze, burning from the inside all the way to his fingertips, his own cock plumping up again. The recurrent gagging and drooling are uncomfortable but the bliss in Jimin’s voice makes up for it.
He barely notices the moment Yoongi threads their fingers on Jimin's waist to help them move but he likes it. How connected the three of them manage to be, even in the intensity of moments like these.

“M’gonna come,” Jimin warns brokenly, frame shaking already.

“D’you want him to come in your mouth?” Unable to nod, Taehyung gives his hand a light squeeze. “Come down his throat, Jimin-ah,”

Jimin keens, going more tense with every thrust until Taehyung pulls him further into his mouth and holds him there. His climax rushes through him and he cries, the kicks of his cock on Taehyung’s tongue sending his mind reeling.

He pulls out, gasping for air, wipes his forearm over his mouth and chin. Disoriented, he takes a few seconds to recenter himself, Jimin now much more gentle as he brushes shaky fingertips through Taehyung’s matted strands.

“Tae,”

They’re still moving, but in slow waves now, Yoongi being careful not to push Jimin too far into his overstimulation.

“Mhm,”

“Can I?”

He brings his eyes up, holds the eyes contact Yoongi is offering him.

“Can you what?”

“You know what.”

“I want to hear you say it, hyung.”

That earns Taehyung a growl, and Jimin stifles a pleased sound in the hollow of his elbow.

“C-Can I fuck your mouth?”

"Oh my god," Jimin's chest is still unsteady, his limbs trembling.

Taehyung offers a teasing grin before he flops onto his back and drops his lips open in acceptance. Yoongi disentangles his body from Jimin’s, kissing him affectionately as he climbs over him to go perch himself just above Taehyung’s head.

It tastes too much like lube and precome but it doesn’t matter. It’s too good, too satisfying to pass up. Yoongi fucks his face like he fucks his ass, slow but rough and deep, searching for his own pleasure. Taehyung scrapes his nails down the back of his thighs as he’s being thrust into and consumed, his legs fidget about on the bed. He would want to stroke himself but he's unsure if he could come a second time without it being too much.

And then, plush, warm lips on the head of his cock and he jerks, a moan dying in his throat as Yoongi continues fucking it. He tries to grapple at Jimin, silently begging for him to wait, he's too sensitive. But his hand is taken and held secure on his belly, Jimin's mouth inching down on his cock, cheeks hollow and tongue sliding along every ridge and sending painful, scorching waves up Taehyung’s spine.

And soon, it's overwhelming. His breathing goes wild, his body is incoherent and tired.
“Gonna breed your fucking mouth,” Yoongi hisses at him.

Taehyung crashes, vision going white as he shudders, whining around Yoongi. Jimin sucks him dry, soothing a hand on his belly and his sides as he trembles through the aftershock.

But he’s not given much time to recover. Yoongi stuffs his cock between his lips once more, far enough that he can feel the supple skin of his ballsac on his chin and then he’s coming in warm spurts, spilling hoarse groans into thick, humid air.

“F-Fuck, Tae,”

He gives a weak whine, swallowing everything, suckling at his cock still as it begins to soften on his tongue.

“You’re so—ah— fucking good,” Yoongi dips his head to look at him, looking exhausted but satiated. He rolls his hips into his mouth once, twice more before he very slowly pulls out, and Taehyung makes sure to increase the suction as he does. “S-Stop, fuck,”

He’s laughing, but he sounds wrecked. Taehyung likes it. A lot.

Curling on himself, he rushes air in, feeling like his lungs were screaming for it. He then stays motionless for a few dizzy moments, only aware of the mattress shaking and the loud panting still permeating the room. He reflexively makes space for Jimin when he crawls up his body and asks for a place on his chest, pulls him in even despite how sweaty he is. Small fingers splay on his sternum, Taehyung closes his eyes.

“I love you,” he murmurs, the words spilling out, too vast for him to keep in.

Jimin's kisses at his pectoral in response, a languid press to return just as much. And then right where he doesn't expect them, Yoongi's lips, on his temple.

“I love you too.”

They still hurt. The words.

Probably will for a long time.

But if Taehyung tries to feel them for what they are instead as for what they used to be, he might manage to hear them properly.

He tilts his chin up and Yoongi humours him, bends to slot their mouth and it's full of feathery, coy emotions.

“Let’s go back,” he says and Taehyung stares at him, a dull kind of fear grappling at his gut. “I want you to try. Even if it’s late. That’s what you always wanted to do. So I want you to try.”

He breathes a quiet okay, and Yoongi leans in again to catch his lips, runs his tongue over them and he lets him in, offers small contented sighs. Jimin straightens and stretches, starts sucking at the moist skin of his collarbone.

“What’s this,” Taehyung laughs, too tired but still responsive.

“I wanna go again,” it vibrates against his ribcage.

Jimin touches him with light fingertips, down his stomach to his groin, then along the line of his spent cock and Taehyung wants to twitch away.
“I already came twice,” he complains with a smile, gently taking Jimin’s hand away from him.

At once comes the weight on Jimin’s thighs at each side of his hips and Yoongi’s thumb on his bottom lip before it slips inside, shutting him up.

“Good. Let’s make it three.”

Δ

It’s more painful than he’d imagined it to be.

Even the handful of hours before they began to pack, it was palpable. They threw the bedsheet out and went to buy another new, fresh set, and the whole trip was quiet. Not only Taehyung, but Yoongi is also in a pensive mood. It's not arrogant, or closed-up.

Just hurting.

**Hobi hyung**: around when will you be back

01-09-2016, 11:54

**You**: cant be sure yet

01-09-2016, 12:57

**You**: we’re almost done here though

01-09-2016, 12:57

**You**: so id say dinner time at the latest

01-09-2016, 12:57

**You**: why?

01-09-2016, 12:59

**You**: is everything ok?

01-09-2016, 12:59

Waiting with worry starting to simmer in his chest, he stares at his screen. At the date.

Already September.

Things have rushed past him a lot.
Hobi hyung: yeah yeah, dont worry
01-09-2016, 13:02

Hobi hyung: just thought it would be nice to see you
01-09-2016, 13:02

He hums to himself, feeling oddly guilty.

In the background, Taehyung talks to Cannelle with a warm voice, surely trying to reassure her as he settles her in the carrier.

Jimin has this apprehension of feeling like a stranger. A newcomer. They haven’t been gone that long. But in such a critical situation, hours can feel like years. He’s kept himself updated on Namjoon’s recovery, even directly texted him quite a few times, but it’s never really the same as being there, with them, through this.

You: i know
01-09-2016, 13:02

He looks at the tiny digits on his phone again.

It’s hard to believe autumn is getting closer. With its lattes, scarves and woollen sweaters.

Then his eyes zero on the day.

First of September.

“Fuck,” he screeches loudly.

The whole cottage goes silent.

You: oh fuck
01-09-2016, 13:03

“What is it?” Yoongi rushes out of the bedroom, alerted.

You: its kookies birthday
01-09-2016, 13:03
“Jimin?”

A little louder.

“It’s Jungkook’s birthday.”

“Oh. When?”

You: fuck hyung im so sorry
01-09-2016, 13:03

“Today. Right now. It’s his birthday.”

Hobi hyung: its fine, we all understand
01-09-2016, 13:04

“Well let’s make sure we make it back early enough,” Taehyung says, gently placing the cage next to the front door.

“Okay, yeah,” he starts typing a message with excited fingers, unwillingly blushing with embarrassment.

You: i fee l so bad
01-09-2016, 13:04

Hobi hyung: its okay jiminie, dont stress over it
01-09-2016, 13:04

Hobi hyung: just call him and its gonna be more than enough
01-09-2016, 13:04

You: no
01-09-2016, 13:04
Hobi hyung: … no?
01-09-2016, 13:04

You: dont tell him anything
01-09-2016, 13:05

You: just tell me where youll be
01-09-2016, 13:05

You: we’ll meet you th ere
01-09-2016, 13:05

For the remainder of the time they spend in the tiny house, Jimin refocuses on the three of them. He’s fidgety. What's going on back in Seoul stresses him out, but he can’t do anything about it now. So he pours all his attention onto Taehyung’s silent sadness and Yoongi’s visible torpor.

They take the duffel bags in the Cadillac first, the cats’ food. Then the cages.

He sees the way Yoongi’s gaze linger in the rooms, taking everything in before he turns his back and gets to the car first, cold as he sits behind the wheel.

Taehyung is more sluggish, paces around more. He roams the whole place a couple of times, pretending to make sure they're not forgetting anything. But Jimin knows. And he remains quiet. He can't quite understand the feeling, how much he must be feeling like he's being pulled apart. Like a second goodbye.

So he stays patient and watches him, just in case he cracks and shatters.

But it doesn’t happen.

Instead, at the last minute, he takes out a folded receipt from his jeans' pocket and uses the pen they found laying on the kitchen counter. He bends over the table, takes a deep breath.

He stays still for a while, fraying Jimin's nerves and birthing worry in his gut. He steps closer to signal he's there, but not enough to intrude into whatever Taehyung is trying to do.

Then the pen goes. Quick. Glides over the paper, in a single stroke.

It’s a messy, emotional writing.

Just as fast, Taehyung drops the pen and exits the kitchen, makes it to the porch.

“Are you coming?” he calls for Jimin.
“Yeah.”

He’s far enough from the table and it’s not that he means to read, but he still manages to.

Taehyung’s phone number.

And under it, tangled letters.

Thank you for everything.

I’m ready to talk if you want.
He feeds his key to the keyhole, twists it to unlock. But he doesn’t hear the slide of the latch. He turns the knob and the door gives. Yoongi frowns.

“Uhm.”

The day had been surprisingly tiring. Emotionally so. The ride back had been long even with how light the ambience was compared to when they got to Busan. But he can still hear the tinge of impatience in Jimin's voice when he says what is it?

“The door’s unlocked.” He’s having a clear mental image of his keys in his hand, the sound of the mechanism and the dirty patches on the carpet of the corridor. But then again, as panicked and rushed as they were, it’s hard to tell what was real and what wasn’t. “It’s probably been like that for the whole week. I hope everything’s fine.”

The first place he goes to check is the second bedroom. When he’s made sure that every part of the computer is there, that the Maschine, the mic and their old albums are still untouched, he manages to breathe easier.

“No one got in here, hyung,” Jimin says evenly from the kitchen.

But the place has a kind of foreign aura that he can’t quite put his finger on.

Time, maybe. Time in a better place.

“Right,” he mutters to the empty room, unconvinced.

He makes it back to them, feeling Jimin’s energy, his guilt and how pressed he is to go find Jungkook. But he sees Taehyung still stalling in the entryway. He’s pretending to sort their shoes with a slow kind of perfectionism but Yoongi sees it.

The apprehension.

“Taehyung-ah,”

Their eyes meet. The falseness of the situation is admittedly a little ridicule, and the childishness in his features is just as much. Yoongi took a while to understand that Taehyung sometimes reverses back to early times when he needs to cope with too-strong emotions.

“What’re you doing?”

He walks to him as he says this, and gets no answer. So he pecks his lips, just once. A promise that he’s not leaving.

“What if I trip again?”
Yoongi unwillingly cracks a smile. It makes him laugh now, but really, it was just two weeks ago. Less than 11 days when the apartment felt half dead and phantom.

“You probably will,” he starts.

"But we'll be here," Jimin finishes, making fondness bloom in Yoongi's chest. "Come on, now. Come shower with me."

“I showered before leaving,” Taehyung objects. He’s nearly whispering, like he’s not completely out of his anxiety.

"You're gross," and Yoongi, confused by Jimin's words, looks over his shoulder to find him smirking. "Shower."

They take a while.

And not because they need a good scrub or that they’re lost in deep conversations. Jimin’s whines are too loud and high to hide anything, the clumsy thuds on the walls of the shower are unsubtle.

The door is slightly open, Yoongi could go in. It’s a quiet invitation and he knows. But he lets them. He’s aware it’s been a while for them and like many facets of their relationship, he gets a weird kind of satisfaction just from hearing them.

He unpacks the bags instead, putting away everything they bought for the cats where it belongs. He fixates the bed for a moment, then settles on making it.

He's apprehensive as well. He hasn't forgotten those cold nights he spent with Jimin in here and Taehyung on the couch. He hasn’t forgotten that fight that drove him away the evening before Namjoon got attacked. He hasn't. They will have to work to rebuild this place as their own. The three of them.

Taehyung’s voice pitches, he lets out a string of drawn out *fuck*, and then he’s crying out, sounding so utterly blissed that Yoongi can feel it under his own skin.

He swallows. Smiles.

“Fuck.”

He tugs at the thin, soft sheet until it's unwrinkled and straight, levelled with the other side.

“Hyung,” comes Jimin’s voice.

“What?”

“Hyung, come here,”

He slips a hand down his pants, replacing himself to the side to not look as depraved as he actually is.

“What is it? You forgot towels?”

“No, fuckin—*come here.*”
He does, perplexed.

When he pushes the door further open, it’s to find Jimin naked and wet and on his knees, just out of the shower. Taehyung is still in though, weak rivulets trickling down his body, his chest heaving and falling fast, his fist still loosely stroking his flaccid dick.

“Come here,” Jimin repeats, emphasizing the demand with a small move of his hand.

And the first thing he grasps at is the band of Yoongi's pants, undoing the button and sliding open the zipper like he needs to do it to keep breathing.

“Yes, fuck,” he mutters, pulling them down his thighs before doing the same with what’s underneath.

“I don’t know what’s got into him,” Taehyung drawls, “but he’s cock-hungry. You're warned.”

The first contact of his lips is as startling as it is ecstatic, and Yoongi hisses, fingers going straight to his wet strands.

They’ll definitely be late.

You: where are you guys
01-09-2016, 20:47

Seokseok: yes hello
01-09-2016, 20:55

Seokseok: is this min yoongis ghost
01-09-2016, 20:55

He shakes his head as his lips stretch thinly.

It's true that it's been a while since he even touched his phone or texted anyone. But for so many reasons, it was the best he could do for himself. For them. He grew tired of justifying his actions all the time, as if his doings needed to be pre-approved from the outside.

He glances at the top of his screen, to the tiny taunting icons of all his awaiting text messages and voicemails. Later, he thought when he first saw them appear, his phone turned on after multiple days of abandon. This can wait, he placed the device down.

Yoongi looks up, to Jimin and Taehyung, to their twined fingers, to their excitement as they quickly peruse stores for a nice gift.
But my own life can’t.

You: yes it is I

01-09-2016, 20:56

Seokseok: wow whattup man

01-09-2016, 20:56

Seokseok: hows the afterlife

01-09-2016, 20:56

You: just how much did you drink

01-09-2016, 20:57

Seokseok: too

01-09-2016, 20:57

You: what

01-09-2016, 20:58

Seokseok: you asked how much i did drink

01-09-2016, 20:58

Seokseok: i said too

01-09-2016, 20:58

Seokseok: too much

01-09-2016, 20:59

You: fuck you’re lame just tell me where you are

01-09-2016, 20:59
Seokseok: heheh
01-09-2016, 21:00

Seokseok: i missed you hyung
01-09-2016, 21:00

Seokseok: we’re at jungkooks
01-09-2016, 21:00

His feet come to a stop, already so far behind the other two.

He rereads the last series of texts with a warm heart, a rosier tint to his cheeks. It lights up something special in him, to realize that some people might be as attached to him than he is to them. He, who times after times felt secluded and unable to really connect or properly blend into a group.

It was still that way in the hospital, when he watched Jungkook and Namjoon interact, listened to Seokjin and Hoseok talk.

He might have been wrong.

It’s not as awkward to return to them, now.

You: yeah i missed you guys too
01-09-2016, 21:02

You: we should be there in 30
01-09-2016, 21:02

△

“Why am I so excited?”

Taehyung grins at Jimin’s joyful tone. He always needed so little to make him smile. A look, a soft pull of his lips, a few words. He’s contagious in that way.

But even this doesn’t tame the mix of nervousness and worry that has seeped under his skin. Taehyung sheered hard before what happened with Namjoon, and now, with a calmer heart and a mind that has seen a bit of sun, he’s ashamed of it.
There were reasons. There still are. They still emerge in his thoughts every now and then. But he barely remembers anything from that week. Too far, too deep. He was sick. And he knows that not everybody understands sickness, and its way around a weak brain.

And so he’s scared. Of what’s been told to them, of what they know. Of having been misunderstood. Of seeing Namjoon, of being submerged with guilt again.

"Because you missed them," Yoongi says from the passenger seat, fiddling with his phone.

It’s the first step of many. He has to.

Hoseok comes out from the house before the three of them are even on the porch.

He closes the door behind himself carefully, before he latches onto Jimin. His arms wrap around him, eager, content. Yoongi chuckles next to him and Taehyung throws him a glance, finds him surprisingly relaxed.

“Man I missed you,” Hoseok says in Jimin’s hair, smile bright and eyes closed.

The embrace lasts for handfuls of seconds, where Taehyung becomes uncomfortable. He’s unused to that kind of affection, although he finds it beautiful. Necessary, even. Taehyung only had one true friend before he met Jimin, and it was Yoongi. But it was a friendship stained with lust and biased thoughts, so Taehyung is aware that he’s never really known what it feels like to have a best friend.

Hoseok releases Jimin, then swiftly moves to Yoongi, enfolds him.

Taehyung’s eyes dart down. To the small gift bag hanging from his fingers. Jealousy. It’s still there. Hurt. He knows they’re sort of close. They kissed and they spent nights out alone together, they text and they talk on the phone, they confide in each other.

There’s no way out of this situation. All the memories this scene brews in him. This sentiment of exclusion that keeps rising in him.

Then a hand on his shoulder, tentative yet reassuring, that brings his eyes back up.

“How are you?”

He swallows at Hoseok’s question, meets his concerned expression.

“—better.”

“It’s good to hear.”

They stare for a few heartbeats more, feeling around the hesitation, but when Hoseok gently pulls him in a hug, Taehyung instantly gives in.

The sincerity that emanates from Hoseok seizes the inside of his chest like a strong fist and he softens, brings his own arms around him.

“Thank you for being here,” Hoseok adds and Taehyung gives a few jerky nods, feeling his eyes becoming stubbornly damp. He does smell a little like alcohol and even if it irks his senses, Taehyung doesn’t want to be the first one to let go.
After that, his whole body begins trembling. A light shake that moves through his fingers and makes his knees weak.

They quietly get in, animated voices coming from further in the house.

“Hyung, did you go out to smoke again?” comes Jungkook voice, approaching.

Ahead of him, Jimin slaps Hoseok’s bicep with the back of his hand, glaring when he’s offered a sheepish grin.

And then Jungkook appears at the other end of the corridor.

“Hyung!” He goes solar, beaming, when he sees Jimin and then them. “Hyung!” He jogs their way, nearly collides with Jimin before he briefly hugs him in. Much shyer than Hoseok is with physical affection. “What are you doing here? I thought you were staying in Busan for a while?”

“Some important stuff came up, we drove back a couple of hours ago.”

“Really?”

“Is Jiminie finally here?” Seokjin asks from afar and a brief silence falls, followed by Hoseok retreating in soft giggles.

“I was too happy, okay? I had to tell someone.”

Follows a session of overflowing emotions, where everyone comes from the kitchen, hugging and asking Jimin for news. His dance mates are loud and teasing, agitated, and it makes for a vibrant atmosphere in the cramped space of the entranceway. Taehyung’s skin buzzes with anxiety, too much energy swarming him when he just spent almost two weeks with only love, the sand and the sea. He focuses on Yoongi and Seokjin’s calmer conversation, fidgety.

Then from the tiny crowd, he spots him, the tallest figure trying to pass through.

It’s an automatism. Taehyung coils up.

Namjoon meets his eyes and for a second he’s the only person in this place with him.

“Hyung,” he whispers, throat tight.

He’s still pale, though he seems better. Taehyung has been told about the nightmares and the lack of sleep and he painfully relates. His arm is still held up in a sling but his fingers are moving much better than they used to, they lost their purply tinge.

And much too quickly, Taehyung tears up.

It’s wordless, the rest around vanishing as they meet in a hug, gentle yet strong and firm. They remain like that for minutes, dead silent but their hold unrelenting. There's so much that's being said simply in the pressure of Namjoon's fingers between his shoulders and in the choking space between their chests. They utter no word but this is enough. He’s thankful for how far he was standing compared to the others. It offers a kind of anonymity they very much need.

Then when they separate, Taehyung notices the shine in Namjoon’s eyes. The kindness and the
understanding.

“Did you come back a better person?” he asks, and Taehyung’s lips melt into a smile.

“I hope so.”

For the rest of the evening, Taehyung gravitates around Namjoon in a weird way.

It’s a clear yet brisk and windy night, but the bravest still find their way into the pool. Taehyung feels too fidgety for that. His eyes keep going from Namjoon to whoever is trying to have a conversation with him. And it’s not that he’s not listening. Because he is. But there’s just this visceral need to keep checking on Namjoon.

He finds that it’s mutual, there’s nothing remotely subtle about how they act. So they sit close and find their way to one another whenever they can.

“It’s probably gonna be like this for a while,” Seokjin tells him, offering a beer that he refuses.

And Taehyung already knows that. Understands where it comes from. Blood is what will have brought them closer.

No one comments on it. No one brings it up.

At the exception of Jungkook. Late, late in the night. When people are chatting calmly around the pool, on deck chairs, close to the fire. He’s deep into tipsiness and it shows, his tongue is slow and soft around his words, his eyes are a little hazy.

“Could you—uh,” he starts and Taehyung raises a curious brow, cut in his debate with Yoongi. “Come with me?”

Taehyung stands and follows without a word. He’s brought inside, in the kitchen just on the other side of the mesh door.

The heaviness of the silence that falls once Jungkook closes the door is worrying. Taehyung's anxious mind makes the worst out of it. Perhaps Jungkook is angry at him. Understandable. Acknowledged. Perhaps there’s something unsaid about Namjoon’s state, a complication, something endangering his life.

“Hyung,”

There’s a sliver of controlled sadness in his voice, his eyes are cast down.

“Mhm,”

“I really—I’m not very good at this?” he chuckles nervously, his smile is shy. "But for what happened, thank you." Speechless, Taehyung waits with a blooming pain in his gut. "Thank you for—taking care of him. For bringing him back to safety."

"Jungkook-ah,"

“No—I mean it. I don’t know—"
“It’s fine,”

“I’m dr-drunk and trying really hard not to cry, hyung. So please, just, accept this?”

Taehyung breathes out a soft okay to match the atmosphere. Somehow he relates to him. To his fear. He knows too well the feeling of having a loved one vanish.

“Do you—want something to drink? Seokjin hyung says my strawberry daiquiris are good.”

He’s cute, Taehyung thinks when Jungkook finally looks at him.

“I’m good, but thank you. Trying to cut down the alcohol.”

“O-Oh. I can make it virgin if you want?”

Slowly, the tension dissipates. Jungkook’s shoulders sag, his eyes are shimmery with wet diamonds. The last piece of worry Taehyung had slips out of his thoughts. They’re okay.

“Sure, yeah. Sounds good.”

“I didn’t even see them kiss once.”

“They hid their relationship for over three months, Jimin-ah. They’re used to being discreet.”

“Oh, yeah. Thanks for rubbing it in, hyung. I appreciate.”

Yoongi clicks his tongue, glances at Jimin, who's in the passenger seat, with an amused expression.

“That’s not what I was trying to say.”

Taehyung lets his head fall back against the leather. He's tired. But so, so peaceful.

“Don’t you think I already feel bad enough? Why do you need to bring that up again.”

“Again, not what I was trying to say.”

“Still what you said.”

“God, you’re bratty when you’re drunk.”

“You like it.”

Yoongi doesn’t answer, just shakes his head with an airy laugh.

“Of course he likes it,” Taehyung says with a grin.

“You too.”

“Yes, me too. You know that.”

“I’m still weirded out. They don’t even look like they’re together?”

"Don't doubt it, Jimin-ah,” Taehyung adds, fresh memories of the discussion he had with Jungkook
resurfacing.

“I’m not really _doubting_ it,”

“I’m telling you. They love each other a lot. You not seeing it doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist.”

A stretch of silence.

“I’m too drunk for your deep stuff. Stop that bullshit.”

Taehyung shakes with airy giggles, his haze growing tenfold.

In moments like this, it’s as if the ink stains on his heart and his brain don’t exist anymore. He doesn’t drown in self-destructive thoughts daily, does not try to run and hide from an eventual pain that could swallow him whole.

In moments like this, his attempts to trade this life for drugs seem ridiculous. Stupid and selfish. Taehyung knows deep down that they are not. But looking back, his struggles seem insignificant. Something only someone self-absorbed would complain about.

But moments like this cannot guarantee he will wake up tomorrow with a clear mind. With the sun beaming and the curtains drawn, showing an open, easy path.

The thoughts will still be there. Some days, he will still bristle if Jimin spends just a little more time with Yoongi than he does with him. He will look at the apartment’s walls with disdain, dread eating alone at the kitchen table.

Moments like this, are just moments. Fragments, a little brighter, to make it more steel than carbon.

There’s still a long way to go.

But Taehyung always liked long walks.
4.9 Pollyanna

His eyes open, quick and abrupt, like a light can be switched on and off.

He recognizes this ceiling even in darkness, would from a thousand other ones. Taehyung stared at it for long, wicked times, hours, days on end. Just from this, his chest goes heavy, crushed by things he can’t see.

The bed under him feels enveloping compared to what they slept on in the last days. So enveloping, almost engulfing. In his lucid haze, he gets images of before, of when he was trying to work on projects for uni alone at his desk, with no one waiting for him, with a silent phone he kept glancing at. Then of Yoongi, naked and writhing under him, thighs lined with angry traces of his nails. Of that afternoon, when he came in to find Jimin with his cock stuffed in Yoongi’s mouth.

“I can’t,” he whines, windpipe growing tight. He sits up, filled with agitation and the need to run away again.

This place is home to ghosts, phantoms of each and every one of his ugliest emotions. They’re imprinted in the walls, translucent wallpaper to kill the white Taehyung hates so much. They seep through his skin and snake into him whenever he’s too weak to fight them off.

“Tae?”

Taehyung momentarily squeezes his eyes shut at the grainy sound of Jimin’s voice. An anchor, maybe. A chance.

“I didn’t mean to wake you.”

“I’m a light sleeper, you know that.” Quietude. Taehyung inhales hard and long, hands coming on his stomach, clutching at the sheet. “You okay?”

He knows it’s Jimin’s roundabout way of asking if he had nightmares again. But he didn’t. He woke up in one instead. For a few fleeting seconds, he wonders if he will ever be able to recover in the hell he made of this apartment.

“I feel—disgusting.”

Jimin props himself on his elbows, looks down at him with puffy eyes and messy hair, but concern laced in his features.

“Why? What happened?”

“I don’t know,” he rushes. And wants to clam up, for Jimin to forget about this. “Being here. It’s just weird, it’s—”

He leaves his sentence to weigh in the air with no intention to finish it. Jimin’s stare stays riveted on him, searching. He’s not quite sure he managed to really convey what he meant. Not sure if he really wanted to, either.

“I think I get what you mean,” Jimin whispers, he’s poised and understanding. He slowly shifts,
wraps himself around Taehyung’s body with a tenderness only him is capable of. "We can wake up early, if you want. I only have class in the afternoon, but we could go and try to meet and talk to some of your teachers? Maybe buy a book or two?"

His stomach coils, abruptly. His fingers give a hard twitch in the fabric.

He wanted this for years without being able to even touch it. Now it's standing before it, and he doesn't feel ready.

“Maybe I should just wait for next semester.”

“Maybe, yeah. But I think—”

Yoongi groans on Taehyung’s other side, groggily rolls towards them.

“S’four. Why are you having a conversation at this hour,” he grumbles, coming closer, instinctively reaching for Taehyung's hand that's resting on his belly. "Jus’leep.”

“I think,” Jimin continues, voice lower but ringing with fondness, “that you should still try. See how you feel. If it’s really too much, then we’ll wait ‘till next semester, yeah?”

Taehyung swallows, feeling just a tad warmer, just a tad less inky.

“Okay, yeah.”

Δ

Taehyung looks like a kid.

He has this glint in his eyes, shy and curious. He’s careful when he knocks at the teachers’ doors, he talks low and reserved. Jimin doesn’t remember seeing him like that. It’s a behaviour that fits his top-student grades.

He won’t get to meet all the professors of this semester’s classes. So far they were only able to talk with two. And while one of them seemed a bit unimpressed by how behind he already is, Taehyung didn’t let it bother him too much. Yoongi gently rubbed between his shoulders and they moved on.

It’s a bit of a weird day, an abrupt comeback to reality. Jimin dazes out often as they’re waiting for Taehyung, longing for the waves and the wind playing in his hair, for how carefree they were allowed to be. He sips through his straw, sitting on a cushioned bench, with Yoongi standing just a bit further, going through the pinned papers on the board. His arms are crossed over his chest in indifference but the frown on his face shows how interested he is in what he’s reading.

“Do you see something you’d like to try?” he asks, tiptoeing around the topic.

Yoongi gives a slow shake of his head.

“Nah, I can’t do school.”

“You can’t do school or you can’t do admin?”

“Both.”
“I don’t think that’s true.”

“Even in middle and high school I was bad, Jimin-ah.”

“Because it bored you.”

“Yeah.”

"Because back at home there was barely any support." A silence, but Jimin knows that what he's saying is taken in. "And that the only support you had was from your younger, equally as depressed boyfriend."

“Jimin-ah,”

“Not trying to push into anything, hyung. I just want you to stop talking as if you were stupid or not smart enough.”

Yoongi sighs, ruffled up but not annoyed. Jimin is pretty sure he already knew all of this, but just considered it easier to pretend he wasn’t worth investing any hopes in.

From the other side of the door, he can very faintly hear the low rumble of Taehyung’s voice and the agreeable voice of a woman. It seems to be going well.

“Growing up you wanted to do music, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Is it still the case?”

“That’s all I ever wanted to do.”

“You like photography too, right?”

“I do, but never as much.”

“They offer the program here. What’s stopping you?”

“A lot of things,” a breathy, bitter laugh.

“Hyung,”

“I know what you’re trying to do, and I appreciate it. But for now, I don't think I can consider that option.”

That’s Yoongi’s soft way to end their conversation, and Jimin is not going to disrespect it. At least now they know each other’s thoughts, they know where they stand on the subject.

Jimin can’t really understand the trauma both Yoongi and Taehyung have with studying. Obviously, he can’t pretend to know what it feels like. But if Yoongi is going to give up on his dream at 22, then he’s going to end up miserable.

And Jimin can’t allow that.

A minute or two later, Taehyung comes out of the teacher’s room with a thin smile on his lips.

“How did it go?” Yoongi walks back from the board, hands going to his pockets.
"Well, I think," his shoulders lift in a loose shrug. "Told me my grades were good enough too and that I shouldn't worry too much."

"See? I told you!" Jimin flares up with joy, the fog of the last few minutes quickly fading away.

“And she’s actually giving my first Monday class—” Taehyung cuts through his own sentence, his eyes go unfocused, hazy. Jimin worriedly glances at Yoongi. “So she—she told me I could go and buy the books—for Monday—holy shit—”

Taehyung crouches violently to the floor. Jimin is fast to imitate him.

“What is it Tae?”

But Jimin does know, he’s seen him like that before. Eyes watery and chest frantically heaving, almost gasping for air.

“It’s—it’s happening— what’s gonna—”

“Taehyung, breathe,” Yoongi places a hand at his nape, and rubs at the tanned skin with his thumb. “Don’t let it eat you up, just breathe,”

Gently, Jimin coaxes him into a breathing pattern. Seeing him like that is saddening. Knowing that he’s so easily shaken up, so easily scared of taking that step.

But they’re here around him and it’s fine.

There are students passing and giving them looks but it's okay.

Taehyung is battling a wave of elation mixed with dread, and the only thing that matters, is that there's fingers to wrap around his to help him up.

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**Yoongi hyung:** tae wanted to go to the café, namjoon told him he was there

02-09-2016, 19:23

**Yoongi hyung:** so we’ll probably eat here

02-09-2016, 19:23

**Yoongi hyung:** want me to bring you something?

02-09-2016, 19:23

**You:** ah that would've been nice

02-09-2016, 19:24

**You:** but hyung already stuffed me with granola bars
He then sends a small heart emoji that he knows he won't be returned. Yoongi isn't too fond of those, to Taehyung's contrary. But they make him smile at the very least, so Jimin didn't give up on using them.

**Yoongi hyung**: text me when you guys are done

02-09-2016, 19:26

**Yoongi hyung**: tae will probably want to hang out a while more

02-09-2016, 19:26

**Yoongi hyung**: he’s pretty hyper

02-09-2016, 19:26

Jimin smiles at his phone.

His class in the afternoon went rough, he was lost through most of it and his teacher didn’t seem too fond of his sudden reappearance.

Taehyung promised he would try to help him catch up when he saw how discouraged he was when he got back to the apartment.

This, along with how happy he seemed for most of the day, how flushed and excited he was when he paid for his textbook, Yoongi's calm throughout the day and this first dance practice after missing two in a row, this makes Jimin float.

**You**: sure, yeah

02-09-2016, 19:26

**Yoongi hyung**: dance well

02-09-2016, 19:26

**You**: always
It’s liberating, almost purifying.

He doesn’t know how he manages to forget how much he likes to dance, sometimes. It’s a pull that comes from within, a visceral force that travels through each of his limbs and goes to echo in his heart. He can just close his eyes and lose control to the beat, feel the melody instead of just hearing it.

He exhausts his body, goes just a little overboard, but he’s content with it. The competition is this weekend and the whole group has refined their moves, so much that Jimin is the one looking like he’s lacking sharpness and synchronicity. But it doesn’t bother him. Dancing is his second nature. He knows he’ll be fine if he works on it a bit harder this week.

“It’s tak-tak-tak,” Jimin dazedly looks at Hoseok coaching one of the girls. “Not tak-tak-tak. Lift the elbow just a bit more. Again. Lift. Tak-tak. Like this.”

He slowly blinks, leaned on his palms as she does the move again and again.

“Yes! Good!”

Hoseok gently taps her on the bicep, beaming, looking proud. Jimin is reminded of why they’ve been best friends for so long.

When a bottle appears directly in his sight, Jimin just fixates it without a word.

“Are you dead or?”

Jimin looks up at Jungkook, then back to the water he's being offered. He gratefully takes a swig, then gives it back before he reclines on the floor.

“Endorphins, it’s been a while.”

"Yeah, you look a little more like a steamed lobster than you normally do."

“Thanks, disrespectful brat.”

“No problem.”

He sits next to him with his usual poise.

Jungkook stares at everyone who’s individually practicing, Jimin stares at the ceiling. It’s tangible. The tension. The hint of awkwardness.

“Are you mad at me?” Jungkook asks without tearing his eyes away.

“What for?”

He knows what for.

“Hiding what’s been happening with Namjoon hyung.”

“Do I have a reason to be mad?”
“We’ve been sharing everything for years, hyung. Even the uncomfortable details. So I would understand if you would be angry.”

“I’m not. It was just a lot to compute at once. I didn’t get to help you through the initial gay crisis, and I think that did hurt me a little at first?”

“Yeah, I get it.”

‘Cause we didn’t get to hear about that possibility at all. I had my doubts, obviously, because I have eyes and I could see how you were acting with them.”

“I should’ve told you.”

“Okay, guys, let’s do it together one last time,” Hoseok calls loudly over the music.

“I don’t want you to feel bad about it,” Jimin sits up, drags his hair back with his fingers. “You went through this your own way and if you tell me that it went well, then it’s all that matters.” Jungkook nods and only gets up once Jimin rests a hand on his shoulder. “Still want to know how it happened though.”

Jungkook smiles a coy smile, drinks some more water before he throws the bottle close to his stuff.

“Ah, so nosy.”

Jimin slaps him on the chest.

Δ

Taehyung takes in a lungful of air, twists his torso to get his vibrating phone on the bedside table. He squints at it, sees the glowering 7:56 along with the contact ID that reads dad.

With a long groan, he flips onto his back, careful not to rouse Yoongi. Jimin is already staring at him with a sleepy, concerned look from the other side of the bed.

“Yeah?”

“There’s a meeting tomorrow at nine. You better be there.”

“A meet—I can’t, I got school.”

Which is true. His first class of the week. First class in this new degree called Freedom. His father just doesn’t know that yet.

“I couldn’t care less. How many classes did you miss last semester Taehyung? How lazy did you get with your studies? How worthless did you become for this company? A class more or less, what’s it going to change now?”

“Okay, fuck you dad.”

“Whatever you say. You’re going to attend this meeting, sitting in that successor seat like you’re supposed to be.”
“No, I won’t. Have a good one.”

He hangs up.

For a handful of seconds, he remains with glassy eyes fixated on the screen, staring at the duration of the call. Then he sighs, lets his hand drop by his side.

“A diplomatic father,” Jimin whispers with just the right hint of bitterness.

“Not really.”

“I’m glad you stood up to him. He shouldn’t talk to you like that.”

“Yeah, well. Still a shitty way to wake up.”

“I can make it better, if you want.”

Taehyung then meets and holds his eyes, and the layer of coldness his father coated him with dies under Jimin’s blooming warmth.

“Come here.”

Δ

It gives Yoongi a weird sensation. Sitting in a classroom. A little like the feeling he got when he first held a snake. Cold and slithery, sliding tightly across his skin. But today it’s in the inside.

To make him more at ease, Taehyung chose a place at the back, in the furthest corner. Yoongi isn’t supposed to be there, there’s a meeting at nine.

But the previous night, after a slight rise in tension caused by a petty argument between Yoongi and Jimin, Taehyung found a way to tell them he was worried about stalling and running off class. It was quiet and shielded with bitter humour yet no one laughed.

“I’ll go with you,” he said, knowing that Jimin had matters to attend to with his father in the morning.

“I wasn’t being serious,”

“I know you, and I know you were. I’ll go with you if it makes you feel safer.”

He’s here now, and it’s not that he regrets it, because there’s no way he could with the childish excitement Taehyung is radiating. But he should have mentally prepared more.

If he's honest, he hates it. He hates the whole idea of mandatory education to be successful or to appear to be so in front of others. No one is ever proud of saying they dropped out. Yoongi didn’t mind it that much, but his parents were ashamed. Especially his father.

So the place and the vibe make him stiff.

He rolls his phone in his palm, focusing on Taehyung's nervous movements as he takes his volume and his tablet out of his bag.
And then, just as he turns his tablet on, he freezes.

“I can’t,” he mutters.

Just as swiftly, he tries to stuff everything back in, breath shuddering when he sighs.

“Why are you doing that,” Yoongi says with a soft, nearly lazy voice. It’s not a question.

“I knew I wouldn’t be able to, I told you that, hyung, it’s –“

“Taehyung, stop,”

Slowly, very slowly, he does. His eyelids fall shut, his shoulders sag. Yoongi knows too well that feeling of being on the edge, waiting to fall on a side or the other, too afraid to willingly jump off.

“Hyung, if I do that, everything changes.”

“Yeah.”

“Maybe not now or tomorrow. But soon.”

“It’s a decision you took a while ago.”

“I’ll come next semester? In fall. Like everyone else. I don’t think I feel ready for it.”

In tender moments, Yoongi will sometimes think about how different Taehyung has been in the last weeks. Drastically so. It’s being frail that bent him this way. Uprooted and bare. The walls are all off, the curtains, the pretense.

It’s throwing Yoongi off. And he knows Jimin is feeling the same. They talked about it. *It’s a matter of balance*, he said, a plume of smoke escaping his lips, *it’s a bit off for now but it’ll settle down on its own.*

“You never will. Because the first step is the scariest.”

“Maybe I did things too carelessly. I should have waited.”

“How well do I know you?”

They look at each other for a few beats, confusion settling in.

“What?”

“When did we meet?”

“Fuckin—” Taehyung exasperatedly throws his head back, but he’s smiling. “Stop with archaic story, hyung.”

“Just answer, brat,”

“When I was a week old.”

“Yes. A week old, wrinkly and crying all the time. So I think I know you pretty well. And I mean it when I say that your place is here, Tae. Trust yourself a little more.” Taehyung nods, fingers with fiddling the bottom hem of his shirt. “Just attend this class. Four hours. Then if you want to back out, I won’t stop you. At least you will have tried.”
Taehyung nods again, jerky little moves of his head that make his hair glow a pretty way even under artificial light.

“Okay.”

At 8:47, Taehyung’s phone lights up with a call. It grabs at Yoongi’s attention, but Taehyung is too immersed in what the teacher is explaining to notice. He gently flips it face-first, thankful that Taehyung put it on silent before class to focus better.

Less than a minute later, it’s his own phone that starts ringing, the device tight in his hand in an attempt to kill the noise of the vibration.

In the ten minutes that follow, they’re being called alternately in a relentless, almost obsessive pattern. He knows who’s on the other side on the line, waiting for them.

Yoongi stares at the front, but his brain is wrapped around his phone that he holds under the desk, against his thigh. His knuckles become white with anger, his stomach coiled with impatience.

Eventually, the calls become less frequent, until they stop altogether. Yoongi gradually lets the tension out of his body in the form of long, quiet sighs, as to not disrupt Taehyung’s focus.

He turns his phone off for the remainder of the class.

When the students are being dismissed, only a handful of them take their time wrap up their stuff. Taehyung is one of them.

“That was so interesting, what the fuck,” he whispers to himself, turning his tablet off.

After that, the decision is easy to make.

Taehyung makes his way to the front of the class, having to wait for a turn to talk with the teacher.

It’s easy. Quick.

Well-meaning.

He takes Taehyung’s phone from the desk, clicks his tongue at the 12 missed calls. He unlocks it, softens just barely as he types 0531.

He deletes all the notifications.

He’s done with this bullshit.

"There," he mutters, throwing his keycard on the desk.
The secretary stares. It's only a matter of seconds before she understands. The sugary-sweet smile she usually welcomes him with locks up, then fades.

"Don't look so surprised, I told you I'd never work up here," he adds. She seems to hesitate, like there's something right on the tip of her tongue that she needs to say. Yoongi knows. He doesn't want to hear it. There's no use in hurting her feelings, or in lying and leaving a door ajar. "So can I trust you to take care of this?"

"I uhm— I'm afraid I'm not allowed to do that," she rolls back on her chair, freeing space so she can look through the drawers. "I'm only a secretary after all. But let me just—Yes okay, fill those up, and when you'll be done, I'll call Mr. Kim."

"I'm not going to fill those. I'm not leaving this place in ten minutes. I'm leaving now."

She inhales, her perfectly manicured hands stilling in their position.

"Right," she recollects herself, raises her eyes at him. "Then what exactly do you want me to do?"

"Call him, let him know I'm getting in there. He's not with a client, is he?"

"N-No."

"Good, then please do that for me."

"Min Yoongi," Taehyung’s father stands, a deceptive act of politeness. "Please take a seat."

"You can drop the act with me. I'm not going to sit, I'm just here to tell you I'm resigning."

He’s given a long, cold stare, the type that used to have him look away, with a weird weight pressing on his shoulders, something like fear running along his spine.

Now it just makes him uncomfortable.

"You can’t resign. One does not just resign from their duty."

Yoongi shrugs.

"And yet that’s exactly what I’m doing, Mr. Kim."

"So what’s the plan, now, Yoongi?" He hears the veil being pulled off just by the drop in his tone. "No education, no particular talent whatsoever," the man purses his lips in mock thoughtfulness, Yoongi smirks bitterly. "An out-and-out runt. This company offered you a perfect life on a silver platter, and you’re spitting on it."

"If the life you lead is what you consider perfect, then I can do much worse than spitting on that platter, sir."

"You’re worthless, Min Yoongi."

The pinching in Yoongi’s chest just keeps intensifying. It might bruise. Again. A bruise over years-old hematomas. But it’s going to be the last one he will allow.
“I’m going to leave, now, if you don’t mind.”

“You need to fill resignation papers.”

"I never filled anything to get in here. I don't even have the necessary education to occupy the position I was in. You cheated my way through here. I believe you will be fine without resignation papers."

Yoongi doesn’t linger. Did so for too many years. Ended up losing too many of them.

Composedly, he walks back to the door.

For the last time.

And because Taehyung’s father can’t tolerate not having the last word, he bites one last time.

"Is it because you're still having those petty feelings for my son? What you might be mistaking for love?"

Without looking back, Yoongi lets out a small, airy laugh. He licks his bottom lip in anger.

“It’s funny how some people calculate they can judge something they never experienced.”

The door closes behind him, engulfing a thick silence.

The most relieving of them all.
You: do you have a minute so we can talk?

05-09-2016, 17:39

Yoongi fixates his phone for a whole minute, before he shuts the screen and crosses his arms over his chest.

The rush of adrenaline has washed off, painfully replaced with stress and anxiety. Leaned on the hood of his car, he’s fidgety. Just a slight tremble that makes his fingers and his knees numb, strengthless. He brings his cigarette to his lips, takes a long, slow pull.

He feels the vibration in his palm and against his ribs, but he keeps his eyes closed for a moment more. There’s the low thrum of the refinery in the background, metallic sounds, stifled whistles of motors. Yoongi lets it all bring him back, to the good and the bad, to the reason why he just fucked his own life over.

Taehyung’s father’s words ring viciously in the back of his mind, still too powerful. “You’re worthless, Min Yoongi.” They’re turbulent, screaming. They flash and they resound in a deafening way.

He’s felt like that for a long time. He’s thought those things for years, after what seemed like failure after failure. He’s been brought to this. Carved with the guilt that comes with the disappointment of others.

But it’s funny.

Those words seemed ridiculous in someone else’s mouth.

“You’re worthless, Min Yoongi.”

It was worth it.

What I did is worth it.

He sighs air that’s tarnished with smoke.

Seokseok: im at work but you can come over

05-09-2016, 17:41

Seokseok: it looks important

05-09-2016, 17:41
Seokseok: are you okay hyung?

05-09-2016, 17:41

You: yeah I’m okay

05-09-2016, 17:46

You: I’ll be there in 20

05-09-2016, 17:47

Coming home that evening is different.

Hoseok managed to calm him down. They talked music to clear Yoongi’s thoughts, brushed past the subject of the next Saturday’s dance competition. It’s only more than an hour in that Yoongi opened up, looked to the side with knitted brows and said it. I quit. And as expected, Hoseok knew just what to say, just how to act to relieve him of even just a fraction of the guilt and shame.

So Yoongi left the disc store peaceful. But the moment he heard Taehyung’s voice, everything dropped right back onto him.

He’s weightless and heavy at the same time. It’s funny. He was so persuaded to have made the right decision yet here he is, doused with confusion.

Taehyung is excitedly talking in the kitchen, Jimin is laughing in a soft, eerie sound. The music of home. The home Yoongi has chosen.

So he takes his time to bask in this, his phone starting another succession of vibrations in his closed fist.

“Hyung are you gonna sleep in the entryway?” Jimin throws at him from afar.

They came back from Busan and it all fell back into place.

So easily.

Maybe too easily.

Yoongi is scared of what will happen if it doesn’t last. He’s scared to have rushed this and that it’s going to cause them trouble.

“Hyung?” Jimin calls again, and this time it’s tinted with worry.

Light steps, followed by Taehyung appearing at the other end of the hallway. Yoongi swallows then forces a neutral expression on his face.

“How did the briefing go?” he’s asked.
There’s a serenity in his eyes that Yoongi doesn’t feel brave enough to break. He’s looking serious but there’s still the trace of a smile on his lips, a fiery glimmer lightening him up. Surely, he’s been talking about his first class to Jimin.

Yoongi can’t smother this. He’s can’t make it die under the stupidity of his actions.

*Tomorrow,* he thinks.

“It went good,”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, it went well.”

As soon as the sound of the shower starts resounding, cutting through an ongoing conversation, Yoongi hears soft padding coming his way.

It’s a careful intrusion, gliding steps, almost dancing. Yoongi looks up from his phone when Jimin enters the bedroom, and all at once, he softens. That’s just how it always is, with him. Easy. Appeasing.

Quietly, Jimin comes close. The minty smell of his body wash wafts over him, curls around his senses and makes him inhale a long, cleansing breath. He straddles his hips, wet strands curtaining his eyes and his small hands pressing on his chest until Yoongi is reclining back. His phone drops from his hand and onto the mattress. Under his fingers, Jimin was always the most contrasting of experiences. So tender and kind, so strong and passionate.

Jimin curves above him, bringing their chests flush, then their lips meet in a leisured touch. Yoongi closes his eyes and abandons himself to Jimin’s will, lets him set the pace and of the rhythm of their tongues.

“You’ve been silent the whole evening,” he whispers, his breath softly fanning across his chin and neck, “the briefing didn’t go well, did it?”

Yoongi doesn’t know how to answer so he just shakes his head, evasive. He rakes his bitten nails on the supple skin of Jimin’s back, making his shirt ride up.

“What happened?”

It sounds more serious.

Yoongi avoids, presses Jimin’s ass down to grind against his crotch. He’s not particularly in the mood. Even with how effortless it usually is for Jimin to set him off. He would want to hold him without a word instead, question and worry-free, warming each other and their fingertips gently roaming without aim.

But this is still good.

It’s a thousand times better than talking.

Than admitting.
Something Yoongi has been wanting for years is finally snug in the palm of his hand but now it seems as scary as the moment he left for New York.

“Hyung?”

He wraps a hand at the base of Jimin’s nape, pulls him down for their mouths to slot. Messy and uncoordinated. An answer in itself.

Jimin pulls away, he’s a little breathless, his eyes a little glassy.

“Seriously, hyung, what—”

“I resigned.”


“I might have fucked things up—”

“There was no briefing,” Jimin concludes, “you didn’t want to scare Tae so you lied about it,” Yoongi lets his eyelids slip shut.

“I—I don’t know if I did well, I just, I went there on a whim and now it’s stressing the fuck outta me,”

“You didn’t do it on a whim, there isn’t a decision in your life you’ve contemplated more than this one, hyung.”

“I feel like shit.”

The white noise of the shower accompanies them for extended moments. It makes everything feel that much heavier and final. He’s worried about Jimin’s reaction, of what he will find mirrored in his orbs.

But when Yoongi finally opens his eyes and looks up, it’s to meet a peaceful expression. No fear, no surprise.

“I’m proud,” Jimin murmurs, in the very thin space between them. “I’m happy you did it.”

“I don’t think you really understand the implications,”

“We’ll manage.”

“Will we though?”

“You know we will.”

Yoongi sighs, runs his hands up and down Jimin’s thighs. It’s so little, barely a smile. The flicker of a hope. Jimin soothes him.

He glances to the side and at the clock on the nightstand.

23:49.

“Tae has school early tomorrow and I’m worried he won’t sleep if I tell him now. I don’t wanna risk him missing class.”
“We’ll tell him tomorrow. But no later than that. We’ll tell him right after his afternoon class, yeah?”

Yoongi nods, ephemeral relief flooding his ribcage.

“No later than that.”

Δ

“Jiminie,”

Taehyung stays attentive for a clear and bright voice that doesn’t come. He rubs the towel through his hair, promises himself to soon get a much-needed trim. He will need a cleaner cut. Maybe in a darker colour.

He gives a skeptical look to his reflection when he hears nothing. The door is not closed, Taehyung started leaving it open again when they were in Busan, so it shouldn’t be difficult to hear even through the background noise.

“Jiminie, your class is at 8:30 tomorrow right?” he tries, just a tad louder.

Then the silence hints at him that they might be outside, perhaps sharing a smoke as they look at the outline of the city at night, the way they like to do when they’re feeling at ease.

He wraps the towel around his hips, turns off the fan.

They get to him then, the breathy little noises, the quiet panting. The sound that catches in Jimin’s throat when he’s straining.

Taehyung stretches himself through the doorway, listening, the faint burn of arousal starting to flare in his belly. He’s pulled in to them, almost magnetic, more vibrant than the faint exasperation he’s feeling at first. When he can finally peek in, his chest stutters weirdly, a momentary stillness as he takes in the sight.

Yoongi’s clothes are still on, his jeans barely unzipped and pulled a couple of inches down. But Jimin is naked, his muscles working under tanned skin. Taehyung can only see his back, but he still gets lost in the fine line of his spine, the gentle curve of his waist, the plumpness of his ass.

“There’s not enough lube,” Yoongi mutters, his brows knitted in a tight line, fingers pressed deep in the flesh of Jimin’s thighs.

“S’fine,” Jimin arches his back and reaches behind, wrapping a fist around Yoongi’s cock before he very slowly lowers himself onto it. He hisses at first, head falling to the side as he forces his body to take it. Just the head at first. He pumps it in and out of his ass a couple of times to ease the stretch, then he swallows more, until he’s sitting flush on Yoongi’s hips. “Are you done with your shower?”

"I was talking to you," Taehyung spits with mock annoyance.

“I’m busy.”

“Right. Sorry for the inconvenience.”

Yoongi quickly throws him a glance as Taehyung takes a few steps backward, gauging his
seriousness. Then Jimin breathes out a laugh that melts into a moan when Yoongi rolls his hips up into him.

“Where do you think you’re going, asshole,” he stops Taehyung, looking at him over his shoulder. “Come back here. I want you in my mouth.”

Busan is what saved them.

It’s not that sudden realization that Taehyung had at the refinery, a few minutes before everything turned red. It’s not the stress of what happened to Namjoon. It’s not exactly the fear of losing him. That, is what pushed him to let go.

But what saved them, is Busan. It’s how Jimin and Yoongi agreed to follow him on a whim, it’s how they accepted his silences, his fragility. It’s how they cradled each other at night.

Taehyung is not healed up. He’s still too sensitive to some things and his reactions, his thoughts are often a mess. He’s still unsure about university. He doubts his decision and his chances to make it. He fears the future more than he did before. Because having something means you can lose it.

But that night, as Yoongi holds him against his chest and that Jimin is wrapped around his back, Taehyung is thankful to his mother. Too many wounds and too much time later.

And despite the melancholy, he falls asleep the happiest he’s been in years.

Δ

Jimin yawns, a hand coming to hide the void of his mouth as the other continues to scroll through his phone. It’s early. Much earlier than it should be. But Taehyung was so enthusiastic about going to get his other books that when he woke Jimin up, he could do nothing more than sleepily smile and nod.

The cashier announces the price for Taehyung’s purchase and Jimin cringes. Even with how used he is to money, the number still hurts his ears.

“Wow, okay,” he whispers. “That’s much more expensive than admin.”

“Yeah,” Taehyung takes his wallet from his pocket instead of paying with his phone like he usually does. “Biology and physio books are the worst.”

Jimin listlessly watches him pay in cash, his phone vibrating in his palm for the nth time this morning.

Yoongi hyung <3: well for now i’m at the cafe
When they left the apartment and that they both kissed Yoongi, Jimin felt guilt crawl up inside. He's feeling bad knowing Yoongi will have to hide for a good part of the day.

And then after that came questions. He drove to university asking himself what would happen to Yoongi and how he would cope with being thrown into the wild like he is inevitably going to be. One step at a time, Hoseok texted him when, choked up with anxiety, Jimin reached out to him.

They leave the store and find a place to buy a coffee, and Jimin takes it extra sugary, hoping for a kick of energy.

Yoongi hyung <3: honestly it’s not as bad as yesterday
06-09-2016, 7:58

Yoongi hyung <3: seokjin hyung is working and we’re talking
06-09-2016, 7:58

Yoongi hyung <3: the only one of us who still has a good relationship with education
06-09-2016, 8:01

You: me, also
06-09-2016, 8:06

Yoongi hyung <3: ah, yes
06-09-2016, 8:06
“Can I ask you something?” Jimin meets Taehyung’s eyes then hums a positive sound. “Remember Gayoung?”

Jimin chuckles.

“Obviously. We haven’t been gone for seven years, Tae. It was only two weeks.”

“I wrote her something this weekend,”

“Okay,”

“She did not answer. So I tried again yesterday.”

“Why do you want to talk to her?”

“To make sure she’s fine, but she’s not answering.”

“And now you’re starting to worry.”

“Sort of.”

“Mhm.”

“I’m wondering if I should try again.”

Jungkookie: hyung

06-09-2016, 8:08

Jungkookie: good mornin

06-09-2016, 8:08

“I’d say it could be anything, just give her some time. She seemed like a nice person, so I don’t think she would ignore you on purpose.”

“Right.”

Jungkookie: its me

06-09-2016, 8:09

You: too early for your shit

06-09-2016, 8:09

You: why are you up

06-09-2016, 8:10
**Jungkookie:** wow so mean
06-09-2016, 8:10

**Jungkookie:** im at school hyung wth
06-09-2016, 8:10

**Jungkookie:** get that dick outta your ass and focus pls
06-09-2016, 8:10

**You:** youre one to talk
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** haha
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** ha
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** yes
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** okay so
06-09-2016, 8:11

**You:** what was that
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** a sarcastic laugh
06-09-2016, 8:11

**Jungkookie:** OKAY SO
06-09-2016, 8:12

**Jungkookie:** i think its time now
Jimin tightens with the slightest hint of nervousness. He’s sort of surprised that Jungkook would be the one to bring his relationship with Namjoon on the carpet first. And even though it’s still a bit of a weird idea to him, Jimin wants to be there when the story will be ready to be told.

His thumb glides of the letter nimbly, although hesitantly.

“Hum.”

He looks up, watches Taehyung’s expression growing more perplexed with every passing second.

“What?”

Then a small notification at the top of his screen.

**Jungkookie**: hey hyungs

06-09-2016, 8:13

**Jungkookie**: welcome to our first group chat

06-09-2016, 8:13

**Hobi hyung**: oh no

06-09-2016, 8:14

“Ah,” Jimin runs a palm down his face, annoyed but warm inside. “It’s official then. You’re part of the mess.”

Taehyung gives a cute laugh. But behind that thin façade, Jimin can see that he’s touched.

**Hoseok hyung**: hell is opening before us

06-09-2016, 8:14

Jimin never really thought about how blessed he was to share a major with Taehyung. Until when they’re parting. Now they have to walk to each their own building, they can’t borrow each other’s books or study together, can’t be project partners anymore, nor can they nurture intensive conversations about what they just learned.

He’s going to miss this.
He presses his lips to Taehyung’s, just a sweet, light touch.

“Text me when your class is over, okay?”

Taehyung nods and then he’s off, his quietness more excitement than indifference.

It’s so different than the Taehyung who used to be high in class, hood over his head and running out as soon as the teacher would dismiss them. Day and night. Jimin fell in love with the dark tinge of a dawn.

But now he doesn’t know if he’ll ever get used to the brightness of the sun.

You: hyung can we talk about something?

06-09-2016, 8:17
Almost in a daze and leaned forward on the desk, Taehyung remains immobile for a few seconds when everyone around starts to move.

He peeks at his phone, dumbfounded to realize that three hours have already passed. He could have listened to the professor for the whole day. He didn't take any notes on his tablet; the screen has been off for a while now, but he feels like he absorbed most of what's been discussed.

The students don’t rush out today. Neither did they do the day before. He’s so used to seeing that. People trying to go through the door as if it would extinguish the fire that’s crawling up on their sleeves.

Here is a whole one-eighty degree.

He ignores the multiple notifications from his father pending at the top of his screen, then mistakenly enters the group chat before he finally selects his conversation with Jimin.

The group chat. His first ever one.

You: class is over
06-09-2016, 11:18

Jimin: how did it go
06-09-2016, 11:18

You: its really interesting
06-09-2016, 11:19

You: but now i gotta run through the building cause my next class is in 10
06-09-2016, 11:19

Jimin: youll make it, youre a fast runner
06-09-2016, 11:19
When he enters the classroom, it’s almost tiptoeing, silent as to not draw too much attention or disturb the teacher who has already started his lesson. He slips into the first available seat he can find, whispers an apology when he knocks his neighbour’s elbow. He’s returned too bright eyes and a too-willing smile that make him bristle with the slightest hint of uneasiness.

"I don't remember ever seeing you here," the guy says and Taehyung side-eyes him as he takes his tablet out, annoyed that he might have ended up next to a chatterer when he solely wants to focus on learning.

"We're more than a hundred people in here," he says dismissively. He doesn't mean to be rude or unfriendly, it's just that he's got already so many things to catch up with that he can't allow himself any distraction.

“Yeah but I’m generally good with faces,” the guy leans in Taehyung’s space, “and I certainly would have remembered yours.” Taehyung blankly stares at him for a second or two, unimpressed, before he opens a new document and titles it accordingly. “Lee Junsu. Bio major.”

Taehyung bristles a little more.

“Cool.”

It’s all he says.

He struggles to concentrate for the first few minutes, his neighbour's attitude remembering him too much of all the straight dudes he met in gay bars who felt adventurous and that he ended up making out with in dark, humid restrooms. He’s reminded of their hands and their clumsiness, the cold behaviour with which they'd usually treat him. In times like these, Taehyung felt like a toy.

But it was better than feeling nothing at all.

He spends the next four hours angled away from the guy, imposing a wall on him, spends the breaks completing his notes, and rereading them. He's avoiding searching eyes, and his ever-ringing phone.

His stomach is growling when he finally dares to look at the notifications. He stretches, thankful that the guy decided to leave using the other side.

Again, six new notifications from his father. The last one just over twenty minutes ago. He sends a quick *im busy, i'll call later* that he hopes will buy him peace for some time.
The group chat, swarmed with so many messages that Taehyung is too overwhelmed to even open.

And then, a short text, but it’s the one that makes him smile the most.

**Kim Namjoon:** Hi, Tae. Are you busy later?
06-09-2016, 15:02

**You:** im just done with class for the day, whats up
06-09-2016, 15:22

**Kim Namjoon:** I have an appointment at the hospital in an hour or so.
06-09-2016, 15:22

**Kim Namjoon:** I was wondering if you wanted to come with?
06-09-2016, 15:23

**Kim Namjoon:** I will understand if you prefer not to though.
06-09-2016, 15:23

**You:** is that because you need someone to drive you there?
06-09-2016, 15:23

**Kim Namjoon:** I can drive, silly. I guess I just wanted us to chat a little bit.
06-09-2016, 15:24

**You:** where are you now?
06-09-2016, 15:24

**You:** i’ll come pick you up
06-09-2016, 15:24

**You:** and we can grab a snack on the way? im starving
06-09-2016, 15:24
Kim Namjoon: I'm at the café. I’ll ask hyung to prepare us something while I’m waiting for you.

06-09-2016, 15:25

Taehyung sends an agreement, his heart light in his chest.

Friends. They do wonders.

Δ

Jimin gets in almost nervously, the lock of the door clicking under his hand.

“Jimin-ah,”

He seizes lightly at Yoongi’s voice, loud and clear even when he’s further in the apartment. There’s unnecessary anxiety pooling in Jimin’s stomach. He knows it’s fine. Things won’t shatter down just because he’s having doubts. They’ve been through much worse.

“Yeah?”

“Are Hoseok and Jungkookie always like that?”

His brows knit very lightly, a tad confused as he takes his shoes off.

“What do you mean?”

“The group chat.”

"O-Oh, right. Yeah, it's pretty much their natural state."

“You alright? You sound a little off.”

He enters the kitchen, finds Yoongi sitting in one of the chairs around the table, looking relaxed. It’s good to see that he’s more at peace with their situation, that he somehow was able to rest on his first job-less day.

“Yeah,” he ditches his backpack, dropping it to the floor before he pllops down in the chair across Yoongi’s like he’s had an exhausting day when in reality it’s just his brain that's been running in circles.

“What happened? Are you still worried about your classes?”

“No it’s— Do I still love Tae?”

Yoongi drops his phone onto his lap, expression going serious.

“Why wouldn’t you?”

Heaving a sigh, Jimin gathers his thoughts. He can’t let this come out wrong. He can’t say things he
doesn’t mean.

"Things have changed, in Busan. Tae has changed, our relationship with him has changed and—"

“Did it really though?”

“I mean—yeah? Did it not?”

“It didn’t.”

“Maybe for you it feels this way because you’ve known him before, but to me it’s just—so different? That I came to doubt why I even fell for him in the first place.”

“Jimin-ah,” Yoongi sets his phone aside, leans forward on the table just a little, making Jimin feels engulfed with intimacy. “I know what you mean. I’ve been through that before. But the only thing that changed is your own attachment to him.” Jimin averts his eyes as to not tear up. He feels stupid.

“You’re not as scared for his life as you were, are you?”

“N—No.”

“Exactly. And you’re not as scared for our relationship. You don’t live on your tippy toes anymore, you don’t have that pinch in your chest whenever your part ways because you know that he means to come back to you.”

“I guess,”

“You don’t—You’re not sad as often, there’s no urgency controlling the way you act. You think you love him less because you don’t suffer as much. And that makes everything less intense. But you still love him. And I believe that now it’s really for the right reasons.”

Jimin likes the feeling of the weight slowly being lifted off him. Of the air rushing in and the emotions spilling out.

"After everything that happened, that’s fucking ridiculous,” he says with a shaky voice. He leans back in his chair, rakes his fingers through his hair and cranes his neck to absently stare at the ceiling.

“It’s not. Jiminie, look at me.” And after swallowing a lump of emotions, Jimin does. “How much time has it been? Five months?” He nods. “You spent five months keeping us three afloat. You’re the only one who held strong through the whole fucking ride. You healed us. You kept us together. Don’t feel bad for questioning stuff. It’s fine. You’re not being ungrateful for it.”

Jimin nods again, licks his dried up lips. He rubs the heel of his palm to his eye socket, heaves a cleansing breath.

“You’re right.”

Yoongi made it seem so simple and uncomplicated when himself was feeling it like a whole mountain.

"Come here," Yoongi coaxes him in, slides his chair back to give Jimin more space in his lap.

But Jimin doesn’t comply, he stands and takes Yoongi’s hand instead.

“Couch? We’ve got some catch up to do on Netflix.”
Namjoon’s hand comes to his shoulder in one, two comforting pats. Taehyung breaks out of his daze, his vision blurry at the corners and his mouth dry.

If he hated hospitals before, now they make him straight up nauseous.

“Relax, everything’s fine,” his voice is rough, easy to focus on, and Taehyung greedily accepts the distraction. “I didn’t bring you here so that you would feel bad, I just thought it would be good for us. You and I. And you and me.”

“I’m not so sure about that,” he starts fiddling with his nails as soon as they sit in the waiting room, anxiously looking around.

“We’re here. We’re fine. De-stress. Nothing is going to happen.”

“I guess I’m not— not really done processing.”

“I know. That’s why I brought you.”

A short-lived silence, then Taehyung is cautiously talking again.

“Can I ask something?”

“Sure.”

“What happened after that?”

“After what?”

"After you were discharged from here. Did you go to the police? Do you— still do that for a living?"

"I asked you not to say anything, so I didn't say anything either. The doctor seemed suspicious of the wound, but I said something vague about some stray metal stuff we fooled around with." Namjoon shrugs, then his eyes go unfocused. "He didn't believe me but it doesn't really matter. As for your second question, no, I'm not. My little sister got so upset, she cried and begged me to stop for days on end, so I did."

Taehyung empties his lungs in a long, relieved sigh. His muscles loosen up, the knot in his chest does, too.

“That’s good,” he whispers.

“That’s safer. But rough on the budget.”

“That’s safer, it’s really all that matters.”

The moment Namjoon is called in, Taehyung falls back into a state of pure emotional rawness. He starts fidgeting on his chair, his leg engaging in a jumpy, restless pattern.

Everything about here is despicable.
The white walls.
The close-to-empty corridors.
The minute sound of someone coughing.
The dull voice of the secretary on the phone.
He hates it.
Everywhere he takes his eyes, he finds a piece of himself. In the confusion with which the patients in
the waiting room are moving, sometimes the pain in their traits. How they won’t talk. Their
quietness. Their stretched out silence. Muteness.
When Yoongi left, Taehyung spent over three days without uttering a single word.
He stands and starts walking around, unable to bear what’s pressing on him. He looks around, roams
like a ghost. Long hallways, dimming light. Closed doors. It looks much like a nightmare, but this
time Taehyung knows he’s awake. There’s no escape.

It’s no coincidence if Taehyung finds his way to the floor he was kept at almost two years ago.
Standing in that corridor where the expensive private rooms are, where the beds are electric and the
LED television is always on to gag how much lonelier that floor is.
He breathes deep, the air in his lungs rancid.
Just how many times did he think he failed to die when he was lying in that bed. How many prayers
did he send in hope to complicate, when his phone was still silent and immobile next to him. Those
were all very lucid thoughts.
But then he got sent out and put back on an even higher dosage of those pills he hated, and it sent his
brain to fizzle. He has some serious mood swings, sometimes I’m scared he’s going to become
dangerous. And Taehyung let his father lie, deluding the doctor sitting in front of them because he
didn’t care anymore. It didn’t matter.
The calm voice of the lady at the front desk answering a man resounds crystalline on the cold
quietude of this place that it makes a shiver run up Taehyung’s spine. They say things he can’t hear,
so indistinct it almost sounds like another language completely.
And then, an idea. Just a flicker of curiosity. A need to understand
Like something is pulling at his shirt from behind, Taehyung takes a few steps back and towards the
voices, listening closely to when their conversation is going to be brought to an end.
Thinking back, he never really knew what happened to him that night. Barely remembers anything
of it passed the moment Yoongi talked to him about marriage. He woke up in a bed that wasn’t his,
with his fiancé gone. He heard the nurse and the doctor talk to his father one of the two times he
came to visit, but he felt too gone inside to really give them or their conversation too much attention.
And then his father fed him the it’s because you drank too much mantra, and Taehyung swallowed
it. Because it made sense. His medication had been changed not too long before that and he
carelessly drank hard liquor without thinking too much about it.

“It’s Yoongi’s fault, look how he ruined you and then ran off like a coward,” his father told him time and time again. That’s the only pill Taehyung refused to let down his throat.

Given the circumstances, he was never really interested in fully understanding the reason why he crashed the night of his birthday, and who was really to blame. It was the least of his worries.

But he’s here now. He could put that piece of the puzzle to rest.

Then his phone rings in his pocket.

And it’s the vibration pattern he only got set for Yoongi and Jimin.

Δ

Like it happened so many times before, Netflix remains a white noise in the background.

They quickly slipped into something more languid, with more lips and more touches. It’s nice, sometimes. When it’s just them. It’s always good when it’s them three but this is different. And Jimin likes this just as much.

Yoongi soothes a hand down his spine, down to the small of his back until his fingers are pressing in the clothed meat of his ass, angling their hips and pulling them together. Jimin is easy to give in, and he curls his body against his, a dull throb of pleasure radiating through his groin.

They haven’t been in that position that often, when Jimin lying on top and between Yoongi’s legs, setting the tempo. But he relishes in it. It’s not something he could fully appreciate before, discomfort lingering whenever he would feel entrusted with too much control.

Taehyung and Yoongi soothed it.

Yoongi said that Jimin was the one to heal them up. But they healed him up just as much. Probably without even noticing.

“If I ask you to fuck me,” Yoongi whispers, after a wet press of lips.

They never did that together.

“Yes,”

“You want to?”

Yoongi’s hands push his pants down the curve of his ass then go past the band of his boxers, grappling at his flesh.

“What do you think?” and to emphasize his answer, he rolls into him in a long and forceful movement.

“Let’s get the lu—”

The sound of the door being unlocked startles them both and they momentarily still before loosening
up again, knowing that Taehyung is just coming home.

“\textit{You’re right on time},” Jimin says with a smile, looking over his shoulder.

But the person who appears through the doorframe isn’t Taehyung.

\[\Delta\]

It’s just a vibration, a quiet buzzing subdued by the fabric of his jeans, but in the silence reigning between those walls, the desk lady still hears it. Monotonously, she warns him about it and Taehyung has half a mind to apologize before he finds the nearest staircase to isolate himself in.

He takes his phone out, frowns at Yoongi’s ID even when he expected it. For some reason, he's having a bad feeling.

“\textit{Hyung}?”

“\textit{Your father was here. I think you should come back home}.”

\[\Delta\]

Chapter End Notes

So, this was a hard decision for me to take, but I will need take a break. I've been planning a trip and I've got so much stuff to organize and learn and I'm generally overwhelmed? I will continue writing this, of course, and if I can post a chapter at a moment or another, then I will. But there is a chance that this will be left untouched until mid-September.

For any update on my trip or this story:
my twitter

And it took me a while, but I finally revamped Bloody paws if anyone is interested:
here

I love you guys, I hope you understand ♡
4.12 Smoke

Chapter Summary

... hi

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Taehyung is back on that same seat when Namjoon finally makes it out of the doctor’s office.

He couldn’t leave without him. He didn’t want to go with just a hurried text to him and some more guilt piling up on his spine, no matter how much Yoongi’s call destabilized him.

So he’s barely sitting on the edge of the chair, eyes coldly kept in the space in front of him, flipping his phone in his hands.

“I’m back,” Namjoon says with a smile in his voice.

His sling is hanging just a tad lower. It’s of good omen. And even through his anger, Taehyung feels it, the warmth of relief.

“I uh—,” he takes a deep breath, stands and holds Namjoon’s stare, “I don’t mean to rush you, but I think I should go back as quickly as I can?”

Namjoon’s content expression slowly fades into a concerned one.

“Sure, yeah,” he starts leading them out, feeling Taehyung’s urgency. “What happened?”

“Hyung called me while you were in there. My father dropped in on him and Jimin.”

“Oh. Oh okay. Uhm. Yeah. Let’s go back.”

Namjoon manages to defuse him.

He always does.

Taehyung likes to think that it’s a kind of magic Namjoon has on people like him. Emotionally fragile, with sometimes incoherent thought patterns. Susceptible to addictions and self-induced heartbreaks.

Maybe because he’s used to working with them, using their weaknesses to survive.
Or maybe because he understands.

Maybe the facet of himself he doesn’t show is exactly that way.

Taehyung drives him back to the café, where Jungkook is supposed to be waiting for him.

“Thank you for coming with me,” Namjoon says, just outside the car but leaning in through the window to talk to him.

“Thank you for asking me,” Taehyung softens. He truly is grateful.

Namjoon smiles with something beautiful and serene. He gives a curt nod.

“And Tae,”

“Mhm?”

“You and I, we can’t let go of each other now, okay?”

And Taehyung knows that he’s talking about their friendship as much as about the secret they’re sharing.

He returns him his smile, although a more restless version of it.

“We won’t.”

Δ

Jimin is high-strung. The wind, the light. They’re all solid touches to his senses. He’s too aware of everything.

The sky turned from a bright, spotless blue to a ceiling of clouds and for once, he’s thankful. It would have been too much.

Sitting on the balcony with Yoongi at his side, he takes his cigarette to his lips to pull at it, blows a thin plume of smoke as he watches the cars in the street below. He’s still shaking. He’s still rosied with embarrassment, tense with anger. And scared. But this time it’s not a fear of the consequences, like when this first happened.

Jimin is shaken up deep to his insides because he’s seen it. It was just a glint, an ephemeral sheen. But in the man’s eyes, Jimin saw madness. Something much stronger than hate. Than disgust. Than ignorance. Enough to give him chills.

He can’t get it out of his head.

**Hobi hyung:** still no news?

06-09-2016, 17:47
Hobi hyung: no weird phone calls? no cops? angry landlord?
06-09-2016, 17:47

You: no
06-09-2016, 17:47

You: and i think it makes me even more restless
06-09-2016, 17:47

Hobi hyung: understandable
06-09-2016, 17:48

You: i know i shouldn't be feeling like this but
06-09-2016, 17:48

You: i dont feel as safe here anymore
06-09-2016, 17:48

You: knowing he has the key
06-09-2016, 17:48

Hobi hyung: why shouldn't you be feeling like that
06-09-2016, 17:48

You: hyung and tae are still here
06-09-2016, 17:49

You: nothing is gonna happen to me
06-09-2016, 17:49
**Hobi hyung:** youre allowed to feel whichever way youre feeling jiminie
06-09-2016, 17:51

**Hobi hyung:** i know id be feeling that way
06-09-2016, 17:51

**Hobi hyung:** hyung and taehyung are probably just like you too
06-09-2016, 17:52

**You:** i dont think hyung has seen the way taes father looked at us
06-09-2016, 17:52

**Hobi hyung:** anyone would feel unsafe even without seeing that
06-09-2016, 17:53

**Hobi hyung:** listen jiminie
06-09-2016, 17:53

**Hobi hyung:** id recommend all of you go out somewhere
06-09-2016, 17:53

**Hobi hyung:** just so that you dont get stuck with those feelings the whole night
06-09-2016, 17:54

**Hobi hyung:** and unless the 3 of you come here, which i dont recommend
06-09-2016, 17:54

**Hobi hyung:** i cant hlep very much right now
06-09-2016, 17:54

**You:** i know, its okay hyung
06-09-2016, 17:54

**Hobi hyung:** but im getting off at 8
Jimin hears the front door being opened and instantly he goes rigid with worry, anxiety ringing red in his head. Alarmed, he looks at Yoongi.

“It’s Tae,” he assures him, before he blows out thick smoke, “he just texted me.”

The hand that comes to warm his thigh snaps him out of it.

“Hyung?”

“We’re here,” Yoongi answers with his head leaned towards the mesh door.

And a few seconds after, it’s being slid open, Taehyung coming outside and looking concerned.

“You okay?“ Jimin nods the answer that Yoongi mutters, the weight of fatigue slowly settling onto him. “He didn’t come back?”

“No.”

“Okay,” Taehyung breathes, letting Tuxedo out before he settles in front of them with his legs crossed. “What hap—” His phone starts vibrating loudly on the floor of the balcony and Jimin startles, fingers clamping around his cigarette. Taehyung clicks his tongue and rejects the call, turns his phone off. “What happened?”

Yoongi nonchalantly shrugs, expires a cloud and kills his cigarette in the ashtray. He crosses his arms.

“There honestly isn’t much to say. It lasted something like, ten seconds.”

“Then it can’t be that bad, can it?”

Taehyung accepts the pack he’s being offered and picks a stick. Jimin then flicks his thumb over the flint wheel, and Taehyung leans in to the flame shining from the lighter.

“We were having sex on the couch,” Jimin cuts, tone harsh.

Taehyung cough as his cigarette lights at the tip, his vision momentarily curtained by puffs of grey.

“Fuck,” he splutters.

“So yeah it was only ten seconds, but it was ten seconds of him staring at us having sex.”

“And he didn’t say anything?”

“Would you have said anything?” he returns, anger starting to coat his words in a thick layer. “Entering your son’s apartment to find the kid you tried to exile from the fucking country under the son of your primary competitor. I don’t think there’s anything to say to that.”

“I think you make it seem more dramatic than it actually is.”
Jimin glares at Taehyung, the tension becoming palpable. He knows Taehyung is doing this to protect him. To make him feel safe, like the situation is under control. But he doesn’t need that kind of pretense.

“And it’s technically his apartment. It’s under his name,” Yoongi adds, looking straight ahead, seemingly lost. “I knew I had locked the door when we left.”

“Ah,” Taehyung sighs and closes, realizing. “So that’s what it was.”

“Pretty sure.”

“What are the options?” Jimin taps his ash off, Taehyung’s gaze heavy on him.

Things turned fast. It’s dizzying. It seemed like today had been bringing nothing but positive things, and now they’re sitting here, a decision to be taken and not much time to think about it.

“What do you want me to say?”

Taehyung’s nonchalance makes him impatient, bitter. But he swallows it back, takes a last drag before he mashes his cigarette in the ashtray.

“I don’t think that here is a safe place for us anymore.” It hurts to say it. To even think of leaving the apartment and never be back. “Even if we change the locks again.”

“He can get himself a copy of the keys whenever he pleases,” Yoongi mutters.

The three of them are shifting to a grey to match the sky.

“We’ll—find a way out.”

Taehyung is looking at the floor as he says this. He looks pensive. Pondering. His cigarette is consuming itself, pinched between his fingers. Jimin has seen this so many times. Knows how bad a habit it is. Sometimes, when he’ll be staring at Taehyung’s hand for a reason or another, or when he absently rubs the pad of his thumb over the skin there, he’ll notice them. The scars. What they are, why they’re there. How they are, ironically, a part of why Jimin fell in love.

“I already told him I’d call back so I’ll do that. Tomorrow. Maybe if I actually try to talk to him properly, he’ll listen.”

In his peripheral, Jimin sees Yoongi fixating Taehyung for a few breaths before he hears him scoff.

“I think that’s the weirdest thing I ever heard you say,” there’s no bite in it. Just amusement and fondness. Fatigue, also. “And I’ve known you—”

“—since I’m a week old. Yes, hyung. We know. We heard. “

“There’s no one else in my life I’ll be able to tell this to. So deal with it.”

Unwillingly, and over the stress, Jimin smiles.

Yoongi has this side of himself that’s a bit untamed, like an exotic animal. A rare sight. It will slip out of his control sometimes, in the form of words, gestures. The softest. The most affectionate. Tiny inkling of all the love he’s got inside.

Taehyung remains speechless for a moment, before his expression turns into something enamoured and he melts into a soft laugh.
“We can’t—“ he says after a deep breath, “we can’t do too much for now. You’ve got your competition this weekend and you got to focus on that.”

“Right.”

“We’ll fix it. That, and how I’ll tell him that I won’t ever take the company over.”

Jimin and Yoongi exchange a glance. *Tomorrow*, they said. *We’ll tell him tomorrow*. But if they hadn’t pushed it, today might have happened differently. Jimin is aware that the reason why Taehyung’s father was here to begin with is this. Yoongi’s decision to resign. The abrupt way everything started trembling for the future of what they built. He also knows that Yoongi has been ignoring calls from his father the whole time he was at the café this morning, that he didn’t listen to the five messages sitting in his voicemail.

It declared the war. The winner will be the one who will have managed to protect best what they cherish. A lifetime. An empire.

“We’ll find a way.”

Jimin nods to the low rumble of Yoongi’s voice.

**Hobi hyung**: and you could go to his place or something

06-09-2016, 17:56

**Hobi hyung**: how does that sound

06-09-2016, 18:01

**Hobi hyung**: jiminah

06-09-2016, 18:04

“Hoseok hyung thinks we should go somewhere else for the evening. To vent out.”

“Where?”

“Jungkook’s.”

**You**: yeah sorry

06-09-2016, 18:06

**You**: we were talking

06-09-2016, 18:06

“I mean, that could be a good idea,” Taehyung says, welcoming Tuxedo as he climbs onto his
thighs. “Especially for you. I know how stressed out it makes you.”

“You can’t blame me.”

“I’m really not,” and at Taehyung’s weak laugh, Jimin instantaneously feels bad for being on the defensive so much. “I mean it. I understand how shitty this is for you.”

**Hobi hyung:** ah i was getting worried  
06-09-2016, 18:06

**You:** sorry  
06-09-2016, 18:06

**Hobi hyung:** no its fine  
06-09-2016, 18:07

A notification from the group chat appears at the top of his screen. Next to him, Yoongi wakes his screen.

**Hobi hyung:** i texted kook on your behalf though  
06-09-2016, 18:07

Jimin gently shakes his head, then opens the message.

**Jungkookie:** so i heard you need help  
06-09-2016, 18:07

**Jungkookie:** hi  
06-09-2016, 18:07

**Jungkookie:** i welcome u into my home 2nite  
06-09-2016, 18:08

**Jungkookie:** how bout tacos
Yoongi softly encourages Taehyung to grab his own phone, watching his reaction as he does.

You: i wouldn't trust

06-09-2016, 18:08

Jungkookie: i take offense

06-09-2016, 18:08

You: good

06-09-2016, 18:08

Seokjin hyung: I'll cook

06-09-2016, 18:08

You: now i trust

06-09-2016, 18:09

Jungkookie: wow

06-09-2016, 18:09

Hobi hyung: ok im jealous now

06-09-2016, 18:09

Namjoon hyung: We'll keep you some.

06-09-2016, 18:09

Hobi hyung: my day is made

06-09-2016, 18:09

Jungkookie: hello
Taehyung laughs softly, leaning back against the railing with Tuxedo rolled up on his crossed leg.

**Jungkookie**: is that a deal

“I weirdly don’t feel like going out?” Jimin whispers, staring at his phone.

And it’s true. Even if being here gives him the impression that he isn’t safe, he’s too drained and anxious to even want to go out.

**Jungkookie**: should i come pick u up

**Jungkookie**: like, all 3 of u

**Namjoon hyung**: And with my car.

**Hobi hyung**: a mess

**Tae <3**: how about we do this here

**Tae <3**: would that be ok with all of you?

**Hobi hyung**: does that include me

**Tae <3**: obviously

**Yoongi hyung <3**: obviously
Jimin snorts, leans into Yoongi’s space to rest again his side.

**Hobi hyung**: then im chill with that if you’re chill with that

**Seokjin hyung**: What do you mean, gross? You do that with Namjoon all the time

**Jungkookie**: we dont tho

**Seokjin hyung**: You literally did it 3 minutes ago

**You**: is this hell

**Hobi hyung**: something like it

**Jungkookie**: were digressing

**Namjoon hyung**: Is it fine with you to stay home?

**Tae <3**: yeah

**Namjoon hyung**: I know it must be uncomfortable.
Jimin gives a resigned sigh but he’s smiling. And when he looks up, he finds his own gleeful expression mirrored in Taehyung’s traits.

“Thanks for inviting them over,” he says. He’s lighter.

And even with the events of the last hours, Taehyung’s eyes light up with something fond and bright. A little teasing, perhaps.

“It’s my pleasure.”

The apartment goes from grim to bustling so quickly that Taehyung’s anxiety peaks for a few minutes. His heart is beating too quick and he’s overwhelmed. The only other time there had been more than three people behind those walls was when Jimin locked himself out of his own house along with Seokjin and Jungkook, and they had to sleep here.

It’s a lot.

It’s busy.

It’s noisy.
Even when the three of them are animated, it’s never as intense as this is. There’s so much going on that he’s confused about what to do, where to put himself. He’s tempted to follow Cannelle and nap with her in a dark, narrow space.

Eventually, Jimin notices. He sits him down and asks him what he wants to drink, brings him water when Taehyung tells it’s all he thinks he’ll be able to stomach.

“Now breathe,” he says, bent in his space. “I’m used to this so I’ll deal. Just stay here and take it easy, yeah?”

“It’s a lot of people,” he answers with a throat that’s too tight.

“I know. And I know it’s weird for you. But you can trust the process. With friends like them, believe me, you won’t have to endure silence anymore.”

“But silence is nice, sometimes,“

“Don’t play dumb, you know exactly what I mean,” with his index he brings Taehyung’s face up, presses his lips onto his. “Hyung will probably be out of the shower soon, okay?”

Taehyung nods, a light flush on his cheeks. He’s still uncomfortable with the harsh noises, and half regretting his decision. Slowly, he pushes away the fear of how badly it could affect his studies if he does this too often. Instead he forces himself to bask in it.

Friendship. The featherweight atmosphere. Ringing laughters. Deeper conversations. The strange pull of being in a group. Smiling only because everyone is laughing.

He’s not used to it.

But he certainly finds it beautiful.

From time to time, he’s being thrown a protective glance. Namjoon, Jimin. Seokjin, sometimes. Yoongi’s hand never leaves his thigh, never stops tapping ribbons of rhythms, even when Hoseok joins them and they excitedly start talking about a new group they discovered, even when they all move from the kitchen to the living room. He sits right next to him, his warm palm finding its place just above his knee again. He’s invariably being brought back into the conversation whenever he’s falling quiet for too long.

It’s a little like a family.

A weird one, perhaps.

But the best he’s ever had.

Chapter End Notes
hey everyone
it's been a while? the last couple of months have been kind of rough on me, i didn't mean
it to take so long
i don't want to say for sure that i'm back or that i will update on a schedule, in case that
would be shooting myself in the foot. but i'm trying to slowly ease back into it?

i missed you guys <3
An hour or two later, when the place is back to an almost deafening silence, Taehyung sighs, his body falling slack from the tension. He barely moved, but somehow he’s exhausted.

His shower takes longer than usual; he’s swimming back and forth in his own thoughts. Water hits his chest and rolls down his body, cool rivulets down to his feet. Idly, he misses Busan. The sound of the waves and the lazy mornings. He thinks that if things were to turn sour with his father, maybe he could find solace there again, for the time he’ll need.

“Taehyung-ah,”

He perks up at Yoongi’s voice coming from the other side of the curtain.

“Yeah?”

Being alone with Yoongi is always a little tricky. They’re still so fragile, a word, a gesture, anything can tear them up. When Jimin told them he wanted to go out with Hoseok and Jungkook to be with them a bit longer, Taehyung coiled up, worried that he was too high-strung to filter his own emotions. But it’s been fine. They’ve been calm and patient, maneuvering around each other well.

“When is your class tomorrow again?”

“13:30.”

“And Jiminnie’s?”

“He’s off, I think.”

“Ah, makes sense. Is there still something you need to do for tomorrow?”

“Uh?”

“Like homework. Projects. Lectures.”

“Oh—Yeah. But I wanted to do them in the morning instead. Why?”

“Okay, good.”

The curtain is tugged open and the next moment Yoongi is stepping in, his palm strong on Taehyung’s nape as he pulls their naked bodies together.
“You took a shower like two hours ago, hyung,” Taehyung says with a smile in between wet slides of lips.

“Shut up,” Yoongi grins back, he looks a little breathless.

They somehow manage to make their way to the bedroom, water leaving a trail behind them. It used to happen all the time, before. That spontaneity. He’s happy that years at least spared that. With a hint of playfulness, he pushes Yoongi onto the bed, meets little resistance. He’s feeling demanding, slightly rough around the edges, he wants his hands to feel the skin they’re pressing in, he wants to be rewarded that blissed-out expression that Yoongi only gets when he’s been pushed to his limit and that he’s lost control.

“Is the door locked?” Yoongi asks him, his eyes wide and pretty.

“Does it matter?” Taehyung gives a witty smile.

“True.”

It’s been a while since Taehyung wanted to be like that to him. Months. The space in between them has solely been painful doubts, it’s been attempts to change, it’s been hope, it’s been patient words. It’s been Jimin.

Jumin is that space between them.

The insecurity coming from his absence is legitimate. But his presence has taught Taehyung so much about the person he’s become, that now he knows with more certitude that his needs to own Yoongi aren’t the expression of loss. Or vengeance.

And because of that, Taehyung allows himself to continue.

“You’re getting a lot of action these days, don’t you?”

His tone is one of reproach as he crawls up Yoongi’s body, staring right back at him.

“I’d be tempted to say yes, but we’ve been interrupted today, so—”

“A disgrace.”

Taehyung nosed at the crook of Yoongi’s neck, and then he bites, firm for a second before he releases and suckles softly on the skin. Yoongi gives a soft hiss as he does, his chest stuttering and fingers clutching at Taehyung’s waist.

“It is,” he easily spreads his legs when Taehyung moves to settle between them, “we were—”

He stifles the rest as if scared of crossing a line.

“You were what?”

Taehyung slots their hips together and gives a slow roll, staring at Yoongi’s lips, expecting that moment when they’ll drop open in a quiet, pleased sigh.

“He was gonna fuck me,”
“Yeah?”

“Y-Yeah,”

“You’ve been wanting that for a while, mhm?”

“—wanting what?”

“To be fucked.” He lets his words hang only a few heartbeats. “By him.” Yoongi lightly squirms under Taehyung. His eyes squeeze shut. His body curls in silence, perhaps a little shame, but Taehyung wants to hear him. “Right?”

“Yeah—”

“He’s good.”

“Tae—”

“Just thick enough to let you feel everything,” Yoongi murmurs a plea to stop that he ignores, perceiving in the languid slurring of his words just how much he likes it. “The stretch when he slides in is so good hyung, and he moves in and out just like he dances. Perfectly.”

“A-Ah f—,” his body shudders, his hips twitch up. Taehyung gives him a derisive laugh, reaching down to coax his legs up. “Tae,”

“What does he do that you like, hyung?” Yoongi easily falls prey to him. A hidden need, maybe. He shakes his head in weak reluctance. “The way he whines like you’re the best thing he’s ever felt? The way he bites his lip until it’s red and puffy and wet with his spit? Or just how much he likes to suck on things? Your fingers? Your cock?”

“Get the fucking lube.”

“I can do that too, if you want,” he reaches for Yoongi’s hand and notices how tense he goes, sees the resistance he’s trying to offer until he ultimately cedes and lets Taehyung insert two of his fingers in his mouth. “He does this thing sometimes,”

Deliberately, he presses his tongue against the crease between Yoongi’s digits, firm and insistent, falsely trying to pry them apart as he moves slowly up and down. The response is immediate, Yoongi shifts and huffs with arousal, growing fidgety. Jimin does that on days when he will take extra time for blowjobs, so enthusiastic that it almost gets him off.

“I’ll never be as good as he is though, right?”

“I’ll be too impatient for lube if you don’t stop.”

“Oh, interesting.”

With fingers still hanging from his lips, he reaches for his own cock, aligns it to Yoongi’s hole and presses to it with a light pressure. The thighs around his waist tightens in plea, and delighted, Taehyung complies and folds his hips towards Yoongi just a little more. It’s still barely slippery with water, and it eases the friction but nowhere near what they need.

“Do it,”

Yoongi’s head it thrown back, exposing his neck that Taehyung gladly abandons the fingers for, kissing and licking the skin.
“Let’s not overdo it, hyung. I haven’t even stretched you.”

“Then just a drop of lube. And you can stretch me. With your cock.”

There’s a coiling low in Taehyung’s stomach, arousal screaming at him to just do it. But he retracts instead, placing more space between their bodies.

“What’s gotten into you?” he asks this softly as to not sound disapproving. But he knows that Yoongi has never quite understood his liking for pain.

“You do it all the time. I wanna do it too.”

“It hurts, hyung.”

“I know. But surely there’s a reason why you like it so much.”

Taehyung chuckles gently.

“It’s just preferences. Not everyone likes it.”

“I’m gonna flip you over if you don’t do it.”

Without another word, Taehyung moves to the nightstand and retrieves the bottle.

The atmosphere shifts strangely. Taehyung who wanted quick and fast and rough grows slow and careful, in a constant battle with his own excitement. Yoongi is hypersensitive under him, just on the fine line between pain and pleasure and Taehyung can feel the weight of his trust even in the air they breathe. The slide is dry until there’s enough pre-come to ease it and from there, it goes messy.

Kneeling between Yoongi’s spread thighs, Taehyung reaches between them to fist at Yoongi’s cock, appreciating the twitches it earns him. He strokes it, fondles it, runs the pad of his thumb under the crown as their bodies continue to meet in rough thrusts.

One of Yoongi’s hand knots in the sheet, the other trying to reach at whatever part of Taehyung he has access to, hoping to slow him down. His moans gradually become choked sobs until he’s gasping for air, eyelids tightly shut and his chest moving frantically.

“T-Tae,”

“Mhm?” No answers follows. “You know what I’m doing. If you want me to sto-op, tell me.”

Yoongi shakes his head in the pillow, visibly too deep in his sensations, his skin flushed and moist. Then Taehyung picks up the pace, relishing every sound Yoongi makes. He twists his wrist on the head of his now slick cock, curves his hips so that he’s fucking him at a better angle.

“I—I’m coming—Oh f-fuck—”

“I’m not gonna stop, hyung.”

“Ah—N—”

Yoongi’s body gives a hard shudder, come splattering across his stomach but Taehyung doesn’t go any easier on him. He continues to pull at his cock, continues to push into him. Harder. It only takes a few seconds for Yoongi’s expression to go from blissed to pained, and it burns ardent through Taehyung’s ribcage, scorching warmth that spreads down to his groin and to his balls.
“Su—Stop,”

“You wanted pain.”

There’s a gurgled noise coming from Yoongi’s lips as he trashes around, trying to break away from his hold.

“S’too much, Tae—”

“Breathe through it, ah—” his head drops, he’s close to climaxing as well. “Breathe, hyung. Endure it.”

It takes longer than Taehyung expected for Yoongi to come a second time. But when he does, it’s breathless and with his mouth agape, cheeks wet and limbs trembling.

Taehyung lets go of him then, pulls out and lets him come down the way he wants, the way he needs. But he’s making sure that he’s still there, that their skins are still touching and that they still share each other’s warmth. With a hand on his thigh, Taehyung sits up and watches him go lax on the mattress, body spent and weakened. He gently rolls onto his side and Taehyung accommodates the movement, filling his lungs and trying to calm his heart.

“How you feeling?” he whispers.

“I wanna make you come,” is the answer he gets, in a low, hoarse voice.

“N—I’m asking how you’re feeling, hyung.”

“I’m—I’m okay. I’m—Fuck. I feel like I’m floating.”

“In a good or in a bad way?” he asks, concern starting to lace his thoughts.

“Good, good. It’s good. It’s—”

Taehyung laughs airy, relieved.

“Told you.”

“But I still wanna make you come.”

“I’m fine, hyung,” he says, slipping behind and spooning him, peppering kisses to his shoulder. “I promise.”

“I get un—unsatisfied when you don’t get to come,” Yoongi shifts backwards, melting in their embrace.

“Me not coming doesn’t mean that it wasn’t good. I’m plenty satisfied just to be pleasuring you.”

“That’s exactly what I mean.”

“W—uh?”

“That’s the same. For me.”

“But it’s fine, I swear,” he chuckles, starting to feel uncomfortable. “You and Jimin say stuff like that but I don’t mind not finishing.”
Yoongi then sits, looking unsteady, and locks eyes with him.

“You—It’s—” he sighs. “It’s another thing you use to put a wall, Tae. Let it go. Accept that we want to take care of you, that you can trust us. What we give, we won’t ask it back.” Taehyung swallows. The room is becoming agitated with emotions. “I want to make you feel good, just like you make me feel good.”

And so he nods, faintly anxious and faintly anticipating, and he kisses Yoongi back when their lips meet again.

\[\Delta\]

Jimin blinks, slow, stunned.

Jungkook takes his eyes elsewhere, breaks the thin envelope they had been surrounded with since he started retelling how things happened with Namjoon. A sort of secrecy. Vulnerability.

Hoseok asks a question and Jungkook and him easily fall in a conversation of their own.

Jimin remains silent. Lost in thought. He looks at the counter behind Jungkook, then outside, at Namjoon and Seokjin’s backs as they’re calmly talking. He tries to distance his emotions and his thoughts from what he’s just heard, but it doesn’t exactly work. If he’s honest with himself, that talk didn’t make him feel any better. Worse, at best. His chest is still tight, he’s still speechless. He fiddles with his glass.

Obviously, he imagined things to sound complicated; love is generally rough on the heart. But he wasn’t expecting this. Not for Jungkook and Namjoon.

Knowing him, Jimin knows Jungkook spoke things to make them softer. He carefully dosed what he could and couldn’t say, because he doesn’t want Hoseok and him to worry. But Jimin is aware of it, and it makes him feel even more guilty. He regrets being so emotionally unavailable, no matter how little control he had over it.

He lifts his drink and takes a sip, eyes still unfocused.

“You okay, hyung?” Jungkook asks, too joyful. “You look demolished.”

“That’s because I am.”

“Ah, Jiminie,” Hoseok suspire, “don’t be like this. They’re okay.”

“Yeah I know that they’re okay,” he exhales, words impatient in return, “that’s not the issue. I feel bad because I wasn’t able to support them. To help them. On no fucking aspect. None.”

“It’s okay, hyung. I know you didn’t mean to become distant. We both went through some shit at the same time. It’s fine. You know I understand. You can’t be in two places at once. And I’ve never been too good with talking so,” he shrugs and Jimin looks down at his hands, swallows.

He’s tipsy and feeling too emotional.

“I know I can’t go back, and that I might have done my best at that time but it’s just—it feels like you grew up so much in so little time? And I didn’t see it coming.”
Jungkook’s eyebrows shoot up, before he beams, looking down shyly.

“Don’t be gross, hyung.”

“I’ll be gross if I want to, especially if it’s my way of showing you that I care and that I love you.”

“Oh god,”

Hoseok melts into a soft laughter when Jungkook sighs in despair.

“Tell me you love me too, asshole,” Jimin demands with mock annoyance.

Jungkook slips out of his seat and goes through the patio door without looking back and Jimin makes an irritated noise.

He know he matters to Jungkook. He has his own way of telling him, and this, is one of them.

They meet stares through the glass of the door and Jungkook smiles, teasing but genuine, before he bends, gently pressing a kiss to Namjoon’s lips. The first one Jimin witnesses.

His stomach twists weirdly, his eyes well up. He softens.

_They’re okay now._

“Come on,” Hoseok pats his back, standing up. “Let’s go outside.”

He loves them so much.

Δ

“There’s something I need to tell you.”

Taehyung freezes as he’s passing through the patio door, seemingly startled by the seriousness in Yoongi’s tone.

“This usually doesn’t lead to something fun,” he answers with a tinge of amusement, but Yoongi’s stiffness doesn’t lessen.

He’s nervous. His body is sore and boneless at once, his heart is high in his windpipe. He’s nauseous.

“Yeah I guess I won’t make that change.”

Taehyung mutters a doubtful _okay_, quietly sitting next to him. It’s a cool evening of September and the wind is fresh but comfortable, a thin layer of cold on their skin. Their thighs come in contact when Taehyung scoots closer, offering him a Marlboro that he accepts.

He takes his time lighting it, wanting to delay the moment just a little longer. There’s the pressure of Taehyung’s silence on his shoulders, the guilt to be the reason why his father barged in. He doesn’t think there’s a chance of turning back now. They’ve taken a one-way road.

“I—” he inhales, hesitating, bringing the fuming stick to his lips.

“There was—uh. There was no briefing.” He taps his ash off. Taehyung is looking at him too fixedly. “I resigned before your father that night.”

Nothing.

Not a word. Not a gasp, not a sound. Not a sigh.

Nothing.

Just the weight of Taehyung’s eyes, burning through him. Yoongi shifts uncomfortably. His throat closes up.

“Tae,”

“W-What did you just say?”

“I said I quit.”

“You resigned?”

“Yes, I resigned.”

“You left the company.”

“What the fuck, Tae. Yes, I left.”

“You’re serious?”

Yoongi makes an annoyed sound, frowning and affronting Taehyung’s stare.

“Are you done? In what language do I need to tell you for you to understand? Don’t you think I feel bad enough?”

“Hyung,”

“What?” There’s shimmer growing in Taehyung’s eyes, wet diamonds. Yoongi’s exhale stutters out of his lungs. “Taehyung,”

Weirdly, the gap between them closes. Taehyung leans into his space and presses their lips. He tastes like cigarette and despair and Yoongi feels his chest fold around his heart and it hurts. He struggles his air through his nose, enduring the pain of finally feeling free.

For such a long time he felt like in a cage, trapped between slowly closing walls. A prison he was carefully put and raised in.

But Taehyung had the key. He had it all along.

He’s being crawled over and he doesn’t resist, easily letting Taehyung straddles his hips. It’s a soft, almost shy movement. Filled with doubts.

“Hyung,”

“What,”

“Hyung, you’re not pranking me, are you? You really did it?”
Yoongi swallows. His core is shaking, a nervous beating that he feels through his fingertips. He just holds his eyes, can’t even bring himself to nod.

He breathes out a soft confirmation.

“I’m sorry,” he adds, finding it harder by the second to maintain contact.

“No, don’t—” Taehyung cups his cheek of his hand, gentle in the way he shuts him up with a thumb over his lips. “Don’t. It’s the best thing you could do.” Yoongi inhales, wanting to object but Taehyung just hushes him again. “It is, hyung. You know it is.”

“I should have waited.”

“But how long did you wait for this?” Yoongi grows tender when Taehyung’s lips curl up, sore with affection and regret. “Too long. If not now then—” A flicker of understanding. “Ah, is that why he came in today?”

A beat. A jab of fear.

“Probably,” Yoongi answers, eyes darting away. “I— Should have told you yesterday but I just—you had school and I didn’t want to kill your night.”

Taehyung nods, calm.

“Jimin knows?”

“I told him.”

“You really should have told me, hyung, I—”

Yoongi brings their lips together to shut him up. He’s raw, bruising with emotions. “I know,” he whispers before kissing him again. “I just didn’t know how.”

Their chests come closer, Taehyung bends his head to hide in Yoongi’s shoulder. He feels him give a vague nod, but that’s it. He says nothing. It’s fine. Yoongi still understands his body as he would words.

So he just hugs him back.

And keeps them unmoving for a long, long time.

Jimin only remembers what happened when he gets his hand around the doorknob. His mind is hazy but his skin still crawls, mixture of uneasiness and cold September night. He slips his eyes closed and then steps in, careful not to be too noisy.

He does bother locking the door. Drunk, wishful thinking.

Air flows in and out of his lungs a few times, he tries to collect himself.
They’ve hit another tipping point. That fragile equilibrium they reached, dealing with each their side of the controversy, is losing its balance. Taehyung’s father is so immersed in that stupid rivalry, they could only avoid it for so long.

Jimin shakes his hair out of his view as he removes his shoes, and when he straightens, he realizes the light in the living room has been left on.

He finds them on the couch, sleeping, Taehyung cradled against Yoongi’s torso, their legs intertwined. Jimin sighs. Trust, he tells himself, immobile under the doorway. Then he sees Yoongi blinking his eyes open slowly, scanning around until they meet stares. He smiles.

_It’s gonna be okay._

_They’ve been holding onto your heart, they never once dropped it._

_Just trust them._

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Chapter End Notes

im disorganized as fuck but we’ll just roll with it ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

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