The Trouble With Soulmates
by Navybluewing

Summary

Hinata loved being the god of love. Nothing made him happier than watching people find their soulmates, especially when they were true loves. But when one cruel conversation causes Hinata to run from his responsibilities, the results to humanity is troublesome. With no other choice, Ukai sends to Hinata to earth with a mission: Help fix five soulmate bonds hanging in the balance, or lose his title as the god of love. Simple, right?

Not when he's only got 30 days to do it.

Notes

Hello everyone! I am so happy that you've given my newest fic a chance. This has been a work in progress for the past couple months, so I hope you enjoy it as much as I did writing it.
The Heart of the Matter

“The only thing we never get enough of is love; and the only thing we never give enough of is love.”- Henry Miller

“I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride!”

The happy tone that flitted through the air synced up with the words that were spoken by the priest in the water’s crystal clear reflection. Unruly orange hair stood in all different directions as the young man pumped his fist into the air. He laid on his side, one arm tucked underneath him so he could watch the new couple kiss in front of family and friends. Once again, Hinata Shouyou had helped another pair fall in love. The scene was magical, and everyone inside it was captivated by the two newlyweds now smiling at each other. They were definitely soul mates, Hinata could see that perfectly clear. But true loves…

That was going to take some time.

“They’re a lovely couple.” Hinata looked up from the lap his head rested in at his fellow deity. With wisps of silver hair and a heart-melting smile, Hinata wondered if Sugawara Koushi was really meant to be the God of Love instead of him. He sure had the beauty for it. Then again, the God of Fertility should be just as pretty, especially if he was breaking the norm by being male. Suga was the first male god to take on the naturally feminine role, yet nobody could find a reason to argue with Ukai’s decision. He was kind, fantastic with human children, and loved looking after pregnant women more so than anyone Hinata had ever met. While some of the older gods took issue with Suga’s demi-god status (as his father was human), Ukai and Takeda refused to let such issues interfere with what they deemed right for earth. Then again, being the first gay pair of Gods to rule, it came to no surprise they were quick to part with nonsensical traditions. Some of the gods accepted this new rule of two males, while others refused. None could compete against Ukai’s tactical intelligence and strength, so instead they relinquished their titles as gods. Ukai and Takeda were quick to appoint some of the younger gods to power, and the balance of the earth stayed intact.

Suga got to keep his rule of Fertility, and Hinata was more than happy about it.

“Can you see the baby?” Hinata chirped out, toes wiggling in excitement when Sugawara nodded. Brown eyes dipped back down to look at the woman in the white dress, and Hinata watched the slight glow appear in Suga’s eyes. It was the one tell for every god when they were using their powers; their eyes shimmered as a warning to others. While Hinata’s eyes took on a golden shine, Suga’s glowed a soft chestnut, giving off a comforting feeling as he spoke.
“They’ll be having a beautiful baby girl in the summer.” Hearing the news made Hinata’s cheeks hurt from the wide grin he was sporting. A wedding *and* a baby! It was a win for both of them. Suga looked back to Hinata and laughed, leaning down to ruffle Hinata’s orange hair. “You’ve done another good job, god of love.”

“Thanks! Their soulmate link’s strong, so I think they’ll last.” Even from here, Hinata could clearly feel the strength of the thread that bound the newlyweds together. And though it was yellow, Hinata wanted to believe it would change soon.

’Soulmates’ did not always correlate to ‘true love’, despite Hinata wishing it would. It would make his job a hell of a lot easier if it did. Humans liked to believe that a soulmate was someone who would complete them and get their happily ever after. Only half of that was true for most people. Everyone in the world had a soulmate they were destined to meet, and part of Hinata’s job was helping them find that person. The part that swayed from human’s expectations was the purpose of the soulmate. People could have one of four different types; The Friend Soulmate, The Family Soulmate, The Sexual Soulmate, or The True Love Soulmate. Each person was only given one, and the choosing of these said pairings had nothing to do with Hinata. Takeda, the God of Fate, was the one who chose which threads to weave together. Hinata only got to link up the matches once they presented themselves.

Every child was born with a white soul thread. It appeared at the first feeling of love the person had with another human, and grew stronger with each connection they made. By the time the human was twenty, their soul thread would be strong and Hinata would be ready to uncover their soulmate thread. With one blink of Hinata’s power, the color of the soulmate thread would be exposed; yellow, purple, red or pink respectively. And with that, Hinata’s true job began.

Those with a yellow (friend thread), purple (family thread), or red (sexual thread) weren’t destined to fall in love with a particular person. They could be happy with anyone, really, so long as they put in the time and effort. It wouldn’t affect their soulmate because the relationship between them and their soulmate was platonic. On occasion, the yellow and red bonds would pull two souls into a romantic endeavor. Most of the time it didn’t work out, or they would be happy but never surpass their predestined threads. You could love the person you were with without them being ‘the one’ for you; 80% of humanity’s soulmates were not pink.

But on those rare occasions, if their love was nurtured just right, their thread would change to pink. The sprouting of the pink string always made Hinata’s heart pound a little harder in excitement. It was thrilling to watch two people learn to love so much about a person that they were able to change a little bit of their fate. They were still soulmates, so it didn’t disrupt much. If it did, Hinata was sure Takeda would ‘break’ the thread.

Being a god didn’t always mean perfection of their craft, Takeda included. Sometimes, bad links between people could only be seen as the pair grew older. In these cases, Takeda was the only one who could deem two souls were ‘knotted’, which meant their soul threads were becoming tangled and matted in distress and torment. Links of these kinds, if not caught, could put people on a path
where they only hurt or abused their soul mates. In order to try and stop these horrible things from happening, Takeda would ‘break’ the bond. It was a painful process for both souls that destroyed the soulmate thread and their connection. They would lose all feelings for their soulmate, and move on with life as if nothing ever happened. The two would never re-grow their soulmate thread, or ever love each other again. And Hinata hated these moments the most, because the human heart wasn’t the same after their soulmate thread was severed.

The upside to Hinata’s job was when a pink soulmate thread appeared. Seeing a true love thread was what he lived for; nothing made him happier than discovering two people who were destined to be together. Pink threads were uncommon and Hinata put more effort into their relationships than that of a yellow, red, or purple thread. He couldn’t help it; he was the god of love after all! Flirting and romance was his forte. And what made pink threads even more special to Hinata was their strength; the other strings were able to break under too much wear and tear. Families feuded, friendships drifted apart, and sex got boring with no emotional links. But no matter what a pair with a pink string went through, the thread never snapped. And Hinata hadn’t seen Takeda ‘break’ a soulmate thread with a pink string.

Hinata wondered if not even Takeda could change the fate of true love.

“I hope their thread turns pink when the baby arrives. I’ve seen a lot of yellow strings do that,” Hinata said, Suga laughing as he ran his fingers through the younger god’s hair.

“I’m sure they will, with your guidance.” The confidence in Suga’s tone made Hinata beam, his body nearly glowing from the praise. But the good feeling was soon dimmed when a too-cheerful laugh entered the serene scene.

“Oh how naive our sweet little god of love is.” Hinata felt a grumble of displeasure fill his stomach as he turned away from the calming water, his brown gaze seeing a face he tended to avoid.

While Hinata was cute, and Suga beautiful, Oikawa Tooru was sexually stunning. His brown hair fluttered around a heart shaped face that brought both men and women to their knees with nothing more than a smile. His eyes were alluring, dark and never fully opened to give an air of mystery. It was no secret that Tooru had the ability to invoke the dirtiest of feelings into Gods and humans alike; he was the God of Lust for a reason. Even now, standing in front of his fellow guardians, Tooru had an air about him that made Hinata’s cheeks warm in discomfort. Suga seemed unaffected, his cheerful smile now replaced with a look Hinata rarely saw on his friend.

“Is there something you need, Oikawa-san?” The mentioned god glanced over to Suga, his crooked smile speaking levels of his devious nature.
“When I heard about the wedding, I just had to come congratulate our little chibi god.”

Anyone who talked to Oikawa for more than a second knew the comment wasn’t true. The brunette was self-centered, borderline narcissistic in most aspects of his life. And why wouldn’t he be? Though the powers each god held didn’t normally affect the other deities, Hinata, Takeda, and Oikawa were the exceptions to that. While Takeda never spoke of the future he saw for his fellow gods, and Hinata only used his powers of love when asked, Oikawa kept no filter on his sexual energy. The power he got from being able to bend gods and humans in whatever way he pleased by a simple look or string of words made Oikawa’s ego burst through every conversation he had.

Including the current one.

“It’s such a shame that they’ll never work out.” The cold tone that iced over the comment was paired with sharp eyes, Oikawa’s smile painted with sadistic glee. Hinata felt his shoulders tense at the claim, ignoring Suga’s calming hand to jump up to his feet.

“What do you know about their love?!”

“Oh nothing, nothing.” With a laugh too airy to be real, Oikawa waved away Hinata’s glare like a buzzing fly. His droopy eyes glanced down to his nails, as if inspecting their perfect curve while he continued. “I mean, they are a cute little couple. But what do you think the bride will do when she finds out her husband’s been sleeping with her sister for the past two months?”

“Oikawa-san.” Suga’s voice spoke with a chiding tone that even made Oikawa flinch, though the god of lust quickly covered it up with a shrug of his shoulders.

“Who am I to stand in-between two people who want to have sex? It’s not my fault that the wife was a little too vanilla for her kinky husband’s taste.”

“Bu-But...But she’s pregnant!” Hinata’s loud protest made Oikawa blink, glancing over to the pond to inspect the new couple sharing their first dance.

“With how much sex the sister and him have been having, I’d be surprised if she’s not knocked up too.” Oikawa then clapped his hands together, a look of excitement on his face as he turned his attention to Sugawara’s scowl. “Oh, is she? You can see the aliens inside of them, right?”
“She’s not pregnant,” Suga snapped quickly, disliking Oikawa’s term for babies. The response made Oikawa pout in a way that caused Hinata’s blood to boil.

“Aw, no love alien for me to brag about.”

“Why wouldn’t you tell me about the sister before I helped set up their marriage?!?” Hinata felt his little hands ball by his side as Oikawa hummed and tapped his lower tip with his finger.


It was no secret that the two didn’t get along well; Hinata loved the idea of love, and Oikawa despised it. This sometimes meant the god of lust did not create the best situations for Hinata. Relationships that didn’t have the bond of the soulmate thread were susceptible to cheating, inappropriate pairings (student/teacher, huge age gaps, step-siblings, etc), and turbulent relationships. Each of those fell under the control of Oikawa, who was able to read the sexual compatibility of humans as well as their secret sexual kinks/fantasies. Oikawa was more than happy to pair people up despite their relationship status or bonds outside of the bedroom. All they needed to have for Oikawa was a sexual attraction. And while some people were better at resisting Oikawa’s sexual mischief, no human was completely unaffected by his charms.

There were times that Oikawa himself went to earth to mess up Hinata’s hard work. Knowing he was alluring to any human despite their gender or preference, Oikawa could make someone fall for his sexual energy with little effort. He enjoyed having sex as much as he did teasing humans into sex-induced crazes. Sometimes, the god of love was sure Oikawa would go to earth with the specific task of ruining a relationship Hinata was working hard to make work. And most times, despite all of the shorter god’s efforts, Oikawa’s seduction worked.

But there was one type of relationship that Oikawa couldn’t touch, which made the tension between the two gods even more apparent; a true love bond. While other soulmate bonds were pretty hard to ruin, they could still be pried apart if Oikawa tried hard enough. The evidence was clear from the marriage Oikawa was implying he’d already meddled with. But no matter how much charm or power the sexy god used to seduce a true love soulmate, they never faltered in their love for one another. Hinata took pride in that; true love trumped sexual urges. The proven fact never stopped Oikawa from trying, getting more than a little upset when his attempts failed. Someone as cocky and self-assured as the brunette bombshell hated to lose at anything, especially to Hinata.

“You did it on purpose, didn’t you?” Hinata accused, Oikawa’s grin a little too wide while he innocently tilted his head.
“Now why would I ever do that?” Seeing a fight brewing on the horizon, Sugawara pushed to stand between them, his soft hands pressing to Hinata’s shoulders.

“Don’t listen to him, Shouyou. He’s just trying to rile you up.”

“And darling mother Suga saves his precious chickadee once again.” The giggle behind Suga was ignored by the god of fertility, though Hinata refused to follow the same path. Jumping once to glare at Oikawa over Suga’s shoulder, Hinata’s hands flailed above him in anger.

“Why are you such a jerk?”

“Because someone has to inform you that the world isn’t run by fairy tales and happily ever afters.” There was a darkness in Oikawa’s face as he stared down at Hinata, disgust seeping into normally seductive eyes. “Love isn’t what humans want anymore. They crave power, money, sex, but not love.”

“Th-That’s not true!” Hinata shouted, his hands clutching over his heart as he adamantly shook his head.

“People all over the world want to be loved. They do!”

“Haven’t you ever wondered why Takeda wouldn’t just make all soulmates true loves if that is truly what the humans wanted?” Oikawa’s words were aimed to hurt, and Hinata felt his heart lurch in his chest at the god’s arched eyebrow. Honey eyes dropped to the ground between them, unfocused while Oikawa continued. “I mean, not to brag, but every human has sexual desire running in their veins. It’s a given fact. So if true love is so important, why not let everyone feel it?”

“True love is rare because it’s the most powerful force in the world.” It was Suga who spoke next, drawing Oikawa’s attention to his calm demeanor. His eyes met Hinata’s as he brushed his hand over the cherub’s cheek, the shorter god scrunching his nose at the attention before gazing up at Suga’s gentle smile. “It’s something so magical and perfect, that not all humans can handle its ferocity. Takeda takes his time weaving every human’s soul thread, and tries to never burden them with a task they can’t handle. So true love, the love that makes the strongest man quiver and the weakest man soar, is only given to those special humans in the world. And you, Hinata, are the one who helps makes that love blossom into something beautiful.”

“You and Takeda baby him too much.” The hiss in Oikawa’s tone only lasted a moment, waiting
until Hinata stiffened and glanced over to him to give a condescending smirk. “Besides, it’s not like chibi-chan will ever understand. After all, our sweet cherub has never been in love before.”

“I know what love is!” Hinata shouted, eyes blinking a few times when his sight started to blur. It was obvious that the god of lust noticed how upset he had made Hinata, but he didn’t stop his assault.

“He’s never even kissed someone. A virgin controlling the fate of others? Cute.”

“Oikawa-” Suga warned, glancing to his now trembling friend in concern. The pain was palpable for Suga, who desperately wanted to pull his younger friend away. Yet Oikawa’s wicked lips didn’t hesitate on their final scathing comment.

“You’re weak, god of love. That’s probably the reason so many humans cheat on their loved ones.”

And that was all it took. Overwhelmed by the embarrassment and pain of Oikawa’s words, Hinata didn’t hesitate to push away from Suga and bolt from the scene, ignoring his friend’s call in order to run away. Suga wanted to go after him, but he knew the quick god would easily outrun him. And when Hinata wanted to hide from the other gods, there was nobody in this world who could find him. His eyes straining to watch the last speckle of orange disappear from his sight, Suga let out a worried sigh and let his head lower. He could only hope Hinata wouldn’t hide for long.

“Oops.” Pulling his head up, Suga frowned as Oikawa scratched the back of his head and let his tongue peek out the side of his mouth. “Looks like I pushed our little friend too much, huh?”

“That was no accident.” The reprimanding tone that Suga used made Oikawa blink, feigning innocence as he casually sauntered toward the fertility god.

“Aww Suga-san, don’t be mad at me. You know I really hate when those beautiful eyes look at me with such disdain.” The purr in Oikawa’s voice matched the tint of caramel now glowing in his gaze, soft fingertips sliding up the expanse of Suga’s neck. His body now pressed into Suga’s, Oikawa made a point to arch his back seductively while whispering into the fertility god’s ear. “How can I make it up to you?”

“That was no accident.” The reprimanding tone that Suga used made Oikawa blink, feigning innocence as he casually sauntered toward the fertility god.

“And Suga-san, don’t be mad at me. You know I really hate when those beautiful eyes look at me with such disdain.” The purr in Oikawa’s voice matched the tint of caramel now glowing in his gaze, soft fingertips sliding up the expanse of Suga’s neck. His body now pressed into Suga’s, Oikawa made a point to arch his back seductively while whispering into the fertility god’s ear. “How can I make it up to you?”

“An apology to Shouyou would suffice.” Suga wasted no time brushing the lustful god’s fingers from his skin with the back of his hand, taking a step back to show his anger had not dissipated. The facade of seduction Oikawa had created was broken instantly, his eyes quick to revert back to their
normal color while he pouted.

“That’s no fair; you never play with me like the other gods. Even Iwa-chan struggles to ignore that voice, and he’s the epitome of boring.” Suga stayed silent at Oikawa’s whine, making the god of lust narrow his gaze on his comrade. “The only gods who can truly resist me are Takeda and Ukai, but they’re in love. Is there something you’d like to tell me, Suga-san?”

“Just this.” Suga’s smile was soft, but tinged with a sadness that made Oikawa’s spine straighten in instinctive warning. “Don’t take your displeasure of love out on Hinata. It’s not his choice who we fall in love with.”

“Are you including me in your little group of love-crazed morons? I’m the god of lust; love doesn’t affect me.” His laugh was meant to be demeaning, but soon trailed off when Sugawara only stared at his fellow god before speaking.

“Do you really believe that? Or do you simply wish that was true?” Their stares were locked on each other, as if waiting to see who would balk first. While Suga’s stayed calm and sympathetic, Oikawa’s raged with anger and a look that neither dared to name. Fists balled by his sides, the god of lust looked ready to spit a nasty retort before another voice intervened.

“Trashykawa.” A booming voice entered the small area, the god of lust blinking once before turning his gaze to the man behind him. A stoic faced god stood with his arms crossed and eyes narrowed, his bulky exterior much different than the two gods before him. Black hair spiked up, Suga knew the newcomer as Iwaizumi Hajime. He was a unique god designated by Ukai to keep the other deities in check. Known as the guardian god, Iwaizumi took his duty seriously, and made sure to step in if a god’s pride or anger got the best of them. If a god caused problems on earth, Iwaizumi was the one chosen to deal with the situation. He was a skilled fighter, and none of the gods willingly tried to get on his bad side. Well, all but one. Despite the irritated look on the guardian’s face, Oikawa smiled brightly at the newcomer, arms open wide.

“Iwa-chan! Have you come to finally confess your undying desire to fuck me? You know I’ll try not to bite too much—”

“Shut your face before I drown you in the pond.” The snarky tone made Oikawa whine, but the man ignored the sound to turn his attention to Suga. “I felt some pretty unpleasant energies coming from over here, so I came to investigate. I should have known Oikawa was causing trouble again. From how fast Hinata was running, I can only assume I’ve come too late.”

“It’s okay, Iwaizumi. I was just about to leave and look for him.” Suga bowed politely to the god, who nodded once before he glanced to the sky.
“You might want to try and find him quick; Ukai doesn’t take well to gods who abandon their duties for long.” The sharp eyes of Iwaizumi flickered toward Oikawa, who took the chance to jump forward and wrap his arms around the strong bicep of his friend.

“Give me a kiss to help me concentrate!”

“Like you need help.” The pair started to bicker as they walked away from Suga, who sighed at the comical scene before looking to the sun. Iwaizumi’s warning rung in his mind, and the fertility god wasted no time starting his search for his wounded friend.

He only hoped the punishment from Ukai wouldn’t break Hinata’s spirit completely.

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“Hinata!” The relieved tone in Takeda’s tone made the orange haired god flinch, glancing down at his feet in shame. He could feel Suga’s comforting presence next to him as the two walked further into the throne room, the wide space echoing their slow footsteps. Still, Hinata felt his back tense when hurried feet rushed down the stairs in front of him, arms quick to wrap around him. “We were so worried when we heard about your fight with Oikawa. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Hinata muffled into Takeda’s shoulder, his cheeks dark with embarrassment as he looked away. Unlike most of the gods, Hinata was raised by the kings of the gods, as his parents were some who refused to stay under the rule of Ukai and Takeda. At the time Hinata was far too young to take care of himself, and Takeda was quick to offer to raise the younger god. Though now he was older and capable on his own, moments like these reverted him back to his younger self.

“There was no physical fight, Takeda-san.” Politely Suga bowed, showing his respect to the king while Takeda nervously pulled back from Hinata to return the favor. Despite being a king of gods, Takeda never let the power get to his head, and fumbled more with manners and etiquette than anyone else.

“Thank you for finding him, Sugawara.”

“It’s not a problem; I was worried about him as well.” Suga sent a look toward the younger god, who bit his lip and settled his eyes on the only person not fretting over him. Ukai sat in one of the two thrones at the top of the stairs above them, his arms crossed and his face stoic. Takeda was quick
to read the mood, patting Hinata once on the head before he walked back to the chair he had ran from. Suga took a slow breath next to Hinata, but neither spoke as they waited for Ukai. Both pairs of shoulders flinched when Ukai finally parted his lips.

“When I appointed you the god of love, it came with an expectation. That you would never give up on your duties, and you would give the job everything you had. You made a promise to me that day. And though I know you were not making the clearest of decisions after fighting with Oikawa, you still broke that promise.”

“I know that,” Hinata replied sullenly, trying not to let his cheeks puff in annoyance as he defended himself.  
“But it’s not like I was gone for long!”

“You were gone for two days,” Ukai answered, eyes matching the irritation in his voice. “Do you understand what happens when something as important as love simply disappears for that long?”

“Not really?” Hinata blinked at the question, his head tilted when Ukai let out a groan.

“Hinata,” Takeda started, taking over when noticing the vein now throbbing in his husband’s forehead. “Love is crucial for every living creature in this world. Without the nurture and caring feelings love brings, nothing can grow and expand to its fullest potential.”

“Then I can just give extra love today!”

“Fate doesn’t work like that, idiot.” Ukai dropped his hand onto Takeda’s shoulder, shaking his head to emphasis his explanation. “When Takeda wove the threads of fate for yesterday, some of those strands were connected to you. Some humans were meant to meet their soulmates, some were supposed to confess, and others were meant to mend strained fights in their established relationships. But because you disappeared, these things were paused.”

“W-what does that mean?” Hinata asked weakly, Takeda staying silent for a moment before his sad tone slipped through.

“The strings are now straining between two roles, and if it’s not fixed…their soulmate strings could break.”
“B-But that’s...I never meant to hurt people,” Hinata insisted, eyes wide in concern as he glanced between the three gods. All of his life, all Hinata wanted to do was help people fall in love. That was the best feeling in the world! Now, because of Oikawa’s stupid teasing, Hinata had messed up.

“And yet that’s what happened.” Ukai stared solemnly down at Hinata’s panicked face, his tone strict as he continued. “Takeda is working hard to retwine their strings, but it’s putting burden on his shoulders that should have never been there. He shouldn’t have to do it on his own. So Takeda and I have decided that you will be tasked with fixing some of these soulmate threads yourself.”

“Me? But how?”

“By going to earth and doing it in person.” The blunt answer left Hinata wide eyed and speechless. Ukai snapped his fingers once, a piece of paper appearing in front of Hinata. Slowly the younger god grasped it, eyes traveling down the page of names while Ukai continued. “In this mess, five ‘true love’ soulmate pairings were fated to have a monumental achievement while you were gone. But because of your tantrum, these did not happen. Their bond was weakened, but not completely destroyed like some others. And so I’m giving you thirty days to fix these errors you created.”

“And if I can’t?” Hinata asked, peeking over the paper to watch the two kings glance at each other. Though Takeda’s frown was evident from where Hinata stood, Ukai gave a curt nod before turning his eyes back to the questioning god below.

“If you fail, then you’ll be stripped of your title as the god of love.” The words cut through Hinata like a knife, Sugawara quick to place his hand on Hinata’s back when he saw him sway in shock.

“It’s okay, Shouyou. You’re going to do just fine, I promise,” Suga soothed, trying to focus his friend on his voice before he quickly turned his head up to Ukai. “I’d like to request that I go with him.”

“Suga?” Takeda asked quietly, Suga bowing once before rising again.

“I used to spend a lot of time on earth, while Shouyou has no experience there. It’ll be hard for him to adjust without having someone he can trust. So I ask you to allow me to be his guide on this journey.”

“You make a valid point,” Ukai agreed, nodding once to show his approval before Takeda contributed to the conversation.
“And that isn’t the only help we’ll be supplying; since it would be hard to gain the trust of these people with no inside help, I’ve found a human who is indirectly connected to each of the five relationships you will be focusing on. He’s a student at Karasuno college, so starting tomorrow you will be coming in as his new ‘roommate’ for the semester that just started.”

“I get to be a college human?” Hinata asked, showing more excitement over the idea than he should have. Takeda laughed at the enthusiasm, pushing his glasses up as he nodded.

“You’ll of course have to take classes, which we’ve picked to help you get to know some of the humans you will be focusing on. Others you’ll have to rely on ‘accidental’ bump ins and your roommate to help meet. But I warn you, this roommate of yours isn’t your normal human.”

“What do you mean?” Hinata asked, Ukai sending a glance toward his smiling husband.

“I don’t remember you telling me anything special about him.”

“It’s not something I’ve ever run into, to be honest. Or even thought was possible.” When feeling all eyes staring at him expectedly, Takeda gave a nervous laugh and placed his hand on the back of his head. “You see, the thing is...this human doesn’t have a soulmate string.”

“Like it hasn’t been activated yet?” Hinata asked, wondering why that was so strange to Takeda. This age range was right around the time Hinata activated their soulmate strings, and it was possible that the human hadn’t crossed Hinata’s radar yet. Some were late bloomers, so that could also be the case for this person. Maybe he just hadn’t crossed paths with his soulmate yet? But at Hinata’s questioning, Takeda shook his head.

“As in, he wasn’t born with a soulmate string.” The information left the room stunned, Hinata blinking once to make sure he heard the god of fate correctly. But the room’s awkward silence meant he wasn’t dreaming. The thought left Hinata breathless; every human had a soulmate string. It was just the way the world had always worked. To not have a soulmate string implied that the human would never love another human completely. Even the monsters who became serial killers and genocide leaders were given a soulmate thread. They had someone connected to them, someone who mattered even in their crazy distressed souls. So for this human not to have one…

“Why wasn’t he born with one?” Hinata, who was still speechless at the revelation, heard Suga’s hesitant question echo in the large room. Takeda pursed his lips together, eyes flickering to Hinata for only a second before he gave a soft smile.
“His name is Kageyama Tobio, and he is the only one who can answer that question for you.”
Love? What Love?

Chapter Summary

Kageyama didn't know what was worse; his annoying neighbor, his new roommate, or the chaos that comes with them.

Chapter Notes

Welcome back! I am so happy that you guys liked the story so far, and I hope this chapter doesn't disappoint. So please enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Love is an untamed force. When we try to control it, it destroys us. When we try to imprison it, it enslaves us. When we try to understand it, it leaves us feeling lost and confused." - Paulo Coelho

If looks could kill, then Kageyama’s phone would be six feet in the ground. The art student was sure he was glowing red with anger as his hand shook, his eyes re-reading the text he had just gotten from the most annoying neighbor he had ever had.

You’re out of dryer sheets. Pick some up. - Tsukishima Kei

“As if I needed you to sign your text,” Kageyama muttered to himself, the puff of white air escaping past his lips from the cold. January had been exceptionally cold this year. The dark haired guy shoved both hands into his coat’s pockets and turned toward the store he had intended to pass before his phone had buzzed in his pocket.

The message itself wasn’t annoying; it was the implication behind it. Yet again, without Kageyama’s permission, Tsukishima had broken into his apartment to do his laundry. At the start of the year, Kageyama had moved into the new apartment just two streets away from Karasuno university. While he had spent his first year in the dorms, Kageyama quickly realized he despised the frat-like mentality of his roommates and quickly found a job that would allow him to afford his own apartment. It had been Tsukishima’s roommate, Yamaguchi Tadashi, who helped convince their now shared landlord to rent the apartment to Kageyama.
About a month after he moved in, his neighbor’s washer gave out. The appliance wasn’t covered under the apartment’s utilities, so the owner wasn’t responsible for fixing it or putting a new one in. Knowing how expensive it would be to get a new one, Tsukishima decided it was better to break into Kageyama’s apartment to do his laundry. Yamaguchi was always polite, asking Kageyama before using the appliance. And the tall art student had no problem sharing; he barely used it more than once a week, anyways. Even between the three of them, the washer never got used twice in the same day.

But did the asshole have to break in before sending the text?

“He’s needed for the team,” Kageyama reminded himself when the thought of stuffing the tall blocker into his dryer and turning it on high crossed his mind. Even with his salty attitude, Kageyama knew Tsukishima was the best blocker they had. He (along with Tsukishima and Yamaguchi) all played on the city’s volleyball team. And though little really scared the setter, Sawamura Daichi was one man he didn’t want to upset. Maybe it was the ‘stressed out father’ vibe the captain gave out on the court (despite only being 23), but Daichi’s eyes had the ability to freeze lava. And even sassy Tsukishima hesitated to go toe to toe with the captain.

Yanking the scarf closer to his rosy cheeks, Kageyama gave a sigh of relief against the scratchy cotton when feeling the warmth of the store. His eyes took a second to adjust to the bright lighting, though they didn’t actually wince until setting sight on the blast of reds and pink thrust into his face. The front of the store had a huge display decked out in hearts and cupid cut-outs, Kageyama’s mood only souring more at the sight. Like he really needed Valentine’s Day, the most pointless holiday ever invented, shoved down his throat. He bit back the desire to kick the teddy bear sitting at the bottom of the display as he walked toward the back of the store.

Love wasn’t a horrible thing. He was sure there were people out there that were meant for each other, and at times he caught himself admiring the bold attempts his teammates made at trying to capture the elusive feeling. But when it came to himself, Kageyama was no fool. Love was not made for him, in any sense of the word. Even as a child, he was unlovable. He contributed that to his parents; the two were miserable at best, and that was before he had been born. Kageyama couldn’t recall a single memory where they had acted like a family. Christmas and birthdays were treated like normal days, and at times his parent’s careers (His father a lawyer and mother a doctor) meant he spent them alone.

The divorce came at age twelve and was just as nasty as the marriage. It was a tug of war between two people who had enough resources and wealth to simply part ways without the fight. But his mother was a control freak, and his father a narcissist. Kageyama didn’t remember much about the years that followed, except it was at that time he really discovered his affection for volleyball. It got him out of the house, away from the angry phone calls and court trials. He didn’t mind that his parents were the only ones who never came to games, and at times he had to be dropped off by the coach when his mother forgot to pick him up. That was fine by him; it gave him more time to go over plays with the only adult that had given him any sense of attention. He knew, deep down, it was only because of his skill as a setter, but he took what he could get.
Kageyama got into college with a full paid scholarship for his volleyball talent, which made it easier for both parents to relinquish responsibility for him. The last time he spoke to his mother was just before his junior year, a quick conversation to congratulate him on the move. That had been in August. His father hadn’t spoke to him since he had come out two years ago.

Not that he really had a reason to confess to that part about himself; Kageyama had never dated. As if his creepy smile and awkward personality didn’t act like a force field for potential romance, Kageyama didn’t see the appeal. Wouldn’t a boyfriend interfere with his goals? And what was the point in trying something that had a low possibility of even working? His parents had loved each other at one point; look how well that turned out. And if his parents couldn’t find it in them to love him, who else could? Not to mention the one brush he had with a potential romance…

He didn’t like remembering the bitter end to that.

By the time he had gotten to the counter, Kageyama was more than ready to get home. One glance out the large windows of the store showed the sun had already disappeared, and he could only assume it was going to be colder than before. The preppy girl behind the counter was decked out in red, a heart pin keeping her bangs out of her eyes. He tried to make quiet conversation with her when she exchanged normal pleasantries, but his eyes continued to flicker to the barrette. Why was she already wearing that? It was only the middle of January; Valentine’s day wasn’t for another month. People didn’t start wearing shamrocks in February, or Santa hats in November.

“If you’d like to buy one for your girlfriend, we sell them in aisle two.” Her voice made Kageyama jump, his eyes wide as he made three quick shakes of his head.

“Oh, uh, I do-don’t have…” She giggled at his embarrassed stutter, scanning his rewards card with a smile.

“Well, then would you like anything else today, sir?”

“No thank you,” he rushed out, blushing when she laughed again.

“$8.39, please.” His hands awkwardly fumbled to grab his wallet with another shake of his head, meaning to answer with words until he felt another vibration in his pocket. Growling unintentionally, he missed the small squeak from the cashier as he snatched the phone from his grasp. As expected, it was another text from the not helpful blonde. Except unlike the first time, there were no instructions or demands. Instead, Kageyama blinked away his previous snarl when seeing a picture load up into
Red cheeks paled suddenly when the image of Tsukishima appeared, his hand wrapped tightly in the shirt of a guy much smaller than him. The person was so short, that Kageyama could tell Tsukishima was able to hold him off his feet while he took the picture. Bright orange hair that looked like it had never been brushed in its life paired with wide brown eyes. They were expressive and honest, showing the panic just hiding behind his anger at being lifted. His cheeks were rounder, which only added a childish look to him. For a second Kageyama wondered if some high school kid had snuck into his apartment, too. But the picture had a caption, Kageyama’s mind blanking as he read it.

**Say hello to your new roommate. I already have. -Tsukishima Kei**

Without a second glance to the cashier, Kageyama tossed a ten onto the counter before he snagged his bag and dashed out of the store. He ignored her call of his change as the bitter cold smashed into his face, eyes watering from the degree drop. Still, he rushed forward, fingers fumbling with the phone to reach his contacts. He swore when Tsukishima didn’t answer, then ignored his second attempt to call him. That *asshole* was doing this on purpose.

The landlord had always told him the possibility of another student moving in, which Kageyama forced himself to be fine with. It was a two bedroom apartment, and the landlord had taken a bit of a hit only renting it to Kageyama. Last week, the art student had been told someone had finally called for the renting possibility. How did he forget he was getting a roommate today? Of all the days for Tsukishima to need to do laundry-

“No choice, then.” Nodding to himself, Kageyama switched to a new number, pressing ‘call’ and shoving the cold phone to his ear.

There was only one person who could help him now.

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“You wanna fight?” Hinata tried to send the most intimidating glare to the blond stranger in front of him, who only gave him an arched eyebrow before sliding his lackadaisical gaze to the demi-god on the couch.

“What do you need honey or milk?” He asked quietly, nodding his head toward the contents on the coffee table. Sugawara gave a thankful smile as he accepted the tea handed to him, curling his dainty fingers
around the porcelain.

“No, thank you. This will be just fine.” The human gave a slight nod before he walked over to the recliner in the living room, the chair giving a groan from the added pressure of the man’s tall body. Hinata still glared through the steam of the tea he was pressing to his lips, refusing to take his watchful eyes off the stoic man. The last time he did, the guy yanked him off his feet like he was some sort of doll! Despite the hostile aura around Hinata, Suga took a gentle sip of his beverage before addressing the man again. “But may I ask a question?”

“If I’m not Kageyama, what am I doing in his apartment?” It was like the human read Hinata’s mind, which bothered him almost as much as it intrigued him. Did this guy have a secret power too? Was he a demigod like Sugawara? Or did all humans have the ability to read minds?! “Don’t be too impressed, shrimp. Your face basically screamed what you were thinking.”

“Don’t call me that!” Hinata snapped, growling before he took a large gulp of the tea. He instantly regretted it as the liquid burned his tongue, Hinata yelping before he dropped the tea back onto the table in front of him. His hands waved while he stuck his tongue out, Suga edging the bottle of milk closer to Hinata to drink. He watched the younger god chug the cooler beverage before turning to face their host.

“We were told there was only one person living here, and yet you seemed to know where all of Kageyama’s things were to make tea. Do you live here as well?” Before the blond could answer, the group’s attention was brought to the front door when another human barged into the apartment.

“Tsukki! You did it again, didn’t you?” Hinata’s head perked up at the new voice, his eyes taking in the mousy human in front of him. Bowing his head, the newcomer moved forward to extend his hand to Hinata with a rushed introduction. “My name’s Yamaguchi Tadashi, and he’s Tsukishima Kei. We’re your neighbors to the left.”

“I’m Hinata Shouyou!” Hinata answered, eagerly shaking Yamaguchi’s hand. A timid smile encroached on the male’s freckled face, his eyes quick to leave Hinata’s as he gazed at Tsukishima.

“I’m sorry about my roommate; he tends to forget that not everyone is used to his unique personality. He’s a really good guy, once you get to know him.”

“Shut up, Yamaguchi.” The two shared a look as the brunette pressed his lips together, displeasure clear in his eyes.
“You can’t keep breaking into Kageyama’s apartment, Tsukki.”

“It’s not my fault the idiot doesn’t fix his lock.” And with a sass that could rival Oikawa’s, Tsukishima gave a pointed stare to his roommate before sipping his tea again. Yamaguchi sighed at the reaction, shaking his head but not voicing a response. The little interaction gave Hinata time to assess the two.

The first thing that stuck out to the god of love was how thick the soulmate thread was between them. It meant that the two had known each other for a long time, and had created a very strong bond. But what was so *odd* about the thread wasn’t it’s strength; it was the color. Or, rather, colors. Never before had Hinata seen a soulmate thread with *two* different colors. The yellow was entwined with pink, implying that a shift was supposed to happen. Normally, when a thread changed to pink, it was instantaneous. There was no lingering color; in a blink of an eye, it would just switch. But here, between these two, the change had been halted.

And he couldn’t stop himself from asking:

“Are you two just roommates?” Despite being the only one who didn’t have tea, Yamaguchi seemed to choke on something as his face turned a startling red in seconds. The response made Hinata blink, confusion clear in his face as he shifted his attention to the ever calm Tsukishima. As if not noticing his sputtering roommate beside him, Tsukishima lowered his tea to his lap before he sighed.

“Yamaguchi and I have known each other since we were children; our mothers thought it was cute to force us into play dates.” It was only then that Tsukishima glanced over his glasses to Yamaguchi, a scowl on his face when the freckled guy started to tremble in his spot. “Breathe.”

Like the blonde had control over his roommate’s lungs, Yamaguchi let out a gasp of air before he quickly inhaled, the passage of air leveling itself out after a few seconds.

“Sorry.” Hinata watched as Yamaguchi moved to sit on the couch, their thread swaying over the table that separated the two roommates. He couldn’t keep his eyes off the multi-colors string, wondering if this was what Ukai had meant by Hinata ‘altering fate’. Maybe they were supposed to transition into true lovers, but because of Hinata’s blunder, the line got blurred.

“Sorry about Hinata; he’s just really perceptive with people. Sometimes he doesn’t really think about what he’s saying before words are just blurtng out of his mouth.” Suga lifted the teapot Tsukishima had left on the table to Yamaguchi, but the human quickly shook his head with a thankful smile. When he placed the pot back down, Sugawara offered his hand for Yamaguchi to shake. “I supposed I should introduce myself as well. I’m Sugawara Koushi, one of Hinata’s cousins.”
“I was wondering your relation to Hinata. At first I assumed you were his older brother, but your looks are quite different!” The two shared a laugh, Suga leaning over to ruffle Hinata’s hair affectionately.

“Sometimes I feel more like his mother than anything.” Hinata was quick to squirm under the attention, Suga giving him a kind smile before pulling his hand back. “But I wouldn’t trade him for anything. He’s one of a kind.”

“Maybe that explains why he’d do something as strange as transfer colleges half-way through the year.” Tsukishima’s voice showed his speculation as he stared at Hinata, who glared immediately in response. “Did you get expelled from your other school or something? I could see you doing something stupid like that.”

“Tsukki,” Yamaguchi said, though only sighed afterward.

“Financial stuff,” Hinata grumbled, trying to think back to what Suga had prepared for him to say earlier on their way to the apartment. “This college is closer to home, so it’s a lot less money for me.”

“Hm.” The half-interested noise that Tsukishima gave in response made it seem like he wasn’t the one who had asked the question in the first place, making the orange haired god seethe in his seat. What was this guy’s problem? Yamaguchi seemed like such a nice guy, yet Tsukishima was as pleasant as a rabid wolf. Hinata was about to tell the snarky student that, too, until another slamming of the front door cut his thoughts off.

It only took Hinata a second to realize who the newcomer was. He wasn’t sure why, but his mind instantly shifted, eyes honed in on the panting man in front of them. He was tall, like Tsukishima, though it was obvious that the blond had some height on him. His black hair was cut in a way that tossed his disheveled bangs into his eyes, but when his large hand quickly swiped them away, Hinata was surprised to see the deep blue color now reflected his way. His gaze was sharp, and his mouth seemed to pull naturally into a frown when the student pulled the scarf off his neck. The sharp angles of his cheeks gave him a handsome edge, and the paleness of his skin worked well with his dark features. He adjusted awkwardly in the doorway, shutting the door behind him before focusing that intense stare on Tsukishima.

“Did you use my tea?”

“Welcome home, king.” The sly smirk on Tsukishima’s face seemed to deepen the scowl Hinata’s
new roommate had, the latter taking a few large steps toward the sitting neighbor.

“I told you to stop calling me that!”

“Is that an order, your majesty?”

“Guys, our guests-” But Yamaguchi’s words were drowned out by Kageyama’s growl, which seemed to prompt the blonde into slowly rising from the recliner. Yamaguchi was quick to jump from his own seat, rushing to stand between the two taller man as they started to argue. Hinata’s attention, which had been following Kageyama since he had entered the apartment, was dragged away by a soft tug on his wrist. He glanced over to Sugawara, who leaned closer to whisper into the smaller god’s ear.

“Is it true? Does Kageyama not have a soulmate thread?”

“O-oh! That. Well...” For some reason, Hinata’s cheeks warmed when he realized that Suga thought his attention had been focused on Kageyama in order to discover the truth about Takeda’s claim. Casually Hinata tried not to let the glow of his eyes be noticeable to Suga as he flicked them at Kageyama, waiting to see if a soulmate thread would appear. The process only took seconds normally, so when nothing appeared, Hinata ditched his powers and turned his attention back to the fertility god. “No, he doesn’t.”

“What does that mean?”

“That’s what I want to know.” And Hinata wasn’t being sarcastic, either. The strange phenomenon was grabbing his attention faster than anything else ever had. Sure, he was still curious about the multi-colored soulmate thread. But this was different; this went against everything he’d ever known about humans. Did this mean that the man had never felt the true desire to love someone or be loved by someone? Or was there something else going on here? Takeda hadn’t given him any hints, so Hinata was left to simply stare at his roommate in wonder. It was a funny feeling that filled his stomach as he watched the man bicker with the snickering blond in front of him. It wasn’t like anything else he had felt before. Was this part of the reason for the missing soulmate thread? Or was it simply Hinata still getting used to being on earth?

His spine tensed instantly when the blue eyes shifted onto him, Hinata unsure of what to say at the intimidating stare he was now receiving.
“Hey.” Hinata jumped at the rough voice, Sugawara letting out a laugh while he patted Hinata’s shoulder to help calm him down.

“Say hello, Hinata.”

“How can I say hello when he’s staring me down like that?” The words came out a little louder than Hinata had meant them to, which made Tsukishima cough out a laugh while Kageyama’s glare intensified.

“That’s just my face, idiot!”

“Wel-Well how am I supposed to know that?!” Hinata shouted back, jumping to his feet when Kageyama stalked toward him. Used to taller people trying to intimidate with their size, Hinata puffed out his chest when his roommate leaned down closer to his face.

“I’m just trying to introduce myself.”

“You look like you’re about to rip my head off my shoulders.”

“I’m going to if you don’t shut up-”

“Two seconds and the king is already arguing with the commoner.” Tsukishima’s comment made both of them lift their heads to look at him, Yamaguchi shaking his head before leaning closer to Tsukishima.

“That’s not a good thing; if they continue to fight like this, we’ll be the ones who have to listen to it all night.” The brunette’s words seemed to knock away Tsukishima’s pleased smirk, the taller man quick to shove his hands into his jeans pockets.

“Then I suppose it’s somewhat fortunate that we have practice in an hour.”

“It’s that late?” Kageyama, seeming to completely forget the previous argument, peeked his head over Hinata’s to see the clock on the wall.
“Practice?” Hinata asked, Yamaguchi quick to nod with a grin.

“Yup! You’re looking at three of the players for the Karasuno volleyball team. We play competitively with other towns through the winter and spring, so our season just started up a few weeks ago.”

“Volleyball?” Suga’s interest in the subject was surprising for Hinata, the demigod slowly standing as his hands linked together in front of him. “That’s a sport I haven’t played in a while.”

“You played volleyball?!” Hinata watched Suga nod with a quiet laugh, rolling on the balls of his feet as he answered.

“Only when I was younger, before I...had to move.” And by ‘move’, he meant before the revolt happened and Ukai had come down to earth to ask for Sugawara to take over the responsibilities of the fertility god. Before that, Suga was content living as a human child on earth. It had been hard for him, Hinata remembered, but in the end, he had made the decision to leave his human life behind for the greater good.

“Really? What position?” Yamaguchi’s question got a big smile out of Sugawara, seeming to enjoy talking about the sport.

“Setter, though I wasn’t very good.”

“Oh, really? Kageyama’s our setter, but we haven’t been able to find a backup for when he needs a rest.”

“I’m fine,” The setter snapped out instantly, but Yamaguchi was quick to wave away his statement as he offered a humble smile to the two gods.

“Would you two be interested in coming to our practice? Our captain had been looking to add some people to our roster, and your past experience may be helpful. Noya’s a pretty solid Libero, so I’m not really sure where we could place Hinata...but our captain is sure to think of something!”

“Noya?” Hinata had barely read the names on his list, but this stuck out to him for some reason. So
when Yamaguchi nodded, the little god was quick to answer. “We’ll go!”

“Are you sure? You’re probably going to get bored just watching us.” Kageyama didn’t seem as on board to bring the pair along, though he didn’t comment again when Hinata shook his head.

“I’ll find something to entertain me, don’t worry!”

“We could always use him as a waterboy.” Tsukishima’s suggestion received a glare in response, the blond shrugging his shoulders before he walked toward the door. “Just a suggestion. Come on, Yamaguchi.”

“Right behind you.” As the two were leaving, Yamaguchi glanced back and gave the group a smile. “Let’s meet up in a half hour and walk together, okay?”

“Awesome!” Hinata jumped in excitement at the new adventure, always enjoying learning about new things. Humans were much different than the gods he was used to conversing with, and he was determined to spend the next thirty days learning everything he could about them. So when the door finally shut behind their neighbors, Hinata whirled to face Kageyama with a wide-eyed expression. “So what am I going to need for this volleyball thing?”

“You’ve never heard of volleyball?” Kageyama asked Hinata stuttering for a moment before flailing his arms around.

“Just never played it!”

“Not really much you need; just some sneakers and a pair of gym shorts. I think Noya left some here last time he came over, so if you need to borrow them for now you can.” Kageyama then glanced over to Suga, his signature frown returning. “My shorts might be long on you—”

“It’s fine, I’m sure I can manage whatever you give me.” Suga’s cheerful tone seemed to unnerve the setter, who kept his gaze from making eye contact with either of them.

Quietly he led them to his bedroom, yanking out the aforementioned clothes and leaving the room just as quickly. Hinata and Suga were quick to change into the clothes given, Hinata bouncing around in the shorts to get used to the feeling against his skin. The clothes humans wore was much different than the robes of gods, and so the textures all felt weird. But not in a bad way, he supposed.
Suga didn’t seem to have the same tactile problem, but he had experience on his side. Once Hinata had adjusted to the new feeling, the two moved back into the living room to see the tea mess had vanished. Kageyama was now at the sink, working on washing the dishes from before.

“So, Kageyama, could you tell us a little about yourself?” Suga’s question made Kageyama jump, not seeming to notice the two behind him.

“Um…” His hesitation showed when he slowed the sponge against the teacup in his hand, his eyebrows drawing together slowly. A half-hearted shrug paired with his quiet answer. “I’m not sure what you’d want to know.”

“Well, what are you going to school for?”

“I’m an art major; I like to draw.”

“What kind of stuff do you draw?” Hinata’s energetic questioning made Kageyama blush, quick to shake his head.

“Nothing great. I’m not very interesting in general, sorry.”

“But you play volleyball; isn’t that interesting?” Hinata asked, confused by the quiet way Kageyama nodded.

“So doesn’t that make you cool?”

“Not really.” He seemed unsure of his answer, struggling with himself for a minute before reconsidering.

“Maybe. I’m not sure; I don’t hang out with other people besides my teammates.”

“Eh? Why not?”

“I just don’t.”
“You seem pretty dedicated to the sport,” Suga suggested, Kageyama finishing the final dish before placing it on the drying rack.

“It’s my favorite thing in the world.” The blunt way he said it showed no sign of sarcasm, the serious tone making Hinata’s heart thump with excitement. He jumped toward his roommate eagerly, his body practically vibrating with energy.

“Then you’ll have to show me how awesome you are! I can’t wait to see you play, Kageyama!” For a second, a look of anxiety flashed over the setter’s face, causing Hinata to blink and cock his head to the side. Before he could ask, Kageyama bowed to them, then slipped around Hinata to walk toward his room.

“If you’ll excuse me, I have to get ready for practice.” The god of love watched Kageyama hurry to his room, a sliver of insecurity popping into his stomach when his roommate’s door shut.

“Did I do something wrong?”

“You’re just…hmm…” Suga walked over to place a comforting arm around Hinata’s shoulders, offering a gentle squeeze. “You’re a big personality to take in. Kageyama doesn’t seem like a very social person, so he’s going to take a little time to get used to you.”

“But if we don’t get along fast, I may not be able to fix everything I screwed up.”

“Don’t think of it that way. It’s only day one; we’ve got plenty of time to figure all of this out. Let’s just focus on the here and now, okay?” When Hinata nodded, Sugawara pulled away and gave him a thumbs up. “You’re going to do great, I promise.”

But even as Hinata nodded and sent Suga a smile, he couldn’t help but worry about the man now hiding in his bedroom.

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The walk to the gymnasium had been an eye opener for Hinata.
Never before had he seen so many soulmate threads at once. The campus was freezing, but tons of students were out enjoying a festival of sorts in the campus center. The colors that flashed in front of Hinata’s eyes were bright and distracting, with lines darting in every direction possible. While some went far (meaning their soulmate wasn’t on the campus), others were weaved much closer. They had passed a group with three sets of soulmates huddled together, and Hinata’s fingers twitched with the desire to run over and pair them up instantly. Sugawara kept him close by holding his hand, reminding him that he was expected to converse with the three other companions in the group.

He found this task even harder when he caught sight of a pink string. When his eyes followed it, he was greeted with a troubling sight. Though the woman and man connected sat near each other, they weren’t together. His arm was around another girl, their soft kissing proving the two soulmates hadn’t been introduced yet. He knew they were fated to meet, but for a second he winced, wondering if Oikawa had played a part in this.

Or maybe it was him that caused this mess up, as well.

“Hinata?” His eyes tore away from the couple to glance over to Yamaguchi, who was now looking at the couple that Hinata had previously been watching. “Oh. They’re kind of cute together, huh?”

“Not *that* cute,” Hinata grumbled, Yamaguchi chuckling softly.

“From your response, I think I already know the answer to this, but...are you seeing anyone, Hinata?” Quickly the god shook his head. “Well, that’s okay. There are lots of single people on campus; you’ll have plenty of time to meet someone.”

“Well, what about you? Are you in a relationship?” Yamaguchi unconsciously glanced away from Hinata, and the god of love saw his eyes linger on a particular blond before looking away in a rush.

“N-Not me.”

“Eh? Why not? Do you not like anyone?” Now Yamaguchi’s cheeks were starting to flush, Hinata eager to press the topic more. “You do, don’t you?”

“Well I-”
“Then why don’t you ask them out?”

“Huh?!”

“Like a date! You know, with kissing and stuff!” Yamaguchi’s face only rose in color at Hinata’s specifics, which the god ignored. “Can you tell me their name? I bet I can help you. Anyone I know? What do they-”

“Yo.” A sharp pain in the back of his head made Hinata whine, his free hand quick to rub the spot as he glared up at the guy who hit him. Tsukishima barely spared Hinata a glance before he was walking forward again, hands playing with the headphones Hinata swore he had been previously wearing. “Don’t interrogate people.”

“Ah, wait up, Tsukki!” Yamaguchi was quick to chase after his fast-paced friend, Hinata watching the two of them disappear into a building up ahead of them.

“If they love each other so much, they should just be together,” Hinata muttered, Suga shaking his head as he leaned closer so Kageyama wouldn’t hear his next words.

“Humans can’t see the threads that you can. They need a little bit of time to figure out how to approach a situation before they exploit themselves. Make sure you’re thinking about that when you try to help them, okay?”

“Fine, but I still think humans are so weird.”

“That’s cause you’ve never been in that situation before.” The strange response had Hinata looking up to Sugawara, but the fertility god was focused on jogging up the stairs to the gymnasium. Hinata moved after him, his eyes quick to zoom around the open space. The previous excitement was back as flashes of soulmate strings fluttered around him. But unlike the campus, each one was unique in a way that Hinata had never seen before.

“Hinata! Sugawara-san! Come meet the rest of the team.” Yamaguchi’s call drew Hinata his way, catching sight of one of the soulmates he was sure he had messed up. A girl with black hair, glasses, and a beauty mark on her chin stood next to Yamaguchi with a clipboard and a schooled face. Her soulmate string looked pink, but upon closer inspection, there were chunks that were still white. It was split the same way that Yamaguchi and Tsukishima’s was, except this implied she had yet to fully meet her soulmate. He was sure this meant she was fated to meet her person, but when Hinata
didn’t show up, it got messed up somehow. The situation wasn’t as troubling to Hinata as his first pair, so he focused on the introduction instead.

“This is Kiyoko Shimizu, our manager and a co-worker of Tsukki. Kiyoko-san, meet Hinata and Sugawara.”

“Welcome.” Her voice was quiet, her eyes shyly looking to the clipboard as she bowed slightly to the two. Before Hinata could even answer, the sound of two growls behind him made him jump, glancing to see if an animal had snuck in behind them. Instead, he was greeted with two of the players he had seen talking earlier. The taller of the two was bald, his gray eyes screwed into a strange way that made Hinata wonder if he was human. But his thought dissolved when seeing the soulmate string hanging limply from him, a pale pink barely visible. Never before had Hinata seen such a weak color in a soulmate thread; the vibrant colors always filling Hinata’s heart with joy. What had happened to this thread?

“Well hello there, shrimpy.” Even his voice was creeping Hinata out, and he was a god. Yamaguchi, however, seemed only annoyed at the demonic man, stepping forward to try and shoo him back.

“And this is Ryunosuke Tanaka, though he’s going to be a dead man walking if the captain sees you scaring even more people away from the volleyball team.” This was a common thing?! From the way Yamaguchi spoke, it sure seemed like it.

“What are you doing talking to our Kiyoko-san?” The shorter male (as in, even shorter than Hinata) seemed as spunky as his friend. The mostly brown hair stood straight up, the only part hanging down bleached blonde. Slanted brown eyes weren’t as freaky as his teammate, but they narrowed in a way that showed he was just as serious as Tanaka. His thread was bright in color, thankfully, but spun with multiple colors like Kiyoko and Yamaguchi. His pairing was a little bit troubling, as it dipped into territory that Hinata tended to shy away from. The pink, he could deal with; the red, however…

That was more Okaiwa’s department.

“Noya, not you too.” Sighing, Yamaguchi gave Suga and Hinata an apologetic smile. “This is Yuu Nishinoya, though we mostly just call him Noya. He’s normally pretty friendly when it doesn’t involve Kiyoko-san.”

“Well someone has to protect our princess!” Noya argued, the women giving a stern look to the two men ‘guarding’ her before she turned her back and walked away.
“Ah, she’s such an angel.” Tanaka and Noya hugged with a twin set of sighs, Hinata bursting into laughter at their antics. He couldn’t help himself; the two guys were funny when they weren’t trying to murder with their eyes! Both men seemed to appreciate Hinata’s reaction, though Yamaguchi seemed distracted as he looked around the gym.

“I haven’t seen Ennoshita or Asahi yet. And where is our-”

“I’m here!” The low baritone of a new male entered the gym, and Hinata lifted his head slowly to get a look at the guy now jogging toward the group. The strong jaw of the man paired nicely with the short black haircut and dark eyes, his strong build giving off an air of confidence. There was no doubt about it; this man was the captain of the volleyball team. Eager to see his soulmate link, Hinata easily spotted the sickly looking pale of pink he had already seen once today. A quick look showed that the string went past Hinata, and not to the right where Tanaka was rushing with Noya to crowd the captain.

“About time, captain,” Noya teased, the older man rubbing the back of his neck when Tanaka poked his side.

“Out on a hot date, captain?”

“Sorry to disappoint, but one of the mother’s had to work late so I had to keep the daycare open. Asahi still had to go back home and get his clothes, so he’ll be late as well.” He gave a quiet laugh before he glanced down to Hinata, a warm smile seeming easy for the man to create. “I apologize for the late introduction, my name’s-”

“Daichi?” Hinata and the captain both looked back at Sugawara, the god of love almost forgetting his fellow deity was still with him. The fair-haired man now stood with wide eyes, hand gripping over his heart and mouth. His shoulders were hunched closer to himself, and Hinata had never seen Suga look so small before. If he had to name it, he looked almost...frightened?

“Koushi...Sugawara Koushi?” A bright pink caught the corner of Hinata’s eye, and the smaller god looked back to the captain. Or more, specifically, the soulmate thread. The once weak color suddenly surged back to life, shining brighter than Hinata had ever seen before. And it wasn’t done surprising the god of love. Because a second later, Hinata realized that Daichi’s soulmate wasn’t past Hinata; he was next to him. Sugawara was Daichi’s soulmate.

Suddenly, Hinata wasn’t so sure everything was going to be okay.
And the cliffhanger was strong for this one. Please don't kill me. So, what did you think? Did you guess the pairings? Was the last one a surprise? What do you think of their soulmate threads, and how will Kageyama fit into all of this? Leave me a comment and kudos!
True Love Knows No Boundaries

Chapter Summary

Hinata learns the truth about Suga and Daichi, while Kageyama gets his own after practice surprise.

Chapter Notes

Welcome back! I'm so happy that all of you guys commented and gave me positive feedback. Thanks for the great amounts of love. So without much more from me, let's get right into the next chapter!

"You know it's love when all you want is that person to be happy, even if you're not part of their happiness." - Julia Roberts

“Could I borrow Suga for a minute?” Before Daichi could respond, the smaller god was yanking his comrade away from the humans and into the furthest corner of the gymnasium, he could find. Suga went willingly, though Hinata wasn’t sure if he had fully recovered from the appearance of the captain. Feeling they were far enough from prying ears, Hinata whirled on his heels and stared up at his friend with a mixture of confusion and shock. “What just happened?”

“I’m...not sure,” Suga answered slowly as if just learning how to speak. In all of the years that the god of love had known his older friend, Hinata had never seen Suga so out of it. Slender fingers continued to run through silver strands of hair as if worried the hair would fall out.

“But you know Daichi, right? Like, you’ve met before.”

“I used to know him.” But from the tone of Suga’s voice, it was so much more than that. That was pretty obvious from the pink string tying the setter to the captain now talking to Yamaguchi and Tsukishima.

“How?”
“Childhood neighbors,” Suga answered, his eyes flickering to the taller man who smiled at the two men now entering the gym. One loomed in height, a brunette bun tied to the back of his head and seeming strange for such a burly man. What was even weirder was the way he flinched at the cry of ‘Asahi!’ from Noya, the smaller player running to his side. The thread between them was easy to detect, and Hinata was puzzled by their relationship. Just what the heck was going on with them?

In comparison to Asahi, the last guy (Ennoshita, if Daichi’s greeting was correct) looked pretty plain. His downturned eyes matched the color of his brown hair, his shoulders relaxed despite the commotion going on around him. Somehow, it seemed like he was one of the more grounded of the group, his smile sleepy when he nodded at whatever Daichi had said to him. He was so relaxing to look at, that it took Hinata a second to see the worn pink thread attaching this man to Tanaka across the court. Now it made sense to Hinata why Takeda had chosen Kageyama as his roommate; all five pairs were connected to his volleyball team!

But right now, he was focused on the one person who didn’t fit that description.

“So you met him when you were kids and still lived on earth.” Suga nodded to confirm Hinata’s summary, his eyes glancing to his hands.

“He moved in my neighborhood when he was three, and our families were very close. By now, my mother had given up her role as a god so she could stay with my father and raise me. Daichi was the first real friend I made.” As he reminisced, a soft smile tugged at the edges of Suga’s lips. “We fished and went camping together. Played flashlight tag and made blanket forts. Our seats were right next to each other throughout school because of our last names. He’s the one who first taught me how to play volleyball. He...was my best friend.”

“Until we turned fifteen and you left to live with your uncles out of state.” Both gods jumped at the interruption, Suga’s eyes instantly finding the smile Daichi sent his way. “And I haven’t seen you since. Well, until today.”

“Has it been that long?” Suga asked quietly, and Hinata wondered if he was asking the captain or himself the question. The timeline seemed to fit, as Hinata remembered only meeting Suga in his teenage years. But the god of love remained quiet on the subject, his interest focusing on the soulmate string in front of him. To say it was bright would be an understatement; it was one of the stronger connections in the group. It was no lie when Suga said they had been best friends; the strength of the bond was only rivaled by Tsukishima and Yamaguchi’s. In fact, if Hinata hadn’t seen the frayed state it had been in earlier, he would have sworn they were already lovers.

But with a bond this strong, why was their pairing on his list to fix?
“I didn’t mean to interrupt your conversation,” Daichi said, his apologetic tone seeming honest. “But we started practice and Yamaguchi informed me you two were interested in joining?”

“Yup!” Hinata chirped out but thought over the question before he awkwardly scuffed his shoe against the floor. “Well, I want to try. Never played before.”

“Good thing you have an amazing wing spiker to lead you!” Tanaka’s heavy arm landed on Hinata’s shoulder, his grin wide with confidence. “I’ll show you the ropes of the best position in the game.”

“You mean besides the libero, of course.” Now Noya had joined in on the fun, jumping in front of Hinata and striking a pose. “The true guardian of the court, and the most important position in the game.”

“We’ll all have to just show him the positions and see which one he likes best.” Daichi’s suggestion was met with groans from the two troublemakers, Suga laughing behind his hand. Hinata was eager to start, but his voice caught in his throat when movement from the court snatched his attention. Kageyama’s slender fingers were framing the ball, his eyes focused in a way that Hinata had yet to see. The arch of his throw was perfect, and like magic the god’s eyes followed the volleyball. Hinata heard the squeaks of Asahi’s shoes before the large man jumped. No, not jumped. Flew. Asahi’s body rose high in the sky as his hand smashed into the ball, instantly gunning it into the floorboards on the other side of the net. The resounding sound was loud, but echoed in Hinata’s ears like a siren’s voice. Asahi floated back down to the ground, arms swinging behind him like a bird.

And Hinata knew what he wanted to try first.

“I want to do that.”

“The ace?” Daichi’s surprised tone matched the looks on Suga and Tanaka’s face, though Noya only grinned in pride. The libero was quick to point toward the tall man, his smile beaming.

“Asahi is one of the best spikers I’ve ever met. Come on, let me introduce you!” Hinata’s wrist was captured in a warm hold, Noya eager to run across the gym. His feet squeaked with his excitement as he popped up between Kageyama and Asahi, the taller man blinking once when the spiky haired man waved up at him. “Hey, Asahi! You’ve got a fan over here.”

“Me?” Asahi dropped his gaze to Hinata, who was sure his eyes were practically shining in awe.
“You were so cool! You were all like ‘bwah’ and the ball went ‘fwoom’ right over the net!” A self-conscious look came over the ace, his hand instantly resting on the back of his neck before bowing politely.

“Thank you very much. My name is Asahi Azumane.” Rising back to his full height, Asahi glanced over to Kageyama, whose natural scowl deepened at the interruption. “I’m guessing this is the new roommate you were mentioning? Hinata, was it?”

“He’s about to be dead if he keeps interrupting practice.” Terror slithered through Hinata’s spine as he caught Kageyama’s glare, but Noya’s warm arm over his shoulders helped ease his tension.

“Don’t be so mean, Kageyama. He wants to become an ace, you know.” Again, the look of shock appeared, and Hinata felt his cheeks flush at the stares. What was the big deal, anyways? As if reading his mind, Kageyama spun the ball in his hand and let out a small scoff.

“He’s too short to be an ace.”

“Excuse me?!” Storming over to the grumpy spiker, Hinata shrugged off his earlier uneasiness to glare at the dismissive man in front of him. “My size has nothing to do with it!”

“He’s not trying to insult you, Hinata.” Asahi held his hands up to try and placate the tension between the roommate, his kind smile showing none of the disbelief Kageyama had. “It’s just that a spiker, especially an ace, tends to rely on their height to get a good jump on the ball.”

“Being small ain’t nothing to be ashamed of. Besides, everyone knows the best battles are done on the ground.” Despite Noya’s cheerful tone, Hinata refused to look away from Kageyama, his small hands pushing the volleyball closer to the tall setter’s chest.

“I can do it.” Refusing to back down, Hinata stood proudly in front of Kageyama, as if daring the other to call his bluff. His roommate remained silent, but his blue gaze bore down on Hinata. He seemed to be dissecting something mentally, the moment being stretched into an uncomfortable silence. Maybe Noya or Asahi had said something, but Hinata had zoned in on the human in front of him, blocking everything else out. Finally, Kageyama scrunched his nose and glanced away, focusing on Asahi with a command that made the ace instantly stiffen.

“Do you mind Hinata trying one toss?”
Despite his deadly look, Kageyama muttered the words like he was asking a parent for permission to stay out past curfew. Hinata tilted his head at the strange combination, wondering if his roommate simply didn’t know how scary he looked. He thought back to their first argument in the apartment, where Kageyama had “attempted” to be nice. This guy just had no social skills. Even as Asahi quickly agreed to giving Hinata time on the court, Kageyama looked like the ace had insulted him. Maybe it really was just his face?

“One toss.” Now that gaze was aimed at Hinata, though the god was sure he actually meant to look scary this time around. “You miss it, it still counts.”

“But if I hit it, you’ll keep throwing to me? You’ll make me an ace?”

“There’s only one ace on the team, idiot.”

“Then a spiker!”

“None of this matters, cause you won’t connect.”

“Go easy on him,” Noya reprimanded, jumping up to smack Kageyama on the back of the head. The sight was enough to grab some snickers from the other side of the court where Tsukishima and Yamaguchi were practicing. Instead of responding, Kageyama moved over to the net, continuing to spin the ball in his hands as he walked. Hinata sucked in a breath as he glanced around the court, jogging toward the back of the square painted on the floor.

“Kageyama’s a really good setter, so he’ll send the ball right to you,” Asahi instructed, hoping to help the smaller player. “But his sets can be...fast, so make sure not to hesitate. And even if you don’t hit it, Daichi will let you play-”

“I’ll hit it.” Hinata’s tongue unconsciously licked at his lower lip, predatory eyes focused on the colorful ball snug in Kageyama’s hands.

“Good luck, Shouyou!” Suga’s words of encouragement sounded through the gym, but Hinata only raised his gaze to greet the blue stare now looking at him. He felt his lips twitching up into a smile, though it felt different than his normal grin. And by the slight widening of Kageyama’s gaze, Hinata wondered if it leaned closer to the animalistic adrenaline he felt flowing through him.
He didn’t know much about volleyball, but seeing Asahi spike the ball with such power hit something deep in Hinata. He wasn’t big, and everyone always looked down on him. Even as a god, he got nothing but downward looks. Some were mocking, some simply sympathetic. Even his friends and family tended to forget he didn’t need to be coddled anymore. In that moment when Asahi jumped higher than his already large stature, the god could only desire to do the same. For a second, he wanted to be the one who looked down on others. To be more than the quirky god, the small one or the ‘chibi-chan’.

He wanted to fly.

So when Kageyama threw the ball to Tanaka to ‘bump’ to him, Hinata eagerly bounced on his feet in unspent energy. The bald wing spiker eagerly helped out, tossing the ball above him before he ricochet it off his forearms toward Kageyama. As soon as the ball hovered over the setter’s head, Hinata’s feet were in motion. The small god sprinted across the court, his speed drawing gasps from the players around them. Hinata wasn’t paying attention, though, as his body shoved high off the ground. His eyes didn’t leave the slender fingers of the setter across from him until the ball was careening his way, the speed faster than he had expected. But like it was second nature, Hinata’s hand was slamming onto the ball, his palm bursting with pain from the force behind it. Like a bullet, the ball shot across the net and made a satisfying smack into the floor.

Hinata’s chest filled with a pressure he couldn’t explain, though he reveled it. Wonder, amazement, accomplishment and exhilaration all bundled into one. Even that didn’t describe it right. The way the gym looked underneath him was something he was sure would stay engraved into his very being. The faces watching him ranged from surprise to annoyance and even excitement. But Kageyama’s was the best. It was the closest thing he felt could relate to the emotion welling up inside of him. It was like looking into an emotional mirror. Their eyes stayed locked as Hinata started to descend back to reality. He needed to catch his balance when his feet dropped to the ground, nearly falling back to the wood. The gym was silent for a moment, and Hinata wasn’t able to pull his stare away from Kageyama’s. The setter’s hands were balled by his side, shoulders tensed like he was ready to bolt. Yet the two stayed still, as if being on the court together was their only option.

“Shouyou!” Hinata finally blinked as he heard his name called, breaking the spell between the setter when a warm body crashed into his chest. Noya’s excited chant of his name was paired with Tanaka lifting him off the ground, jostling the god while he paraded him around the gym.

“Did you guys see that? Hinata hit the quick toss on his first try! This kid is a monster!” Tanaka’s loud roar under him made Hinata’s head whip over to Suga, who only gave him a shrug with a laugh.

“That’s one term I don’t know.”
“Because it’s only something the King can do.” Tsukishima’s flat tone was followed by a lackadaisical set of squeaks, the blonde’s hands resting in his short’s pockets. “A King’s Toss, if you will.”

“Shut up.” Kageyama’s voice was quickly drowned out by Noya, who was now jumping around Tanaka in excitement. Once the wing spiker set Hinata back on the ground, Noya yanked him into a hug which Hinata was more than happy to return.

“You’ve got to play with us; Daichi, tell him he’s got to be on the team!” Hinata’s head shot up to the captain, the taller man giving a soft smile to Hinata before letting his gaze rise to someone behind him.

“What do you think, Kageyama?” Again Hinata switched his attention to his roommate, but their gazes didn’t meet. Instead, the setter’s eyes lingered on the ball Hinata had hit, which was rolling into the wall on the other side of the court. The silence was a little stifling to the god, who was eagerly awaiting an answer as he shifted on his feet. Why wasn’t Kageyama answering? Was he really not sold on Hinata’s ability?

The god of love knew he had an advantage; being a god gave him some better attributes than a human would. His reflexes were quicker, and his speed would be hard to challenge. Suga must have hidden his abilities when he was younger if he wasn’t seen as a strong player. Maybe Hinata was being a little reckless showing off his skills on his first try, but the rush he had gotten from the spike was worth the risk. And none of them seemed to really question it so much as accepted it as a phenomenon. Humans could be a little gullible that way, and it worked in Hinata’s favor this time.

“Well?” Daichi prompted Kageyama again, and the tall setter finally turned his attention back to the group now staring at their silent companion.

“I’ll toss to anyone who’s essential to winning.”

“That’s his way of saying you rock.” Noya’s cheeky deciphering had the setter rigid and blushing, quick to shake his head.

“I didn’t say-”

“Welcome aboard, my little kohai!” Tanka’s ruffling of Hinata’s hair had the smaller guy beaming, instantly tossing his fist into the air from excitement. Daichi laughed as he moved over and dropped a
hand onto the two shorter men’s shoulders, nudging them toward the court.

“Alright, enough showboating. Let’s get some actual work in you two.”

“Yes, sir!”

~**~

It had been years since he had touched a volleyball. Though his body ached from Daichi’s lengthy drills, Suga couldn’t say he hated the old feeling. Even as kids, Daichi had pushed their friends in the neighborhood to be the very best. He had been a leader back then, too, and was able to use his natural charisma to convince others to play with them. And they would run drills and compete in mock competitions until the street lights came on and their mothers called them in for dinner. But even as they were rushing to get home, Daichi would call out reminders of where they were meeting the next day for ‘practice’.

“Let’s get this gym cleaned up and call it a night.” The voice behind his childhood friend had deepened significantly but held the same strong certainty as he spoke. “Next practice is at 7 pm on Friday. We’ll be working on diving receives, so don’t forget your knee pads.”

“That was so much fun, Suga!” Hinata was practically floating as he jumped around the older god, Suga smiling before gently pushing him toward the volleyballs on the other side of the court.

“Why don’t you go help out with retrieving all of those balls and I’ll assist Asahi with the net?”

“Alright!” And like a rocket Hinata was gone, whizzing past Kageyama to snag two balls. The dark haired setter sent a glare Hinata’s way before picking up his pace, unofficially starting a battle for who could collect the most. Suga laughed at the sight, shaking his head as he walked toward Asahi. Though the two may have gotten off to a rocky start in the apartment, Hinata’s passion for volleyball seemed to open Kageyama up easily. It was a good feeling to know his friend would get along with his human roommate, especially if he would be relying on him.

“Would you like some help?” Suga asked politely, Asahi jumping at the introduction of the new voice. It was pretty obvious that Asahi wasn’t good with people, so the fertility god tried to relax the human with his soothing voice. “Even if I’m new, I’d like to be as much of a help as I can.”
“Oh, of course. Thank you very much.” Asahi didn’t meet his gaze, but was quick to show Suga how to roll the net for storage. Suga was sure not to touch the tall ace, knowing that contact may only frazzle him more. Even without physical interaction, Asahi seemed to flush at the close proximity. Feeling sympathetic, Suga allowed some of his power release in order to ease his teammate’s anxiety. Though it was more effective with women, men with high levels of stress or panic could be soothed by the relaxing aura he exuded. It was subtle, but Suga could see that Asahi’s shoulders were slowly relaxing as the seconds ticked by. And by the time the poles and net were organized, Asahi’s eyes were able to meet Suga’s. The small achievement made the fertility god smile, happy to know he could help the sweet guy beside him.

“Yes, we’re both in the childcare field.”

“You two work together?” Suga asked, stepping closer to the dark haired man. He knew there was no need for the close proximity, yet he felt himself naturally gravitating toward Daichi’s side. It had been like this as children, as well, though he had always thought it was because of their comfortable friendship. Now, however, Hinata’s discovery made some sense. It sure explained the warmness filling his heart when Daichi’s gentle eyes shifted toward him with a laugh.

“That’s really amazing, Daichi. I never knew you liked children.”

“Well, what fifteen-year-old boy actually enjoys babysitting on a Friday night? That should have been a hint,” Daichi replied, though Suga shrugged as he placed his hands on his hips.

“I liked helping you babysit, though. Except for the night we ran out of diapers.” Suga’s gentle elbow in Daichi’s side made the taller man laugh, Asahi glancing between the two before he hesitantly spoke.

“Daichi, if Suga is good with children, we should ask him to help out at the daycare.” The suggestion drowned out the laughter, Daichi quick to shake his head.
“That’s not Suga’s problem to bear. I told you, I’ve got another week to figure it out.”

“Figure what out?” Again, Suga pushed into the conversation that technically wasn’t his to intrude on. But Asahi had been talking about him, so was it really being nosy? He was just trying to understand the situation better! So Suga simply tilted his head toward Daichi, hoping his smile would ease the tense man into speaking. “I’d love to help out any way I can!”

“I don’t want you to feel like you have to,” Daichi replied, seeming set on not bothering the setter. Rolling his eyes, Suga gave a solid punch into Daichi’s shoulder, stunning the sputtering ace behind him. Daichi seemed caught off guard himself, slowly blinking as his hand rubbed the now sore spot.

“I just said I don’t mind. So you should just tell me so I can decide on my own if it’s a burden or not. Doesn’t that seem fair?”

“Ma-Maybe you should tell him,” Asahi rushed out, his eyes still wide from the previous attack from the benign looking setter.

“You still punch really hard, I forgot that was your go-to when you want to get your way.” Despite being hit, Daichi couldn’t stop the small smile from curling his lip when Suga only grinned in response. The daycare owner shook his head, then focused on the topic that had initially gotten him hit. “In our state, you can only have six kids to every day care staff working. It’s to make sure that we aren’t neglecting children, or getting overwhelmed. For a while now, I’ve had about fifteen regular families that use our daycare. The moms and dads that normally use us are single parents with weird hours of work, so we try to accommodate them the best that we can. I had four staff working there, and having Kageyama as the fifth kept us in ratio. But at the start of the year, my worker Yui started her maternity leave, and now we’re in search of someone who could take her place. If I can’t get someone soon, I’d have to cut the services off for families who don’t have a lot of options to begin with.”

“So you just need someone to help out until she comes back?” Suga surmised, Daichi nodding to confirm. It was too easy for the fertility god to shrug his shoulders and point to himself with a laugh. “Well, I have no problem helping out.”

“You really don’t have to.”

“I don’t mind. I love kids.”
“But you don’t even know the hours.”

“You’ll be at work tomorrow, right? Give me the address and I’ll come by so you can show me my schedule.” Suga seemed to have an answer for every excuse Daichi would give, confused why the man was so resistant in the first place. Wasn’t Suga offering to do him a favor? Why did it feel like the other way around?

“But you-”

“Daichi.” Suga’s smile lost some of its happiness as he hesitantly took a step back, speaking softer than before. “Do you not want to work with me?”

“That’s not it!” Flustered from the need to prove himself, Daichi’s hands reached out to grab Suga’s shoulders. Their eyes met as Daichi spoke, trying to push as much emphasis as he could. “I would love to work with you, honest!”

“Then why are you fighting this so much?”

“I just don’t want to be asking for favors the second we finally meet up again. It feels like I’m taking advantage of you, which isn’t how I envisioned this.”

“You’ve thought about me?” The question came out before Sugawara could stop it, and Daichi didn’t even look shy as he gave a solid nod.

“You were my best friend; why wouldn’t I want to see you again? Didn’t we promise?”

Suga felt himself flush, his heart unable to slow with the caring look now staring down at him. How was this guy overwhelming him so fast? It had been eight years since he had stared into this earnest gaze, yet it felt like no time had passed. He still had the optimistic face he held when they stood on Suga’s porch the night before he left to take on his role as the fertility god. That young man had been so sure they’d meet again, and the Suga hadn’t had the heart to tell him the truth. Yet here, in a twist of fate nobody (not even Takeda) had been expecting, Daichi’s confidence was rewarded. How had a human known the truth about something that blindsided the gods? And Sugawara wondered how often Daichi thought of him before today.
For some reason, he was scared to find out the answer.

“I...uh, well, maybe…” Both men slowly looked over to Asahi, who was fumbling with his hands as he backed up slowly. “Should I leave? Of course I should leave, I’m so sorry!”

“Stop being weird,” Daichi scolded, sighing before he glanced over to Suga and smiled. “I should get going. But give me your contact information so I can text you the address.”

“Are you trying to inconspicuously ask for my number?” Suga’s question made Daichi blink before he laughed, his hand ruffling the hair on his neck.

“It’s for work purposes, I promise.” Suga laughed along with his old friend before exchanging the number he had just learned that morning, thankful he had remembered that particular trend from his teenage years. Once done, Daichi slipped his phone back into his pocket, Suga glancing to his phone when it vibrated. “I sent you the address and some directions of where you can park when you get there. Me and Asahi will be there anytime after 7 am, but you can come by whenever you’re free.”

“I’ll be sure to come by.” Daichi looked like he was going to say something else, but his voice was cut off by the loud arguing of Hinata and Kageyama.

“One more toss!”

“You idiot, the net is put away. And we just cleaned up the balls!” Kageyama’s hand was clawed into the top of Hinata’s head, the smaller man trying to pull the hand off his head to no avail. Growling, Kageyama shoved Hinata away before he turned away from him, his arms crossing over his chest. “I’ll toss more of them to you tomorrow, okay?”

“Really?”

“Obviously.”

“That’s awesome!” Hinata’s loud cheer was followed by the god jumping onto Kageyama’s back, the setter not prepared for the extra weight. Both shouted as they fell forwards, crashing into the hard wood of the gymnasium. The impact was doubled for the taller man, who felt his back get crushed by his new roommate. For a second neither moved, trying to gather an understanding of their new positions. But it was just enough time for the blond blocker to walk by and snicker.
“Looks like the King’s found his very own spider monkey.” The laugh that slipped from Yamaguchi’s mouth was tiny, and he sent an apologetic smile toward the two before hurrying after Tsukishima. Growling at the teasing, Kageyama pushed up onto his knees, effectively tossing Hinata off his back. The young god yelped at the harsh treatment, sending a poignant glare toward his setter.

“You don’t have to be so rough with me, you know.” In response, Kageyama simply glared at his teammate, neither budging from their spots on the floor.

“Are you two okay?” Suga’s concerned tone made the glaring duo look up at the offered hand of help, the fertility god sending them a warm smile. “Let’s get going before it gets even colder outside.”

“Understood.” And with the small suggestion, Kageyama was up on his feet and heading toward his gym bag. Hinata took Suga’s hand to help him up, the two meeting with the setter at the gym door. All three exchanged goodbyes with Daichi and Asahi, stepping out of the warm gym and heading toward the apartment.

“So, how did you like your first practice?” Suga asked, directing his attention to Hinata. The younger god seemed to add an extra spring to his step when responding.

“I really like it! Receives are hard, though. I never get the ball to go where I want it to.” His brows furrowed at the unpleasant thought, but then the look of irritation gave way to pure joy. “But my favorite thing is when Kageyama sends me a ball to spike!”

“Me?” The blunt answer left the setter’s cheek with a shade of pink that hadn’t been there before, the slender man tucking his hands into his pockets and glancing away from the group. “It’s not that cool.”

“It’s the best!” Hinata protested, not seeming to notice the obvious embarrassment of his roommate. Suga tried to keep his laugh soft as he stepped in, sending a sympathetic smile toward Kageyama before he spoke.

“Well, what about your teammates? Do you get along with everyone?”

“Of course, they’re really cool. I like hanging out with Noya and Tanaka; they like to teach me cool poses to do after I score.” The three passed through the college center, which had drained from the
larger crowds from earlier in the day. The sight of a few lingering people and their corresponding threads made Hinata’s attention shift, his eyes rising to Kageyama. “Which reminds me; did Ennoshita and Tanaka break up or something?”

“How did you know about that?” The three stopped walking, Kageyama’s small breaths coming out in white smoke while Hinata looked at him in confusion. “I know for a fact that neither one of them would bring that up at practice.”

“Maybe during a break?” Suga supplied quickly, but Hinata didn’t pull his attention from the blue stare dissecting him. The spiker let a few thoughts swish in his head before he grinned in a way that tensed Kageyama’s body.

“Well, it’s kind of my business to know about that kind of stuff. After all, I’m the God of love!”

“Hinata!” Suga’s cry was mixed with shock and panic, though neither reflected on the human’s face in front of him.

“God of love? What, like a fake cupid?”

“Do I look like a naked baby with a bow? I’m not that short, Bakayama!” The insult was extra sensitive because a particular god of lust had used it more than a few times. Kageyama’s scowl only increased at his roommate’s anger, the tall setter rolling his eyes.

“It’s about as believable as you being some type of God. Did you receive too many balls to the face or something?”

“How else would I know about Tanaka and Ennoshita? Or Noya and Asahi’s weird sexual relationship? And don’t even get me started on Tsukishima and Yamaguchi’s relationship going a little further than friendship–”

“Are you some sort of stalker? Should I be calling the police?” Now Kageyama was stepping away from the two gods, his shoulders tense and his eyes sharp as knives. Hinata wasn’t distracted from the look, his hands waving in his air as he spoke.

“I just told you that I’m the God of love! Do I have to prove it to you?”
“O-Obviously. You sound crazy!” Kageyama’s stuttered reply had Hinata’s cheeks bright with anger, the small god glancing around them. Most had left, but there was a couple walking together across the street. Though their soulmate string wasn’t connected, their love was easily detectable for the god. Grinning at his discovery, he spun on his heels to face Kageyama and pointed to their test subjects.

“I can get them to do a lovey dovey act. Whatever you want, so long as it doesn’t hurt them, I can have them do it. Just name it!”

“How am I supposed to just think of something like that off the top of my head?” Kageyama’s snappy refusal made Hinata growl, his brown eyes turning to the paler god next to him.

“All right, Suga. Then you give me a suggestion; something that the two wouldn’t ever think of doing unless I was the one getting them to do it.”

“Are-” Suga’s concerned look passed over to Kageyama, worry evident in his tone. “Are you sure you want to do this, Shouyou?”

“Ukai didn’t say I had to hide my powers from Kageyama. And if he’s supposed to be helping me out, he’s got to know what’s going on.” He decided to keep his desire to rub it in his roommate’s face silent, knowing Suga wouldn’t approve of it. Sighing, the fertility god looked over to the couple, tapping his finger on his lower lip.

“Well, then...what about having the guy lift up the girl and twirl her in his arms?” Hinata’s eyes instantly flashed with the suggestion, the brown giving way to an amber glow.

“Not a problem.” Romance was second nature to Hinata; after all, simply falling in love wasn’t enough to keep a relationship going. He had to help maintain couples with small dustings of romance, whether it be flowers or sporadic dates to pamper their significant other. Without that, the couple’s link could crumble easily. So Suga’s request was easy, and with the smallest twitch of his fingers by his side, he flicked a bit of romantic spontaneity the couple’s way. The trio watched on as the man slowly stepped closer to his girlfriend, a casual arm around her waist pulling her closer to him. And though they couldn’t hear what the conversation they were having was, her joyous giggle echoed in the cold air when her boyfriend’s arms lifted her into the air and spun her around. Hinata’s own smile grew at the sight, always enjoying watching his fruits of labor come to fruition. There was just something about love that made him happy, and he couldn’t think of a world without it. People like Oikawa confused him; why give up the best feeling in the world for a physical pleasure when you could have both?
“What the hell…” Hinata turned his attention back to Kageyama’s, whose normally stoic stare was wide in disbelief. Hinata was practically jumping out of his shoes as he hopped around his roommate, orange hair bouncing with each movement.

“Did you see that? Did you? Do you believe me now?” His excitement was bursting from his tone and blinded him from the shaky breath of the man he was questioning.

“Why are yo-your eyes glowing?” Hinata finally planted his feet on the ground at the question, replaying it in his head once before snapping his fingers.

“Oh, that’s what happens when I use my power! I’ll shut it down.” And with just a blink of his eyes, the glow was gone. “It’s a tell for any god you come across; as soon as you see their eyes glow, you need to be on your guard. Knowing what they’re going to do is half the battle. Suga’s eyes glow too-oh, that’s right! Don’t tell anyone, but Sugawara is the God of fertility.”

“This isn’t real.” The words were whispered, Kageyama speaking to himself instead of his two walking companions. Hinata read the statement wrong, his scowl and crossed arms showing his frustration.

“I just proved that it is. What else do I have to do to-hey, where are you going?!” Because in the middle of Hinata’s complaint, Kageyama had sprinted away from them. Confused at the turn of events, the spiker turned to Suga, who looked a little uneasy. “What’s his problem?”

“Shouyou, Kageyama is human,” Suga explained, trying to make sense of the situation for the very confused god of love. “Humans don’t really like to believe in things that their science say are impossible. Our existence to them isn’t real, so what you just did probably goes against everything Kageyama’s been told his entire life. And since he can’t deny what he saw, he’s trying to distance himself from it. That’s just how humans are.”

“So what do I do, then?” Hinata asked, Suga smiling before nodding in the direction the roommate had run toward.

“It looks like Kageyama is going back to the apartment; it might be easier for you two to talk just one-on-one. Be honest about why you’re here, and don’t expect him to accept everything right away. He’s going to need time, but don’t give up.”
“Ri-right!” Hinata chirped out, Suga smiling before he ruffled Hinata’s hair.

“I’m going to go back to report to Ukai and Takeda. I’ll be back tomorrow, so we can talk more then. Do your best, Shouyou.” With a confident nod, Hinata took off, following the path Kageyama had taken. His feet moved with little thought, his mind trying to process what Suga had said. He wasn’t sure how to get the skittish human to talk to him about the reality of gods; it had always just been known fact for him. And without Kageyama’s help, it was going to be harder to get his job done. It wouldn’t be impossible; he was a social butterfly who normally knew how to get everyone talking. But humans were weird.

And since he knew Oikawa, that was saying something.

It was embarrassing to admit that he struggled to remember how to get to his apartment, turning down two wrong streets before asking a passerby for directions. When he finally made it to the apartment, he could hear the rustling of feet on the other side of the door. Hinata, thankful to actually remember his key, was quick to enter. His eyes fell on the back of the setter, Kageyama stiffening when Hinata shut the door. The smaller guy pressed his back to the door, assuring himself that humans couldn’t pass through walls like some of his brethren could.

“We should talk-”

“No.” The cold tone that iced Kageyama’s voice momentarily broke Hinata’s concentration, but he refused to be scared into submission.

“Okay, then I’ll talk, because I can’t do this without you.” The admission seemed to catch the other man’s interest, and slowly the setter turned to meet the gaze of his new roommate. Hinata, however, kept his gaze on the floor, his feet turned into themselves. “Suga told me to be honest with you, so...I didn’t really choose to come fix your friends. I, uh...well, I kind of am the reason everything is messed up.”

“...Explain.”

“It’s a really long story, but basically I made a...mistake.” It was the first time he had admitted it. The shame that cramped in his stomach was just as painful as he had expected. He knew that his fight with Oikawa was stupid; why had he let the older god get into his head? It would have been fine if Hinata had been the one dealing with the consequences. He knew he did stupid things sometimes. But meeting the people who were affected by his childish behavior made it worse. So swallowing his pride, Hinata pressed forward. “And because I’m the god of love, some of the relationships I’m in charge of got messed up. So I’m here to fix them, but I need you to help me.”
“And what happens if you don’t?” Hinata finally lifted his head, Kageyama’s blue stare pinning him down. “If I don’t help you, what happens to them?”

“I’m not sure.” He hadn’t really thought about failing. Then again, he hadn’t planned to meet someone like Kageyama. The stoic man stayed quiet at the admission, not giving any indication where his head was at. The silence was long for the god, never being good with stressful times. He perked up instantly when Kageyama’s lips parted.

“You really are an idiot.”

“He-Hey!”

“And the longer this whole thing takes, the longer I’ll have to deal with your idiotic nature.” The insult fueled Hinata’s need to argue, but he didn’t get an argument in when Kageyama glanced away. “Which means to get you out of my hair, I have to help you.”

“You really will?” The excitement in Hinata’s voice only seemed to deepen the frown on the setter’s face, but the god didn’t care. Instead, he rushed forward, his hands grasping onto Kageyama’s arm. “Okay, then you need to tell me everything you can about Ennoshita and Tanaka, right now!”

“I haven’t even showered!” But Hinata ignored Kageyama’s complaint as he dragged him into the setter’s room. Even being taller, Kageyama couldn’t stop his body from stumbling back when his knees hit into the bed. He threw his hands back to keep him sitting upright, surprised when he felt a weight on his thigh. Glancing down at his lap, his whole body froze when Hinata’s orange hair entered his sight. He knew he didn’t get his protest out right away, but that was because he was currently choking on his spit.

“You smell fine,” Hinata said casually, glancing up to the human he way lying on. His frown was evident by the uncomfortable look on Kageyama’s face, feeling the leg clench under him when he tilted his head. “Kageyama? Are you okay?”

“I’m...uh...” It was the first time that Kageyama was speechless in front of the God, and it made the smaller man snicker.

“You look stupid.”
“Why are you on my lap?!” Kageyama blurted out, and it took Hinata a moment to answer.

“What do you mean? This is how me and Suga always have important conversations.”

“But it’s different. You’re related and we’re not.” Hinata sighed but didn’t remove himself, closing his eyes as if it would diffuse any of the tension between them.

“Is this because you’ve never been in love before?” There was a long pause between the two of them, and Hinata wondered if he had overstepped another ‘line’ with human conversation. Do they not talk about love often, even in private? If that was the case, then Hinata’s job was going to be a lot harder than he thought. Why did they treat such a wonderful emotion like it was a curse? The sad feeling tapped against his soul, but Hinata tried to ignore it to focus on Kageyama’s voice.

“Have you?” Hinata could feel his face flush instantly, and the God of love suddenly felt too close to his roommate. Now he scrambled to push away from the human, sitting back on his legs and clapping his hands together.

“Let’s just focus on your friends!”

“Right.” Their eyes met for a moment, and despite the tense atmosphere, Hinata felt a winding sense of hope thumping in his chest. Kageyama’s lips were still straight as ever, yet Hinata didn’t feel as put off as before. He had another teammate on his side, even if he wasn’t as willing as Suga.

And when Kageyama finally kicked him out of his room to sleep, Hinata swore he saw a smile.

Chapter End Notes

So a new pair has been formed. How on earth will Kageyama deal with Hinata's secret? Will the two manage to beat the clock? Why was Daichi and Suga on his list? And just what happened between Ennoshita and Tanaka? Gotta comment and kudos to find out! But theories are always welcome =D
The Aftermath of Heartbreak

Chapter Summary

Hinata gets schooled in the art of humanity, and a partnership is born.

Chapter Notes

I'm **TOTALLY** not a day late with this update...>.< Please enjoy anyways!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"If I know what love is, it is because of you." - Herman Hesse

The day after meeting Hinata went by in a fuzzy haze. Kageyama had learned that he and Hinata shared his clay sculpting class, which the God had no business in. He couldn’t figure out the rhythm of the pottery turntable, and by the end of the class, both roommates were covered in clay. Despite the disaster, the shorter man was enthralled by the intricacies of school. At some point the spiker convinced Kageyama to show him the campus, pointing out each of Hinata’s classrooms for the next day. He had a pretty sporadic schedule which gave no inclination as to what his major was. Then again, the god was only pretending to be a conflicted college student, so it didn’t really matter. Hinata also made Kageyama show his own classrooms, and by the time the ‘tour’ was over, the artists was more than ready to pass out.

Friday morning classes gave Kageyama a moment to think about Hinata’s secret. The truth behind his roommate was still a hard pill to swallow. At times he expected to up from the weird dream, yet reality never came. There were other moments he was sure Hinata and Suga were playing a prank on him, but the way the short man marveled at the refrigerator or buses made Kageyama confident that he wasn’t joking. A part of his should have been panicking; didn’t Hinata’s existence mean everything he thought was true had been a lie? How many gods were there? Had Kageyama pissed any off? It would certainly explain some of the horrible things that he had gone through in his life.

Did Hinata control all types of love? Or was things like family love someone else’s job? If the short roommate was the guardian of all flavors of love, then Kageyama had a few bones to pick with him. Like the fact that his parents should have never gotten married. There was no love between the two, and nobody felt that more than Kageyama. Then again, they never showered him with warmth and adoration, either. Maybe the two were simply incapable of the intimacy. But if Kageyama was created from two people who were incapable of love, what did that mean for him?

Not that he really cared about the answer. Love was never going to be as important as volleyball or art to him. Not having the ability to love kept him focused. Several times he had watched his fellow
classmates struggle to balance the demand of school and a relationship. The clash would end with a bad break-up that made both people miserable for weeks. Love was just a means to hurt someone else, and he wanted no part of that.

But that didn’t answer why Hinata had ever let his parents stay together.

“Kageyama!” The loud shout of his name nearly shocked him out of his seat, blue eyes quickly darting to the doorway of the lecture hall. Like the god had a sixth sense, Hinata was staring up at him in excitement. “I found you!”

“Hi-Hinata?” Kageyama’s voice died off at the giggles from his classmates, his embarrassment making it impossible for him to speak. From some of the whispering, Kageyama could tell his fellow students were curious. Some were enamored by the god of love’s “good looks”, while others were more interested in the connection between him and Kageyama.

“Are you almost done?” Ignoring everything, Hinata kept his curious gaze on the setter while tilting his head. Sinking lower in his seat, Kageyama practically stabbed his nails through his skin with his hard pinch. This was no longer a dream; this was a terrible nightmare.

“Excuse me.” The tone of his professor showed he did not find the interruption funny, sending a scolding look to the unknown student. “We’re currently in the middle of a discussion of satire in the 1800s. Do you wish to give us your knowledge on the topic?”

“Uh...what?” His roommate was an absolute idiot. Now using his book to hide, Kageyama could only pray for the fire alarm to go off. Or the ground to swallow him; whatever was quicker.

“If you have nothing to contribute, then you can wait for your...friend out in the hallway until class is done.” The squeaks of the professor’s shoes were loud, though seemed silent compared to the closing of the classroom’s door. The clearing of the professor’s throat made Kageyama flinch before peeking his gaze over the book. It was no surprise he locked eyes with the older man, and the look of displeasure was quite clear. “May I continue, or will I be receiving another unexpected guest?”

“No sir,” Kageyama answered quietly, and the teacher sighed before returning to his power point. Kageyama became hyper aware of the side glances and snickers for the rest of the class. The tall student was the first one out of his seat when the teacher released them for the day. It wasn’t hard to spot Hinata sitting in the hallway. He looked like a dog waiting for his owner to come home after tearing up everything he could find in the house. The small god barely got to his feet before Kageyama had a grip on his arm, quick to drag him out of the building. Kageyama didn’t stop moving until he found a deserted bench behind the science building. Once sure that the two were
alone, Kageyama whirled on his heel and sent a scathing glare at his roommate.

“Why weren’t you in class?” Hinata’s senses picked up on Kageyama’s deadly glare, and he was smart enough to put some distance between them.

“We got out early. Why are we back here, anyways?”

“So if I want to kill you, there are no witnesses,” Kageyama growled, Hinata squeaking in fear.

“If you do that, then I won’t be able to fix your friend’s love lives!” The statement was true, and Kageyama knew he wasn’t about to take the blame for that. Even if Tsukishima was a pain the ass and Tanaka could get on his nerves, Kageyama respected them too much as teammates to ruin their lives.

“Why didn’t you just go back to the apartment?” He was doing his best to keep the murder out of his voice, and it seemed to work by how easily his roommate relaxed.

“I’m hungry, but you forbid me from touching the stove and Suga’s at his first day of work.”

“Why does Sugawara-san have a job? He’s a god!”

“Because he’s in love with Daichi.” Hinata said the statement like it explained everything, but all it really did was make Kageyama’s desire to choke the god spike again.

“Let me ask something else. Why does Sugawara-san know how to get a job while you’re as useful as a newborn baby?”

“Suga’s a demi-god, and spent the first half of his life on earth,” Hinata answered, the loud grumble of his stomach showing he hadn’t been lying about his hunger. The setted sighed and shoved his hands into his jacket pockets, turning away from Hinata to walk toward the center of campus. When he heard Hinata scramble to catch up, he tilted his head up to the grey sky to let a puff of white air escape.

“I’ll teach you how to use the microwave tonight so you can make ramen when you get hungry.
How often do gods eat, anyways?"

“The same as humans I think. But we have servants cook for us, so we don’t really make any food ourselves.” He should have expected such a life for supernatural beings. Meanwhile, Kageyama had to teach himself how to cook, both parents too busy to take time to show him. The benefit of going to college was their abundance of food choices. For now, Kageyama led his teammate to the coffee shop that was closest to them. The small shop also served sandwiches which were better than most of the campus choices. If he had time in-between classes, Kageyama would make a stop at the shop and grab a bite to eat while he studied or did homework.

“This is where Ennoshita and Yachi are employed, though I don’t know the other people’s names that work here.” The only reason he knew the blonde was because the shared a class in each of his semesters of school, one of those being the class he had just left. He wondered if she would make mention of the weird intrusion the next time the two crossed paths. Yachi and Ennoshita both worked similar shifts, which meant his fellow teammate brought her up on occasion.

“Yachi? Like Yachi Hitoka?” At the name drop Kageyama stopped, his hand frozen on the door while he looked back at Hinata.

“She’s on of your mess-ups?”

“Don’t say it like that,” Hinata mumbled, Kageyama rolling his eyes before pushing the door open.

“What did you do, anyways? You said it’s complicated, but knowing your brain, it could just be hard for you.”

“It’s not easy to explain,” Hinata argued, moving into the line at the shop. The good food always meant there was a line, but Kageyama didn’t mind waiting. The food was really that good. Counting three people in front of them, Kageyama turning his attention back to the god who looked contemplative. It seemed he was thinking over Kageyama’s request, hesitating to open his mouth and explain. “So you humans-”

“Can you stop talking like we’re some subspecies? People are going to start questioning you.” Kageyama emphasized the point by tilting his head toward the girl in front of them. She hadn’t noticed Hinata’s slip up, her headphones blocking out the world. But they wouldn’t get that lucky every time, and Kageyama didn’t need anymore weird looks because of the god huffing next to him.
“Fine. People all have this thing call a soul thread. Takeda--he’s one of my dads and helps rule over our kingdom-”

“Your dad’s Zeus? Wait you have two dads?” Hinata rolled his eyes and shook his head, the question seeming to irritate him.

“Ukai is way cooler than that pervert. Zeus has been gone for a long time; actually, all of the greek gods loss rule over the heavens thousands of years ago. And yeah, they’re both my dad. Well, adopted. You’re making this more complicated!” Hinata shook his head, trying to focus on what the original task was. “Okay, so Takeda is the god of fate, which means he’s in charge of weaving all the important strings of your life to create your soul thread. There’s work strings, money string, health strings, and lots of different ones that help determine what parts of your life are going to be strong and which parts weaker.”

“Got it.” That wasn’t exactly true. Kageyama’s understanding of it all was a bit murky, but then again Hinata didn’t seem the person to best explain things. He could ask Sugawara the next time the two bumped paths. For now, he let Hinata give him the basics.

“There’s this one string I’m in charge of called ‘the soulmate’ string. Normally around this age, the soulmate string will present itself in the form of a color. The color determines which kind of soulmate you have.”

“Everyone’s soulmate isn’t romantic?” Kageyama asked, surprised when Hinata shook his head.

“Nope, sometimes people have really strong connections with a family member or friend. But if the string is pink, then it means your soulmate is your true love. My main job is to help pink soulmates find each other and nurture their relationship. If another color pops up, I still have the chance to match the person up with someone, but it’s less about fate and more about well-placed romance.”

“And that’s it?”

“There’s a bunch more to it, but that’s all you need to know for our mission.”

“Which means the people you screwed up had pink strings?”

“Not exactly?”
“So they aren’t true lovers?”

“They are!”

“What the hell? They can’t be true love soulmates unless they have pink strings, yet they don’t have pink strings and are still true loves? You can’t have it both ways, idiot, so make up your mind.”

“This is what I meant by it being complicated! Their strings started to turn pink, but then they just stopped so now they’re both pink and another color.”

“You said nothing about strings being two colors,” Kageyama said flatly, his eyes glaring down at the grumbling god.

“That’s because I’ve never seen it happen before.” Hinata chewed on his bottom lip for a moment before he glanced back up to Kageyama, a sign of guilt clear on his face. “But they’re stuck between soulmate links, and I’ve got a month to fix them. If I don’t...”

“What happens then?” Because no matter how Kageyama looked at it, the statement did not have a positive connotation.

“I don’t know, but I don’t think it’ll be good.” The words seemed heavy on Hinata’s tongue, and even Kageyama felt the weight of the consequences. Though he didn’t know the feel of true love, he had seen it. His friends were pretty bad at hiding their feelings, and sometimes the setter felt like an outcast in his own life. But he wouldn’t wish a bad fate for any of them.

“Right. Let’s get you something to eat and then go over a game plan for our mission.” Hinata perked up at the serious tone Kageyama used, his smile blooming as he nodded.

“You’re awesome!” The shout caught some looks, Kageyama instantly smooshing his palm over Hinata’s face and dragging him to the counter in front of them.

“Good morning, what can I-oh, Kageyama!” Hearing the chipper tone of a familiar voice, Kageyama removed his glare on Hinata to give the girl a proper greeting.
“Good morning, Yachi.”

“Is this the friend who visited our class earlier?” Somehow he had hoped the girl forgot the incident, but Hinata wasn’t someone easily looked over. The god finally wrestled away from Kageyama’s grip, brown eyes shining with excitement when locating the barista.

“It’s so cool to finally meet you! You’re so pretty, and you seem really nice. Well, you have to be to deal with Kageyama! What kind of things do you like to do? Are you dating someone right now? Or do you like that forbidden love kind of stuff? Anyone on campus catch your eye in the past week?”


“You’re gonna break Yachi.” A hard whack to the back of Hinata’s head made the god yelp, his eyes reflexively filling with tears as he rubbed the sore spot.

“What was that for, Bakayama?”

“You’re supposed to be getting food, not interrogating Yachi. Just pick a sandwich so we can get out of her way.” They were the last in line, but it was easy for the artist to see that Hinata was overwhelming the barista. Yachi was a mild mannered student who was a little bit skittish at times of high stress. The two had worked on a project together their freshman year, and the setter was sure Yachi was going to combust during the presentation. The years had helped, but not cured her anxiety. He wasn’t the social butterfly, but he had learned to adjust to crazy situations thanks to Tanka and Noya. If he hadn’t known of Asahi’s preference for men, he could see the gentle giant and Yachi making the perfect nervous pair.

“Can’t I just get what you’re ordering?” Hinata asked, Kageyama’s blinking prompting him to continue. “I figure we were both getting something since you’re paying.”

“When did I agree to that?”

“Well, Suga didn’t leave me any money!” The spiker yanked out his pockets to emphasis his point. The lack of money from his roommate shouldn’t have been a surprise. If the guy couldn’t work a toaster, Suga was right to leave him without money. He probably had no idea how their currency worked. Adding that to the list of things he needed to teach his useless partner, Kageyama pulled out his wallet with a sigh.
“Just make me two of my regular sandwich, please.”

“Of course!” And then Yachi was off, probably thankful to be far away from the duo. Hinata bounced on the balls of his feet, his eyes darting around to soak in the atmosphere.

“This place is really cool! It’s got nice music and it smells good. Can we eat here?”

“I guess?”

“Oh! Can you tell me more about Ennoshita and Tanaka’s break-up now?” The night of Hinata’s arrival, Kageyama did his best to summarize the teammates Hinata inquired about. Some, like Kiyoko and Ennoshita, were a little harder for the setter to describe. Part of that was their quiet and reserved nature, which was outshined by some of the other players. They were also known to keep to themselves, just like Kageyama. But after hearing about each of the players, Hinata made the decision to focus on Ennoshita and Tanaka first. Hinata claimed that it would be easier to reunite a couple who had already been together than to start one from scratch. Kageyama could see the logic behind his method, and the two had left it at that until now.

“Wait to get our food, then we can talk.”

It was obvious why Hinata was not the god of patience; he could barely keep himself from fidgeting in his spot. Kageyama did his best to ignore him as a mother would with their impatient child. Yachi returned a few minutes later and Kageyama swapped his money for the two sandwiches. Hinata was quick to drag Kageyama to a table, barely moving the wrapper before devouring the food in front of him. From the weird moan that came from Hinata’s mouth, it was obvious that he approved of the choice Kageyama had made. Kageyama took his time with his food, speaking between bites.

“So what do you need to know?”

“Everything?” Cause that was specific. Kageyama took another bit from his food while he thought of where to start.

“Well, they knew each other before college. They were best friends in high school, but they didn’t get into a relationship until a year ago.”
“Who asked who?”

“Why does that matter?” Hinata shrugged at the question, leaning on his elbows and watching Kageyama take another nibble.

“Just gives me a sense of which one is ‘gwah’ and which one if ‘bam.’” Kageyama stared at his roommate like he had suddenly sprouted six heads, but Hinata was used to the expression when it came to his lingo.

“I’m pretty sure they kind of mutually admitted to liking each other, but Ennoshita was the one who kissed Tanaka first.”

“It’s not surprising; despite how quiet he is, Ennoshita gives off a really cool leadership aura. Kind of like Daichi!”

“I couldn’t see Ennoshita threatening to run us until we pass out,” Kageyama replied, Hinata practically sparkling at the information. “Don’t get happy about that!”

“Why not?” Cocking his head to the side, Hinata stared over to Kageyama in confusion. Not bothering to answer, the setter focused back onto the topic at hand.

“Ennoshita’s also got the patience of a saint. Tanaka is more than a handful, yet Ennoshita seemed more than comfortable with his eccentric nature. That’s why it was such a shock when he ended things between them.”

“How did Tanaka handle that?” Hinata asked, eyes lingering on the last piece of Kageyama’s sandwich.

“Maturely, which was more concerning than if he had freaked out. We all thought he would be begging for Ennoshita to give him a second chance, but he just accepted it. His stuff is still in their apartment, but he’s been sleeping at Noya’s since the break-up. Nobody really knows why they broke up, either.”

“So if anyone was going to have some details what happened, it’d be Noya,” Hinata concluded.
“Probably; he’s practically Tanaka’s brother. If one of them is getting in trouble, the other one must not be too far away.”

“Alright, then let’s go find Noya!” Hinata shot out of his seat as he snatched the rest of his roommate’s sandwich, popping the bite into his mouth before Kageyama could protest. His eyes brightened at the taste, turning to where Yachi was wiping the counter down. “Yachi!”

“Huh?” The girl lifted her head at the call of her name, Hinata’s bright smile catching her attention instantly.

“After I fix Ennoshita and Tanaka, I’m going to help you find your soulmate!” His open statement took a second for the blonde to understand, her face brightening in color once the words hit her. He laughed at strange reaction, though her nearly lost his footing when Kageyama yanked on the hood of his sweatshirt.

“Stop bothering Yachi already.”

“I can’t help it; her reactions are just so fun!” Hinata managed to turn around before Kageyama could drag him through the door backwards, matching the setter’s step once out of the store. Kageyama didn’t respond to Hinata’s statement, though his face was twisted in a way Hinata hadn’t seen before. Shrugging the look off, the god stretched his hands over his head and sighed. “I don’t get why you humans get so weird about love. The second I bring it up, your reactions are so strange. Yamaguchi looked ready to pass out over it the first time I asked him. I can’t wait to see how Asahi reacts!”

“We’re not toys.” The tone that came from Kageyama was harsher than his normal anger, both pausing in their walk to look at each other.

“Kage...yama?” Hinata’s surprised contrasted Kageyama’s anger, the taller man stepping close enough to force Hinata’s head to tilt up.

“Maybe you think love is just some given expectation because you get to see the ending. You know when things are going to work out. But humans aren’t that lucky. So when you tease people about it, of course they’re going to get nervous. It’s not because it’s fun for them; it’s because they’re scared. How would you feel? What if someone picked on something that you had no control over because they thought it was fun?”

“I…” The truth was, it happened all the time to the god. Oikawa never had a good reason to pick on
Hinata; he just did it because he was there. But it was never fun for the spiker; nothing about Oikawa’s snickering and teasing comments were funny. They just hurt. Little fists curled up at Hinata’s sides, the small god lowering his head in frustration. “That’s how I got into this mess.”

“Someone actually made fun of you?” There was a hint of surprise in Kageyama’s tone, and Hinata wondered what assumptions humans made about gods. He tried to use a shrug as his answer, but two large hands on his shoulders indicated Kageyama wasn’t satisfied. “Why?”

“Remember when you asked if I’d ever been in love?” There was a beat of silence between them, and Hinata knew Kageyama got the point of the question when his hands tensed. “One of the other gods likes to tell me that I’m unqualified because of that. He says I’m not mature enough to understand what humans really want out of love is sex. I got so embarrassed when he blamed my lack of love experience for why people cheat that I ran away. I ran and hid away for two days until Suga finally found me. And now I caused this huge mess. Maybe Oikawa was right; what if people would be better off without a god of love?”

And Hinata’s insecurity finally took shape in his words, the god feeling frustrated for even saying it. This wasn’t the setter’s problem; it was Hinata’s. What was a human going to do for him? If Hinata was more mature, maybe he could think of a way to handle Oikawa’s teasing. If he had just been someone else, then none of this-

“That logic is pretty stupid.” Kageyama’s tone held no sarcasm or jest, and Hinata jerked his head up just in time for the setter to flick his forehead. “You, the most stubborn and hard-headed person I’ve met, is going to let some pompous god tell you the value of love? What’s with that?”

“But I messed up-”

“And you’re gonna fix it.” He said it like it was common knowledge, his downturned lips showing his clear irritation with Hinata’s lack of confidence.

“You really think I’ll succeed?” Kageyama didn’t hesitate to nod, tossing in a roll of his eyes afterwards.

“Why would I just say that? Besides, this Oikawa guy sounds like an airhead.”

“You might not want to say that; he’s the god of lust, after all. If he wanted to, he could make you impotent.” Kageyama grimaced at the threat, Hinata disliking the weird twinge in his chest. The
setter had no fear of never falling in love, but he was worried about losing his sex drive? Did that prove Oikawa’s theory true? “He’s a pretty important god.”

“So are you.” Kageyama’s serious gaze didn’t waver as he pinned Hinata down, the wide-eyed god staring in shock at the compliment. “You are important. Don’t let anyone take that from you, okay?”

And though the two were nowhere near the gymnasium, Hinata felt his heart flutter the same way it had after connecting with Kageyama’s first pass. But there was more than that; his stomach cramped up and his skin felt clammy. It was awkward but comforting at the same time. Hinata wasn’t sure why his first reaction was to smile. His fingers tingled, and he wondered if Kageyama felt the same rush of sensations. Before he could think better of it, Hinata reached out to grab the setter’s hand in his own. He just wanted to see if the same warmth was surging under the human’s skin, or if it was something to be concerned about. Their fingers slipped together with little resistance, and like a puzzle, they matched up perfectly. While his smaller palm should have felt cramped or crowded, the edges of the setter’s larger hand felt like a cushion to rest on.

“Hey, what-” It was obvious that the human wasn’t used to such a forward touch, but when he tried to pull away, Hinata tightened his grip.

“Can I tell you something, Kageyama?” Amber eyes were full of conviction as they peered up to an unsettled blue gaze, the resistance of Kageyama’s hand weakening. “You’re not like any other human out there, you know.”

“What does that mean?”

“It’s cause you...you’re just special, you know?” Hinata wasn’t sure why he changed his mind at the last minute. He knew it was only a matter of time before Kageyama would wonder about his own soulmate. Curiosity ran deep in every human’s veins. Even if he had no intention of falling in love, he would want to know what fate had in store for him. And when he finally got the nerve to ask Hinata, the god of love wouldn’t lie. Kageyama deserved to know the truth. But Hinata didn’t want to ruin the moment between them yet. So instead, he smiled, pressing his palm closer to his roommate’s and nodding. “That’s why Takeda picked you to be my partner for this mission!”

“Don’t be weird, idiot.”

But Kageyama didn’t try to pull away again, and Hinata felt okay with that.
The loud music could be heard through the front door of Noya’s apartment, and Kageyama didn’t bother to knock. He knew from previous experience that the two inside wouldn’t hear him anyways. Pushing the door open, Kageyama made his way through the kitchen to the living room. The scene that greeted him was far too common for Kageyama’s liking. Noya and Tanaka were pantless, both men staring at the bright tv in front of them. While Noya beat on the fake drums, Tanaka pressed colorful buttons on the plastic guitar, matching the beats on the screen. Kageyama could see that the two had been playing for some time from the crushed soda cans and the remnants of snacks on the couch. The scene was the quintessential stereotype of a college apartment. And if either one of them was bothered by that, they hid it perfectly.

“Rolling THUNDER!” Noya’s battle cry was loud when the drums reached it’s final note, the numbers racking up in bonus points. After two more hard hits, the song was complete.

“Perfect score!” And then Tanaka’s shirt was gone, the boxer clad man jumping onto the coffee table. He whooped while he showboated, the shirt twirling around his head like a helicopter propellor. Noya’s grin was wide as he twirled the drumsticks through his fingers, lounging back in the computer chair. Kageyama snorted at the scene, wondering how two men could get such confidence from a game children played. Hinata, however, was awestruck, and jumped around the coffee table in excitement.

“That was so cool! I didn’t know you two could play instruments.” Embarrassed for Hinata, Kageyama snagged his wrist and yanked him mid jump to give him a glare.

“They weren’t really playing.”

“Eh?”

“Oh man, you’ve never played RockBand before? What planet are you from?” Noya’s laugh caused Hinata to blush, the libero glancing at the next song Tanaka was choosing. “So what brings you two to our humble abode? Plan to get schooled again, Kageyama?”

“That was one time,” Kageyama defended quickly, avoiding the curious look from Hinata by moving to the couch. His eyes flickered out the window of the apartment, his scowl hidden behind the hand he leaned on. “And you two got me drunk, so it doesn’t count.”
“Alcohol can’t be blamed for your singing voice.” Tanaka snickered as he glanced over his shoulder at Kageyama, still standing on the table. Kageyama glared up at him, but his lack of protest was evidence that Tanaka wasn’t lying.

“My neighbor thought I was killing a cat,” Noya continued, his eyes flickering to Hinata. “I almost got put on PETA’s watchlist.”

Now the setter knew he was blushing. That was the last time he’d let the duo convince him to drink sake. Kageyama had never dabbled in drinking in high school, and up until he joined the volleyball team, he had no means to get drunk. Though Asahi had tried to warn him of how dangerous drinking with Tanaka and Noya could be, the setter had agreed to see what all the fuss was about. Part of him was curious what type of tolerance he had with alcohol (not a lot, apparently). But the truth was, his decision had been made as soon as he realized that people wanted to be his friend. That reason alone had sealed the deal long before the mention of booze and a horrible rendition of ‘Under Pressure’. And though he’d never live down the memory, Kageyama still felt a twinge of happiness hit his heart whenever it was brought up in good spirits.

Tanaka looked ready to add insult to injury when a chime on his phone cut him off. The nearly naked wing spiker swiped his phone from the table before jumping off, snagging his shirt on the way down.

“Time to grab the victory pizza.”

“You two eat nothing but junk.” At Kageyama’s accusation the bald man shrugged, pants shimmied up tan legs before he jammed his feet into his worn out sneakers.

“Maybe, but it’s healthy for the soul. So in truth, is it really unhealthy?”

“Ah, so wise Tanaka-san.” Noya’s voice lifted with a horrible accent as the two friends dramatically bowed to each other in a way that the setter was sure they stole from a B-rated kung fu movie. Tanaka rose first, hand snagging his jacket as he walked to the door.

“I’ll be sure to grab some extra garlic sauce for you.” The words seemed casual for Tanaka, like they were rehearsed. Noya, however, didn’t seem on the same page, his eyes reflecting his confusion.

“Why would you do that? I hate garlic.” Being a setter meant that Kageyama was trained to notice the tiny details, like how Tanaka’s shoulders tensed after Noya’s claim. But the spiker got control
over his reaction as quick as Kageyama could blink, a hand rubbing the back of his head while shrugging.

“Sorry, spaced for a minute. Yo, Noya, don’t let Kageyama touch my guitar while I’m gone. I don’t want his curse transferring to my equipment!” And like the air hadn’t gotten tense, Tanaka slipped out of the apartment. Hawk-shaped eyes stared at the door silently, a scowl tugging at his lips.

“Just make up with him already.” It was obvious the sentence was not aimed at anyone in the room, but the man who had just disappeared.

“Are you talking about Ennoshita and Tanaka’s break up?” Hinata ventured, knowing this would be the only time he’d get to talk to his shorter senpai. Noya abandoned the drumset to flop onto the couch, his eyes closing.

“My best friend is awesome, and having his as a roommate has been pretty sweet. It makes it a little weird when Asahi comes over, but even then he’s cool enough to find something to occupy himself.” From the way Hinata squirmed, Kageyama knew he was fighting the urge to ask about the libero and ace’s relationship, but he did well in staying quiet while Noya sighed. “But sometimes he’s also an idiot.”

“I’m guessing there’s a story linked to that?” Kageyama wasn’t sure if Noya would tell the younger players about the break-up. Tanaka and Ennoshita had both been quiet about the situation, and the team had respected them by pretending it wasn’t on everyone’s minds. Noya dropped his head on the back of the couch, Hinata moving to sit on the opposite side of the older man.

“If you could tell us what happened, we’d like to see if we can help fix it.” It was the first time Kageyama had heard Hinata think before he spoke, and he wondered if the earlier conversation had anything to do with how he was handling the sensitive conversation.

“I don’t think anyone but Tanaka can do that. Still, it won’t make anything worse to tell you what I know.”

“You’re awesome, Noya-san!” One gold iris peeked open at Hinata while the libero grinned, though the look was washed away when he got serious.

“You might not know, Shouyou, but Ennoshita is a film student. Tanaka’s not in school right now, and he’s been trying to decide if he wants to go back. My bro’s pretty sporadic, so he struggles to
stay focused in classroom settings. I ain’t much better, but I squeak by.”

“But Ennoshita’s never really cared about that, right?” Kageyama’s question was answered with a nod from Noya.

“Ennoshita and Tanaka have always been supportive of each other. Tanaka never shuts up about all the cool movies Ennoshita makes at school. It was even more obnoxious the past month.”

“Why, did something happen?” Hinata asked, Kageyama filling in his new teammate.

“I guess last summer Ennoshita had made a movie for a project with the school. He got to direct the whole thing, and it was so good that the teacher entered it into a film festival for college students. Ennoshita’s film took home a bunch of awards, and the school decided to show it to support him.”

“That’s never happened before at the school, so it was a really big deal. Ennoshita was getting a lot of recognition for it, the tickets were sold out within the first few days of being on sale,” Noya continued, Hinata staring in obvious awe. “Tanaka told everyone he could about it. You couldn’t get him to stop bragging about Ennoshita. I bet half of those tickets were because of my best friend’s loud promotional skills. And of course, he made everyone on the volleyball team buy a ticket, too.”

“I still want to know how he got Tsukishima to go,” Kageyama muttered, Noya’s snicker filled with mischief.

“When you want to get that big loser to do something, you get Yamaguchi to go. The second he thinks sweet little Yams is going to be alone with Tanaka, he’s bound to find some stupid reason to go.”

“Tanaka?” The setter could clearly see the confusion on his roommate’s face, but it was expected. He had only been around for a few days, missing out on some of the past experiences the team had shared together. But Noya seemed eager to spill the memories, lifting himself up to meet Hinata’s gaze head on.

“One time we got Yamaguchi drunk, and he admitted that he thought Tanaka was attractive, “for a bald guy”. Needless to say, our dear blocker seems to take issue whenever Yamaguchi and Tanaka have the potential to be left alone now.”
“I thought you said they weren’t dating?”

“They’re not,” Noya and Kageyama’s answer was in-sync, and the god of love was left with more than a little confusion.

“But that...what?” Noya’s burst of laughter had him slapping his knee, and Kageyama only shook his head. Trying to explain the dynamic that were his neighbors would take all night, and for now they needed to focus on one relationship at a time. Refocusing the conversation, the setter turning to Noya.

“If I remember correctly, Tanaka didn’t show up that night.”

“He didn’t, though nobody knows why. The night of the movie, we were all supposed to meet up and watch it together. Ennoshita had gotten us front row seats, and was planning to join us right before the showing started. Everyone but Tanaka showed up. I tried calling him, but his phone had been shut off. We tried to hide it from Ennoshita, but it was pretty obvious his number one fan was MIA.”

“Did he show up after?” Hinata asked, his stomach cramping when watching Noya shake his head.

“I guess Ennoshita finally confronted him the next morning and they had a big fight. Tanaka couldn’t even explain where he had been or why he had skipped out. So Ennoshita broke up with him and Tanaka...just agreed.”

“The two haven’t let it mess with volleyball, but their behavior is out of character,” Kageyama explained, his arms crossing in discomfort. “Tanaka is a guy who never goes back on his word, and Ennoshita isn’t the type to make irrational decisions.”

“Plus Tanaka still hasn’t said where he was the night of the film. Even when he does something really dumb, he always tells me.” And from the hurt tone Noya used, the god of love knew that the situation bothered the libero more than he was letting on. He wanted to say something to comfort his new friends, to explain that this incident was out of character because it wasn’t supposed to happen. Tanaka and Ennoshita worked well together because that was how Takeda made their strings. Other people would have felt jealous of the film student’s new attention, but Tanaka couldn’t stop praising him. And where other lovers may try to push Tanaka to make a decision about his life, Ennoshita patiently waited. Even as their friends spoke about them, it was obvious that the two were a supportive, loving relationship. They were true lovers and soulmates.
And Hinata had ruined that.

“This is all my fault.” Hinata’s weak whisper made Noya shake his head, though the setter kept quiet. He understood why the god was blaming himself, even if Noya was left in the dark.

“You just came at a weird time, is all. It’s not like you’re a bad luck charm or something.”

“I’m going to help Tanaka win Ennoshita back!” Hinata’s loud declaration had both other men leaning back, Noya blinking once before he tilted his head.

“How?”

“I’m...not sure,” the god admitted, his cheeks bright but his eyes flashing with sheer determination. “But I will. Just you watch.”

Kageyama watched his roommate, knowing that look. It was the same look he had seen on the court. Hinata may have been down on himself, but he wasn’t going to give up without a fight. The fire that blazed in the little spiker felt contagious, and the setter felt his fingers twitch with the desire to do something. He never got involved in other’s affairs, feeling he was too awkward and others knew how to deal with situations involving love better. But tonight, he felt different.

“Alright,” Noya conceded, his hand reaching up to ruffle Hinata’s messy hair. “I’m counting on you.”

“Got it!” The two shared a moment of mutual affection before Noya leaned back, snagging his two drum sticks and holding them out to Hinata.

“Alright, enough mushy talk. Let’s teach you how to be the next rock star.”

Hinata wasn’t nearly as good at Rock Band as he was spiking. By the time Tanaka came crashing back into the apartment with boxes of pizza, Hinata had failed four songs before they even reached the second verse. The bold entrance distracted the shorter two, energizing them to jump over the couch and clamber to the kitchen. Kageyama rolled his eyes and followed, watching the drool practically drip from Hinata’s mouth at the sight of the pizza. It took all of two seconds for the older pair to realize that Hinata have never had the greasy delicacy (“were you raised by apes, Shouyou?!”) and then promptly shove a piece into his face. Kageyama, by default, was dragged into
eating a slice, his attention too distracted to see the wheels starting to turn in Hinata’s head.

So he nearly choked on a pepperoni when the god of love spoke.

“Tanaka-senpai, will you teach me and Kageyama how to flirt?” Noya seemed as confused by Hinata’s request, though Tanaka wasted no time boasting about his ‘skill’. Kageyama wanted to protest the request; why the hell would he want to learn to flirt? But the side glance Hinata gave him implied he had a plan. So he kept his mouth, resisting the urge to strangle his roommate.

Whatever Hinata was planning had better be good, or his new title would be the god of undeniable pain.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s the best place to end it for now! So many fun things happened in this chapter, with just a hint of romance. So, why didn't Tanaka go to the movie? How will Hinata get the two back together? What will happen when Kageyama finds out about his lack of a soulmate bond? And who else sucks at Rock Band? Find out soon! Kudos and comments, please!
Love and Friendship

Chapter Summary

The truth about Tanaka comes out, and Kageyama and Hinata have an interesting conversation about love.

Chapter Notes

Ah! I know I'm a day late, but I was a little busy with a wedding yesterday (ironic cause of my other story, "The Wedding") so I couldn't get this out until now! Please accept my humble apology and enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Love is a friendship set to music” - Joseph Campbell

To say Kageyama was unhappy by the lack of freedom on his day off was the under statement of the year. While the weather had risen higher than thirty degrees for the first time all month, that did not mean the setter wanted to be in the park. Saturday mornings meant higher foot traffic in the area that Kageyama only inhabited when going for summer night runs. Neither of those conditions fit the situation today, though the tall man wasn’t sure he’d want to sweat in jeans. He bit back a yawn as he buried his hands further into his jacket’s pockets, wondering if Tanaka would yell at him for the volleyball coat.

Take a shower and don’t dress like losers! Tanaka’s instructions had been simple after their morning practice. The older player seemed completely devoted to his “mission”, though Kageyama was still silently fuming. Just this meeting for “flirting techniques” was eating into time he could be doing one hundred more important things. Like eating, playing volleyball, or sleeping. Hell, studying was better than whatever this was. Blue eyes flickered to his left, his scowl growing when hearing the happy hum of his roommate. Hinata looked content to be sitting on the cold park bench, legs swinging in time to the unknown beat of the tone.

“Why are we here?” He had asked the god of love the same question the night before, though Hinata had only answered with “you’ll see”. The answer had frustrated him then, and seeing Hinata looking so content with whatever plan he was putting together was fraying Kageyama’s last nerves.

“To learn to flirt.” The twitch of the setter’s eye was in sync with the hand that shot out and clamped on the unsuspecting spiker’s head. The yelp his roommate gave was loud, though nobody was close enough to the bench to hear them.
“Want to try that again, dumbass?” Because what was the god of love going to do with Tanaka’s lesson? He was a celestial being who had only came to earth to fix his mess up. Didn’t he have enough on his plate to deal with? There was no gain for him to even try to get acquainted with humans outside of his desired couples. Kageyama was the unfortunate exception, and he couldn’t see Hinata trying to put the moves on him.

And even if he did, it’s not like I’m interested.

“Let go, Bakayama!” Hinata’s feeble attempts to get Kageyama’s hand off his head was amusing to the setter, and he gave a tiny smirk while he moved the smaller man’s head.

“You know, for a god you’re pretty weak. Shouldn’t you be able to break out of this or something?”

“I can’t use my powers on humans, or I’ll get in trouble with Ukai. Otherwise I’d make you cry!” It was sort of pathetic to see Hinata huff up at him while little fingers tried to pry off his hand. In response, Kageyama shrugged, giving a squeeze to the top of his head.

“I’d let go if you just told why we’re really here.”

“Ow ow ow it’s to get Tanaka to open up!” With the new information, Kageyama released the mop of orange, though the poniente stare Kageyama gave showed he wasn’t completely satisfied with the answer. Giving his own glare, Hinata shifted around on the bench before speaking. “If we give him a confidence boost by asking about his skills, he’ll feel superior to us. That’ll mean he’ll drop his defenses, and we can try to get him to open up about how he feels about the break-up.”

“But Noya already filled us in about that,” the setter said, Hinata shaking his head.

“We still don’t know why Tanaka skipped the showing of Ennoshita’s movie. Until we figure that out, we’re stuck.”

“You’ve put thought into this? You’re not going to pass out on me because of your brain overheating, right?”

“Like you can talk! And this is my job, you know. If I can’t fix true love soulmates, then I’ll be
“That’s your concern?” The slight edge to Kageyama’s voice made Hinata sit straighter on the bench, though he wasn’t sure why. Kageyama had a weird aura around him now. His face remained impassive, eyes away from Hinata and watching the other humans in the park. There wasn’t much difference from his normal grouchy self, to be honest. Yet there was something that Hinata couldn’t place that was off about him.

“What’s the matter with you?”

“So you wouldn’t be doing this if your Godhood wasn’t on the line?”

“Of course I would. True love should always end up together, and that’s my job.”

“And what if their strings weren’t pink?” Hinata tilted his head at the question, and a swell of annoyance clipped Kageyama’s tone. “If Tanaka and Ennoshita were just two people who weren’t soulmates, would you still fight for them? Or would that not be enough for you?”

“It’s not like I enjoy people breaking up,” the god griped, though the scoff from Kageyama proved he didn’t agree.

“You keep blabbing about “fate” and “soulmate strings”. Kind of hard to believe you.”

“Th-That’s because I don’t like budding into those relationships!”

“Because they’re not worth your time?” Kageyama’s eyes finally fell back to the god, and Hinata discovered that the frown the setter was wearing wasn’t right. Normally, the man’s face showed his irritation, but this look was different. His eyes were too narrow, the thinning of his lips showing true anger. Was Kageyama...mad at him? He had seen him bothered and annoyed, but this was something that made Hinata squirm and rush to answer him.

“It’s nothing like that.”

“Then what?”
“True lovers...they never cheat.” Hinata’s eyes reflected his vulnerability as they danced away from Kageyama’s, the setter falling quiet after the admission. “They don’t abuse each other, and even when things get tough, all they want is their soulmate happy. They’re two halves of the same heart. But other relationships don’t have that bumper. When they face problems, there’s no guarantee that they’ll make it out. And sometimes I want to step in and fix everything for them, but I’m not sure if I’ll make the right decision. What if I just make it worse? And I don’t want to push people to stay together and force Takeda to break their bond.”

“Do what now?”

“It’s a fail safe for humans that are hurting each other, but are bound by a soulmate link. Takeda is able to sever the bond so the two cannot cause long lasting damage to the other.” The sad tone in Hinata’s voice was rare, the smaller man pushing a rock between his feet to distract himself. “The person loses all feeling for their soulmate. They’re basically strangers afterwards.”

“Could the two stay together after a soul break?” The question was not what the god was expecting to hear, and he lifted his gaze toward the tense setter next to him.

“Why would they?”

“Convenience, or logical reasoning. What if the two had shared investments? Or what if they had children?”

“I’ve never heard of a case where the two stayed together. And I don’t think Takeda would let that happen.” The answer didn’t seem to be what Kageyama had wanted to hear, and the spiker wondered if the taller man knew about the obvious disappointment showing on his face. “Kageyama? Why did you ask that?”

“My parents-” But the words were cut off before the full thought could be vocalized. Even with the missing parts, Hinata could figure out where the setter’s head was at. He had been curious about his own parent’s lack of love during their relationship. Leaning against the back of the bench, Hinata sighed while lacing his hands behind his head.

“I don’t know your parents personally, but I’m pretty sure they weren’t linked together by a soulmate bond.”
“How do you know?”

“How do you know?” A silence fell between them, Hinata’s eyes following a group of kids playing some sort of game in the park. Their laughs were distant, and Hinata took a second to think about what Kageyama would have been like as a child. Would he have laughed like them? Did he know what it meant to have real friends? His parents had shattered his ability to foster love, a fate that had left him without a soulmate string. How lonely had that been for his roommate?

“It’s not like I thought they were soulmates or anything. All they ever did was fight.” Kageyama’s quiet response made Hinata shrug, his hands tapping against the wood by his thighs.

“Parents aren’t always the best; I mean I don’t even know my real parents.” It wasn’t something Hinata talked about often, but the story was falling through his lips before he could think twice about it. “There was some stupid civil war between some of the gods, and my parents were on the losing side. Takeda and Ukai took me in when my parents abandoned me to go live as humans. I was too young when they left to really remember anything about them. I could probably walk by them on the street tomorrow and have no idea who they are.”

“You haven’t tried to find them? You guys don’t have some sort of magic ball or something up there?”

“I could look, but I’m fine where I am. Even if Ukai was a little strict with me growing up, he and Takeda always took care of me and made me feel loved. I don’t really want to spend time thinking about people who couldn’t be bothered to raise me. I’ve got Suga, Takeda and Ukai as my family now. And the whole volleyball team’s pretty cool, too! Noya and Tanaka could be my crazy older brothers, but in a good way.”

“You...are so simple minded.” The rude statement made Hinata huff, but his protest left him at the hint of a smile on Kageyama’s lips. His panic was immediate at the change of emotion, hands waving around before pressing them to the pale cheeks in front of him.

“Kageyama, are you feeling okay? You’re smiling!”

“It’s cause I’m happy, idiot!” Kageyama’s snappy tone made Hinata jump, the god of love taking a second to fully process what Kageyama had said. He was happy? Because of what Hinata said? The revolution made the shorter man grin, the red coloring in his cheeks proving the statement embarrassed him. But it also made him...proud? Content? He couldn’t place the word, but the spiker was unable to wipe the good feeling away.
“Yo!” Tanaka’s voice pierced through the cold morning air, and the pair’s attention was drawn to the approaching teammate. Dressed in black sweatpants and a familiar volleyball jacket, the bald man wore nothing to cover his head. Hinata wondered if he was cold from the lack of coverage. “How are my hopeless kouhai doing? Ready to find the loves of your life?”

“Yes senpai!” Hinata chirped, and Kageyama tried not to roll his eyes at the brazen statement. Even if he met his soulmate, there was no way he was going to fall in love. Tanaka ignored his lack of enthusiasm, turning his sharp gaze to the oranged hair spiker in front of him.

“First things first; who are we looking for?” It was obvious that Hinata was lost, and Tanaka gave a sweep of the park before speaking. “Are you into women or men?”

“I like everyone!” Was Hinata’s brilliant answer. Kageyama had a feeling that his roommate missed the point of the question, though he didn’t bother to correct him. It wasn’t like Hinata was really going to date whoever he met. Tanaka nodded once at the god’s statement, rubbing his chin as if solving the world’s hardest riddle.

“So our spiker is bi-sexual...gives up some options to work with.” The setter was a little concerned that Tanaka was taking the task so seriously. His brows furrowed deeply on his forehead, his normally scheming smile dipping toward the edges of serious. But as soon as the look came, it disappeared, and Kageyama had no time to worry about the change in behavior. Tanaka’s concentration switched to the tall artist, and Kageyama nearly stepped back from the fierce stare he received.

“What?” Kageyama asked, the wing spiker leaning into his personal space.

“Are you into men or women?” The question was simple, yet Kageyama felt like he was speaking a different language. Nervously he swallowed and suddenly it felt like his tongue did not fit in his mouth. But even as he squirmed in his spot, Tanaka’s stare was unrelenting. Realizing nothing would change until he answered, Kageyama sighed and glanced away.

“I’m not exactly into women.” Even though he had known about his sexuality for years, saying it out loud felt strange. The last time he had been forced to admit the truth, his father took no time to disown him. Though he knew that Tanaka was gay himself, the irrational fear that he would react poorly still lingered in the back of his head. The bald man seemed surprised by the information for only a moment before he shrugged.
“Makes sense; after all those love confessions, I should have assumed you were playing for our team.” After giving a thumbs up, Tanaka started to crack his knuckles with a look that could have gotten him arrested for murderous intent. “Then let’s find you both a prince charming.”

~***~

Scouting for the fairy tale ending was as successful as Kageyama predicted. Tanaka treated the task like a secret agent mission, forcing the two younger teammates to crawl under bushes and hide behind trees. Even though Kageyama wasn’t interested in getting a date, the whole event was embarrassing. People were outright laughing at them when they rolled down the grassy hill to explore new territory. The grass stains on his pants were more than annoying; what was the point of dressing nice? He would have been better off in his practice clothes. If either of the morons in front of him minded they showed no sign of it. Hinata was willing to do whatever Tanaka asked, fearing nothing and never ashamed. And since Kageyama wasn’t about to let Hinata one up him, he followed along as well.

When the three finally took a break for lunch, Hinata’s dirt smudged face was full of smiles.

“So this is how you get dates? You’re so awesome, Tanaka-senpai!” The cocky chuckle from the older man was low, Tanaka tapping his temple a few times before speaking.

“Just got to use your brain and outthink your target.” What love advice suggested calling your date a target? The snort Kageyama had let out was covered by the bite of his salad and Hinata’s loud voice.

“Are you looking for a potential prince charming, too?” The wing spiker choked on the soda he was guzzling, coughing a few times to free up the airway. Ignoring the obvious discomfort from Tanaka, Hinata leaned his head in his palm and grinned. “What type of guy are you looking for? I bet they’re going to be super cool.”

“I’m not really looking for myself, shorty.”

“Why not?”

“What kind of teacher would I be if I was focusing on myself?”

“But shouldn’t we get some experience watching you in action?” Hinata questioned, Tanaka taking
the time to puff out his chest before he answered.

“It would be a privilege for you to see my exceptional skill.” He let out a bark of a laugh after, showing that the bald man still boasted with the best of them. But the bravado deflated when Tanaka glanced to his phone which sat at the edge of their picnic table.

From where Kageyama was, he could see the dimmed picture of Tanaka’s background. Though the picture was of the entire team, the setter could see why it was so important to his teammate. Tanaka had a secure arm around Ennoshita’s shoulders, the quieter man resting against his teammate’s side and laughing. The two weren’t secretive of their relationship. Tanaka boasted about Ennoshita any chance he could before the break-up. But the picture captured a moment of true connection between the two, and Tanaka didn’t seem ready to let it go.

It was pretty obvious now that the two were soulmates.

“Plus, it wouldn’t be fair to flirt with someone when I’m in love.”

“Y-You’re seeing someone?!” Hinata shouted, nearly popping out of his seat at the statement. Kageyama didn’t show his surprise, which he was thankful for when Tanaka shook his head.

“Nope. The guy dumped me. A tragic story if I’ve ever heard one.” Tanaka tried to hide the obvious pain with a laugh, though the god of love jumped at the opportunity.

“Why?” Hinata asked, though Tanaka shrugged his shoulders.

“Hard to think of who would give this up, right? It’s too long a story to talk about, so don’t worry about it.” Tanaka took the opportunity to shove his burger into his mouth, and the spiker sent a quick glance toward Kageyama. It wasn’t hard to see that his roommate was looking for some help in the current situation. Hinata was new, which meant he wasn’t around when the break-up went down. The spiker wasn’t supposed to know about it as extensively as he did. He could not weave his way into the conversation like he had with Noya, who seemed ready to talk to someone about the predicament. Tanaka would just continue to brush him off or try to switch the topic. He had done the same to the members on the team that had tried to talk to him. They had been supportive and positive, never placing the blame on his shoulders. They hoped that by playing nice, Tanaka would open up. It resulted in nothing to show.

But none of them had tried the other side of the argument.
“I’d probably dump my boyfriend if he ditched me on the most important night of my life.” It wasn’t hard at first to keep a straight face when he made the comment (possibly channeling his inner blond blocker), though he wasn’t sure who looked more caught off guard; Tanaka or Hinata. Wasn’t this what the god wanted? The pair of gaping faces crumbled his composure (how did Tsukishima do it for his entire life?) but before he could excuse himself or apologize, Hinata recovered.

“Is that true?” Hinata’s innocent tone and wide eyed gaze was a low blow for the wing spiker, and Tanaka quickly shook his head.

“It wasn’t like that!”

“So what happened?” Tanaka seemed to fumble with his answer to Hinata’s question, and the god of love took the moment of confusion to send Kageyama a thankful look. The setter tried to ignore the glance to focus on Tanaka, who looked ready to burst.

“I planned to go to the performance that night. I mean it! All week long I was selling tickets at the store and bragging about Ennoshita. My boyfr--er, ex-boyfriend has always been good at making movies. It was about time someone noticed it!”

“But you couldn’t make it to the show? Did you have work?” Hinata questioned. Tanaka gave a grimace, then a slow shake of his head.

“I could have gone. I should have but…” Tanaka dropped his head into his hands, as if unable to face the rest of the story. “I knew Ennoshita had to get there early, so I planned to surprise him with some flowers. Sure, Yamaguchi suggested it but I was going to do it anyways to keep my title of best boyfriend. Except I don’t go to the school often, and the arts building is huge. When I poked my head into one of the classrooms to ask for directions, I overheard some of Ennoshita’s classmates talking about the movie.”

“Bad things?” Kageyama wondered who could be mean to someone like Ennoshita. He was one of the most patient and understanding people the artist knew. He was certainly the easiest to get along with on the team. So it wasn’t surprising when Tanaka gave another shake of his head.

“They loved the movie. They had seen it the first time it aired at the festival, and they kept saying he deserved the win. What they were complaining about was me.”
“Huh?” Both Hinata and Kageyama were thrown off by the curveball Tanaka pitched their way. The wing spiker didn’t lift his head, though he nodded enough for the two to see.

“They kept saying they felt bad for Ennoshita because he was dating an embarrassme...”

“They kept saying they felt bad for Ennoshita because he was dating an embarrassment. Said I was ‘a neurotic mess who knew nothing about film’. From the way they were talking, it felt like Ennoshita had been complaining to them about me. Maybe I get a little loud when I cheer, but I’ve tried harder to keep my shirt on! Sometimes I couldn’t help getting hyped up; his work is great, even if I didn’t always understand it. I try to, it’s just hard for a guy like me. But when they said how embarrassed Ennoshita would get if I was there, I got upset. He wasn’t supposed to have to spend his night worried about me. So I...didn’t go.”

“But you didn’t tell Ennoshita that,” Kageyama argued, finally making the glum man raise his head.

“It was just weird to admit what happened. And what if he confirmed what they said? I wasn’t ready to hear my boyfriend was ashamed of me.”

“But because you didn’t tell him, you guys broke up! You can’t be okay with letting him go.”

“Of course I’m not happy about it!” Just the frustration in Tanaka’s voice was enough to show how unpleasant the bald man found the idea. His sharp teeth clenched together tight as he pushed out the next sentence. “But if he’s going to be happier with some calm, mature guy who doesn’t embarrass him, then I’ve got to let him find that person.”

“But that’s not how love works. He won’t just be able to forget you like that; he’s in pain too. I just know he is!”

“I am a pretty amazing lover. I’m sure he’ll never be able to find a guy who even comes close to your awesome senpai.” He smothered Hinata’s head with his hand before he snagged the trash from the table, pushing out of his seat. “But enough about that; we have been at this for hours and neither one of you have gotten a number. Once I throw this trash out, we’re on the hunt again.”

“I think you’re scaring people away from us,” Kageyama muttered under his breath, watching Tanaka walk away before he turned his attention onto Hinata. The god’s face was pressed to the
table, his arms covering his head where Tanaka had touched him. From the slumped shoulders and lack of conversation, Kageyama knew Hinata’s head was back inside itself. Sighing quietly, Kageyama scooted closer to his roommate, slowly placing his hand onto the smaller shoulder. “Sitting here feeling sorry for yourself isn’t going to fix anything.”

“The more I learn, the more I realized how much I screwed everything up.”

“Well obviously; wasn’t that the reason you came to earth?” He waited until Hinata turned his head toward him, brown eyes glancing warily toward Kageyama’s scowling face. “Own what you did, admit you messed up, and then do something about it. That’s only something you can do.”

“And what if I mess up again?”

“That’s what I’m here for, right?” Hinata popped his head up at the statement, Kageyama quick to pull away from his spiker when his eyes shimmered. “If you do mess up, I’ll knock some sense into you. So you just focus on the love stuff, and I’ll focus on keeping you on the right track.”

“Like partners,” Hinata whispered, and Kageyama felt the need to squirm away at the title.

“Does it really need a name?” But that seemed like a clear enough answer for the god, the earlier negative feelings disappearing in a matter of seconds. He was the grinning idiot again, but the artist found his shoulders relaxing at the normal scene. Though Hinata was annoying and tended to talk too much, seeing him down on himself never sat well with the setter. If he could do something to change that, he would.

“Alright you two! We’re not leaving this park until each one of you have made your senpai proud.” Even if it meant wasting his time on a really stupid ‘mission’.

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Sunday night’s practice was a blessing for the overfrustered setter. After letting Tanaka and Hinata drag him around all day Saturday, Kageyama had no time to do homework. That meant he had to cram the work in before practice, which was a headache already. But with the calamity going on in his kitchen, the artist was sure he was going to fail every assignment. Suga, who Kageyama swore was the god of patience, was helping teach Hinata to cook. The short man had picked up on how to use the microwave easily, though the stove was a whole other monster. He would forget to turn on the heat or leave the flame unattended while getting distracted by who knew what.
 Needless to say, Kageyama was more than ready to be back in the gymnasium.

“So what’s the battleplan tonight?” The setter also knew his roommate was hyped up for the practice, though not all of it was because of the game. He had decided to put a “plan” into action for Ennoshita and Tanaka. If he didn’t start fixing the messes he made, he would run out of time.

“Ennoshita’s hard to talk to and I barely see him during practice, so I’m still figuring it out,” the god admitted, both players looking to where Ennoshita was tying his shoes.

“Why don’t you talk to Yamaguchi?” Kageyama suggested, shrugging before he started to stretch. “They’re both on the sidelines a lot, so they talk more than most. He’d be your best bet to learn more about how Ennoshita feels about the break-up, too.”

“Good idea! Then I can befriend Yamaguchi, too. That’s killing two Goliaths with one stone.”

“That’s not the...nevermind.” It would take too long to explain how wrong Hinata had gotten the saying, so Kageyama switched topics. “Yamaguchi’s one of your clients, right?” He hadn’t really listened very well the first time Hinata gave him the list, both too tired and freaked out to focus. In his defense, hearing your new roommate is some freaky god on a mission that he needed help completing was a little more than the normal plot twists of life.

“Of course he is; who else could handle Tsukishima?” Hinata’s revelation grabbed the setter’s attention, Kageyama quick to respond.

“Wait, even that guy has a soulmate?” Hinata nodded once to show he wasn’t hearing wrong, and even then the artist struggled. “How does someone like Yamaguchi end up with Tsukishima? Can that guy even love someone other than himself?”

“Of course! I told you every human has a soulmate.”

“So it’s just a human thing? Or do gods have different rules for love?” The question seemed to throw Hinata for a loop, and it took a little longer for him to answer.

“The only time I’ve seen a soulmate string with a god was Suga, but he’s also part human.”
“So then how do gods know they’re in love?”

“How would I know? I’ve never been in love, remember?” The setter sighed as he finished his stretches, rising to his full height while speaking.

“Would you ever want to?” He watched Hinata squirm in his spot, which confused him. Shouldn’t the god of love be able to talk about his love life without getting embarrassed? He was always going on about the beauty of the romantic feeling, yet he looked ready to puke at the examination of his heart.

“I’m not sure; I mean, it’s not like I have a lot of choice in the matter. Most of the gods are way older than me. Suga’s nice, but he’s family. Iwaizumi is pretty scary and Oikawa…”

“Obviously you wouldn’t fall in love with an asshole like him,” Kageyama finished for him, the shorter god too eager to nod in agreement. Kageyama’s mind started to wander at the silence that followed, leaving his lips vulnerable to spill a question. “Well what about a human?”

“I guess it’s possible; Suga’s parents fell in love and there were no issues. His father’s soulmate line was purple, so it didn’t interfere with them being in love. But they also didn’t have a soulmate connection, so I can’t say for sure if they’re really in love.”

“So then the possibility is still there?” The two stared at each other quietly, a weird atmosphere crawling under Kageyama’s skin. He wasn’t sure why he felt so compelled to know the information. Most times, talk about love annoyed him. There was no need to glorify it; love was just like every other feeling and should not get special treatment. Yet here, for this small frame of time, Kageyama wasn’t satisfied with his normal apathetic self.

“I don’t know. Maybe? Don’t ask such complicated questions, Bakayama!” The anger from his roommate was unexpected, and Kageyama blinked when the god sprinted away from him. Hinata nearly tackled Yamaguchi (who was talking with his own roommate) from how quickly he had been running. The freckled man looked surprised at the sudden ambush, while Tsukishima seemed instantly annoyed. Neither had time to question the spiker’s actions before Yamaguchi was dragged to one of the gym’s corners by Hinata. The blond blocker was left alone in the middle of the gymnastics, looking more than a little confused. The scene would have been comical if it wasn’t a desperate attempt to get away from Kageyama. But since it was, all Kageyama could do was scowl.

“Don’t mind him; Hinata has always struggled with embarrassing conversations.” Kageyama turned
his attention to the newcomer, the fair-haired god offering a warm smile and a volleyball as a peace treaty.

“Would you like to pass with me while we talk?”

“Yes, please.” Since Hinata was caught up with whispering stupid nonsense with Yamaguchi, Kageyama was more than willing to warm-up with the calmer god.

“Great, I’ve been meaning to check in with you.” Suga started the volley with a soft toss that was easy for Kageyama to return while answering.

“Did something happen?”

“Nothing in particular. I just wanted to know how Hinata’s been since he moved in. Not too much trouble, I hope.” Kageyama snorted at the question before focusing on placing his fingers under the falling ball just right. Once returning the pass, Kageyama let his thought on the shorter god be known.

“He’s a pain. I assumed he’d be trouble, but he’s outdone my wildest expectations. He’s loud and has no idea what personal space means.” The flashback of Hinata’s eyes peering up at him from his own lap slipped into Kageyama’s mind, but the black-haired setter was quick to suppress the memory. “And some of his ideas are just asking for disaster.”

“I’m sorry he’s such a handful, but he means well. And it’s good that he’s made a friend like you.” Suga’s positive twist to the information froze Kageyama, making him fumble to recover the quickly descending volleyball.

“Me? I’m not his fr-friend! I’m just helping the weirdo out so he can leave earlier.” Kageyama’s denial of their relationship received a passive hum that showed that Suga wasn’t sold on the idea, but he was polite enough to keep the thought to himself.

“It’s not that I’m worried about Shouyou making friends; he’s got an infectious personality and people and gods alike tend to flock to him. But sometimes he’s so worried about others that he forgets to take care of himself.”

“What do you mean? He’s a god; doesn’t he have servants who look after his every whim and
need?” Suga’s smile was small while he shook his head, aiming his pass with little effort. Though the god may not have had the precise ball handling skill that Kageyama did, his setting ability was still something to be respected.

“We may have some privileges, but we don’t simply rule from a golden throne. Gods have a responsibility to each of you, and we take it very seriously. Shouyou has been known to get really sucked into his work. One time, he was so distraught over a struggling bond that he refused to eat or sleep until it was fixed. He passed out seconds after the two reconciled.”

Kageyama caught the passed volleyball, his concentration floating toward a certain orange-haired spiker. Hinata was full of energy as he bounced around Yamaguchi, the pinch server laughing at the antics. Though he looked fine, Kageyama couldn’t be sure of the last time he had seen the god sleep. He was always awake before the artist, who just assumed he was able to run on less sleep than humans. But by how careful Suga was being in asking Kageyama of Hinata’s habits, he wondered if he should be noticing things more. Suga had taken his time to teach Hinata how to cook, but were there ulterior motives? Was the fertility god making sure the younger god was eating? And what else could Hinata be hiding just under Kageyama’s nose?

“Why does he care so much?” Kageyama’s fingers tightened on the ball in his hands, blue eyes peering down at the smooth lines of the fabric. “At first I thought he was just scared of losing his title, but that’s not it. Hinata told me he’s never even been in love, yet he’s willing to put himself at risk for other people’s happy ending. What does he get from that?”

“That’s just the job of the god of love.” Suga’s simple answer left a bitter taste in Kageyama’s mouth, eyes glaring at the floor when Daichi’s strong voice called for the team to start practice.

“He’s more than some stupid title. And what’s the point? All love does is hurt others.”

“Maybe you’re right.” A blink and a glance to the fertility god was the only response the young man could get out, frozen by the smile that Suga was giving him. “But aren’t some things worth a little pain?”

“Suga! Come play!” Hinata’s loud voice felt muffled for the artist, who watched Suga call back to his fellow god before walking past Kageyama.

“We should go join them, before they think something is wrong.” Kageyama’s feet followed Suga slowly, knowing that he was right. But his mind…
His mind was stuck on the heartbroken smile he was sure Suga hadn’t meant to show him.

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“Do you remember the plan, Yamaguchi?”

“Because he’s the idiot in this pairing.” The growl Hinata let out at the blocker’s answer was loud, hoping his glare was just as fierce. From the quirked eyebrow he got from behind Tsukishima’s glasses, his effort was wasted.

“Why are you here?”

“Why are you stupid?” Nobody would blame the shorter man for attacking the smug teammate next to him.

“Tsukki, maybe you shouldn’t distract Hinata right now. They’re almost done with clean up.” Yamaguchi’s concerned voice brought Hinata’s attention back into focus, his head whipping to look at the team. Asahi was dry mopping the floor while Daichi and Kageyama put the bleachers back against the wall. Ennoshita and Suga had been tasked with cleaning the volleyballs, while Noya and Tanaka wrestled with the net. Kiyoko was “supervising” the two, though it looked more like she was judging their complete lack of competence in the simple task.

“Remember, Ennoshita can’t know what I’m doing.” The solid nod and serious look on Yamaguchi’s face was a little weird, but Hinata was grateful for his help. After telling the neighbor about his desire to help fix the relationship between their teammates, Yamaguchi was fully on board. He thought the two were good together, and Hinata got excited after his freckled teammate voiced his thoughts on Tanaka and Ennoshita being “soulmates”. After hanging out with the gloomy setter all week, it was nice to have a willing ally on the side of true love.

“Good luck, Hinata!” At Yamaguchi’s whispered encouragement, the small spiker made his move. In seconds Hinata was across the floor, appearing in-between the two trying to lift the net.

“I can help, Tanaka-senpai! I think Asahi needs some help dry mopping, Noya-senpai.” The two older men sent each other glances at the honoraries, their broad smiles showing how much they enjoyed Hinata’s praise.
“Guess someone’s got to help our ace. Kiyoko-san, will you-”

“No.” Her firm answer and turn of her shoulder made whatever Noya planned to request fall flat, though the libero seemed to enjoy the cold response. As she walked away, Noya turned back to Tanaka and Hinata, giving a side salute.

“I leave our precious kouhai in your hands, Ryuu.” And then Noya was off, attempting to find the tall ace in question. The first step was complete; now, Hinata had to put faith in the strength of a true love’s soulmate string.

“Hey, Tanaka-san? Can I ask you something?” Hinata shifted the net on his shoulder as they made their way to the storage room, the door getting pushed open by Tanaka’s foot. The large unit was empty and both men made quick work of placing the net into the back of the room. Once the load was out of his hands, Tanaka pushed to sit on the mats that were stacked up against the wall.

“Ask away. But stay away from the door; if Daichi sees us slacking off, he’ll make us regret it.” The god made his way over to the impromptu couch, knowing that Tanaka was telling the truth. Though a good-hearted man, the captain ran the team like a true leader. He was a god, yet his muscles ached after the long drills. How did these mortals do it?

Shaking his head to focus, Hinata turned to face his teammate, crossing his legs on the mats.

“Did you ever get to see Ennoshita’s film?” The wing spiker let his back fall against the wall behind him, his soft sigh seeming wistful.

“Nope. The film festival was for college students only, that’s was why I was so pumped to hear the school was doing a showing for the public.”

“So you never saw it, but you promoted it? What if it was bad?”

“Impossible.” The word was out with little thought, and Tanaka seemed ready to argue his point to the grave. “Even if I couldn’t see it, I’d defend him. There’s no question that Ennoshita knocked it out of the park.”

“You’ve got so much confidence in his work; you really are an awesome senpai.”
“While that statement is completely true, I can’t take the credit for this one. It’s got to go to Ennoshita. If he wasn’t so skilled with a camera, then I wouldn’t have the confidence to brag about him. I’ve never met someone who put that much dedication and time into their trade. There’s no doubt he’s going to be a famous film director up there in Hollywood.”

“But...there’s a chance you could be there with him, too.” Hinata leaned forward a bit, trying to catch the light from the doorway in order to see Tanaka’s face. Gray eyes were relaxed as they stared across the storage room, the bald man’s hands resting on his thighs. Nothing in his body was tense or strained. Whatever he was thinking about, Tanaka had come to terms with on his own.

“There’s a reason I’m in love with him, you know. And not just cause he’s hot or smart or anything like that. He’s my best friend. Which means he dealt with waking me up for school and covered for me when I forgot homework. And he’d whip my ass into shape for finals week. When I have a shitty day on the court, he’s the one who says ‘keep playing like that and I’ll take your spot’. It makes me push harder, makes me be better. He watches marathons of old kung-fu movies with me even though he hates them. He’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me.”

“So why won’t you tell him the truth?” One of Tanaka’s hands moved to rub the back of his head, his smile bright despite his self-defeating words.

“I know his classmates were right; I don’t deserve him. I’m nothing special, and I’m not really going anywhere in life. I enjoy my job at the pet shop; I’m fine with being me. I’m not classy, and he’d never be able to bring me to award shows when he makes it big. But just knowing he gave me as much time as he did makes me the happiest guy in the world.”

“Well I’m glad you’ve got this all figured out.” Both Hinata and Tanaka’s heads lifted to look at the doorway where the voice had come from. With more strength than Hinata thought his teammate could muster, Ennoshita shoved the ball cart out of the way before he pushed into the room. His eyebrows lowered and his eyes narrowed on the bald player now gaping at him. Tanaka pushed to his feet, though seemed wary of closing the space between him and his pissed off friend.

“When did you-”

“If you were going to plan my life, don’t you think you should have asked me what I wanted?” Though his voice was calm, there was a raging storm just beneath the surface that Hinata knew he wanted nothing to do with. Quietly the smaller player scooched off the side of the mats, keeping his gaze on the two while he made his silent escape. “And what did you mean my ‘classmates were right’?”
“Uh-”

“What did they say to you?”

“That’s-”

“When were you at the school?”

“The night of your show!” Tanaka shouted quickly, Ennoshita’s eyes widening when the information was dropped in the air between them. “I should have told you the truth but...I just don’t want to hear it from you, too.”

“Hear what?” For the first time since Ennoshita entered the storage room, his voice wasn’t flat. The tone hinted at a cauldron of emotions; sadness, anger, confusion. It did little to stop the wing spiker’s nerves, and Tanaka took a few short breaths before squaring off with his teammate.

“They said you were embarrassed by me. That you were ashamed that I was your boyfriend.”

“Embarrassed? Why would I be embarrassed?” There was a stretch of silence, and Tanaka lifted his hand to clench over the fabric of his shirt, feeling his heartbeat pounding in his chest.

“Because I get loud and kind of make a scene whenever you invite me to some film thing. Or maybe cause I’m not some smart film student who knows how to appreciate the difference between Hitchcock and Kubrick. And I can’t change who I am-”

“Who asked you to?” Ennoshita’s question was followed by a sigh, Tanaka blinking at the unexpected response. Sleepy eyes rolled before the dark haired man stepped closer, his hand warm against Tanaka’s cheek. “Ryu, how do you know about Kubrick and Hitchcock?”

“What do you mean? You talk about them all the time, how they were film changing directors back in their day. Though from what you’ve shown me, Tarantino is where it’s at,” The wing spiker answered, still confused by why he was being asked the strange question. Ennoshita sighed with a shake of his head, but the smile and stroke on Tanka’s cheek seemed like a good sign.
“This is why I love you.” Ennoshita’s simple answer came out like he telling his teammate the weather. He didn’t seem to notice how the statement stalled Tanaka’s heart and easily stole his breath with little resistance. “It’s not like I fell in love with you before I knew you. I’ve been your best friend long enough to realize you have an affinity for losing your shirt and screaming a lot. But that’s not all you are. You’re the guy who stays up late to watch silent films even if you hate reading subtitles. And you me make flashcards on your break with horrible drawings on them to help me remember information.”

“Hey, some of those were Yuu,” Tanaka protested weakly, his cheeks red in embarrassment. Ennoshita smiled at the rare look of modestly, his thumb soft on the wing spiker’s cheek.

“The point is this; you’re the best cheerleader a guy could ask for, even if you’d look quite stupid in a skirt. When I accepted being your boyfriend, it wasn’t with the expectation you’d change.”

“But your classmates-”

“Don’t get us, I know. They tell me all the time. But that’s okay; I get us. And I love you. Though choosing Tarantino over Hitchcock makes me question that.” To emphasize the teasing tone in his voice, Ennoshita flicked the wing spiker’s forehead, giving a lazy smile. “And who would have thought my boyfriend would be done in by a few geeky film students?”

“Boyfriend?” The hope was obvious in the bald man’s voice, Ennoshita giving a small nod while dropping his arms to rest on the taller man’s shoulders.

“Yes, my boyfriend. Unless you try to hide something like this from me again; then I won’t forgive you so easily.” The film student was snagged against his boyfriend’s chest in seconds, his red cheeks being cupped and pulled forwards toward parted lips.

“I won’t. Promise.” Tanaka barely got the words out before their mouths met, the kiss passionate on both sides. Ennoshita’s arms laid limp over Tanaka’s shoulders, his fingers twining behind his back. The wing spiker seemed more than content with having his boyfriend snuggled back in his arms, and was determined to prove it with his lips. Both men were too distracted by the long overdue moment to notice the four eyes watching from the doorway.

“They’re perfect together.” Yamaguchi couldn’t see just how true the statement was, but Hinata could. His eyes barely glowed, but they easily caught the change in the soulmate thread. The once weathered and lackluster string that had laid limply between them was now sparkling with color,
shining bright enough to fill the room. And though it wasn’t his own love, Hinata felt his heart swell. One couple was fixed, but he had four more to go. For now, he enjoyed the scene in front of him, knowing he had a lot more work to do.

After all, his next set of soulmates had never even met.

Chapter End Notes

And the two are finally united. I just love a happy ending. But what will Hinata have to do for our next pair? Will something change between Kageyama and Hinata? And just what pair seems to concern the god of love the most? Find out next time! Kudos and comments appreciated =)
Levels of Love

Chapter Summary

Never had this happened to a string before. All Hinata knew was that it wasn't good.

Chapter Notes

Ah I missed the posting day! Sorry sorry, yesterday was insane >.< Please enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"You don't love someone for their looks, or their clothes, or for their fancy car, but because they sing a song only you can hear." - Oscar Wilde

“Suga! Suga! Look at what I made!” Chubby cheeks were stuffed with a smile as a boy no older than four held a piece of paper up proudly. Suga’s eyes took in the mess of colors smooshed together on the dripping paper, paint clearly not dried yet. Still the god smiled, crouching down to meet the boy’s stare on equal level.

“Wow, Naru. This is amazing.” Suga was tentative when he took the painting, looking back to the blonde child.

“Let’s go hang this up to dry, okay? Your mommy is going to love this.”

“Okay!” The child was quick to grab Suga’s hand, pulling the soft spoken man toward the arts and crafts area. Neither noticed the pair of older eyes that were watching them, Daichi’s smile soft as he leaned against the wall of the playroom.

“He’s really good with children.” Asahi’s observation received a nod from the owner.

“He’s been a natural since we were young. Every time we had to watch a kid from the neighborhood, it was Koushi who got them to take a bath or go to bed. He’s got a mom’s demeanor.”
“It works well with your dad aura.” The owner sent a glance to his worker that had the taller man raise his hands in surrender. “Not that there’s anything wrong with that!”

“You make me sound so old,” Daichi grumbled, self-consciously rubbing his cheek. The rough scrape of oncoming hair reminded the man he had to shave. Brown eyes shifted back to the man playing on the floor. Did he even own a razor? When they were younger, Suga had always looked years behind his actual age. Now, despite his hairless face, it was obvious the man was an adult.

“Daichi?” Asahi’s voice snapped him from his thoughts, but it was obvious he had been caught daydreaming. The gentle giant let his fingers clumsily link together while he looked down to his feet. “Not to pry, but did you and Sugawara-san…”

“Did we what?” Daichi asked, his brow furrowing at the tense shoulders Asahi presented to him.

“Da-date?”

“What? Why would you think that?”

“Well, it’s just...you two seem to get along really well. And you guys act like you have been friends for years even though he just came back. Whenever you two talk, you guys get so close and-”

“If you weren’t such a scaredy cat, I’d tell you to become a detective.” Daichi cut off the fumbling ace, his smile showing no hard feelings. “How long have you been holding that in?”

“Ah, sorry. Noya and I were just discussing it last night and I can’t get it out of my head now.”

“You have enough time to talk about me at your “special” sleepovers?” The color that drowned Asahi’s face at Daichi’s implication was almost concerning. Though the captain didn’t support the strange set up his ace and libero had created, it was not his place to change it. The two did not let their bedroom activities interfere with their play on the court, so Daichi had no right to complain. Both were adults with hormones. If they were okay with their arrangement, that was their choice. The dark haired man watched his friend nervously push some loose hair behind his ear, eyes unable to meet Daichi’s gaze.
“It’s not like we...I mean, we talk as well!” Asahi blurted out, making his calm friend laugh.

“Well don’t worry yourselves over me and Koushi; we’re just friends.” Daichi nodded once to show his confidence in his words, contrasting the wary look his friend gave. “There’s nothing going on between us. Suga’s never made mention of his preference and I’ve never asked.”

“But if he was, would you-”

“Daichi!” Suga’s voice travelled from across the room, breaking up the conversation. “Come see all the pictures our very talented artists made.”

“Coming,” Daichi answered instantly, sending a glance toward Asahi as he moved. “While I do that, maybe Asahi can take the rugrats to the kitchen for lunch?”

“Of course!” The ace was quick to corral the excited children, a few giving Suga hugs before rushing after the group. Giggles and chants of Asahi’s name died out as the kids ventured to another room, leaving Suga and Daichi alone. The light haired man smiled from where he sat on the floor, looking small from Daichi’s standing position.

“Should I have Asahi make another peanut butter and jelly sandwich for you? Or do you want to go straight to the nap room?” The laugh that came from Suga warmed Daichi, the memory of the sound doing no justice to the real thing. It wasn’t like the captain was blind to Suga’s appeal. He was handsome as a teen, and that only seemed to increase with age. Sometimes Daichi wondered if this man and the moments shared with him all those years back were the reason he had started questioning his sexuality. Having Suga disappear from his side had left him feeling restless and incomplete. The summer Suga left had been hell. Years passed and the pain lessened, though never fully disappeared.

And seeing him again pushed the floodgates of emotion wide open.

“Kids are just so amazing! Look at all the things they created.” Like a proud mother, Suga spread his arms out to display the nonsensical art to the daycare owner.

“They may not be picasso, but they are the best at making a mess,” Daichi replied, laughing when Suga’s eyes darted toward the obvious smears of paint of the floor. Little yellow footprints had led across the room, reminding Daichi how smart the investment in washable paint had been.

“Well, I figured we could clean up while they take their nap. After that we’ll do our hour of outside
activity, then pop in a movie. When that’s over, it’ll be time for pick up.”

“You’re kind of amazing,” Daichi praised, Suga shrugging before he pushed himself onto his feet.

“I just modified what we used to do when we were babysitting. It worked back then with the neighborhood kids, right?” Suga’s question brought back memories that Daichi hadn’t thought of in years. Despite their cobwebs, the scenes that ran through his head were clear.

“Except that time with the trouble twins.” As if the memory left a bitter taste in the air, Suga pursed his lips and huffed.

“I prefer to think of that as a mutiny.”

“You say that because one bit you.”

“He broke skin, Daichi,” Suga crooned, the dark haired man smiling despite his friend’s frown.

“I know, I was the one who bandaged your hand.” As if reliving the past, Daichi reached out to the previously injured skin, his touch remaining soft when collecting the back of Suga’s hand in his grasp. His thumb swept along the curve of Suga’s palm, tracing where the bite had been. “That was the first time I ever saw you cry.”

“It really hurt,” Suga defended quietly, allowing Daichi to retrace the fading scar as many times as he wanted.

“You were a strong soldier,” Daichi teased, allowing his eyes to express his amusement.

“I got him to bed after that, too. I wore my battle scar proudly.” When the shorter man lifted his head with pride, Daichi’s eyes caught the smudge of orange now decorating his left cheek.

“That’s not the only thing you’re wearing.” Daichi’s response made Suga blink, the captain rolling his eyes. “You’ve got paint on your face. Now you really look like one of our kids.”
“You’re enjoying this way too much,” Suga surmised, Daichi letting himself smile at the cute scowl.

“Maybe.”

“You, sir, are rude.” To emphasize his point, Suga poked Daichi’s chest, the captain brushing the touch away with his free hand to step closer.

“Right, the worst. It doesn’t look dried yet, so maybe I can…” His fingers were on the other man’s cheek before Suga could respond, a steady swipe from Daichi’s thumb pushing the setter’s face into his hold. Feeling the soft skin sobered Daichi. It only took a few seconds to notice how little space now separated the two men.

“Daichi?” Suga's voice was quiet, as if unaware his voice could climb higher than a whisper. Hazel eyes stared up at him, lacking the discomfort or disgust Daichi was expecting. Their fingers were still entwined innocently, hands hanging by their hips. The tension felt thick in the air. When Daichi released a shuddered breath, he could see grey strands shift away from Suga’s forehead. Swallowing lightly, the captain focused his eyes back onto the wet paint, a shaking thumb removing most of the incriminating smudge.

“You look good in orange,” he confessed, brown eyes flickering back to observe Suga’s reaction. His worry of offending the man were disintegrated by the lovely flush staining the setter’s cheeks. It wasn’t from disgust. With wide eyes of surprise, Suga may have been caught off guard, yet he didn’t pull away from the second stroke pressed gently to his jawline. The moment was quiet between them, though lacked any expected tension. Daichi led Suga with no resistance. The shorter man’s free hand lifted to curl over the captain’s shoulder, the touch sending electricity running through Daichi’s skin. Had it always felt this good to be touched by Suga? He couldn’t remember. Despite the lack of recollection, he didn’t want to pull away. And from how Suga’s eyes started to flutter shut in compliance to Daichi’s touch, the feeling was reciprocated.

“Dai-san?” A wobbly voice yanked the serenity of the moment away from the two, both men stepping away from the other to focus on where the noise came. The small child in the doorway was the obvious answer. With a worn out blanket pressed close to her chest, the red head’s eyes shined with worry as she stared at Daichi.

“It’s almost naptime; can you come read me a story?”

“Ah, I…” His eyes reflected his guilt when glancing to Suga, who was quick to smile and slap his boss on the back.
“Go help Asahi; I can start cleaning this up on my own. Plus, I’m sure Asahi will need the assistance tucking them all in.”

“Right.” With a short bow, Daichi focused his attention on the little girl. Suga kept his smile bright until the two had left around the corner, the god quick to slump his shoulders once alone. Instantly his hand went to his cheek. Fingers smoothed over the spot that Daichi had stroked, and Suga knew his blush was still heavy on his skin. Sighing to nobody in particular, Suga turned to look back at the mess. His eyes weren’t expecting the two men now sitting in front of the miniature table, Suga’s shout barely kept quiet by his quick recognition of his fellow god.

“Shouyou, what are you doing here?” Hinata’s smile was a mile wide as he rocked back in his chair, and Suga couldn’t help but notice that the god of love fit in the children’s seat easily. The same could not be said for his counterpart, Kageyama’s long limbs and lanky torso causing the setter issues. How had they even gotten into the room without Suga noticing? His eyes flickered to the exit in the corner of the room, which had been cracked open by the bunched up rug in front of it. Well, that answered one of his questions.

“You and Daichi really are soul mates. I can see it when you’re talking.” The dreamy tone in Hinata’s voice was something that Suga had heard him use several times, though it was never directed toward him. From the corner of his eye he could see how red Kageyama’s face was, implying that he had also beared witness to the scene between him and Daichi. At least he looked guilty about the invasion of privacy. Hinata had no shame, eyes bright with unspent energy. “I don’t know why Daichi’s on my list; you two have a really solid soulmate thread.”

“Shouldn’t you be in school?” Suga asked, Shouyou shaking his head.

“On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we’ve both got some sculpting class, and she let us out early today.”

“I told the dumbass we should go back to the apartment, but he wanted to come here,” Kageyama supplied, easily ignoring the glare sent his way to focus on Suga’s soft sigh.

“Did you need something from me?”

“Your brain!” Hinata’s instant chirp caught Suga’s attention, the smaller god scrunching his nose in frustration.
“So we fixed the first bond with Ennoshita and Tanaka-senpai, and I promised Yachi that she’d be the next one I’d fix. She’s really nice and makes good food, so I really want to help her! But…”

“But?” Suga prompted, watching Hinata’s hands clamp into his hair while he groaned.

“But she’s never even met her soulmate!”

“So the problem isn’t knowing each other too long, but that they’ve never met before?” Suga asked, moving to sit on one of the desks in the room. Kageyama let out a soft sigh before he rubbed his temple.

“I don’t know much about Kiyoko-san’s personal life, but from what Noya and Tanaka tell me, she doesn’t have a lot in common with Yachi. Kiyoko-san graduated with Daichi and Asahi, so they don’t have class together. Yachi’s a theatre major who doesn’t come by the sport clubs. It’s unlikely that they would have the same circle of friends, though they do know a few of the same people.”

“Well, what about their interests? Do they have anything that links them?” Suga asked, Hinata instantly glancing to Kageyama for an answer.

“The only thing I know is that Kiyoko-san gets her coffee from the shop that Yachi works at; she’s said they always make her order perfectly, and she enjoys something about their designed cups. But she never gets it herself.”

“Then who does?” At Suga’s question, Kageyama let out a sigh and crossed his arms.

“That jerk, Tsukishima.”

“What?!” Hinata nearly fell out of his chair at the name, the god popping onto his feet and shaking his head.

“Impossible, that guy doesn’t do anything nice unless you sell him your soul. Why would he do that for Kiyoko?”

“Kiyoko-san was a classmate of Tsukishima’s our sophomore year. She graduated with a 4.0 and an
archeology degree, so he respects her or something.”

“She’s pretty and smart,” Suga said, smiling when Kageyama flushed and glanced away.

“I don’t see how either piece of information helps our situation.”

“Nothing, really. Just an observation.” Suga tapped his chin as he glanced out the window, voicing his question out loud. “So what does Kiyoko do when she doesn’t work with Tsukishima?”

“They have the same schedule since the library is so big; Tsukishima works in the boring archives and Kiyoko runs the main desk,” Kageyama explained, Hinata letting out a low groan at the information. Suga gave him a pat on the shoulder, trying to ease his friend’s distraught.

“I don’t suppose Tsukishima calls out sick often?”

“No. His job helps pay for his college tuition.” But after a second of contemplation, Kageyama shook his head. “Ah, well once. Yamaguchi got food poisoning and was puking all over the place. Tsukishima had to call out to take care of him.”

“Well, then there’s your in.” Suga’s bright smile confused both of the men, the fair haired man clapping his hands together. “Maybe if you talk to Yamaguchi, he’ll play sick to help you out. If there’s no Tsukishima to buy Kiyoko’s coffee, then she’ll have to get it herself. So long as Yachi is there, the girls get their ‘cute meet’, and your job is done. For that pair, at least.”

“Do you really think Yamaguchi would go along with this plan? Seems sort of cliche,” Kageyama complained, though Hinata’s eyes were sparking with new found passion.

“Of course! Yamaguchi loves love almost as much as me. And he’s going to get a night of Stingyshima fawning all over him. Sounds like torture to me, but they’re soulmates-”

“Still freaks me out,” his roommate grumbled, blue eyes showing clear disgust.

“Well I’m sure that you’ll figure the rest out on your own.” The pair were jostled from their conversation when Suga’s hands grasped the back of their shirts, yanking them toward the exit of the
daycare. “And as much as I like talking with you, this is my job. Which means I can’t be sitting around talking with you like this.”

“H-Hey!” Hinata stumbled into Kageyama’s side when Suga pushed them through the doorway, the sweet smile on the fertility god’s face never wavering.

“Next time, Shouyou, use your phone. Good bye, and good luck with Yamaguchi!” With a warm wave of his hand, Suga didn’t hesitate to shut the door on the two stunned men outside.

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“I thought math only had numbers.” Hinata was sure that the letters on the page in front of him were meant for writing, not for his ‘statistic’ class. Though the blonde next to him snorted at his statement, Yamaguchi seemed more compassionate.

“Hinata, how did you make it through high school without learning simple algebra?”

“I just...uh...I had Suga to help!” Blushing at his lacking intelligence, Hinata glanced up to his neighbors in distraught. “Will you help me out? I’m going to fail this class so hard if you don’t!”

“Tsukki is the genius here. You should ask him-”

“Not interested.” The flat rejection was followed by Tsukishima pushing his headphones over his ears, eyes looking with boredom at his phone. “He’s too stupid to teach.”

“I am not!” Hinata’s protest fell on tuned out ears, the tall blocker resting his head on crossed arms. Hinata was starting to see why Kageyama disliked his neighbor so much. Hoping his glare would somehow affect the salty blonde, the god couldn’t help but notice the complete worksheet that rested on Tsukishima’s desk. He had finished the problems in five minutes and yet couldn’t be bothered to help Hinata out.

“Ah, maybe we could move to a table in the back?” Yamaguchi’s question was soft, with a motherly tone that had Hinata nodding. The aura that Yamaguchi gave off reminded the spiker of Suga, and he assumed that’s why he easily followed. The two transitioned away from Tsukishima and to the back of the classroom, Hinata huffing when dropping into a new chair. Yamaguchi tried to send a smile his way before he pointed to one of the problems, his voice constructive and slow. It only took
a minute for Hinata’s attention to wander. His eyes flickered around the room, letting his ire slip away when observing a pair closer to the front. The two men were talking casually, no sign or inclination leaning toward important conversation. They didn’t touch, and both men seemed calm in their seats. From an outsider’s point of view, they may have just looked like random classmates. Yet Hinata saw the truth. A yellow string was wound around them, a friendship forming that would change both of their lives. It wasn’t romantic, but the bond was strong.

The soulmate thread focused Hinata on the task at hand.

“So then you have to balance out the equation on both sides-”

“Hey, Yamaguchi?” Brown eyes blinked at the abrupt interruption, Hinata pressing his head into the palm of his hand. “Do you know a girl named Yachi? She works at the coffeeshop near the library.”

“Oh, you mean Yachi Hitoka? She’s in a child care class with me and Kageyama.”

“Sweet, so you--wait. Did you just say Kageyama is in a class about kids?!?”

“Why did you think Daichi allowed him to work at his daycare?” The immature nature of the god reared its head at the news, trying to hide his snicker behind his hand. An image of the scary setter with a baby strapped to his hip was almost too much to bear, but the spiker somehow managed when Yamaguchi continued. “But I do know Yachi. Why, what’s up?”

“I just want to know what she’s like.”

“Oh, she’s super sweet!” The bright smile on Yamaguchi’s face showed he liked the blonde, and his words only supported the look. “Yachi always helps out in class, and she’s smart. Sometimes she gets nervous, something we sort of have in common. Except when she gets worked up, she tends to run away. It’s actually sort of cute, and lots of guys try to hit on her. But she’s...her preference is women.”

“Has she told you what type of girl?” Hinata asked, wondering how close her expectation was to her actual soulmate. Yamaguchi blushed at the question, his finger brushing under his nose.

“No, but I have a theory.” The news wasn’t a surprise to Hinata, as Yamaguchi seemed to ooze love
fanatic. Yamaguchi tapped his pencil against his table, the class work long forgotten. “It’s just a
guess but…”

“Is it someone like Kiyoko-san?” Hinata asked, hoping that Yamaguchi would pick up on his
suggestion. Instead the pinch server blinked, hesitantly glancing to his own fumbling fingers.

“W-well yeah. But, it’s not like they know each other. And I don’t think I’ve even seen them in the
same room before.”

“Well at some point, we’re all just strangers, right?”

“Ah, yes, that’s true. But I’m just not sure how Yachi and Kiyoko would even meet up. Kiyoko is so
busy and Yachi struggles to meet new people-”

“We could help them!” Hinata grinned over to Yamaguchi, who seemed less confident in the idea.
The freckled man’s response to Hinata’s suggestion was left unspoken when a soft laugh floated
through the air. The feminine tone caught the god’s attention, and Hinata tried to locate the noise. A
girl he hadn’t talked to before was sitting on his desk, her attention focused on the blonde blocker.
Though Tsukishima looked less than thrilled to be in the conversation, he didn’t give her the cold
shoulder. It was a weird sight, as Hinata had only seen his neighbor talk to himself and Yamaguchi
before today. Just who was this girl, and what did she want with the snooty blocker?

“Oh.” Hinata turned his head back to Yamaguchi, his stomach clenching when seeing the lost look
plastered under freckles. Yamaguchi’s hand trembled against the pencil, though he didn’t seem to
notice as he watched the unusual scene in front of him. It was quite clear to the god how deeply the
scene hurt his friend.

“Do you know who that is?”

“Not personally. She…asked Tsukki on a date.” There was a quiver to the brunette’s lip that pained
the smaller man. Hinata silently winced at the fake smile struggling to stretch over Yamaguchi’s lips.
“The day after Ennoshita’s premiere, Tsukki and I were studying in the library. She came by the
table and admitted she had liked him for a while. When she asked Tsukki, he...agreed.”

“What? But why would he say yes?” Hinata’s question was met with a shrug that wasn’t meant to
look so stiff. Again, the reminder of his disappearance reared his ugly head. This time, it had been
Yamaguchi who had been left in the crossfire. Disliking how wrong the information made him feel,
Hinata shook his head quickly.

“There’s no way this is real.”

“It’s not hard to believe; who wouldn’t want to date Tsukki?”

“Because they’re not right together.”

“We don’t know that.” The low tone that Yamaguchi used was quiet, his eyes downcasted to the half-finished worksheet resting in front of him. “And I want to hope for Tsukki’s happiness, so we should root for their date to go well.”

Hinata wanted to comfort his neighbor with words of confidence and positive energy. From his point of view, it was obvious Tsukishima wasn’t fully engaged in the conversation. His headphones were still resting on his ears, his eye down on the finished paper. Why Tsukishima had accepted a date with someone who held no importance to him was troubling, but not as much as the sound that snagged Hinata’s ear. The glance back to Yamaguchi proved he hadn’t heard the snapping twine, though it took Hinata a second to realize why. There, where the yellow and pink striped thread wrapped around Yamaguchi’s wrist, was a frayed piece of string. It was small, barely noticeable on the thick thread. Maybe someone not looking would had skimmed over it. But in all the years Hinata had been the god of love, he had never seen a soulmate fray like that.

And the thought terrified him.

“Yamaguchi-”

“I don’t think I can help you out with Yachi and Kiyoko. Sorry, Hinata.” Yamaguchi’s eyes dropped down to the table, his eyes catching the half-finished paper in front of them. “Ah, we only have a few minutes to finish this. Let’s continue, okay?”

The two rushed through the work, though Hinata barely listened to his friend’s instructions. His attention continued to drag back to the thread, wondering what the frayed piece meant. He’d have to check the others to assure they weren’t receiving the same treatment. The pinch server was quick to pack his bag when the professor dismissed the class. He mumbled another apology to the god before rushing to the doorway. Tsukishima had waited for his roommate, golden eyes lingering on the fumbling from. When the freckled man’s eyes looked up to him with an apologetic smile, the blond blocker rolled his eyes before departing.
Hinata had taken his time leaving class, surprise nearly tripping him when finding Kageyama waiting outside the classroom. He knew for a fact that the setter’s English satire class wasn’t in the same building. The chance of bumping into each other by accident was unlikely. Did that mean that Kageyama had come looking for him? The probable answer made Hinata’s heart skip, the god confused at the painful reaction. Why did his chest feel so weird? He had seen Kageyama lots of times before this. It wasn’t like anything about him had changed from the morning. So why was his body reacting so funny?

“How’d your plan go?” Kageyama’s question grounded the spiker’s fluttering mind, the two weaving through the hallway together.

“Yamaguchi said no, but I think it’s cause he’s distracted. Something weird happened with him and Stingysama’s thread.”

“What do you mean weird?”

“A piece of it frayed while we were talking,” Hinata explained, the taller man’s mouth flipping to a frown. They jogged down the stairwell to the exit of the building, both done with classes for the day.

“Is that unusual?”

“I’m not sure. I’ve never seen it happen before.” The brisk air that pressed to Hinata’s cheeks was a nice distraction from the frustration welling in his stomach. “The only time a soulmate will break apart is when Takeda forces a soulbreak.”

“You told me about that before, right? That’s when your dad forces soulmates apart because they’re hurting each other or something?”

“Yeah, though I’m not even sure if that’s what’s going on. This whole thing is complicated because of my screw up.”

“Then we need to figure out Yachi and Kiyoko-san before something happens to them, too.” As they took the short walk down the street to their apartment, Hinata couldn’t shake his negative feelings away. With each crunch of snow under his sneakers, the intense sensation grew. How did things get so messy? So many people had been wrapped up in Hinata’s stupid decision. It was hard to ignore it now. Kageyama didn’t seem to notice the internal battle in his roommate, yanking his keys from his
jacket when the two stopped in front of their door. “What are we doing for dinner tonight? I think Sugawara-san made-”

“I ruined everything and I’m not sure how to make it alright again. Yachi and Kiyoko deserve my full attention, but my mind is so ‘bwah’ from Yamaguchi that I can’t! I haven’t figured out what I’m supposed to patch up with Sugawara and Daichi, and I don’t have enough time to even question Noya-san about Asahi. I didn’t want to ruin their lives, any of them!”

“Stop yelling,” Kageyama snapped, the smaller god refusing to listen as they moved into the apartment. “We’ll think of something.”

“Like what? We already thought of ‘something’, and that plan just made Yamaguchi’s thread fray.”

“You’re being dramatic, dumbass.” Waiting until the door was shut behind them, the dark haired man turned to his fidgeting roommate with a glare. “So the first plan didn’t work. Whatever, who cares? You just going to give up on their soulmate string?”

“N-no way! Never,” Hinata responded with conviction, and Kageyama leaned his shoulders against the doorframe.

“Good.”

“Good!” The two sat in silence for a minute before Kageyama shifted in his pose.

“What if we switched the plan around?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Let’s bring Yachi to Kiyoko. We’ve got a test coming up in child care. I’ll set up a study session in the library with Yachi and Yamaguchi when Kiyoko is working.”

“You don’t study.” The blunt tone Hinata used made Kageyama flush, his voice raising in emotion.
"We’re not going to really study, idiot!" For good measure Kageyama swiped at his roommate, smacking the back of his head as he tried to ignore his own embarrassment. “It’s just a cover to get Yachi and Kiyoko in the same place so you can work your weird magic.”

“Wah...Kageyama, you’re awesome!” The huge smile on Hinata’s face was the only indication of his intention before he lunged forward, little hands quick to wrap around Kageyama’s torso. Stunned by the motion, Kageyama stumbled back into the door, his spine tensing. What was Hinata doing? Fingers frozen by his side, the setter felt his heart constrict. Hinata seemed so comfortable with the touch, and yet the setter felt like he couldn’t breathe. His breath shuddered when brown eyes peered up at him in curiosity. “Kageyama?"

“I…” His throat was dry, making it hard to voice his response. Even if niagra falls was wetting his vocal box, Kageyama wasn’t sure what he wanted to say. The moment was surreal; when was the last time he had been touched like this? His parents were just as bad at physical love as they were at parenting and he’d never had a boyfriend. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d felt cared for. His teammates were good for some types of affection, but nothing like the warmth he felt radiating from the spiker’s embrace. He didn’t know if he was supposed to respond. Yet with the big gaze of Hinata gazing up at him, his tongue moved with words. “I don’t...know what…”

“Oh.” Hinata’s arms loosened around the lean chest, and the god of love didn’t hesitate to take action. Small hands wrapped around the setter’s wrist, yanking him through the living room. Kageyama made a noise of protest, though it fell on deaf ears. Hinata broke into Kageyama’s room, eyes flickering with conviction when they spotted the bed. “Here!”

“Wh-what?” The taller man was pushed onto the mattress, his wide eyes showing his surprise. Hinata jumped onto the bed next to Kageyama, the smaller body wiggling between limp arms. The god didn’t seem to mind the lack of pressure, the small hands returning to circle behind Kageyama’s back again.

“It feels really good to give someone a hug; go ahead, try it!”

“This is weird.” Kageyama mumbled, Hinata not responding. The setter couldn’t keep his nerves from rising, anxiety at being so close to another person spiraling through his stomach. If Hinata could hear the pounding heartbeat pulsing in his chest, he didn’t say anything, simply pressing his head under the chin of his taller roommate. Hinata was so relaxed in spite of the panicked man he was holding, Kageyama jumping when a soft touch was smoothed down his back.

“Just hug me.” The soft demand of the celestial being had the dark haired man’s arms snapping into action, a squeak coming from Hinata at the hard pressure slamming him into Kageyama’s chest. “W-Wait! Not like that, you’ll kill me!”
“This is why I said it’s stupid!” Kageyama’s snappy tone tried to cover his shame. Before he could shove his annoying roommate away, Hinata patted his back and glanced up at the setter from the corner of his eye.

“Try again,” he encouraged before closing his eyes, showing complete trust. Kageyama didn’t move right away, but his internal desire to get it right finally kicked him into gear. This time he pressed with uncertainty, long arms slow to wrap around the small body. When Hinata hummed in approval of the touch, Kageyama felt the tension winding in his shoulders relax. The steady breathing of his roommate started to slow the setter’s nerves. The soft weight resting in his arms was comforting in a non-tangible way. It was something he couldn’t describe. Hinata’s body was emitting heat, and despite the slight chill of his room, Kageyama felt warm. Safe. It was a stupid thought, he knew. It wasn’t like a hug could save him or change his past. The silence was weird for the two, who were bickering almost every second of their time together. Yet for some reason, holding Hinata dissolved the desire to speak.

Maybe he wasn’t thinking straight from the drowsy feeling. The atmosphere was shifting, though the setter couldn’t place where it was headed. The muddled factors were blamed for the movement of Kageyama’s fingers, the skilled digits slipping into the spiker’s hair. It was soft, with more volume and resistance than Kageyama’s. The difference of texture was alluring, and the setter ran his thumb over Hinata’s nape. The hair was even softer there, and resulted in a shiver from his roommate. A second later the hand was dropped back onto the bed as if burned.

“Sorry.” He had no clue what he was doing, only going with little grasps of instinct and curiosity. But Hinata had shivered, which meant he had done something wrong. Or he thought that was the case, until Hinata pressed his face into Kageyama’s chest.

“No, it...felt nice.”

“Oh.” The silence returned, but Kageyama felt his cheeks warm as he repeated the action, leaving his other arm secure over Hinata’s back. Like a kitten Hinata leaned back against the touch while he quietly sighed. Hinata didn’t pull away, and Kageyama continued to run his fingers through the spiker’s hair. The motion seemed to have an effect on the god, and it only took a few minutes for Hinata’s body language to change. The god’s hands bunched into the back of the setter’s shirt weakened, but didn’t release completely. An even level of breathing and the full relaxation of the little form in his arms made Kageyama realize Hinata had fallen asleep. The setter glanced down to Hinata, who unconsciously nuzzled into the fabric covering his chest.

“Who falls asleep in the middle of the day? Idiot,” Kageyama chastised quietly, eyes narrowing on the slumbering midget.
And yet his fingers didn’t slow in their comforting speed.

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“What are you doing, Shittykawa?” Oikawa’s eyes didn’t leave the pool of water in front of him, a scowl marring his pretty lips. The god of lust was quite focused on the image shimmering in the ripples, even as his friend stomped to where he was laying. “You going deaf?”

“Look at chibi-chan getting all lovey dovey with some human; it’s disgusting.” He pointed down to the water where the aforementioned god was reflected, wrapped up in the arms of a human Oikawa had never seen before. “He runs away from his post for two days and gets to take Suga on a vacation? How is that fair?”

“Sounds like you’re jealous for no reason. You go down to earth all the time to sleep with humans. And it’s not a vacation.” Cheeks puffed out in a childish nature when Iwaizumi sat down next to him, rolling one shoulder with a grimace. He had pulled two of the younger gods apart that morning when they had started to fight, and his shoulder ached from the altercation. The pain was weak, but it distracted him from the curious look Oikawa sent him. “Because you were such a dick, Hinata got punished and was sent down to fix some couples. I guess their soul threads or whatever got all screwy, and now Hinata and Sugawara are fixing it.”

“So what’s this human got to do with it?” Oikawa asked, shifting up from the damp ground.

“Why would I tell you that?” Iwaizumi sent a warning look to the alluring god when he shimmied into the guardian’s lap. Long limbs draped over Iwaizumi’s shoulders and thighs, Oikawa’s smile tainted with seduction as he leaned closer to his friend.

“Iwa-chan, you look really good today. I wouldn’t be so curious about chibi-chan if you gave me something to occupy my time.”

“Like what, my dick?” The blunt tone from Iwaizumi made Oikawa’s eyes shine with mischief, one of his hands rolling over his shoulder and descending down the broad chest.

“Well, if you’re offering-”

“Can it, horndog.” A quick grab onto the brunette’s wrist made the lusty god pout, pressing his hips
down into the guardian in retaliation. The soft hiss from Iwaizumi paired nicely with the pink in his cheeks, proving the god’s powers weren’t completely useless. Oikawa grinned at his small victory.

“It doesn’t feel like all of you minds my interrogation skills.” A roll of green eyes didn’t argue against the claim, though Iwaizumi continued to hold the wrist hostage.

“Why do you want to know about the kid anyways? He’s got nothing to do with the punishment. If anything, Hinata’s just got a crush, which also has nothing to do with your department.”

“It must be nice to be able to fall in love like a fool.” The cold edge to Oikawa’s tone was out of character, and took the guardian by surprise. The bitter gleam in his dark stare wasn’t directed at Iwaizumi, but the lake the two sat beside. Shoulders that always dropped with calm seduction were now was rigid as Oikawa’s spine, the god of lust expressing something darker than mere curiosity.

“Says the man who has all the gods eating out of his palm. You could have anyone you wanted,” Iwaizumi retorted once gathering his senses back. A blink of brown eyes dismissed the cold look from before, Oikawa turning back to Iwaizumi and squirming in his lap.

“Does that mean I can have you, as well?” Their gazes were locked for a few heartbeats before Iwaizumi scoffed, pushing Oikawa off him.

“I’m warning you once; leave Hinata alone. The last thing I need to do is chase your sorry ass around because you couldn’t mind your business.”

“I would never dream of making your life harder, Iwa-chan.” Yet from the light tone in his voice, it was obvious the cogs were turning in Oikawa’s head. He ignored the serious look sent from the guardian to roll back over to the image in the water, a devious thought running through his head.

He couldn’t help but wonder if the god of love could feel heartbreak, too.

Chapter End Notes

Oh no, Oikawa is up to no good. What is he thinking? What will happen with Kiyoko and Yachi? Why was Tsukishima talking with that girl? And what will happen with Hinata and Kageyama’s relationship? Find out next time. Kudos and comments are always welcome!
Chapter Summary

Yamaguchi is more intuitive than Kageyama expects, and Hinata learns the truth of his roommate’s past

Chapter Notes

Ahhhhh I’m so sorry this is coming out so late! Saturdays are just too busy for me >.< But happy father’s day to everyone! Hope that you spent it enjoying the day with all the dads you know! And for now, enjoy this lovely chapter =D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“We’re all a little weird. And life is a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall into mutually satisfying weirdness—and call it love—true love.” -Robert Fulghum

“I’m sorry, Kageyama, but I don’t think I can make it tonight.” The soft voice Yachi used when bowing her head to the setter showed her remorse, pretty pink fingernails nervously fidgeting on her lap. “One of my co-workers needed the night off for her sister’s 21st birthday. I promised to take her shift at the coffee shop.”

“And tomorrow night doesn’t work for us because of practice,” Yamaguchi added, his cowlick seeming to droop as he tapped his agenda. “The test is Tuesday morning. That doesn’t leave us much time to look at.”

“I’m really sorry!” Yachi’s panicked expression when she lifted her head made Kageyama squirm in his seat, giving a quick shake of his head.

“It’s fine.”

“Really it’s not your fault; our volleyball schedule is intense and takes up a lot of our time.” The three students had their desks pressed together, their classwork finished and set to the side. Yamaguchi excelled in the course, and Yachi was quite good with making quick work of their assignment. Even if Kageyama struggled to keep up at times, having Yachi and Yamaguchi made it easier. If only the same could be said for putting Hinata’s plan into action. Though he knew it wasn’t the girl’s fault, Kageyama felt a buzz of irritation at being unable to pick a time that worked for both
of them. Between their school schedules, jobs, and volleyball, it didn’t look feasible.

“Maybe I should just marry rich; then I wouldn’t have to worry about school,” Yachi groaned, Yamaguchi snickering as he leaned his head in his palm.

“You’d really fit the trophy wife persona, Yachi-san.”

“That’s mean, Yamaguchi!” The puffing of the woman’s cheeks while she dropped her head onto her desk made her look far younger than she was. Despite his preference for men, Kageyama could appreciate her cute appearance. Her feminine bows and subtle makeup kept her look refreshing. Wide brown eyes gazed up at the freckled man with a scowl, her nose scrunched childishly. “You sound like Tsukishima”

“Nobody can be that salty,” Kageyama quipped, his frown showing his lack of understanding when the two classmates started to laugh.

“We must not be that far off if we’re all still single.” Yamaguchi’s comment made the setter roll his eyes.

“I’m happy just playing volleyball.”

“But wouldn’t you be even happier if you found the person of your dreams?” Yachi asked, her eyes drooping in a dream-like trance as continued. “I know I would. It’d be someone who's cool, calm, and collected. She’d have really pretty hair, dark and smooth. And she’d be super smart, but not a show off about it. She’s probably too mature for that, you know? But not a pushover; I bet she’d be able to put anyone in their place with a few sharp words.”

Too lost in her own dreamland, Yachi missed the shocked glance on Yamaguchi’s face. Kageyama, who was always good at observing things, knew why the pinch server looked so stunned. Hinata had told the brunet about the good feeling he had hooking up Yachi and Kiyoko. The two had never met, interacted, or probably even known each other. But just like that, Yachi had described their team manager without so much as a hint. Kageyama knew why Hinata could make connections with a blink of an eye; he was the god of love after all. But for someone in the dark like Yamaguchi, it was magic.

“Yachi, would you like to come see one of our volleyball games?” And it might have been why Yamaguchi proposed the random offer to the blonde. Yachi only blinked once before her eyes
shined with excitement, cheeks starting to flush as she nodded eagerly.

“I can come? I mean, I’ve always wanted to go! What, with working with Ennoshita and listening to you two talking about it--I’d really like to come! When is your next game?”

“We have one Saturday, if you’re not working,” Yamaguchi offered, Yachi’s smile widening at the news.

“Normally I do, but remember how I said I switched shifts with my friend? She took my Saturday.” Now Yamaguchi flashed a grin, the two seeming to bounce energy off of one another.

“It’s fate then; you have to come cheer us on. And maybe you’ll find that special girl you’re looking for.”

“Why does it have to be me? What about you two?” The turn of attention surprised Kageyama, the sweet woman barely letting her gaze linger on the blushing brunet across from her desk. “Though I suppose this question should be directed to Kageyama, since you-”

“Y-Yachi!” Yamaguchi’s shaky voice and flushed face was enough for the observant setter to understand that she held knowledge he didn’t. Kageyama felt no desire to probe; everyone was entitled to keep some things to themselves. If Yamaguchi wanted him to know, he’d tell him. Then again, from what Hinata had said, the dark haired man could guess what the pinch server was hiding.

“So that just leaves you, Kageyama. What would your soulmate be like?” As if realizing her forward nature, Yachi gave a small smile and rushed to wave her hands in front of her. “Ah, if it makes you uncomfortable-”

“I’ve never thought about it before.” Kageyama’s blunt response wasn’t a lie; the setter never put much stock in thinking about his perfect match. Until Hinata showed up in his life, he had just assumed soulmates were something people made up to make them feel better about their relationships. He honestly hadn’t believed in them. But now, knowing the truth behind soulmates, the question wasn’t so crazy.

Except for the fact that Hinata had never even hinted at who his soulmate was. For all the love talk that the spiker spewed out, the other half to Kageyama was never mentioned. Part of the responsibility rested on his shoulders; Kageyama didn’t ask. Then again, with how much emphasis the god put on being acquainted with your other half, it was almost strange for it not to come up. Did
that mean his soulmate string wasn’t in danger? Was Hinata not allowed to tell him? Hinata never outright told the others who their soulmates were. Maybe it was some rule his dad had put on him. Maybe it just ruined the magic for Hinata. Either way, the god of love hadn’t even so much as hinted at who Kageyama was supposed to end up with, or even what type of soulmate he had.

“Well want to give it a shot now?” Yachi’s voice reached the setter’s ears, though he was only partially listening. His focus was still lingering on his roommate and his lack of knowing anything about his soulmate. Knowing his idiotic teammate, Hinata probably completely overlooked it. The thought made Kageyama scoff.

“Nobody stupid.” The words were spat out with pure annoyance, but Kageyama didn’t notice as his eyes narrowed on the desk in front of him. “He can’t be gullible either. Or noisy. Definitely not someone who constantly talks.”

“That would be kind of hard for someone like you to handle,” Yamaguchi said, seeming to agree with Kageyama’s analysis. The dark haired man nodded once, a weird feeling swelling in his chest when his mind flashed back to his annoying roommate pressing into his chest the day before.

“They...should like volleyball.” When he spoke this time, his voice lacked the anger from before. His glare had lost its deadly gleam, his frown resting into something more neutral. “And should know how to play. Be passionate about it. They shouldn’t just quit when they don’t get something right; they should keep working hard. Refuse to give up on their dreams, even if they mess up every now and then. And not be afraid to go up against people who are bigger or stronger than them.”

“Does Kageyama have a crush on someone?” Yachi’s innocent question stiffened the setter’s spine, the coffee barista tilting her head curiously. “You said you’d never thought of what you’d want in your perfect partner, but you speak like you already have someone in mind.”

“Of course not. Love is pointless,” Kageyama replied, wondering why his face warmed despite his immediate denial. If Yachi or Yamaguchi noticed the look they didn’t voice it, though a shared glance between his two quiet classmates was incriminating.

“It was just a thought.” Yachi’s smile was bright while she grabbed their papers from the desks and stood. She waved the pile at the two as she yanked her bag over her shoulder. “I’ve got to get going; my shift starts in a half hour and I forgot my uniform at home. I’ll turn these in while you guys put the desks back, okay? Yamaguchi, text me the information about Saturday. I can’t wait to see you guys play!”

“Bye, Yachi-san!” Yamaguchi waved to their classmate while Kageyama started reforming the lines
of the desks, the teacher announcing the homework for the next week while most of the class started to shuffle out of the room. His neighbor fixed his own desk and grabbed his supplies, turning his attention to Kageyama once organized. “Are you done for the day?”

“No, I’ve got my clay sculpting class.”

“The art building is on the way back to the apartment complex, right? Let’s walk together.” The suggestion wasn’t strange since Yamaguchi was known for being quite friendly with the members of the volleyball team. Despite this, Kageyama hesitated with his nod, his guard coming up when the two left the building. Normally the mousy brunette was quick to go on his way, rushing to meet with his roommate or finish a project he had due for another class. This was the first time that Yamaguchi seemed relaxed walking beside Kageyama, his brown eyes content with watching the snow dribbling from grey clouds above them. Kageyama’s arms were tight around his books while he walked in silence, nearly jumping out of his skin when Yamaguchi finally spoke.

“Yachi’s description really resembled Kikyo-san, right?”

“Somewhat,” Kageyama answered, unsure why the pinch server was bringing it up. Yamaguchi didn’t look bothered by his ambivalent answer, pushing forward with his hidden agenda.

“It’s funny, really. Just the other day in class Hinata had mentioned getting the two of them together. I found it a little weird because he barely knew either of them, and yet he was eerily spot on.” When Kageyama didn’t respond to the statement, Yamaguchi let out a puff of laughter into the crisp winter air. “Your roommate is really good at matching people up; he was the one who helped Tanaka and Ennoshita back together, too.”

“He tends to meddle,” Kageyama clarified, giving a weak shrug of his shoulders. “It’s not something you should look too much into.”

“If I’m not careful, he’s going to try and do the same to me.” The comment was too close for comfort, and the setter felt his stomach spike in anxiety.

“Why would you think that?”

“It just seems his pattern; he did question my dating life the first night we met,” Yamaguchi pointed out, his previous observance of the snowfall lost to focus on his neighbor. “Sometimes I hear him talking with Suga-san about the relationships on the team. It seems he’s quite interested in almost
“Almost?” The phrasing of Yamaguchi’s observance caught the taller boy’s attention, watching his brunette teammate nod.

“Everyone but you, that is.” The shift in the conversation was a double edged sword; though it kept Yamaguchi away from learning the truth about Hinata, it also put unwanted spotlight on himself. Wondering why he had agreed to walk with Yamaguchi, Kageyama tried to look around for the art building while answering.

“It’s because I’m not interested in finding someone.”

“Hmm. Maybe.” Yamaguchi didn’t sound convinced with Kageyama’s clear cut explanation. Though he wanted to steer away from the conversation, his earlier thoughts on the subject started to surface again. Hinata didn’t just meddle with his friend’s relationships. At times between classes or on their way to practice, Hinata would stop to work his magic on a couple they came across. He was the god of love, and that job didn’t stop because of his new assignments. Plus, it was obvious that Hinata loved helping others out. Giving some extra ‘assistance’ to a struggling couple came second nature for the short spiker. Kageyama knew that despite his clear objectives, he wouldn’t turn a blind eye on other relationships.

Which brought up the silence on Kageyama’s soulmate again.

“He’s just an idiot,” Kageyama finally spat out, hoping it would end the conversation. The silence between them only lasted a moment before Yamaguchi shyly glanced away from Kageyama.

“Or maybe he doesn’t want to see you with someone else.” The comment was so surprising that it paused Kageyama’s feet, the setter’s eyes baring his confusion clear enough for Yamaguchi to continue. “Kageyama...isn’t it possible that Hinata has a crush on you?”

“No?” What he had meant to be a firm answer turned into it’s own question, and Yamaguchi didn’t hesitate to jump on the chance to answer.

“But he likes hanging out with you all the time! He looks for you at practice before anyone else, and is always bragging about how you’re the best setter. You two bicker like an old married couple, and he’s the only person you let hang all over you. All the evidence implies there’s feelings there.”
“You’re looking into it too much,” Kageyama denied, his eyes trying to glare through his embarrassment. Quick to resume the walk, his pace increased once seeing the art building’s front entrance.

“Or maybe you’re not looking into it enough.”

“I have to go to class.” And before his teammate could get another word in, the taller man rushed up the stairs and into the art building. He made sure to press to the wall next to the doorway as if Yamaguchi would barge in and demand a continuation of their conversation. It was a crazy thought, and after a minute without the intrusion, Kageyama slumped against the wall with a sigh. His hand pressed over his chest, wondering why the small burst of movement had caused his heartbeat to become so erratic. A few measly stairs shouldn’t have made him feel so out of breath. But it had to be that.

Because Kageyama didn’t want to think of what else would have made him feel so flustered.

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“Why is sculpting so hard?” Hinata’s loud complaint echoed through their apartment as the two entered, Kageyama rolling his eyes while closing the door behind him.

“Because they expect you to have some artistic ability, which you don’t.” The blunt reply made Hinata scowl, the spiker sending a disapproving look at Kageyama before he flopped onto the couch in the living room. The setter followed close behind, sitting on the cushion that Hinata’s small frame didn’t reach. The tips of Hinata’s toes brushed the outside of his thigh, and the tall man ignored the weird sensation fizzling through his skin as he dropped his head onto the back of the couch.

“I blame the teacher. Isn’t her job to teach me?”

“You can’t teach talent.”

“Says who?”

“You are an idiot.” Hinata let out a squawk of defiance before he jabbed his heel into Kageyama’s thigh, the setter wincing at the flash of pain before steering a fierce look at his roommate.
“Says the one who doesn’t study,” Hinata retorted. Before Kageyama could point out that he couldn’t study talent, Hinata’s eyes flashed with an idea before he pushed to sit up next to Kageyama. “I forgot to ask you what happened with Yachi today!”

“Nice going,” Kageyama teased, smirking at the flush of embarrassment now covering Hinata’s round face. “She wasn’t free tonight, but we managed to convince her to come to the game Saturday.”

“How does that solve anything?” Hinata asked, yanking his feet to sit cross-legged on the cushion. The fact that he could sit comfortably while facing Kageyama showed how small he truly was, though the setter kept the thought to himself.

“You’ll have the chance to introduce Yachi to our team before the game, which includes the manager. The point is to get them to meet, right? It’s easier this way.”

“You actually thought this whole thing out. That’s great!” Unsure if he should feel offended by Hinata’s implication toward his intellectual ability, the spiker’s mouth didn’t give him time to think it over. “You’re really the best partner ever!”

“This is all just so you’ll get out of my apartment,” Kageyama snapped out, frustrated at the memory of Yamaguchi’s words now floating through his head. Even with the space offered by the couch, the two had migrated toward each other, Hinata’s knees pressed to the outside of Kageyama’s thigh. The touch didn’t bother him like it should have. And even if the praise that Hinata poured on him was directly related to their “mission”, Kageyama’s chest puffed with pride at the compliment. It was reactions like this that made the setter snap at his spiker, though it didn’t stop the guilt he felt when Hinata scowled up at him.

“You’re still going on about that?”

“Obviously. You just invaded my space and forced some crazy task onto me without even asking what I thought of any of this.”

“Well if I bother you so much, you could just say so, Bakayama!” Hinata’s voice was loud, but it wasn’t anger that was reflecting in his amber gaze. Hurt was evident, even as he insulted the setter and glared down into his own lap. Disliking the reaction, Kageyama hesitated before leaning over to drop his large hand onto the top of Hinata’s head.
“It’s not like I hate you or anything. Stop being dramatic.” He waited until the familiar gaze was lifted back to his own before he sighed, hoping his lack of knowledge involving intimate conversation wouldn’t show through. “You’re a pretty good spiker, even if you get overzealous. You’re someone I like working with. And hanging out with you isn’t the worst thing I could do with my free time, I guess.”

“It’s the same for me, you know.” Hinata’s ease with expressing himself was obvious, the smaller man lacking any self-consciousness while he nodded. “You’re mean most of the time and you get way too mad over little things, but you’re super cool on the court. And you’re the first person I met who didn’t look down on me or treat me like a kid. I guess you humans call us friends? Yeah, you’re my first real friend!”

“You too,” Kageyama muttered quietly, Hinata’s grin bright for only a moment before it dimmed with a look of contemplation.

“But it’s not the same as Yamaguchi or Noya and Tanaka-senpai.” Fidgeting fingers flexed in Hinata’s lap, as if unsure of where to rest as he tried to explain himself. “It feels the same, but different too. In a good way? It’s like a rush of good feelings, but also some weird ones that I don’t get when I’m with them. Do you know what I mean?”

It scared Kageyama how quickly he understood Hinata’s horrible explanation. Part of that may have been because he didn’t know how to put it into words, either. His teammates were his friends. Sometimes lack of confidence made him doubt that, though a reassuring smack on his back by Daichi or a compliment from Asahi washed that fear away. Yet here, while staring down at the innocent and expectant gaze of Hinata, the younger man knew there was a shift of difference between them. The nerves of losing his friendship with Hinata wasn’t there because he knew the truth; Hinata was a god who was only there for a month. If the man disliked him, it wasn’t going to change his life for long. He had no reason to care about what Hinata thought of him.

But he did. He cared. Enough for his lungs to struggle to breath and his stomach to cramp in a way that was dreadful and exhilarating. His body was refusing to function properly, and it took him three tries to finally get his brain and mouth to focus on changing the topic completely.

“How do you plan to fix Asahi and Noya?” The look of confusion on Hinata’s face proved the change was lacking any finesse, but the setter didn’t care. “We can’t really do anything with Yachi and Kiyoko-san until Saturday, which is two days away. While we wait, we should move onto the next couple. You told me that you wanted to work with Noya and Asahi next, so let’s think of your plan of infiltrating them.”
“Can’t we do that later?” It was the first time since the orange haired spiker showed up on his doorstep that he actively avoided talking about love. The hesitancy in his gaze proved that sometime was off about the god, and Kageyama wasn’t going to let the strange behavior go by quietly.

“Let’s do it now. The last thing we need is your thick head going into another couple without a plan.” Kageyama waited for a loud retort about the insult, and warning bells went off in his head when he didn’t get a response. Now his attention was focused on the man next to him, Hinata’s downcast stare hinting that something was amiss. “What’s up with you?”

“I...don’t normally get involved with people with red strings. It’s more Oikawa’s department,” Hinata admitted weakly, the name making Kageyama’s nose scrunch is distaste.

“But they’re supposed to be pink, right?”

“They were, but because of my disappearance, they never fully got there.”

“Which means?” Kageyama asked, watching Hinata let out a huff of annoyance.

“That Oikawa technically has just as much pull on them as I do.” Obviously frustrated at himself, Hinata smacked his palm into his temple. “Red strings are heavily influenced by their sexual bond, and they’re the most unpredictable of the four pairs. It’s also the only bond that involves another god. Oikawa doesn’t like to let their sexual attraction become true love, either, so he tends to sabotage them before I can really do anything romantic for them. He always wins, no matter what I try.”

“But Noya and Asahi are different.” The firm tone in Kageyama’s voice was surprising, but the setter refused to back down in his resolve. “They want to be together, or else their bond wouldn’t have wanted to shift to pink, right?”

“It is really rare for red to shift to pink,” Hinata admitted, biting the side of his mouth to hide his smile when Kageyama leaned closer to him.

“So stop comparing them to everyone else. Maybe Oikawa has sabotaged you ninety nine times, but there’s still one more chance to stand up to him. And now you’ve got me by your side. You’re not alone this time.”

“Right.” Hinata’s nod was sharp as he clenched his hands in his lap, the doused fire in his eyes
roaring back to life, “We won’t lose to him!”

“We won’t.” Hinata felt his smile spread across his lips at Kageyama’s words, his body leaping into action. Before the setter could prepare himself Hinata pushed forwards, jumping onto the unsuspecting man with a cheer.

“We’re going to kick his ass!”

“Hinata!” Kageyama barked out, the laughing god ignoring him while tossing his arms into the air. The extra weight pressed into his lap and chest made Kageyama fall against the back of the couch. The setter’s intense glare was quickly lost when Hinata’s arms dropped around his neck and yanked him into a familiar hug, still laughing next to his ear. Having Hinata taller than him felt strange, his face smushed into the side of the spiker’s neck. But excluding the positioning, the warmth of the embrace felt the same. His arms weren’t strangling Kageyama, but gave enough pressure to remind the setter that they were holding him. It was just as embarrassing as the first time, the taller man’s arms motionless against his sides. But despite the wave of awkwardness, Kageyama couldn’t force himself to hate the feeling of being hugged.

“Get off me,” Kageyama protested, though didn’t move to push the smaller man away. It was obvious that Hinata had no intention of listening as he settled into Kageyama’s lap, only pulling back enough to catch the setter’s stare with his own.

“Does it still feel weird?”

“Getting mauled by a pint size grizzly bear?”

“No, idiot. I’m asking is it still hard for you to accept that someone would want to hug you.” Hinata’s voice was questioning, genuinely curious of Kageyama’s current feelings. Never being the best to express himself, the setter scowled, doing his best to not seem affected by the intimate touch.

“It’s...complicated,” he finally settled on, unsure of how else to explain it.

“How?” Hinata didn’t seem quite as satisfied with Kageyama’s word, pressing the conversation forward despite Kageyama squirming beneath him.

“You wouldn’t understand,” the setter claimed, hoping to squash the topic with his dismissive tone.
Instead, Hinata tightened his hug, pulling them closer with a shake of his head.

“Try me.”

“It’s...it’s not like I’ve never tried to be close to people before.” The unpleasant feeling that was creeping into his body was immediate, his spine hunching while his shoulders struggled to keep from slumping in dismay. He steeled his face automatically, forcing the encroaching feelings away. “There was a kid in high school that had told me he was gay. We were both on the same volleyball team. He started to hang around me a lot and buy me my milk cartons at lunch. I didn’t really get it, but my teammates kept making comments about him liking me or something. And then there was a party...it’s not that I actually even felt much for this kid. His spikes were terrible and he could barely block. His receives were comparable to yours which isn’t saying much-”

“What happened at the party?” Hinata asked, eyes focused on watching how Kageyama’s gaze shifted to his left to stare at the wall.

“Nothing.” The long drag of silence between them promised Kageyama’s words weren’t honest, so Hinata waited as patiently as he could for his roommate to amend his statement. “Stupid teenage stuff. He told me he liked me and asked to kiss me. Everyone else used to brag about kissing. I should have--We kissed...we kissed a few times, and then he went and told the rest of the team that he ‘won’. From the pieces of information I could obtain, it was some bet as to how long it would take to get ‘Robotyama’ to act human. And I guess a kiss proved that I wasn’t some emotionless android.”

He wanted to pretend the memory didn’t affect him. After losing the expectation of love and affection from his flesh and blood, the same should have applied to the boys on his team. If parents who were linked to him by genetics couldn’t like him, why would a set of strangers? Letting his guard down had been a mistake, especially in the tentative years of high school. Lack of social interaction and positive engagement left him awkward in everything unrelated to volleyball. Even being invited to the party, when he hadn’t been asked to go to any of the others, should have been a warning. Yet when the people he had considered comrades had finally extended the olive branch, the young setter had been desperate to grasp onto it.

Working with Daichi and the others had shown him that not all extensions of friendship were fake. Being asked to hang out with Noya didn’t have ulterior motives, which was something that took time for Kageyama to wrap his mind around. Tanaka may have gotten a laugh from his horrible singing, but it was never malicious. As the years went on, Kageyama managed to shake most of his poor memories from childhood into the back of his mind. But even now, with the trust he had for his team, he shied away from any physical showing of affection. He did not want to be led back down the rabbit hole that had burned him before.
Yet the warmth that Hinata wrapped him in didn’t feel like the blaze of betrayal from years past.

“Why do humans like to hurt each other?” This time, Hinata’s words were muffled into the shoulder of Kageyama’s shirt, the taller man sighing.

“It’s not a big deal. It was years ago.”

“It doesn’t matter; that guy is a jerk!” The frustration in the spiker’s voice was clear, surprising Kageyama. “If I knew who he was, I’d make sure he got a taste of his own medicine. Like a really bad first date, or early balding! That’d show him the-”

“Why do you care?” The words were out before Kageyama could stop them. It had been a fleeting thought, one he tended to create when people showed him the faintest form of affection. Hinata had no reason to care. Kageyama continued to repeat that to himself even as the god hugged him closer, letting his warmth sink in.

“Because you’re important to me!”

“To your mission you mean,” Kageyama amended, disliking the strange tension building in his chest. Orange hair was quick to shake against his neck in denial.

“It’s not about that at all. You’re important to me. I really...I mean it. Even if I fail this mission, you’re still gonna be important, too. So don’t just toss my words away like some garbage, okay?” The weird edge to Hinata’s voice at the end of his sentence made Kageyama flush, his head tilting up to stare at the ceiling while his hand quickly pressed against the back of Hinata’s head.

“D-Don’t say stuff like that. And don’t look up.”

“Eh? Why not?”

“Just don’t, idiot.” There was a lack of disdain in his voice, which annoyed Kageyama almost as much as the heated cheeks and smile now twitching at the edges of his lips.

But neither compared to the weird heartbeat pounding warmly in his chest.
Working with Daichi had made Suga aware of a few of his ‘tells’ that were unique to him. When he was overthinking something, his brows drew close on his forehead, reminding the fertility god of an old man playing chess. Right before he laughed, his nose would twitch. After yelling at Tanaka and Noya over something ridiculous, the captain glanced to him as if needed some sort of affirmation his scolding was justified. The way his eyes softened when speaking to one of the children at his daycare was a radical difference than the sharp gaze that was now critically looking at their playbook.

Daichi has many facets to him, and Suga hated how quick he was to memorize each one.

“We need to make sure that we focus on attack against this team; their coach was known for being a powerhouse blocker when he played in college.” His voice was firm and unwavering in its analysis, dark eyes finally looking up to the setter with a stern connotation. “This is your first real game, so I’d understand if you’re nervous.”

“Oh no, I’m fine. I mean, it’s not like I have to worry about playing much with Kageyama on the team.” At the mention of the younger setter, both men glanced to the court where he was currently practicing.

“Kageyama will need breaks, and I don’t want you to think we undervalue you on this team—”

“Daichi, it’s fine. Really, I don’t mind sitting back and cheering you on,” Suga answered automatically, a smile rising to his lips as he shrugged. “But if I go in, I’ll be sure to give it my all. I wouldn’t want to disappoint you, captain.”

“Hearing you say that feels weird,” Daichi replied, rubbing the side of his neck while Suga snickered. Seeming to want to move the attention away from himself, Daichi turned the topic back to Kageyama. “I’m surprised Hinata isn’t out there bugging Kageyama to practice.”

“That is a little strange,” Suga agreed, not expecting to see Kageyama tossing for Asahi and Tanaka. A quick survey of the gym showed no trace of the short spiker, and Suga frowned in slight concern. “He came in with Kageyama, so I know he’s here—”

“Excuse us,” Yamaguchi’s voice grabbed their attention, the mousy pinch server bowing in sync
with a pretty blonde beside him. “I’m sorry to interrupt so close to the game, but have either of you seen Hinata? He wanted to introduce Yachi to our teammates, but we can’t find him.”

“We were just wondering the same thing,” Suga answered, waving to catch the other setter’s attention before beckoning him to the small group. “We should ask Kageyama; he tends to keep a good eye on him.”

“He looks busy. Maybe I should just wait until later,” the girl Yamaguchi had around the wrist suggested, the freckled man shaking his head.

“We can’t play without Hinata, so we need to find him.”

“Find who?” Kageyama entered the conversation with a scowl, a volleyball being passed between his nimble fingers.

“Have you seen Hinata?” Daichi asked, the taller man showing a look of confusion before he shook his head.

“I thought he was just taking forever in the bathroom.”

“So nobody’s seen Hinata?” The captain’s question left the group silent. It was a concerning thought until a snort cut through the tense air, all eyes falling on Tsukishima.

“If you’re looking for the flying shrimp, he’s outside sitting against the wall. He looked ready to puke, so I kept my distance.”

“You didn’t see if he was okay?” Kageyama snapped, the blonde blocker raising his eyebrow over his sport goggles.

“Last time I checked, he wasn’t my loyal servant. You go check on him.” Closing the conversation with a roll of his eyes, Tsukishima walked toward the rest of the team now huddled by the bench. Daichi gave a quiet sigh before he turned to the two younger teammates, nodding toward the exit of the gym.
“Go check on our spiker and see what’s the matter with him. If he can’t play, we’ll have to make substitutions.” Kageyama wanted to go after Tsukishima to continue their conversation. But for now, Hinata was the primary goal. He was walking toward the exit before the end of Daichi’s request, hearing Yachi and Yamaguchi trailing after him. Getting out of the crowded gym was tough, though once through the doors it was easy to spot Hinata’s orange crown of hair. His face was buried into his knees, which were pulled close to his chest. The position made Hinata look so...small. His bursting personality normally cloaked his small stature. But in the moment, seeing his roommate brought down to size made Kageyama restless.

“Hinata?” Yachi’s nervous call of his name lifted the spiker’s head, the queasy look on his face showing something was off. Kageyama stomped toward him, irritation evident in his tone.

“What the hell are you doing out here? The game is about to start.”

“I feel sick…”

“You were fine this morning,” Yamaguchi reasoned, the spiker looking at his knees in guilt.

“That’s before I saw all those people,” Hinata groaned, burying his head back into his knees. “If I mess up in practice, Kageyama will just yell at me. But if I messed up in there in front of all of them...ugh, I’m going to puke.”

“Oh, I know what this is.” Yachi’s enlightened voice was followed by the smaller woman moving to crouch in front of Hinata, her eyes showing sympathy. “Hinata, I think you’ve just got some stage fright.”

“What’s that?” Hinata’s voice was muffled, but Yachi only smiled and placed her hand onto his knee.

“It’s when you get really nervous performing in front of a bunch of people. Lots of people get it, so it’s nothing to be embarrassed about. I’ve been in lots of plays on stage, and no matter what the part I still get a little scared. It’s a little different than volleyball, but I think it’s the same premise.”

“What do you do about it? You know, to stop your stomach from going ‘blah’ all over the place?” Hinata asked, peeking his eyes out to look at the theatre student. In response Yachi held out her hand, flattening her fingers in line with her palm.
“Give me your hand and I’ll show you a trick.” Now curious from the request, the spiker moved his arm to place his hand into the woman’s. Letting out a slow breath, Yachi placed her finger on his palm, turning her gaze back up to him. “This is something my mom did for me the first time I ever performed and it made all my nerves vanish. The first thing you need to do is imagine someone you trust, who is really important to you and you know will stay by your side no matter how you play. Can you think of someone?”

“Uh…” Like a magnet the spiker’s eyes flickered over to the setter who was silently standing next to Yamaguchi. Kageyama blinked once at the look, but Hinata didn’t let his stare linger before turning it back to Yachi. “I have someone.”

“Great, now close your eyes.”

“R-Right!” The god did as told, feeling a few small circles being traced in his palm in rhythm to the Yachi’s rhyme.

“Bippity boppity boo, I believe in you!” A final tap in the middle of the imaginary circles finished off the tune, and Hinata slowly opened his eyes to look at the kind smile of Yachi. “The charm will help you remember that there’s always someone by your side, so you’re never really alone. There’s that one person who believes you can beat anything. So remember that, and all your nerves will go away.”

“How do you feel, Hinata?” At Yamaguchi’s question, the spiker curled his fingers into his palm before he blinked, his look of surprise quick to morph into excitement.

“I feel great!” The renewed spiker jumped to his feet, his eyes practically sparkling at the burst of energy. Stretching his arms over his head, Hinata shifted his weight a few times before sending a thumbs up to Yachi. “Your spell worked great. Thanks!”

“Your welcome,” she replied, pushing back to her feet the same time a long horn sounded in the gym.

“That’s the warning the game’s going to start,” Kageyama explained, and Yachi was the first one to respond with a squeak.

“Oh no, my seat! I hope it’s not taken; I’ll see you guys later. Good luck!” The theatre student rushed back to the doors of the gym, the three men following behind her. Hinata was practically skipping
with his steps, his grin wide when approaching the door.

“Man, Yachi really is amazing. I feel like I could fight a bear or something!”

“Ah, not to bring you down, but you got so wrapped up in your nerves that you never got to introduce Yachi to Kiyoko-san.” Yamaguchi’s words instantly burst Hinata’s bubble, the spiker stopping short of the entrance with his mouth dropping open.

“No way!” Hinata’s loud yell echoed through the cold air, making a set of birds scramble off the branches on a nearby tree. Kageyama smacked himself while Yamaguchi laughed, the setter mumbling ‘idiot’ to himself.

He couldn’t figure out how the god of love could be so clueless.

Chapter End Notes

Hinata is quite the interesting character...hee hee. So, what will happen with Kiyoko and Yachi? Will Hinata be able to turn Asahi and Noya's red thread? Or will something stop him? And as the two roommates get closer, is there more to Yamaguchi's words than Kageyama wants to admit. Kudos/comment and find out!
"It's a very dangerous state. You are inclined to recklessness and kind of tune out the rest of your life and everything that's been important to you. It's actually not all that pleasurable. I don't know who the hell wants to get in a situation where you can't bear an hour without somebody's company." - Colin Firth

After the most recent failed attempt to get Yachi and Kiyoko together, Hinata decided to take some time to re-think the strategy with the two women. He wasn’t admitting defeat; Hinata just needed to organize his thoughts before he simply picked up the blonde barista and threw her into the arms of Kiyoko. The thought had been pretty tempting, but Sugawara and Kageyama both vetoed the barbaric plan. Even with his immeasurable charm, the smaller god wasn’t 100% sure he could get away with that one, either.

Putting Yachi and Kiyoko on pause meant that he had to face the elephant in the room; Asahi and Noya. Kageyama didn’t have much knowledge on the situation other than the fact that the two slept together on a regular basis. And he didn’t mean that they cuddled. The style of their relationship wasn’t concrete like Ennoshita and Tanaka, yet still more developed than Yachi and Kiyoko. The fact that there was no real line of basis to go off of troubled Hinata. How did they function like that? Even as he watched the two of them across the large dinner table (Daichi had suggested after the win over their opponents that the team go out for dinner) interact, the sway of the red and pink thread irritated Hinata. It was an uncomfortable feeling that had him squirming in his seat.

“Stop that.” A slight nudge in his side made Hinata look to Kageyama, who leaned closer so his voice wouldn’t be heard by their rowdy company. “If you keep staring at them like that, they’re going to figure out something’s up. Yamaguchi is already suspicious, and he’s actually smart enough to pick up on things like this.”

“I can’t help it,” Hinata whispered back, his hand clenching his fork while he huffed out his frustration. “This one shouldn’t even be a problem!”
“Yeah, and I shouldn’t be talking to the god of love about soulmate connections. Yet here I am, so shut up and stop boring holes into their head.” The two shared a glare before Kageyama moved back to his plate, shovelling a mouthful of pasta into his mouth. The spiker rolled his eyes at his roommate’s eating habits, though he knew he couldn’t say much about it. Suga once compared to his food etiquette to a starved hyena, whatever that meant.

“I love buffets. All the meat I can eat, for the same price? How do they make money off this?” Tanaka’s mouth was full while he talked, his plate covered with everything he could possibly stuff onto it. The scathing look the blonde blocker gave him proved he didn’t appreciate the lack of manners, though Yamaguchi only laughed and offered the shrimp on his plate to his grouchy roommate.

“Here, Tsukki.” Never losing his scowl, Tsukishima shook his head while taking a piece onto his fork.

“Why do you get shrimp if you’re not going to eat it?” He asked, biting into the seafood while Yamaguchi gave him a smile.

“Ah, well...you always forget about the shrimp, and then complain about it when we get home.”

“...I don’t complain.” The guilty look on the freckled man’s face proved he disagreed with the statement, though the blocker didn’t give him a chance to voice it. Stabbing two more shrimp onto his fork, Tsukishima leaned his head on his hand while he looked at his loaded utensil. “Shut up, Yamaguchi.”

“Sorry, Tsukki.” At the apology, the taller man scoffed before nudging his discarded plate closer to Yamaguchi. Though it was mostly cleared, one side was covered with fries that Tsukishima hadn’t touched since picking them.

“I don’t want these anymore; you can have them.” Yamaguchi’s face lit up at the offer, happy to snatch a few of the salty fries for his own consumption. Hinata watched the interaction, his earlier irritation being overshadowed by the warmth in his chest. Watching humans fall in love had always been a highlight of his job, but there was something special about knowing them personally that made it even better. Millions of people fell in love, and Hinata never had the time to really learn their personal stories. Being friends with Yamaguchi, while learning how devoted he truly was to his best friend, was something magical. It made his desire to fix the frayed string hanging between them even stronger, and he silently promised the pinch server to give him the happy ending he deserved.
“Who’s ready for another plate?” Noya’s cheerful tone caught Hinata’s attention, the god of love shooting out of his seat before anyone could reply.

“Me!”

“Don’t eat too much, or you’ll be groggy tomorrow for practice,” Daichi warned, Noya giving the captain a thumb’s up before he dragged his kouhai to the other side of the restaurant. Thankful that nobody else moved from the table, Hinata followed behind Noya while scoping out the food options.

“Daichi says that, but he’s the who always goes into a food coma after a really good win. You’d think being a good captain gave him an extra stomach.” Noya laughed when picking up another plate, Hinata letting the warm porcelain soak into his palms. “I think he’s able to transfer the extra weight to his thighs; he’s got the best legs in the game. Even if I do all my battles on the ground, his legs would crush mine in a competition.”

“Asahi has a lot of muscle, as well,” Hinata replied, Noya giving a grin that teetered between pride and guilty pleasure.

“Trust me, I know. I’ve sat on them enough to truly appreciate our ace’s thighs.” The openness in which Noya spoke of their sexual relationship was an eye-opening to Hinata. They had no issue in talking about having sex, yet love was taboo? Humans were really confusing. Then again, Oikawa would fall under that same category, and he was a full fledged god.

“Noya-senpai? How long have you and Asahi-san…” His words were struggling to come out, but it seemed the libero understood what he was asking.

“I think we started like, two years ago? We’ve been friends for a while, but it was pretty obvious that I thought he was really hot. Asahi took some time to admit he found me good looking, but once he did, the kiddie gloves were off.” The small man picked out a scoop of rice as he explained the situation to Hinata, who struggled to keep an impartial face at the casual tone. “Now it’s just kind of second nature. He’ll sleep at my apartment or vice versa. So long as it doesn’t get in the way of us playing volleyball together, it works out pretty well.”

“But you’re not dating?” At Hinata’s inquiry, Noya laughed, his blond bangs swaying as he glanced up to the god.

“It’s casual, and better that way. With no title there’s no arguments, no stipulations and no
expectations. And we get to have great sex. What’s there not to like about our arrangement?”

“Well, there’s stability in a relationship. Someone’s there you can share your problems with, and you can rely on them when things are getting hectic.” Noya’s shrug rubbed Hinata in an offsetting way, though the older man didn’t seem to notice.

“I’ve got my friends for stuff like that, right?”

“Don’t you want to fall in love?” Hinata’s blurted question paused the libero for a second, eyes falling from wide to their normal shape as he gave a laugh.

“When Asahi finds a guy that he wants to have a fairy tale ending with, we’ll stop messing around. But for now, why fix something that’s not broken?” The golden gaze drifted over Hinata’s shoulder, his smile tinged with a smirk as he stepped closer to the spiker. “But if you’re so concerned about love connections, then you should know that the guy working the sushi station is totally checking out your ass.”

“Eh?” The god was ready to spin and investigate Noya’s claim, but his teammate was quick to stop him with a hand to his shoulder.

“You can’t just look! Then he’ll know that you know.” Hinata didn’t really understand what the big problem was, but he assumed it was a human thing and gave a nod. Grinning, Noya grabbed Hinata’s free wrist and pulled him closer. “Don’t worry, I won’t say anything to Kageyama if you want to talk to him.”

“No, that’s okay. We should be head back to the table.” The sentence rolled through his head after he answered, Hinata quick to realize Noya’s weird statement. “Wait, why would Kageyama care about that guy?”

“Wouldn’t you?” Noya obviously expected an answer, but Hinata felt his mind tangle with confusion. Would he care if someone tried to talk to Kageyama? Was he supposed to? He liked seeing Kageyama make friends, and when he got along with their teammates, Hinata felt some weird sense of pride. But this wouldn’t be a friendly encounter, and the young god felt like it changed the situation more than he wanted to admit. The look that Noya gave him as they trekked back to the table seemed to imply that he already knew the distinction. But if he did, he wasn’t planning on telling the spiker anytime soon.
The rest of the meal went by with little incident. The bill was surprisingly small for all the food they consumed, making Tanaka again bring up the lack of business savvy for the buffet. After forcing Tsukishima to figure out the bill (“You’re just the smartest, kouhai!”), the team shuffled from the warmth of the restaurant into the cold air of January.

“Man, that was good eating.” Patting his stomach, Noya hummed for a second before he turned to Asahi. “You ready to get your super smash on?”

“Spending the night again, eh?” Tanaka’s grin was filled with mischief as Noya shrugged, ignoring Asahi’s blush.

“His apartment’s closer to the store, so it makes it easier for me to get up there when I have to work mornings. You wanna join?”

“Nah, I’ve learned my lesson crashing in on your sleepovers.”

“Not my fault I’m loud,” Noya jested, and Tanaka pretended to throw up despite his own laughing. Hinata wasn’t aware that humans could turn as red as Asahi had during the conversation.

“Yuu,” Asahi murmured, the libero lifting his head backwards to look the man behind him. “Maybe you shouldn’t…you know.”

“Got ya,” Noya acknowledged, turning back to Tanaka and lifting his thumb up. “Catch up with you later, Ryuu.”

“Save me the pillow talk and text me when you get to work tomorrow, bromeo.” The two friends exchanged a friendly handshake that looked intricate and practiced. Hinata watched the groups separate, his own roommate tugging him toward their apartment. Suga had offered to walk Daichi home, Tsukishima and Yamaguchi leaving earlier than the rest. It made the walk back to the apartment quiet, though Hinata wasn’t sure that was a good thing. Left to his own thoughts, the god’s head swirled with discomfort and annoyance. It was obvious to him that Asahi and Noya had a great level of communication. Yet neither one had been able to break past the line between sex and love. With how content Noya was with their current relationship, Hinata could only assume that it had been Asahi who had planned to move the relationship forward. So what had changed? And where they were now, would Noya even accept a change in their pattern?

“No luck with Noya?” Kageyama had inquired when stepping into the apartment, Hinata’s scowl
seeming to give him away. Not sure how to explain himself, Hinata moved into his room to snag clothes to wear for bed. Making quick work on the change, the spiker returned to the living room to see that Kageyama had followed his lead. Now wearing blue plaid pants and a black tank top, the tall setter was settled on the couch while glancing through the channels on TV. It wasn’t until Hinata had flopped himself onto the cushion next to him that Kageyama spoke again. “Do I even want to know?”

“Why do people have sex with people they don’t love?” Hinata watched Kageyama shrug while he muted the commercial on the TV, resting comfortably against the back of the couch. “Wouldn’t know, never done it.” There was no shame in Kageyama’s voice, the man quick to supply an explanation. “After my run in with my teammate in high school, I’ve steered clear of romantic relationships. No romance, no interest in sex.”

“But Noya and Asahi are in love, yet they act like they aren’t.” The large sigh that deflated his lungs made Hinata slump in his seat. “If they’re soulmates, shouldn’t they want to be together romantically? Why is Noya fighting against it so casually?”

“Soulmates…” Kageyama’s faded voice caught Hinata’s attention, the unfocused blue stare hinting that something was amiss.

“Kageyama?”

“Hinata, who—” Kageyama paused for only a moment before he turned to face Hinata, the hairs on the back of the short man’s neck standing up. There was sudden clarity in Kageyama’s stare, the intense look freezing Hinata in his spot. “I don’t need to know their name, but...what type of soulmate do I have?”

“Your...soulmate?” Hinata croaked out, the avoided topic now center stage between them.

“I know it’s not a family one. It’s not like...I just know it’s not.” His hands balled on his lap at the painful thought, and Hinata tried to keep his throat from drying out by repetitively swallowing. “And I’m guessing there’s some weird rule about telling me their name-”

“Kageyama-” Hinata tried to interrupt, but Kageyama shook his head and continued.

“What type of soulmate do I have?” He asked again, and Hinata wanted to jump over the couch and bolt out the door. Their gazes were locked in a way that the god knew he couldn’t pull away. It was
rare for Kageyama to inquire about anything involving his powers. Love was not important to the setter. But for all the things to get curious about, why did it have to be the one thing Hinata couldn’t give him?

He could lie. It was a hard thing for Hinata to do on his best days, but he could. It wasn’t like Kageyama would know if he was telling the truth or not. If he made a suggestion of it being a friend soulmate string, then Kageyama would be none the wiser. He had already been given an escape route for not giving a name; he could say that Ukai had forbidden him to give out personal information. Then Hinata would leave in a couple weeks, and the setter would simply think he hadn’t met the person yet. It would feel terrible, but the pain would pass, and he could forgive himself eventually.

“You don’t have a soulmate string.” The words fell from his mouth with painful effort. Seeing the morphing of uneasiness in his roommate’s eyes was hard to watch, but Hinata clenched his teeth and continued. “I didn’t believe it at first, but when I came down here and looked for myself...there’s no trace of you ever having a soulmate thread.”

“What does that even mean? You told me that everyone has one.”

“Because there’s never been another human who lacked one. It’s just a part of a human’s soul. Not even Takeda had seen it before you.”

“But that…” Then the sentence died in Kageyama’s mouth. His whole body stiffened before the setter was pushing to his feet, eyes pulling away from the uneasy god to shut off the TV. “Whatever. It doesn’t matter.”

“Kageyama-”

“I’m going to bed.”

“Kageyama!” Scrambling to follow him over the couch, Hinata refused to let him escape as both men rushed into Kageyama’s room. The taller of the two ignored his roommate to duck into his bed, the covers pulling close to his face. The hint was pretty clear; go away. Hinata took the clue and threw it out the window, refusing to let it die the way Kageyama wanted it to. Instead he moved to the end of the bed, digging under the comforter in order to worm his way next to the stunned setter.

“W-what the hell?” Hinata could feel the warm breath of Kageyama skimming his forehead, but it
didn’t deter him from staring up at the man with a serious expression. “Get out of my bed, you idiot!”

“We’re supposed to be a team, remember? You said that. And that means talking about things like this, too.”

“There’s nothing to talk about,” Kageyama argued, but a shake of Hinata’s head proved he didn’t agree.

“You’re not a robot. You have feelings, I know it. I’ve seen it. So don’t be afraid to tell me how you’re feeling or what you’re thinking.” The loud declaration made Kageyama glare down at him, but Hinata wasn’t backing down. He held the strong gaze with his own.

“I’m not mad about the string.” After a few long seconds of silence, Kageyama’s eyes softened unlike anything Hinata had seen before. “But...not having a soulmate means nobody will ever understand me.”

The implication that Kageyama left in the air made Hinata’s eyes widen. It shouldn’t have hit him as hard as it did; he knew the importance of the soulmate string. But to him, he had only looked at the love aspect. He gave little thought to how important it was to have someone truly understand and respect a person for everything they were and were not. Despite their lack of romance, Tsukishima and Yamaguchi knew each other like the back of their own hands. They remembered what foods the other would forget to eat. Ennoshita proved he understood and loved Tanaka no matter how rambunctious he was. Despite the years apart, the trust Daichi had in Suga coming to work for his business was instant. Yachi thought Kiyoko was perfect before she had even met the librarian. And even with the discord with Asahi and Noya, there was a level of trust between the two that couldn’t be compared to simple friendship. To think that Kageyama couldn’t have any of that...

“It’s fine.” The clipped tone that Kageyama adopted made Hinata’s heart clench, Kageyama turning away from Hinata to face the wall next to his bed. “I didn’t expect it, anyways. The whole thing is stupid.”

“Hey, don’t say that,” Hinata protested weakly, though he didn’t know what else to say. Silence covered them like a second layer of skin. He had never experienced what Kageyama was going through. How could he? He wasn’t human, and had never met a human who was going through what the setter was. It was unheard of, and there was no rulebook in how to handle it. Even with the craziness that was the di-colored soulmate string, Hinata had some experience with changing relationships. But Kageyama was so alone in this situation-

His arms were reaching around Kageyama’s body without thinking twice, surprised to feel the
shuddering in the setter’s chest. His whole body was vibrating in restraint, and it amazed Hinata that the man was so silent despite his body’s violent reactions. Though he couldn’t see it, Hinata had done this enough to know what was going on: Kageyama was crying. The tears were silent, but even the strong setter couldn’t keep his body from trembling in Hinata’s arms. He must have been biting his lip to keep himself from making noise. Like a bullet the pain shot through Hinata’s body, and he scrambled to get closer to Kageyama’s back while pressing his forehead in-between the taller man’s shoulder blades.

“I’m sorry. Sorry, sorry…” Hinata’s lips couldn’t apologize fast enough. Even as the words were spilling out of his mouth, Hinata was trying to think of anything else to say. But nothing could be done; the wound was open and there were no bandages in sight. All Hinata could do was add pressure to the lesion and pray his hug would help settle the pain of his teammate. His words had put Kageyama in such a heartbreaking situation, and the god wanted to chase it all away. Kageyama was his friend, his partner in crime. He wanted to support Kageyama the way the man had done for him many times before. But a negative voice Hinata wasn’t used to hearing whispered through his mind.

Who will be there for him when you’re gone?

A sturdy hand pressed to the back of his own, and Hinata felt himself choke up at the unsteady voice Kageyama spoke with.

“Stop apologizing, dumbass. It was better it happened to me than someone else. Now go to sleep.” For the first time in his life, Hinata didn’t want to be the god of love. Not if it didn’t have the power to give love to those who deserved it. Because Kageyama was overdue for love. Yet not even Takeda could fix this. Being the god of fate meant that he had the burden of knowing the pain and heartbreak that each person would go through. Is this what he had meant when warning Hinata of the man’s lacking soulmate thread? Did he know just how broken Kageyama would sound when trying to relieve Hinata from any guilt? Closing his eyes, Hinata couldn’t answer his roommate. What else was there to say?

Instead, he kept his arms tight around Kageyama, allowing the setter to succumb to a restless slumber.

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Sunday had been full of so much tension, that Hinata actually looked forward to the torturous statistics class. Yamaguchi was quick to inquire about Kageyama’s off mood the night before, though Hinata avoided the discussion as much as he could. Practice had been rough for both of them, their once amazing timing falling apart from their tension. Hinata’s guilt weighed him down, and the setter’s mind was not on the game. Suga, the only one who Hinata was able to tell about the situation, did his best to try and help distract their teammates. Even Tsukishima, the most
lackadaisical and uncaring being to ever grace a volleyball court, pipped in his own comment Monday morning.

“The king looked like his peasants demanded his head.”

The only thing Hinata could do was focus on the mission while giving Kageyama the space he needed to deal with the current predicament. Since his roommate wasn’t a viable option at the moment, Hinata had to turn to another source of intelligence. That was the reason the god was hopping up the steps of the daycare where Suga was currently working. He made sure not to go through the back door, listening to the cheerful chime when he pushed the door open. The front room was filled with pictures that he was sure the children had drawn. In the midst of all of this was a framed photo of what Hinata assumed were the workers of the daycare. Kageyama was squished between Daichi and Asahi, looking uncomfortable at having his picture taken. Despite his discomfort, Hinata took a moment to admire the tall man’s attractive face.

“Hello?” Hinata moved away from the picture at the voice of their ace, Asahi tightening the bun on the back of his head while he scanned the room. His eyes showed his surprise when finding Hinata, though his kind smile implied he was welcome. “Good morning, Hinata. How was school?”

“Boring. I’m suspicious of anyone who decides that math is enjoyable. Is Suga around? I need to talk to him.”

“He’s in the middle of working on making slime with the kids, but they should be done soon,” Asahi explained, the smaller spiker nodding before he waved around the room.

“Then can I hang out here? Last time I went in, Suga tossed me out.”

“That’d probably be for the best.” Asahi pointed to one of the bean bag chairs, Hinata not hesitating to sink into the foamy seat. The new angle made Asahi seem even bigger than before, and gave the god a different angle of view. From here, his eye caught the purple bruise that was almost hidden by the loose hair near the back of Asahi’s neck. It made sense why the large man had been fussing with his hair earlier; he was trying to hide the mark that normally wouldn’t be covered by his higher hairdo.

“Did Noya-senpai sleepover last night?” The innocent question got a nod from the man now picking some of the scattered toys through the playroom.
“Why do you ask?”

“You’ve got a mark on your neck.” It was concerning how a man with such a powerful demeanor could be tripped up by a simple observation. Pressing his hand to the ground to keep himself on his feet, Asahi was flushed with embarrassment as he rose back to his full height and turned to look at Hinata.

“T-That’s—”

“It’s from him, right?” Hoping to keep his face open and trusting, Hinata watched Asahi nervously chew his lower lip before giving the smallest of nods. “Did it hurt?”

“We really shouldn’t be discussing something like this here,” Asahi cautioned, Hinata tilting his head slightly to show his confusion.

“Eh? Why not? I thought those were normal?” Too flustered to answer right away, the glass-hearted giant moved to drop the toys he was holding into the bin before he took a steadying breath.

“They…don’t really hurt,” the ace admitted, his large hand rising to press over the mark.

“It kind of looks like he branded you as his or something.” Hinata’s observation received a mixed reaction from the daycare worker. Though his lips twitched into a smile, the deep brown eyes were darkened with sadness.

“We don’t have that type of relationship.”

“You wouldn’t want to be Noya-senpai’s boyfriend?”

“I-it’s nothing like that!” Asahi objected, his free hand twitching by his side as he struggled to formulate his thoughts. “We are just….we’re where fate wants us to be right now. There’s no reason to worry about it.”

“But would you want something more?” It was obvious what his answer was, even if he couldn’t vocalize it. Asahi’s whole demeanor changed when talking about Noya. He looked lighter, and his
face relaxed with a calmness that struggled to show when playing volleyball or talking with Daichi. Asahi felt comfortable with the libero. If Hinata had to guess, the man knew just how in love he was with Noya. Yet despite this obvious sentiment, the ace simply shook his head.

“Yuu’s happy where we are, so I’m happy as well. There’s nothing you need to worry about, Hinata.” The answer felt wrong, and all the evidence Hinata needed was in the uneasy sound of rope snapping. The same as Yamauchi, Asahi’s soulmate string started to fray. The only difference between the two was the strength in their bond. The long friendship that Tsukishima and Yamaguchi had kept their thread sturdy, even if a few parts had broken and frayed. Asahi and Noya’s relationship hadn’t had the same time to develop, meaning the thread’s thickness was limited. A few pieces breaking apart was dangerous. But Hinata couldn’t tell Asahi that; which meant he had no real proof to refute his claim. Even if he did, he didn’t have the time, as Suga’s appearance into the room disrupted the conversation.

“Asahi! There you are. We were looking all over for you.” A sweep of hazel eyes caught Hinata in the corner, the fertility god smiling at his friend. “You used the front door I see.”

“I’ll go help Daichi!” The speed in which Asahi used to escape the room was a red flag if Hinata ever saw one, and it didn’t take long for Suga to place his hands to his hips and send Hinata a suspicious look.

“Did you do something to Asahi?”

“I may have asked him a few questions about his relationship,” Hinata admitted, knowing it was pointless to lie to Suga. It was like the guy had a radar for lying or something. Suga sighed as he walked over to Hinata, crouching down to ruffle the smaller god’s hair.

“Yup, that would do it. Asahi seems to be really guarded about Noya.” Once finishing his affectionate gesture, Suga let his butt drop to the floor to sit in front of Hinata. “From what Daichi has told me, Asahi is head over heels for the little guy. Nothing harmful, but our ace has it deep for Noya.”

“This whole thing is giving me a headache!” Hinata groaned, little fists banging against the sides of his head to show his frustration. Suga laughed at the display, reaching over to place his hands onto the fists and pulling them from Hinata’s temples.

“We’ll figure it out. You’ve got time.”
“But I’ve got so much to do. Not only do I need to figure out why Noya-senpai is being so stubborn, but I’ve still gotta find a way to get Kiyoko and Yachi to meet. I haven’t even tried to work on Tsukishima and Yamaguchi, and then there’s you and Daichi—”

“Don’t worry about us yet, okay?” The soft smile from Suga was meant to be misleading, but for once Hinata didn’t simply accept the easy going response.

“Are you guys getting along okay?”

“Fine. He’s a great boss.”

“Great! Then fixing whatever your problem is should be a walk in the park, and then you two can be together.” Though the words were meant to be uplifting, the look to strain on Suga’s face was trouble.

“We...can’t be together, Shouyou.” The dismal response had Hinata’s heart slowing, though Suga tried to look genuine with his smile. “If I stay around Daichi, he’ll never be happy. He can’t have a normal life with me because of my status as a demi-god. I...don’t plan to tell him about any of this.”

And suddenly, Hinata stumbled into the problem; Suga and Daichi were in love, but Suga rejected the bond. The fertility was too concerned about the effect on Daichi’s life to even contemplate staying with him. Daichi knew nothing about gods and soulmate threads. If Suga left again, he would be none the wiser. It was the same scenario that Hinata had faced with Kageyama; to tell the painful truth, or live in a blissful lie. Except Suga decided that the latter was the only acceptable answer.

“Suga, shouldn’t Daichi be the one to decide if it’ll be too much for him?” Hinata questioned, the older god smiling despite the painful tone of his voice.

“Even if Daichi was willing to make the sacrifice, I can’t put him first. My promise to Ukai was not one I did with a light heart. Maybe if I had known about my soulmate thread when I was a teen, I would have taken a different path. But I can’t change that. Even if we’re meant to be together, I can’t quit on Ukai like my mother did. I owe him so much, I don’t want to let him or Takeda down.”

“But Suga—”
“For now, let’s not worry about that. I’ll talk to Ukai and Takeda when the time comes so they don’t hold this against your godhood, okay? As for Asahi, let me see if I can get any more information before my shift is over.”

“Yeah, thanks, Suga.”

“No trouble at all.”

The two shared a smile that neither truly felt, and Hinata left with an even heavier heart than before.

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“You’re late.” A voice much softer than Kageyama reached the god’s ears when he returned to his apartment later that night. Blinking once to make sure he was in the right apartment, Hinata dropped his bag next to the doorway while golden eyes behind thick-rimmed glasses stayed steady on the television. “Kageyama’s text said you’d be home before him cause he’s at work.”

“I went to visit Yachi at the coffee shop and I fell asleep in one of the booths.” The snort from the man on his couch should have been expected by the spiker.

“Typical.”

“Wa-wait! Tsukishima, what the heck are you doing in here? Did you break in again?”

“Obviously.” Like the answer was the only proper response, Tsukishima let his thumb raise over his shoulder to aim toward the dryer in the closet. “Laundry day.”

“You can’t have a laundry day in an apartment you don’t own!” Hinata shouted, the slight wince from the blocker showing how loud he had been.

“Don’t take your bad day out on my eardrums.”

“How did you-”
“I’m smart.” And chatty with his detailed explanations. Still, the archaeology student had a point. For once, it wasn’t him that was the reason for Hinata’s bad mood. Disliking feeling like an intruder in his own apartment, Hinata stomped over to the couch before claiming the furthest cushion from Tsukishima as his own. If the blonde cared, he didn’t show it, eyes still watching the documentary on a weird looking bird.

“Asahi and Noya are being stubborn.”

“I don’t remember asking,” Tsukishima interrupted, though Hinata ignored his rude response. The spiker yanked a throw pilling to his chest, his chin resting on it as he huffed.

“Both of them are just so blind to their own feelings. It’s infuriating!”

“They’re not blind; just stupid.”

“Huh? Why do you say that?”

“I’m going to regret saying this.” Interest piqued by the out of character statement, the god’s attention rested fully on his teammate who pressed mute on the remote before he sighed. “A couple weeks ago, I overheard Asahi and Daichi in the locker room. According to the conversation, Asahi had plans with Nishinoya the night after Ennoshita’s performance to talk about something. He sounded more nervous than usual, which I didn’t think was possible. But it had nothing to do with me, so I tried to tune them out after that.”

“Then what happened?” Hinata asked, Tsukishima scrunching his lips to the left side of his face before he narrowed his gaze onto Hinata.

“Like I just said, I tuned them out. Something obviously stopped them from talking, since the two are still in their friends with benefits stage. But if I had to take an educated guess, I’d make a connection with the brief separation of Ennoshita and Tanaka. They did break up on the same day, and Tanaka slept over Nishinoya’s that night.”

“So then Tanaka’s got to have some information about what happened,” Hinata concluded, though Tsukishima shrugged and flicked his show back on.
“Don’t know, don’t care. I don’t understand what any of this has to do with you, either.”

“Don’t you want to see everyone happy?”

“Not particularly.” Tsukishima replied, and the god had to resist the urge to toss his pillow at the blocker. Despite his dismissive demeanor, Hinata knew that Tsukishima didn’t have to give him that information. It would have been less work to simply act like he didn’t know a thing. And if there was one thing Hinata knew about Tsukishima, it was that he enjoyed taking the path of least resistance. Engaging in conversation he considered “beneath” him to help out a couple that had nothing to do with him was not his normal means of action. Which meant, deep down, the blocker did care about his friend’s happiness. Hinata wanted to point this all out (mainly to prove that he wasn’t as dumb as Tsukishima liked to portray him as) but a sudden opening of the front door surprised Hinata enough to yelp.

And when he saw who was standing in the doorway, his stomach dropped.

“Honey, I’m home.” The sinister smile that placed itself on the pretty face of the god of lust was never a good sign for Hinata. The fact that he was here was enough to run the spiker’s blood cold, though he tried not to show his panic when Tsukishima lifted his attention from the TV.

“You’re new.” Despite the grand entrance, Tsukishima seemed even less interested in Oikawa than Hinata, barely covering his yawn as he glanced over to the frazzled god on the couch. “You know him?”

“My sweet little cousin didn’t tell you about me? I’m deeply hurt, Chibi-kun.”

“Another cousin that looks nothing like you.” Why the blocker was directing the question to him instead of Oikawa was a mystery, and Hinata struggled to come up with a convincing reason for the obvious discrepancies of their looks.

“We get that alot. Suga’s from Hinata’s father’s side. I’m from his other father’s side. It’s always confusing to explain when there’s a gay couple involved, right?” Oikawa didn’t hesitate to move into the apartment, finding solace in the open spot on the couch. With his back to Hinata, the new god focused all of his attention on sliding his arm to rest on the back of Tsukishima’s couch cushion. “I’m Oikawa Tooru. And you are?”

“Interested in someone else.” The flat way that Tsukishima rejected the lusty god was a record, but
the reply caught Hinata’s attention just as much as the shocked look on Oikawa. Was Tsukishima thinking of the woman he was going on the date with? Or was it Yamaguchi? The need to ask was right on the tip of his tongue, but he couldn’t bring himself to do it in front of Oikawa. It was unlikely the god came by for good intentions, and the last thing he wanted was the brunette to get his claws into Yamaguchi. While Tsukishima was quite good at putting off a antisocial aura, the pinch server was too nice. Oikawa would eat him up in seconds. The chiming of the dryer gave the blond the excuse to move off the couch, which he took instantly.

“Oikawa, what are you doing here?” Hinata whispered out once Tsukishima was on the other side of the room, the pouting god glancing over his shoulder to the smaller man and shrugging.

“Iwa-chan told me about your little predicament, and I thought I should come down here and help.”

“Does he know you’re here?” A faked look of innocence came over Oikawa’s face while he whistled, giving Hinata enough evidence to prove that the guardian was left in the dark. Oikawa had been known for visiting earth for a few days at a time, which meant that the guardian would not be actively looking for Oikawa unless directed to by Ukai.

“Shouyou, Kageyama and I brought dinner-” Suga’s voice was cut off once entering the house, nearly toppling over the cartons of food in his hand as he stared at the couch in shock. “Oikawa?”

“Koushi!” Seeming to lay on the excitement thick, Oikawa vibrated on the couch as he waved both hands at the stunned fertility god. “It’s so nice to see you. How weird is it for all three cousins to be in the same town at the same time?”

“It’s...very unexpected,” Suga answered, his eyes quick to take in Tsukishima’s presence before he moved toward the kitchen. “When did you get here?”

“Just a few minutes ago. I’ve heard lots about Shouyou’s new roommate, so I wanted to check him out for myself. I can never be too cautious with the little one.” A yelp came from Hinata when Oikawa pinched his cheek, the god of love smacking the hand away from his face before he moved to the other side of the couch. Oikawa didn’t seem bothered by the change, his eyes flickering to the door in interest when Kageyama finally entered. “Well hello there.”

“Uh, hi.” Mirroring the awkward aura he had when first meeting Hinata, Kageyama didn’t meet the gaze of Oikawa, instead focusing on dropping the bags he held onto the floor.
“Is that Kageyama? My little cousin never told me he was so cute.” And like a warm breeze, the god of lust was on the move. Before Hinata could stumble to his feet, Oikawa was next to his roommate, fingers pressing under his chin to lift the skittish man’s face to meet his gaze. “And look at those eyes; I’m sure lots of women swoon over you.”

“That’s a joke, right?” Tsukishima’s hands were full with his basket, meaning he couldn’t hide the snicker after his question. “The king’s as straight as a u-turn.”

“S-Shut up, you’re no better!” Kageyama snapped out, face bright from humiliation. In response, Tsukishima raised his eyebrow.

“You’re out of detergent.” Then the blocker was gone, disappearing through the doorway to return to his own apartment. Suga was the first to react to Tsukishima’s disappearance, moving to shut the front door and lock it. Once the front door was secure, Hinata turned back to Oikawa, his anger seeming to rise when realizing the man hadn’t separated from his roommate.

“Why are you here, Oikawa?” Suga’s question was stern, lacking the normal kindness of his voice to show the mischievous god he wasn’t looking for an excuse.

“You two are just no fun.” Giving a wink to Kageyama, Oikawa broke their connection to walk over to the window, his back leaning on the edge while his arms crossed. “I’m here because someone’s been trying to play cupid with one of my threads.”

“The threads don’t belong to anyone, Oikawa. And even if they did, the one who can claim them would be Takeda, not you or me,” Hinata argued, Oikawa showing how little he cared about the explanation with a scoff.

“As soon as they get a color, you and I both know we take control.”

“But the thread that you’re talking about is both pink and red,” Kageyama stated, watching Hinata nod.

“It was red originally, but it’s...making a transition to pink.”

“But it’s still partly red, which means that they could remain sex buddies without your influence,” Oikawa countered, and Hinata felt himself scowl at the thought. “So the only fair thing to do is to have a competition to see which side comes out on top.”
“This isn’t a game, Oikawa. This has to do with two people’s fate, as well as Shouyou’s god status,” Suga scolded, but the brunette laughed at the motherly tone.

“And I feel like I’m doing them a favor by sparing the hassle of love. Both of them are happy just having sex; why mess it up with emotions? It just causes heartbreak. I’m doing them a favor.”

“I’m not looking for a fight.” Hinata’s head shook as he glance over to Kageyama, the man’s eyes downcast and half-lidded at the conversation of soulmate threads. “If anything, this experience has shown me how much damage us gods can do by meddling in the human world.”

“So if they’re human hearts, they’re too precious to break?” The tone that Oikawa’s voice took on was chilling, and the god of love looked back to see Oikawa’s eyes narrow on him. “I hereby announce a challenge to you, Hinata Shouyou. I won’t be letting you convert those two without a fight.”

“Tooru-” Suga’s words were cut off by the mocking laugh Oikawa used, eyes filled with a dark emotion Hinata couldn’t place. And when it spoke, his anger was bubbling under the surface.

“It’s time to determine which really trumps; love or sex. Let’s see just how powerful your ‘true love’ really is.”

Chapter End Notes

Oikawa, you sly sly god. Nothing smells more like trouble than when Oikawa comes into play. So what will happen with this new declaration of war? Will more secrets come out about Asahi and Noya? And how will Kageyama play a piece in all of this? Kudos and comments please!
Learning to Focus

Chapter Summary

Hinata learns the truth about Noya and shares a moment with Kageyama

Chapter Notes

Hello my lovely fans! I'm happy to see so many people invested in this story, and I hope the comments keep coming! Without further adieu, let's get this chapter going.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you." - A.A Milne

The quiet between him and Kageyama was more than a little awkward for the god of love. He was happy that the setter had been willing to come with him to the pet store in order to question Tanaka. If he didn’t look too far into it, he could say that Kageyama had a change of heart. But the only thing that had changed was the awkward tension that had accumulated in their apartment. After Oikawa had declared himself a rival in Hinata’s quest for fixing Asahi and Noya’s soulmate string, the cocky god had decided to camp out on their couch. There was no need for it; Oikawa visited earth so much, he had places he could spend the night. It was merely a tactic to annoy the younger god, and Hinata hated to admit that it was working.

The problem came with how the god of lust decided to bug him. If it had just been his normal teasing and annoying jabs, maybe Hinata could deal. Instead, Tooru set his pretty brown eyes on a target much more human. Kageyama, despite his best attempts to ignore it, was a mortal man. Since he didn’t have a soul mate, nevermind a love connection, he was weak to Tooru’s powers. Which meant that when Oikawa walked around the house naked after his shower, Hinata could see how flustered and affected his housemate was. And when the god of lust practically trapped the setter against the fridge while “reaching for the cereal”, the artist looked ready to combust. The situation shouldn’t have concerned Hinata; it wasn’t like Oikawa’s powers were causing the man any real harm. It was just...irritating. Like a scratch that Hinata couldn’t itch, the situation made him feel restless and ready to bolt out the door to go to class. The only reason he stayed was how little he trusted leaving Oikawa alone with Kageyama.

Luckily, they had classes early on Wednesdays, which meant a quick escape from the lusty god. Both were cautious when coming back to the apartment that afternoon, the tension evaporating when the god of lust was nowhere to be seen. Too tired from the previous day, Hinata took the free time to sneak in a nap before announcing his plan to talk to Tanaka at his job. Yamaguchi had informed him earlier in statistics that Noya had Wednesdays off, meaning only he and the bald senpai would be in
the store at closing. It was the best time to try and get the older man alone. Kageyama was quick to join in on Hinata’s trip to visit the pet store, not seeming to want to stay in the apartment. Why that had made Hinata grin more than he had all day, the god wasn’t sure. Even with the lack of conversation between them, just knowing that Kageyama would rather be helping Hinata with his mission than alone with Tooru made his stomach relax.

The chime above the automatic doors lifted Yamaguchi’s head from the spot he was currently sweeping, the freckled man’s face filling with a smile as he waved.

“Oh, so you did come to visit.”

“Of course I would; who said I wouldn’t?” At Hinata’s question, Yamaguchi shrugged his shoulders, his downcast eyes proving he wasn’t willing to rat out the disbeliever. Instantly, the god knew who Yamaguchi was referring to. “Stingysama.”

“Tsukki’s pessimistic on most days,” Yamaguchi countered, lifting the broom to point toward the back of the store. “Tanaka’s just finishing feeding the lizards so we can close up.”

“Thanks, Yamaguchi!” Hinata put a pep in his step as he rushed through the aisle of catfood, careful not to knock over the tiny cans when taking a sharp turn. His eyes were distracted by the colorful fishes to his left, which left him defenseless to the tug on the back of his shirt.

“Focus.” Kageyama’s direct command made the god huff, though he followed the command by wandering behind the taller roommate. After passing more fish and furry rodents (“They’re hamsters, idiot”), Hinata was able to catch a glimpse of the man they were searching for. True to Yamaguchi’s word, the wing spiker was in front of a cage which held a giant reptile, the man showing no fear while flicking a few dead insects into the exhibit and shutting the cage’s door. The pink glow that was surrounding the once damaged thread on Tanaka’s wrist was a relieving sight. Even if he failed in his mission, Hinata knew that he had salvaged one relationship. But he wasn’t about to throw in the towel; he could only hope that with the wing spiker’s own relationship settled, he’d be able to help answer some lingering questions. Tanaka hummed a tune the spiker had never heard while turning to face them, his grin baring his sharp teeth upon recognizing the two.

“Yo! What are you two doing here? Trying to get a pet for the apartment or something?”

“If we did, Hinata would kill it.” The blunt tone that Kageyama used made the god glare over at him, making sure to jab his elbow into the other’s hip. He snickered at the pained grunt the art student let out, faking a look of innocence once Kageyama shot a glare at him.
“We actually came here to talk to you,” Hinata supplied, ignoring his fuming roommate to focus on Tanaka’s furrowed eyebrows.

“If it’s about another flirting training-” A shake of Hinata’s head paused the lizard caretaker, leaning back on the wall next to the cage. “Alright, then shoot.”

“We actually came to talk about the night after you and Ennoshita got into your fight.” Hinata’s words dropped the happy smile from Tanaka’s face, a look of unconscious guilt reflecting in his grey eyes before he groaned.

“Man, why’d you have to bring that up? Me and Chikara are going strong now. The last thing I want to do is relive that.”

“We’re more focused on a conversation that Noya had when you went to his house,” Kageyama edited, the god of love happy to see his roommate actively engaging in the conversation. If he had no desire to help out Hinata, then he could have remained silent. Instead, he lent a helping hand, keeping his tone casual. “One he had with Asahi-san.”

“Oh, that.” Snapping after his statement, Tanaka seemed to understand what the two were fishing for with little prompting. “Yeah, I remember that. I had gone over there after the argument because I couldn’t go back home. Noya’s my bro, so he was cool with it. But he had a...thing with Asahi, so he had to call and cancel. I kind of overheard the conversation.”

“Well what did Noya say?” Hinata asked, Tanaka’s look of discomfort apparent to both of them.

“I’m only telling you two this because of what you did for me and Ennoshita.” Waiting for Hinata and Kageyama to nod, Tanaka let out a long sigh before glancing out at the darkened night. “Yuu was really shaken up by our break-up...it was like he didn’t think it was possible, ya know? It was probably his nerves that made him say that to Asahi-”

“Say what?” Hinata piped up, receiving a smack to the back of his head from Kageyama.

“Give him a second to finish.”
“I’m sorta paraphrasing, but after he told Asahi he had to cancel their dinner plans, he said ‘Relationships suck. If Tanaka and Ennoshita can’t make it, there’s no hope for guys like me. Sex buddies is the only way to go.’” Tanaka’s face was pulled into a displeased look after his recall on the event, his arms quick to cross over his chest. “After that, they said goodbye and hung up.”

“Well that explains it,” Kageyama said, Hinata’s hand coming to the side of his head to tug on his hair.

“Why did Noya-senpai say that to him? How the heck was Asahi supposed to confess to him after hearing something like that?! You humans-”

“Wait, what are you talking about?” Tanaka asked, Hinata giving another tug to his orange strands before looking to his teammate.

“Asahi asked Noya-senpai to dinner so he could ask him out.” The look that fell over the wing spiker’s face implied that Hinata’s explanation didn’t fit well with whatever information he had. Quick to jump on the hint, the spiker practically leapt onto his older teammate while his hands flailed in the air. “Do you know something else? You look like you were going to say something.”

“Yuu’s my best buddy, and he’d probably crush my head between his freakishly strong thighs if he finds out I told you this. But...if you can work your weird duo magic with Noya and Asahi, then I’ll consider the risk worth it. If he asks me how you two found this out, I’m not admitting to anything.”

“We’re going to fix them. I promise.” Hinata’s voice didn’t shake with the insecurity or worry that had plagued him throughout the night. Even if he was struggling with the troublesome pair, that didn’t mean he was going to give up. The look that Tanaka was giving to him proved that deep down, they weren’t a lost cause. The second Hinata wavered in his belief in the true love soulmate thread would be the day he stepped down from his position. For now, he needed to believe that Takeda had wanted Hinata to fix these two’s relationship for a reason only the god of fate could understand.

“If you want to see Noya-san happy, then you should tell Hinata everything you know.” The serious voice that resounded from Kageyama made Hinata glance up to him, the setter’s blue stare not wavering as he bowed slightly to Tanaka. “Please allow us to help.”

“When my kouhai ask like that, how am I supposed to say no?” Holding back dramatic tears, the bald man pretended to wipe the water from his eyelids before he returned to the most serious tone the joker of the team could muster. “What the hell? I can take that ankle biter if I have to.”
“I’ll be sure to tell him that tomorrow.” Yamaguchi’s teasing tone made the group glance down the aisle adjacent to them, seeing the brunet sweeping up a pile of dirt and depositing it into a trash bag.

“You’ve got to get new friends; that blonde salt machine is rubbing off on you too much.” At Tanaka’s grumble, the freckled server hide his snicker before he pointed to the back door.

“I’m going to take all the trash out and lock up the back. Hinata, I’ll meet you and Kageyama out front in about ten minutes. We can walk home together, okay?”

“Right!” Waiting until the other employee was out of hearing range, Hinata turned back toward the scowling wing spiker. “So what do you know, senpai?”

“Asahi wasn’t the one who asked Yuu on the dinner date; it was the other way around.” The god could feel his eyes widen at the news, though it was clear that Tanaka wasn’t done. “And he did it because he was going to ask the big nerd out.”

“How do you know that?” Hinata asked, Tanaka smirking as he bumped his thumb into his chest.

“A bro always knows what his bro is about to do. It’s bro code!”

“That doesn’t sound very convincing,” Kageyama replied skeptically, the older teammate rolling his eyes.

“Well I realized it after Yuu started to ask a bunch of questions about me and Chikara. Like when we knew we should start dating and how I would have done it if I could re-do it and shit like that. Finally I confronted him with the true bro battle; a wrestling match. And once I pinned him down, he admitted that he thought he was in love with Asahi. So I sort of helped him plot the whole thing out, but then the movie night happened...After seeing what happened with Chikara, he couldn’t go through with it. He said he’d rather keep Asahi as a fuck buddy then lose him completely. I think that’s why he made that comment to Asahi.”

“But that…” Hinata’s words failed him as he glanced down to his feet, his nose scrunching in obvious frustration. Though he was thankful for the truth, it didn’t make the situation any easier. Noya seemed quite devoted to pretending that he enjoyed the simplistic relationship with Asahi, even though he knew he was in love. Asahi was too quiet and mindful of making problems to ever push the envelope. If he thought Noya didn’t want more, he was going to respect that until the day he
died. Noya’s fear, one that Hinata couldn’t fully grasp, was keeping him from taking the final step. Why did he take the break-up so seriously when the two were able to reconcile soon after? What made him and Asahi different?

A loud ring from Tanaka’s pocket had distracted the man, who announced that Ennoshita was waiting for him outside. It made their exchange of goodbyes quick, Hinata unable to force his normally energetic wave when Tanaka jogged from the front of the store. The biting of the cold air felt sharp against the small man’s cheeks, the god quick to shove his hands into his jacket’s pockets. The darkness of the night didn’t lift his mood, which felt dismal from the information his friend had given to him. This wasn’t the breakthrough he had been expecting. And though it was more than he knew before, his plan looked just as murky as it had that morning.

“So now what?” Kageyama’s voice sounded far away despite how his arm brushed against Hinata’s. Not wanting to look up at his roommate, the amber gaze stayed forward and unfocused on the darkness of the parking lot. After a few moments of quiet, Hinata released a white puff of smoke from his lips.

“There’s only one thing to do; we face Noya-senpai head on.”

“But you’ve done that already,” Kageyama pointed out, Hinata’s teeth hurting from the cold and how tightly he clenched them.

“So I do it again.”

“Nothing’s changed.”

“Now I’ve got a time limit.”

“You want to rush in without a plan because Oikawa’s here? What difference does that make?”

“If I don’t do something, he’s going to win!” Hinata’s voice echoed in the spacious area, his eyes blazing with anger and guilt while he lashed out at his scowling roommate. “This is how it always works with him; Oikawa will choose a target and no matter what I do, he wins. He always wins. Unless I have the upper hand of a fully pink soulmate thread, he’s just going to come in and destroy them. And I don’t want that!”
“So take tonight to think about what to do next. Your head is for thinking, not using as a battering ram! We have time, idiot,” Kageyama snapped back, Hinata’s eyes narrowing as he clenched his fists by his side.

“Not enough. Not against him.” The tension between the two rose as their unwavering stares clashed, neither seeming willing to back down from their point of view. Hinata, in the deepest part of his heart, knew that what Kageyama was saying was true. Rushing them could scare off Asahi or shut Noya down. Either situation would spell disaster for their relationship and give Oikawa an even bigger playing field. But despite this logic, Hinata wanted to do something. The slow method that Kageyama was suggesting felt suffocating. How could the setter understand how he was feeling? The pressure of fixing everything he screwed up continued to pile onto his shoulders, and he felt his knees start to quiver from the weight once Oikawa appeared. It made him restless to remove some of the burden, yet Kageyama wanted to drag his feet. Why couldn’t he see where Hinata was coming from?

“Is everything okay?” The hesitant voice from Yamaguchi tried to ease the uncomfortable air between the feuding roommates, though Hinata refused to answer. It came as a surprise to him when Kageyama scoffed, finally breaking their eye contact to look at the third man.

“Hinata’s too stuck in his empty head to listen to reason.” It gave little insight into the specifics of the conversation, though got Kageyama’s point across efficiently. Hinata’s urge to reply was strong, but his tongue remained frozen in his mouth. Yamaguchi’s eyes rounded with sympathy before lighting with an idea, the freckled student moving forward to engage the two.

“Whenever I get kind of down, I like to do something that takes my mind off of it. And I know there’s a bowling alley a block away that does mystic bowling after 8pm.”

“Mystic bowling?” The question left Hinata’s mouth as soon as it came to mind, Yamaguchi eagerly nodding while he dug his phone out of his pocket.

“Tsukki and I go there sometimes after work or finals week. It’s a really fun time!” Pausing before he finished dialing Tsukishima’s number, the brunet gave a hesitant look to the spiker and meekly smiled. “Ah, that is, if you like bowling.”

“I wanna go!” The loud yell from the shortest member of the conversation was instant, his fondness for new experiences chasing some of his previous frustration away.

“Do we have to invite your roommate?” Kageyama’s sour look made Yamaguchi laugh, waving the artist’s worry away while pushing the phone to his ear.
“You know Tsukki loves bowling, and I really like seeing him happy.” The arch in the setter’s eyebrow matched with Hinata’s perked interest in Yamaguchi’s statement. Seeming to realize his slip, the cheeks of the pinch server pinkened while he turned away from his teammates to focus on the voice on the other side of the phone. The two remaining men glanced to each other, the taller scowling.

“Do you even know how to bowl?”

“Not a clue.” Hinata blinked when Kageyama smacked himself, wondering why his roommate was reacting so poorly. He hadn’t know how to play volleyball either, yet he was a great help to the team in the recent weeks. If bowling was anything like that sport, then the god would be fine.

By the end of the night, Hinata would be a bowling champion.

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Champion was a subjective word.

“How are you this bad?” The tone Tsukishima used bordered on disgusted as yet another of Hinata’s bowling balls rolled into the gutter. Yamaguchi’s laugh was light hearted, though the god could hear him attempting to ‘scold’ his blond teammate throughout his giggles. Looking up to the screen above the alley, Hinata’s cheeks roared with red as the animated scene replayed his pathetic attempt to hit the pins down.

When Yamaguchi had explained the game to him, it had seemed quite simple. The ball just needed to slam into the weird looking pieces of wood in order for the person bowling to get points. The more pins that the person got down, the more point they received. The kind man had also made mention of things called ‘spares’ and ‘strikes’, but from how he was tossing the heavy slab of marble, he didn’t need to worry about those. He wanted to blame his lack of points on the loud music or the flashing lights in the darkened bowling alley, but Hinata could clearly see it didn’t affect the other players. Tsukishima was as proficient in the game as Yamaguchi had boasted, though the freckled man wasn’t horrible either. Kageyama’s skill settled between the two, though he seemed determined to beat the blocker.

And Hinata…
He had gotten pretty acquainted with the word ‘gutter’.

“Do you think we should put the bumpers up for Hinata?” Yamaguchi suggested as Kageyama moved to take his turn, the man with glasses showing his disapproval with a snort.

“So you guys can try to get extra points with pathetic trick shots?”

“Are you nervous that I’ll win that way?” Yamaguchi said, biting his lip to hide his smile as Tsukishima rolled his eyes.

“You’re speaking as if you’ve ever outscored me in our history of bowling.”

“Well that’s because you won’t let me use bumpers-”

“I won’t let you cheat,” Tsukishima amended, Yamaguchi’s eyes showing he didn’t take the other man’s words to heart.

“It’s not cheating if it’s an offered option.”

“Is that so?” There was a coy tone to Tsukishima’s voice that Hinata had never heard the normally stoic man use. It paired well with the side glance he gave his now laughing roommate, Yamaguchi’s humor seeming to double when Tsukishima rose from his seat.

“Wait, Tsukki, it’s my turn!” The brunet was quick to chase after his friend, the blond snatching a blue ball that Yamaguchi had been using throughout the night. Hinata leaned against the side of the wobbly chair as he watched the two play fight, the taller man raising the bowling ball just out of Yamaguchi’s reach. It was strange to see Tsukishima so relaxed when Yamaguchi pressed into his chest to try and reach the ball. From his own observations of the blocker in class, Tsukishima despised people intruding on his personal space. It had nothing to do with germs or being nervous; Tsukishima just didn’t like people. But here, as his friend continued to lean into him for support, the archeology student stayed quiet. In fact, if Hinata squinted and cocked his head, he could almost swear the other man was smirking over Yamaguchi’s feeble attempts.

“They’re wasting our bowling time.” Kageyama’s dry comment on the scene in front of them came after he plopped himself in the seat next to Hinata, making the god’s own connected chair shake.
“Probably,” Hinata mumbled, eyes following the swaying thread between them. No improvements had been made in the color struggle, but he couldn’t see any more breaks. After the frustration over Asahi and Noya, the god of love was going to take any bright side he could.

“You regretting coming here yet?” At Kageyama’s question, Hinata shook his head.

“Yamaguchi was right; I feel a little better.” Hinata’s words were followed by a loud crashing of the pins, the aforementioned man managing to knock most of his pins down with his second ball. Instantly the brown eyes were turning to his best friend, seeking the approval despite his lack of asking for it. In return Tsukishima shrugged, though the slight upturn of his lip did not slip past Hinata. “I just want to see everyone happy.”

“I know that.” There was no judgement in Kageyama’s tone, the two falling silent as Tsukishima started his turn. Yamaguchi lingered on the side of the lane, his smile wide as he cheered his roommate’s name. The response of ‘shut up, Yamaguchi’ was clear, though it lacked conviction while he bowled a well placed strike. Knowing that the end of Tsukishima’s turn meant he was up, Hinata let out a soft sigh before pushing out of his seat. Before he could move, Kageyama was in front of him, a firm grip wrapped around his wrist.

“Kageyama?”

“Your problem is you don’t think about what you’re doing.” Nearly tripping on the ledge of the alley, Hinata managed to keep his balance as his teammate pulled him to stand in front of the bowling lane. Kageyama only let go of his wrist to grab the bright orange ball Hinata had been using, placing the polyester ball into the spiker’s hands. Then with a firm nod, Kageyama stepped behind him, his hand sliding down the pale skin of Hinata’s arm to extend it backwards. “You always toss the ball at your hip, and you’re only focusing on the pins. You see the arrows on the boards?”

“Uh...y-yeah,” Hinata forced out, trying not to focus on the goosebumps that were rising on the skin Kageyama had previously touched. It was very hot in the crowded bowling alley, yet Hinata’s skin refused to listen to reason. He tried to focus his stare on the wood in front of him, though he nearly jumped out of his shoes when the setter’s palm rested on the back of his hand.

“What? That makes no sense. Are you trying to make me lose?”

“Those are what you need to look at. Not the pins.”
“Just trust me, idiot.”

“I do!” His eyes were filled with conviction as he yanked his head to look back at his roommate, the smaller man’s back brushing the setter’s chest as he continued. “You’re the one I trust the most, Bakayama!”

“The believe me when I say I won’t let you fail.”

The strength of his words were clear as day in Kageyama’s stare, as if to remind Hinata he wasn’t alone in this. Despite their rocky start, Hinata knew that his setter wasn’t the type to run away from a fight. Whether it was an opponent, Oikawa, or fate itself, Kageyama tried to keep a cool head and focus Hinata. And in return, Hinata was there for the moments when the setter’s composure crumbled. Emotions were Kageyama’s downfall, whereas they only fueled Hinata’s strength. It was how their bond worked. The revelation made Hinata nearly rear back in surprise. How had the two managed to rely on one another like this? This wasn’t part of the plan. Yet without resistance, the two’s friendship weaved together like magic. No, not magic; like a soulmate-

“If you hit it head on, you risk only hitting the two center pins. So aim for the arrow that lines up with that space next to them.” Kageyama’s instructions came without Hinata’s preparation, but the god was able to catch the information while the setter continued. “You want to get the ball between the center pin and the pin to the right. In order to do this, you need to keep your arm straight, and make sure you release the ball after you pass your hip. Got it?”

“Y-yeah,” Hinata mumbled, ducking his head down when Kageyama released his hand and took a step back. Taking a long breath, the smaller man allowed his body to follow the other man’s key points, his fingers only letting go of the bowling ball once in the right position. Both men watched as Hinata’s ball flew down the alleyway, smashing into the pins. Only seven were knocked down, but it was enough for the smaller god to jump in his spot and cheer. “Kageyama did you see that?! Did you see how many went down?”

“Obviously I saw-whoa!” The force of Hinata’s body hitting into his own nearly knocked the taller man over, but Hinata didn’t care. Instead he let out a cheerful laugh, securing his arms around Kageyama’s neck and burying his face into the tense shoulder under him. He didn’t mind that his feet weren’t touching the ground or that he probably looked like a baby animal wrapping his legs around Kageyama’s hips. The motion made his roommate toss an arm around his small back to keep him from falling. The music and loud chatter of other people faded out from Hinata’s ears, the warmth of the body in front of him making him smile.

“That was so cool,” he mumbled, the only response received being the tightening of Kageyama’s
arm around him. But that was enough for the god of love, and he hummed in excitement. The feeling rumbling in his chest was warm, and Hinata didn’t want to lose it.

“Can you two be lovey dovey on your own time?” But like a splash of cold water, Tsukishima’s bored voice dropped down on the two and doused the feeling away. In seconds the two were separated, Kageyama giving a slight push to Hinata in order to move him off the bowling lane. Ears still fuzzy from the moment, the spiker couldn’t hear the argument going on between the setter and the blocker, though he did feel the slight nudge in his side. Looking over to Yamaguchi, he was surprised to see that the brunet was looking away awkwardly.

“Ah, you may want to go get some fresh air. You’re face is really red.” Slow to get Yamaguchi’s implication, Hinata raised his hands to press the palms into his cheeks. Sure enough, he could feel the skin radiating heat. He was blushing? Over what Tsukishima said? Or was it the fact that Kageyama hadn’t refused his hug like every time before? His eyes moved back to the setter now growling at Tsukishima’s smirk, Hinata’s eyes widening at the sudden uptake in his heartbeat. The action felt confusing and comforting at the same time. He wasn’t sure what to make of it. It wasn’t like he liked Kageyama or anything! He was a human. A human without a soulmate string, at that.

“So then the possibility is still there?” Kageyama’s question rung in Hinata’s mind, making Hinata’s stomach cramp up. He wasn’t sure what the response meant, but he couldn’t shake the feeling it was not going away. And for the rest of the night, Hinata struggled to keep his eyes from lingering on Kageyama.

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It was Thursday that Hinata decided he was going to confront Noya about his feelings for Asahi. He had stayed up all night devising a plan, picking out what words he wanted to say, and not thinking about the weird warmth he got in his body whenever he looked at Kageyama too long. Even as his teachers droned on about some dead poet and the boring equations for math, Hinata continued to run his plan through his mind. Getting the libero alone was going to be the hardest part, and he had yet to fully flesh out how he was going to do it. So he went to the coffee shop to stuff his face with food (as Suga had finally given him some money to ‘use wisely’) and think. And he did both, which resulted in him passing out in the booth.

Being late to practice was not part of the plan.

“Ah Daichi I’m sorry I’m late!”

Hinata’s loud cry in the gym would normally receive several looks and laughs from his teammates,
and a long string of bereavements from a particular roommate. But the declaration of his arrival didn’t pull the team’s eyes from the court. It only took Hinata a second to realize why. There, a familiar god was serving a pass with expert precision for Asahi to spike. Hinata felt his spirits drop. The god of lust looked like a professional as he casually turned to the team, his tongue poking out from the side of his mouth while holding up a peace sign. Unsure of what to make of the scene, Hinata stumbled over to Suga and Kageyama, the only two not currently crowding Oikawa on the floor.

“What is he doing here?” Hinata asked, Suga giving a shrug while his wary stare stayed on the other god.

“Apparently, Oikawa was the star setter on his high school team.” Suga’s explanation received a scowl from Hinata, who was well aware that the man never participated in human school. Suga was quick to lean down closer to his fellow god, making sure only the two next to him could hear. “I think Oikawa spent the whole day watching videos in order to copy some of the professional’s techniques.”

“Either way, it’s impressive.” Kageyama’s reply irritated the young spiker, the god pushing closer to his teammates talking with the god of lust.

“Ah, chibi-chan! You didn’t tell me you play on the town’s volleyball team. You know how much I love the game.” Oikawa’s sweet voice didn’t fool Hinata, who watched a hint of a smirk tease the brunet’s lips. “When I got word about this little practice, I knew I had to come and lend my assistance.”

“But you can’t join the team since you’re just visiting,” Hinata argued, Daichi shrugging while glancing at the clock.

“With Oikawa-san’s skill, we could utilize him for the time being. I’m sure Kageyama would like to get some tips from someone who was scouted for the national team.”

“It’d be my honor to help Tobio-kun out.” The casual way Oikawa said the setter’s first name was immediately aggravating to Hinata, though he knew he couldn’t make a scene in front of the other players. Oikawa seemed to know this as well, the older god enjoying the flustered spiker more than he should.

“Rolling thunder attack!” The team’s attention was pulled away from the two cousins when Noya’s battle cry echoed through the gym, Asahi yelping when the libero slammed into his back. Tanaka’s burst of laughter was caused when the giant nearly stumbled over from the move. Noya didn’t seem
worried about the ace dropping him, casually pressing his forehead into Asahi’s temple and humming. “You’re all sweaty, and we haven’t even started practice yet!”

“I was warming up with Oikawa-san,” Asahi explained, finally planting both feet firmly onto the floor and letting out a relieved sigh. Noya was hoisted up higher on the tall man’s back when Asahi secured his hands under the smaller man’s thighs. Noya made sure to show his appreciation when he rubbed his cheek against Asahi’s, his grin wide with pride.

“I saw. You hit those spikes really hard! Even I might have had some issues receiving them.”

“I doubt that.” There was a slight embarrassment in Asahi’s voice that mirrored the blush over the compliment, Noya laughing in response. But before he could reply, Oikawa butted in.

“You two aren’t dating, right?” The blunt way he put the question made the room tense, though the newcomer didn’t seem phased by it. Instead, he let out a laugh that was filled with more sarcastic amusement than joy.

“That’d be super weird if you were!”

“Tooru,” Suga warned, finally moving to join the group. “That subject has nothing to do with you.”

“I’m just making a statement, Koushi. No need to get your feathers in a bunch. If they’re dating, then I’m mistaken, but I was just commenting about their clashing personalities.” To add fuel to the fire, Oikawa waved his hand and turned his gaze back to the silent pair. “I fell in love with a guy who was my polar opposite once. Biggest mistake of my life. I’m sure it would have ruined everything we had together if I had made a romantic move on him.”

“We’re not dating.” The odd tone that Noya used boarded on forceful, though the libero was quick to cover it up with his signature laugh and cocky grin. “We’re two peas in a pod, but there’s no love loss between us.”

“Ah, right.” Asahi’s soft tone was overshadowed to the god of love by the sound of snapping string. The panic that swelled in Hinata’s chest was sudden as he watched another piece of their soulmate thread fall apart. The tug of war between feelings of love and lust were going to snap the two’s thread right in half!

“Alright, enough chit chat. We’ve got to start practice now.” Daichi cut off the conversation between the group, each of the teammates moving to drop their stuff on the side of the gym. Quickly Hinata
glanced to Oikawa, who seemed quite happy with the change as he moved to walk past him.

“You might want to give up this fight, chibi-chan. You don’t want to be the reason their thread breaks, right?”

“You would get in trouble with Takeda and Ukai if that happened,” Hinata snapped back, Oikawa showing his lack of care with a shrug.

“A slap on the wrist and maybe a lecture. But it’ll be nothing compared to the guilt you’d feel knowing you helped cause this.” Their stare off only lasted a moment before Oikawa was moving toward the group of players, leaving Hinata to clench his fist in pain. Even if he wanted to deny it, he knew the older god was right. He wanted Noya and Asahi to be happy together, but having their string break because of Hinata and Oikawa’s fight-

“You’re doing it again.” A soft thump to the back of Hinata’s head made the god blink, glancing behind him to see Kageyama scowling. “You’re focusing on the wrong thing.”

“I’m not-”

“Don’t worry about Oikawa. Just focus on Noya and Asahi just like you would with any other couple. They’re not going to break that easily.”

“Yeah…” The setter wasn’t saying this just to bring up his spirits. He knew the two in question better than either of the gods. If he was telling Hinata to keep going, it was because he trusted in his teammate’s wills to fight for what they wanted. It was the setter’s job to be observant of everyone on the court in order to make the right decisions. This was the same type of situation; Kageyama was assessing each of the players in the predicament to determine just how hard Hinata could push. If the god truly trusted his roommate, he needed to listen to his cues. “Okay, then I’m gonna talk to Noya tonight.”

“He tends to take a breather outside right before we start putting our supplies away,” Kageyama explained, shrugging before he stretched his arms over his head. “If you want a good time to talk to him, that’d be it.”

“Got it!” Having talked out a plan with Kageyama had helped clear Hinata’s mind better than he had thought it would. Throughout practice, he didn’t feel the itch to jump at any chance that Noya was alone to talk to him. He knew when he would bring up the conversation, and it allowed him to keep
his mind on getting his quick set matched up with Kageyama. Daichi also helped the situation, his serious no-nonsense attitude making even Oikawa take the drills seriously. Practice was as smooth as it could be when having the diversity of personalities on their team. For the first time since the god of lust had barged into his apartment, Hinata was able to relax.

And when he managed to slip outside during the break before they cleaned up, the spiker found Noya just where Kageyama had suggested he’d be.

“Noya-senpai?” The libero tilted his head toward the younger player, his hand curling in front of his t-shirt to let the colder air under his collar.

“Need some fresh air? It gets way too hot in there for me sometimes.”

“I actually came out here to apologize for my cousin.” Making sure he had Noya’s full attention, Hinata bowed his head once before continuing. “Before practice, when he was questioning you and Asahi...I’m sorry.”

“Nah, don’t worry about that. No harm done.” The wave of Noya’s hand seemed natural to the shorter man, as if brushing off offensive statements was a common thing. Taking a moment to think about what he wanted to say, Hinata pressed forward with the conversation.

“And I just wanted to say it wouldn’t be weird if you and Asahi were an actual couple.”

“It’s not like we were planning on getting together anyways.”

“But you were, once.” Hinata’s comment came out before the god could stop it, though he wasn’t sure he would have if given a chance. His normally naive persona wouldn’t work with someone like Noya; facts were the only thing the man wouldn’t be able to avoid. So when his older teammate turned to him in confusion, Hinata took a steady breath and steeled his nerves before continuing. “I know that you were going to ask Asahi out the night Tanaka and Ennoshita broke up.”

“Where did you hear that?” The laugh that came up through Noya’s throat was lacking the hearty undertone it normally carried, showing Hinata he wasn’t truly wishing to laugh.

“I think what’s more important is finding out why you didn’t ask him. From what Daichi said, Asahi is really head over heels for you.”
“I doubt it.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Asahi isn’t in love with me.” It was strange for the spiker to see the anger outlining the golden eyes of the libero now staring at the empty parking lot in front of them. His hands were fisted and shaking beside his hips, though his voice stayed steady and low. “The big lug would have told me by now.”

“What if he’s nervous?” Hinata questioned, Noya biting his lower lip and giving a rough shake of his head.

“We’re just friends with benefits. There’s no reason for us to get like that together. He’s nervous when talking to all those women who flirt with him at the daycare center. With them he’s a blubbering fool who gets tongue tied and red in the face. But he’s...he’s not like that with me.” There was a flash of hurt in the libero’s eyes as he wiped over his lips with the back of his hand, as if trying to push away his pained grimace. “And even if I did love him, he’d only say it back so he doesn’t have to hurt me.”

“Asahi wouldn’t do that!” The protest was instant from Hinata, his heart clenching at the slump in Noya’s shoulders. He never would have thought the confident senpai who had taken him under his wing would look so defeated. Was this why some humans treated love like a disease? Did their fear of being lied to keep them from expressing the truth? Not willing to give up, Hinata stepped closer to Noya and raised his voice. “He really cares about you. If you just told him the truth-”

“And what if he doesn’t feel the same?” There was a challenge in Noya’s question, but beneath it was a quiver that hit Hinata with a sudden realization.

“You’re scared he’ll turn you down?”

“Ruining our friendship isn’t worth finding out. Maybe it was to Ryuu, but he was lucky. If Ennoshita didn’t forgive him, Tanaka would have had to watch his most precious person vanish from his life. And those two are made for each other. If that could happen to them, then...I can’t lose Asahi. Not over feelings that are probably unrequited anyways.” The solemn stare from Noya spoke loud and clear, Hinata’s eyes softening in sadness.

“Noya-”
“I’m going back to help clean up.” It wasn’t until Noya’s back was turned to him that Hinata spoke.

“He loves you, Noya-senpai. I can’t tell you how I know. But Asahi only wants to be with you; you’ve just got to give him the chance to prove it.” The statement only paused the libero for a moment, the shorter man slowly shaking his head before returning to the gym. Hinata wanted to chase after him, to shake some sense into his defensive friend and show him the truth. He wanted to lock Asahi and Noya in the broom closet like the corny love movie Yachi had made him watch during her break. But if it worked that easily, then he would be out of a job. He knew that wasn’t real. Noya and Asahi were true love, despite how much distance the smaller man now kept from the ace while cleaning up. Asahi’s look of confusion at the strange behavior was apparent to the god, who felt lost at the new predicament. Neither man wanted to admit their feelings in fear of hurting the other. They would rather live in silent pain than take the chance of losing their bond.

It was true love, in every bitter sense of the word.

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“Are you trying to drown yourself in hot chocolate?” At Kageyama’s judgemental question, Hinata glared over his steaming beverage, licking the whipped cream from his upper lip before nodding.

“It’s my life, I’ll do what I want with it.” Taking another gulp of his hot beverage, Hinata picked up on the airy giggle of the blonde barista now walking over to the only occupied table in the coffee shop.

“Nothing beats a nice cup of cocoa on a snowy night like this.” True to the theatre student’s observation, the night’s flurries were piling up outside the coffeeshop. Hinata shivered at the sight before holding the drink tighter in his small hands. “I’m sorry you guys had to come here to finish our project.”

“It’s fine, I wanted to get out of the apartment anyways,” Kageyama answered, his hand expertly drawing a straight line along the posterboard in front of him. Letting Yamaguchi and Yachi focus on the factual side of the project, the art student was left to create an eye catching visual for their presentation. Though the project wasn’t due until Tuesday, Friday night was the only time the three could coordinate. Daichi had cancelled their normal practice because he was going to visit his parents for dinner, leaving the space open for Yamaguchi and Kageyama. Yachi was stuck at work closing the shop, so the trio improvised. Hinata had only come along when realizing he would be left in the apartment with a particularly annoying god.
“Are you hungry, Hinata?” At Yachi’s question, Hinata nodded his head, the barista moving back behind the counter to make her friend some food. After calling his thanks to the blonde, Hinata’s eyes focused on the phone in front of him. With a little help from Yamaguchi, the god had learned how to open his calendar, though he wondered if that was a good thing. Now staring down at the device, Hinata had counted seventeen days left of his trip. With so many relationships still up in the air, he couldn’t help but feel defeated. It had been so easy to help fix Tanaka and Ennoshita. Why was everyone else digging their feet into the ground? It was enough for even the proudest of gods to sulk.

The chime of the front of the coffee shop lifted the god’s head, his eyes stopping on a familiar dark haired woman.

“Kiyoko?” At the call of her name, the librarian tilted her head toward the occupied table before giving a soft nod.

“Good evening.” Dark eyes shifted toward the freckled man, the slender woman shifting to show a messenger bag wrapped around her shoulder. “Tsukishima-san asked me to bring this notebook to you on my way back to my apartment.”

“I forgot I left it in Tsukki’s bag yesterday. Sorry for making you come here in such bad weather.”

“My apartment’s this way,” Kiyoko replied, her voice calm as she placed the material in Yamaguchi’s hand. Moving her free hand to push her hair behind her ear, the archeology graduate scanned the vacant coffee shop. “I enjoy the coffee from this establishment as well, though I’ve never been inside. It’s normally quite crowded when I’m heading to work. It’s...quaint.”

“Their drinks are good, but Yachi’s sandwiches are the best!” Hinata proudly proclaimed, his hand pressing to his stomach as he grinned.

“Hinata, please stop yelling.” The shake of Yachi’s head was stopped mid turn when the older woman turned toward her, light brown eyes wide above her bright blush. The theatre student went stiff in her spot, Hinata feeling a spark of hope in his spine when hearing the stutter in his friend’s voice. “He-Hello!”

“Hello.”

“Yachi, this is our manager for the team, Kiyoko. She was just telling us how much she loves your
coffee,” Hinata introduced the two quickly, though his eyes weren’t focused on their faces. Instead, amber eyes flashed with light, watching the white thread to seek out any change of color.

“Ah, it’s...it’s the coffee brand! I just po-pour it into the cup.” Nearly dropping the sandwich when placing it in front of Hinata, Yachi snapped back to look at Kiyoko while she rushed out a question. “Would you like some? Coffee I mean. On the house! F-for bringing Yamaguchi our notes.”

“Yes please.” Kiyoko’s polite voice only seemed to increase the flush on Yachi’s face, the barista scampering to the counter to grab a cup. Wanting to give her friend another boost of confidence, Hinata glanced to his own drink and grinned.

“The best part of Yachi’s drinks are her cups.” Showing the side of the styrofoam cup, Hinata presented the baby crow Yachi had decorated his drink with. “Even when it’s busy, Yachi always draws something.”

“Those are done by Yachi-san?” The interest in Kiyoko’s voice froze the blonde, the woman peeking up from her coffee maker with an embarrassed smile. It was obvious she was in the middle of creating another doodle on the manager’s cup, her pink marker just adding the tip to the bottom of her heart. Though hidden from the on-looking librarian, Hinata caught sight of Yachi’s finger drawing a familiar circle into her free palm before lifting her head and giving a nod.

“I just like to try and make my customer’s days a little brighter. They’re kind of silly-”

“I find them cute,” Kiyoko replied, her small smile making Yachi’s eyes widen in surprise.

“Y-You do?”

“I enjoy them very much.” Nearly dropping the coffee in her hands, the fumbling barista tried to look casual as she continued to draw on the styrofoam in front of her. From the table, Hinata’s eyes glowed as they took in the flash of pink flooding the once white thread. By now Kiyoko had migrated closer to the counter, the ease of the two’s conversation only brightening the newly created bond. To say Hinata was stunned by how simple the exchange had been would be an understatement. All he had done was promote Yachi’s skill in the coffee shop. There was no planning or meticulous thinking. It had just been a natural thing.

“See what happens when you focus on the right thing?” Kageyama’s words weren’t cocky or meant to boast his knowledge; his teammate was trying to encourage Hinata. He didn’t want the spiker to
give up on their friends. Watching Kiyoko and Hinata giggle over the manager’s attempt to draw her own doodle, a fire ignited deep inside Hinata. He was going to help everyone find the love they deserved.

And nobody, not even Oikawa, was going to make him lose focus again.

Chapter End Notes

And another string is fixed! Hinata's got two under his belt, but with less than three weeks left, will the god of love be able to complete his task? What wrench will Oikawa throw in Hinata's plan? And what is going on with Hinata and Kageyama's feelings? Find out this and more next time!
The Rise and Fall of Hinata

Chapter Summary

Noya and Asahi face their feelings, and Hinata is faced with a new crisis.

Chapter Notes

Ah this is coming out so late today, and I'm sorry for that! I hope that you will enjoy this new chapter, thank you for reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." - Lao-Tsu

“Why does Suga have to sit out?” Hinata’s look of displeasure was aimed at their captain, though the aforementioned god stepped between the two with a placating smile.

“It’s fine, Shouyou. I offered to sit out so you guys could have your practice game with Oikawa. It’ll good for everyone, and I don’t mind being the scorekeeper. It’s just a practice scrimmage.”

“I also think it’ll benefit you younger players to see Oikawa’s style. I watched him practice earlier; his serve is quite troublesome, even for me.”

“Maybe Hinata should sit out, as well.” Tsukishima’s snarky tease made Yamaguchi laugh, Hinata scowling at his neighbor before turning back to his captain.

“Then I want to be on Kageyama’s team!”

“The teams are already divided up, though I did keep you and Kageyama together.” Daichi’s answer made Hinata relax, disliking the idea of being on a team with Oikawa. “You’ll have Tanaka, Tsukishima, and Noya on your side as well. I’ll be joining Oikawa with Ennoshita, Asahi, and Yamaguchi.”

“I get to set to the ace?” Oikawa’s grin was playful as he moved closer to Asahi, his hand splaying
against the sturdy back of the taller man. “I’ll be sure to treat you nice, cutie.”

“I-I’m not-” Asahi’s face showed his embarrassment at Oikawa’s compliment, though the god of lust only moved closer to the ace.

“There’s plenty of men who beg to differ. How about if you win me this match, I take you out tonight?” There was a glint of mischief in the brunet’s eyes, Oikawa letting his fingers walk up the man’s arm. “I know a club named Poison of Eros where we could have a lot of fun.”

“I’m not good with clubs,” Asahi answered quickly, though a wave from the setter proved he didn’t buy the excuse.

“Then this is the perfect kind of club for you. It’s made for even the shyest of mortals to let their true desires shine. I wonder what you truly want underneath that nice guy persona?”

“Ah, well...ma-maybe if we win.” The nervous laugh from Asahi made Oikawa smile, though Hinata noticed that not everyone was as happy about the ace’s relenting statement. The libero, who was trying to keep his distance, popped his head up from his current stretch, a look of shock dropping onto his face. It wasn’t hard to guess why; the gentle giant was not the type to step out of his comfort zone. Part of Hinata assumed it had more to do with Oikawa’s persuasive pressing than actual desire to go. And yet with the strain between Noya and Asahi, it was obvious that the smaller man felt uncomfortable with the suggestion.

“Well then we have to win; I want to serve first!” Happy with his temporary teammate’s acceptance, Oikawa practically skipped to the other side of the court. Daichi shook his head while calling the start of the match, Asahi giving a quiet glance toward the still frozen libero before following suit.

“Best two of three wins. Sugawara is in charge of calling the game. Everyone else, get ready to fight.” A loud chant on both sides of the court proved that neither wanted to lose, Hinata feeling a charge of energy run through his body. A quiet glance to Kageyama proved the art student was already looking his way, the two nodding in sync before facing the net again. With everything going on around them, the negative feelings of helplessness and confusion were left outside the court. In this zone, all that mattered was connecting with his setter and making the play.

This was easier said than done with Oikawa serving the ball. When Daichi had spoke of the setter’s advanced technique, he wasn’t saying it to impress. Assuming that the god had been missing from the apartment all day to perfect his skill, his running serve sought to break the floorboards. The serving beast inside the flirty god was dangerous, and it didn’t help that the libero’s defence was off. Noya’s face was pained when his arms couldn’t shovel under one of the serves properly, causing the
colorful ball to ricochet into the bleachers. Golden hawk eyes watched the botched ball roll away with a grimace, Noya clenching his teeth before stomping back into his position. His irritation was felt throughout their team, though Kageyama seemed more interested in admiring the older god’s serving form than sulking.

“He learned that in one day? How? Nobody can receive that.” The awe was palpable in Kageyama’s voice, Hinata shoving his elbow hard into his roommate’s stomach when seeing Noya wince.

“Stop kissing his ass,” Hinata hissed out, Kageyama scoffing at the remark.

“I wasn’t! His serve is just deadly-”

“If you like it so much, why don’t you go be on his team?”

“Then who would be your setter, dumbass?”

“Anyone but you, Bakayama!” The duo sent glares at each other before Tsukishima coughed, catching both of their attentions with a pointed sneer.

“Can you two have your lover’s spat when we’re not losing?” It was weird to hear the blocker attempting to focus the two, though it was justified. Unfortunately, staying focused on the game didn’t make much of a difference. The other team took the final point with little contest, the score reading 25-19 after a strong spike from Asahi. The sweat pooling from the losing team proved that they hadn’t gave up once. Still, despite their hard work, they had come up short. It was hard for Hinata to be handed a loss from Oikawa, but his own disappointment was pushed to the backburner when seeing Noya slam his hand into the ground.

“Damnit!” There was frustration on the libero’s face as he closed his eyes, taking the loss to heart. It was obvious to the short man why his team had failed; he hadn’t been able to stop Oikawa. His main job was key to keeping the points off the board. Everyone else could take their battle to the sky; Noya fought his on the ground. But today, he knew his mind wasn’t focused on being the guardian his teammates relied on. Whenever he lifted his eyes to try and focus on the game, Asahi was in his vision. Asahi, his ace, getting complimented by Oikawa and blushing in a way that left a rock in Noya’s chest. And it reminded him of the question refusing to leave his head; if their team won, would the gentle giant really go out with his newly formed teammate? It wasn’t like he had plans with Asahi, though he was tempted to make some when hearing Oikawa’s suggestion. But when the ace didn’t turn down the offer, Noya’s tongue refused to move.
“Daichi said we should take a break before our next match. With how Kageyama and Tsukishima are bickering, we probably need it. I can’t wait to see what the captain does when he sees the two of them fighting. I bet they run laps for hours!” The libero didn’t lift his head at Hinata’s chatter, pushing up to his feet and heading toward the bench. “Noya-senpai?”

“Sorry.” The word felt heavy on his tongue, not used to having to apologize for his performance. The libero sulked over to his water bottle, snagging it and a towel before dropping his butt onto the metal seat. Trying to hide the frustration blurring his vision, Noya yanked the towel over his head after chugging half his water down. The cold beverage did nothing to quench his heartache. Dropping the bottle from his hand, the small man rested his elbows on his thighs and lowered his head completely. He wasn’t sure what he was more upset about; his crappy performance, or Oikawa’s flirting with Asahi. Neither felt good, but one he knew was temporary. Even if Oikawa left, there would be others. Women, men, it didn’t matter. Asahi was an attractive person, inside and out. It was only a matter of time before the gentle giant fell in love.

Then Noya would lose him for good.

“Noya?” The concern in the ace’s voice was something Noya was used to, though he hated when it was directed at him. Knowing he wouldn’t be able to fool the man with a well placed smile or laugh, Noya kept his head down.

“Break over?”

“No, I just came over to check in on you.”

“I’m not hurt or anything,” Noya muttered, his shame rolling over his tongue. “I’m just having a bad day on the court.”

“But you’ve received the most of Oikawa-san’s serves; Daichi’s stunned you’ve hit so many back.”

“Even the captain’s doubting me?” It was painful to think the others had noticed his struggle. He was supposed to be their rock, wasn’t he? Yet compared to Oikawa, he looked like a rookie.

“No, nothing like that! You’ve done fantastic, we’re very proud of you.” He heard shuffling in front of him before the deep brown gaze of the tall man was in his view, Asahi kneeling in front of the bench. Showing his apologetic look, Asahi rushed to continue. “You’re the best libero I’ve ever seen; he only targets you because your skill is known all over the country.”
“Maybe,” Noya relented, feeling his spirits raise at the strong nod of the ace.

“Just keep your focus on Oikawa-san’s feet. Where he points them before he jumps is where he’s aiming the serve.”

“You telling me about this is basically ruining your chances of Oikawa taking you out tonight,” Noya said, Asahi’s blush starting to spread over his cheeks when he rubbed the back of his neck.

“Winning the game doesn’t really matter if it ends up breaking your confidence. You’re worth more than that. Plus, I’m not exactly the type to go to a club. I’d rather go watch a movie at your apartment or something.”

“Really?” Noya asked, stunned at the answer. When Asahi gave an instant nod, Noya’s heart warmed. “Why?”

“Uh, well...i-it’s not important-” Interrupting his panicking friend, Noya leaned forward to press his hands onto the red cheeks of the ace. Asahi’s spine tensed, yet Noya refused to back down.

“I want to hear it.” The anxious expression tilted toward sadness when the ace dropped his gaze, keeping his fingers balled over his bent knees.

“I like hanging out with you, maybe more than I should. And I know you’re not interested in dating someone like me, but I-I just enjoy being with you, even if we’re not...you know.”

“Wait, hold up.” Unable to fully process what the older man was admitting to, Noya felt his throat dry. Asahi was desperately trying to look anywhere but the libero, his face bordering on pain. He looked ready to bolt, and if not for Noya’s hand firmly holding his face in place, the guardian was sure Asahi would run. How many times had Noya seen this same face on the giant before he rushed away with a half-baked excuse? Normally Noya just assumed the man was panicking about something pointless and let it go. He hated pushing subjects that overwhelmed Asahi, knowing of his anxiety. But was this what the older man had been trying to say all those times before? His mind whirling through the previous conversations with a nosy short spiker, Noya felt his fingertips tingle as he finally opened his mouth. “Do you love me?”

“Y-Yuu!” The mortified tone in Asahi’s voice didn’t deter him, keeping golden eyes focused on his target. In his mind, he knew that his friend’s nerves were frayed. They hardly used first names
outside of the bedroom. It felt too intimate for simple sex buddies. The only time Asahi went to the
name was when he was feeling overwhelmed. Normally, Noya would adhere his friend’s panic and
back away with a laugh and a playful jab. But the libero knew it was too important to ignore this
time.

“Do you?” He pressed the topic, watching the man in front of him struggle to respond. His eyes held
pure worry, his body still stiff from the first question. This was fear that Noya knew well, as it had
circulated his heart when Hinata had questioned him before. But something that the libero refused to
listen to that night came rolling back into his mind.

_He loves you, Noya-senpai. I can’t tell you how I know. But Asahi only wants to be with you; you’ve
just got to give him the chance to prove it._

If there was a time to do that, it was now.

“Because I do.” Noya’s heart skipped at the widening of Asahi’s eyes, though he knew he couldn’t
stop now. If he was going to do this, he wasn’t going to stop until he got everything off his chest. “I
want to do mushy-gross shit with you for as long as I can. I want to steal your super large shirts even
if they eat me alive cause I love your smell. The sex is great, and I don’t think it’s just cause you’re
hot. Sleeping in your bed is the best; sometimes I offer to pick up early shifts so I can sleep over.
Everything about you is amazing. There’s like, a hundred other things I could say right now to prove
I’m pretty into you, but the whole point is...I love you. Like, a lot.”

“No ya,” Asahi mumbled softly, the libero giving two strong shakes of his head.

“But I want you to know that no matter what, you’re my friend.” It wasn’t often that Noya felt
embarrassed; he was best friends with Tanaka, after all. That took skill. But here, he could feel the
tips of his ears starting to pinken as he took a slow breath. “So if we’re going to be a thing, you’ve
got to know that I don’t want to lose our friendship.”

“Me either!” The open response caught Noya off guard, Asahi’s face reflecting his shy nature despite
his loud outburst. Seeming to understand the volume change, the ace coughed before returning to his
normal tone. “I love you, so I don’t want anything to change between us. E-except our status; that I
wouldn’t mind changing a little. If you agree, I mean.”

“You can just say you want to be my boyfriend, you know.” Noya’s blunt statement made the other
flush.
“I want...that.” The libero laughed at Asahi’s avoidance, then cut himself off when he leaned forward to kiss the ace. His hands slid from the tan cheeks he had captured to sift through brown hair, feeling the tension in the older man waver within seconds. It was sort of nice to have the height advantage for once, Asahi still kneeling in front of him. But the softness that Asahi used returning the kiss felt like magic. He knew that the ace’s body could strike fear in anyone he wanted to. Yet the large hand which had killed many spikes throughout the years was feather light when sliding against Noya’s jaw. He treated the libero as something precious, and the short man felt stupid for overlooking this for so many years.

The two deepened the kiss to the pleasure of the crowd now cheering for them. Hinata’s cheers rivalled Tanaka’s in loudness, the god of love unable to stop himself from jumping in joy. As his two teammates continued their overdue kiss, the glow of Hinata’s gaze captured the magic lighting up around them. Pulses of pink were quick to seep through the broken and discolored parts of their thread, chasing any trace of red to an inevitable demise. The thread that Hinata was sure would never sway his way finally finished its transformation. Overwhelmed by the feeling of excitement, Hinata tore his gaze off the romantic moment to search out a specific pair of blue eyes. His grin only widened when realizing Kageyama was already heading his way, the spastic god running forward with both hands in the air.

“We did it!” Kageyama’s eyes widened when Hinata rushed into his personal space, the smaller hands latching onto Kageyama’s to yank them over his head. The setter managed to wiggle one of his hands out of the death grip Hinata held, though it didn’t drop back to his side. Instead, it moved to the god’s head, ruffling the orange hair with a grin that didn’t struggle to look friendly.

“N-Nice job.” The warm tone that swept under the words dazed Hinata, the smaller spiker gazing up at the man in front of him. In reflex his hand squeezed around Kageyama’s, and the god of love felt his heartbeat flutter when he received a softer squeeze back.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do it without you,” Hinata admitted, the setter’s look of subtle discomfort proving he still wasn’t used to praise. His free hand moved from the soft resting spot on Hinata’s head to press the back of it over his lips. The move did little to hide the higher flush on his cheeks, the embarrassed look making Hinata’s grin only widen.

“Idiot.” Yet the insult didn’t sound mean, and the spiker simply laughed at the reply. Not wanting to stay in the spotlight, Kageyama swept his eyes over the court and pulled his hand away once he was scowling again. “Where did Oikawa go?”

“Huh?” When taking in his surroundings, it was clear who was missing. The god of lust was nowhere to be seen. If Hinata didn’t know the god like he did, then he could have passed the disappearance off as Oikawa being a sore loser. It was no secret that the brunet did not lose as well as he won. But even in the face of defeat, Oikawa normally stuck around to explain his “fluke” of defeat. In this case he could have simply said the Takeda stacked the cards against him and sent
Hinata to fix a relationship destined to have a pink string anyways. Yet there was no trace the man was even there.

“Alright, that's enough of a break. We’ve still got another set to play, and none of us are getting better by watching these two lovebirds.” Laughing when seeing Asahi pull away from Noya with a blush, Daichi moved over to Suga and dropped his hand to the god’s shoulder. “Though with Oikawa having some business to take care of, you'll have to take over for him.”

“Business?” Hinata asked in confusion.

“Oikawa said he had gotten a text from a friend in an emergency, and he had to go take care of things.” Suga shrugged before he gave a look that showed he wasn’t believing the words coming from his mouth. “He said something about making it up to us later.”

“Hopefully he’ll be able to come to another practice before he goes back home.” Noya’s face no longer held a look of dismay when jogging back to the court, his eyes shining with a familiar determination. “Now that I’ve got my head on straight, I want to try receiving his serve again.”

“That’s the spirit.” Giving an approving nod, Daichi moved back toward his side of the court with Suga in tow. Hinata let his mind wander when trying to think of where Oikawa went, though a hesitant voice from behind him was quick to grab his attention.

“Hinata, um…” It wasn’t until the shorter man’s eyes fell on Yamaguchi that the pinch server spoke. “Maybe you should let go of Kageyama’s hand now?”

“Oh.” It took a full five seconds for Hinata’s brain to catch up to Yamaguchi’s words, the god quick to yank his hand back from the now blushing setter. Feeling his own cheeks scald in color, the spiker ignored the chuckling from Tanaka and Tsukishima to face the net, hoping the first serve would smash into his face. At least then he’d have a reason to be embarrassed. Kageyama said nothing about the event, though his side glare toward the two men still laughing behind them implied he understood why they were in such good spirits. The spiker glanced down at the hand once held in Kageyama’s grasp, wondering why his fingers still tingled in warmth.

But what was even more concerning was the smile that came with it.

~**~
“That restaurant was so good!” Hinata’s cheerful tone puffed into the crisp air as he hopped around Suga, the older god letting out a laugh at the spiker’s energy.

“You deserved a good dinner after helping Asahi and Noya find their way.”

“I thought you said it was because I stayed back to help clean up the gym?” Hinata asked, tilting his head when his friend gave a soft smile.

“I can’t treat you for both?”

In the god of love’s opinion, it sounded more like a bribe than a present. Because the practice ran longer than expected, Daichi was unable to stay and lock up the gym. Suga offered to take on the task, then drafted Hinata’s help with the seduction of food afterwards. If the spiker had known part of the task meant dry mopping the entire floor, he may have went home with Kageyama. But the thought of tangy orange chicken made the young man’s mouth salivate, and he agreed without hesitation. By the time the two finished the task and went out for dinner, the street lights had flickered on. Dark was settled like a heavy blanket on the quiet street, the two men being the only people walking down it.

“Just think of how much you’ve helped Daichi out. I’m sure he appreciates it.” The mention of the dark haired receiver made Hinata sigh, his hands shoving into his jacket’s pockets.

“What did he have to do that was so important, anyways?”

“I think he was going to meet his employee’s baby for the first time. He’s been really worried about her all week, so it’ll be nice to see him relax once seeing the mother is doing okay.” Suga’s words held a warmth to them that caught Hinata’s attention, the god peeking up to the setter quietly. Suga’s eyes were filled with a pleasant gleam, as if remembering something fond. It was obvious to the spiker just what Suga’s focus was on, so he took a step closer to him as they rounded the corner of the street.

“Suga, have you changed your mind about your bond with Daichi?”

“No, I haven’t.” Though there was no force or aggression in Sugawara’s tone, it was obvious that his mind was set. “It’s been nice to catch up with my old friend, but I plan to keep it at a platonic level.”
“But soulmates don’t work that way when they’re true lovers,” Hinata argued, rushing to keep his pace with the silent god. “If Daichi is meant to fall in love with you, then he’ll never be truly happy without you by his side. He’ll always feel incomplete.”

“Daichi has a flourishing business and lots of friends and co-workers who adore him. I wouldn’t want to come in and take the chance of burdening his life with my complications. He’s got lots of people who can help him feel loved without someone like me there.”

“And what about your heart?” Rushing to stand in front of his friend, Hinata tried to meet the hazel gaze with his own while he spoke. “Don’t you want to be happy, too?”

“I have no reason not to be happy. I have friends who worry about me, and two bosses who make sure I never go without. With all that Ukai and Takeda have given to me, I have no reason to complain about my life.”

Yet even as Suga gave a smile, it was obvious that the pain was just lurking beneath the surface. Why was Suga trying so hard to pretend he was happy without Daichi? Did he really think Ukai and Takeda would punish him for being with his soulmate? Takeda was the one who chose Daichi for Suga! If anyone would be happy about their relationship, it would be the god of fate. Yet here Suga stood, refusing to even think of a future with Daichi. For Tanaka, it had been his fear of not living up to Ennoshita’s expectations. Yachi had just never met Kiyoko, and Noya was too scared to lose his friendship to chance a real try at love. So what was it that held Suga back?

“Now enough of that.” The fertility god reached forward to ruffle Hinata’s hair before turning him back to face the apartments they were standing in front of. “Let’s get inside so we can talk to Kageyama about a gameplan for Yamaguchi and Tsukishima.”

“Alright,” Hinata caved, knowing he had some time to work on Suga and Daichi. If he kept pressing it now, he had a feeling the fertility god would continue to dismiss his arguments. So instead the two went to the apartment, Hinata prepared to find the dark haired setter camped out on the couch. So when he opened the door to the living room to find no roommate, Hinata didn’t hide his surprise.

“Did he go to bed already?” At Suga’s question, Hinata scowled and shook his head.

“Kageyama doesn’t go to bed early on saturdays because his weird show comes on at midnight.” But just to be sure, the spiker moved into Kageyama’s room and flipped on the light. There were signs of Kageyama being home, as his work out clothes were crumpled in a ball to the side of his bed. But the lack of his cell phone or wallet on his dresser proved that he hadn’t been in the apartment long. Returning back to the living room, Sugawara peered over the counter in the kitchen and shook his
head.

“No sign of him here, either. Do you think he went to Yamaguchi and Tsukishima’s apartment?”

“They normally come here since Tsukishima likes to mooch off us.”

“Call them just to check while I look in the bathroom.” It had taken Hinata a while to figure out how cell phones worked. Even though he had now owned the device for a couple weeks, looking up numbers and calling people was still a chore. It took him a few tries but the god was more than relieved when Yamaguchi’s number flashed over his screen, listening to the ring twice before a familiar voice answered.

“Hinata?”

“Yamaguchi, are you home?”

“No, me and Tsukki went grocery shopping. Why, did you need something?” The absence of his neighbors made Hinata scowl, the small spiker pacing the floor while he answered.

“Suga and I just got back from dinner and Kageyama isn’t home. We thought he may be with you guys.”

“No, but I know where he is.” The answered made Hinata perk up, pressing the phone closer to his ear. In the background he could hear Suga returning to the room, though he kept his focus on Yamaguchi’s next words. “We had actually asked him to come with us when we were walking home. I figured he’d be lonely without you there to keep him company. But then Oikawa showed up out of nowhere and said something about needing Kageyama’s help to blow some steam off.”

“Oikawa?” Hinata repeated, surprise evident in his voice.

“Yeah, I think he said he was going to show Kageyama a few tricks he knew. I just assumed that they were talking about setting from how pumped Kageyama looked. He only gets like that when he’s training or playing volleyball. But I’m surprised they didn’t ask you to come and play.”
“Did Oikawa tell you where they were practicing?” Even as he asked the question, Hinata felt something tighten in his stomach. He glanced up at Suga’s face, seeing the same trepidation that Hinata was now feeling. Something was off about the whole situation.

“No, I didn’t ask. Sorry!”

“It’s okay! I’m sure they’ll be back soon; thanks for telling me. See ya tomorrow.” He ended the call before he turned to Suga, hoping his face didn’t show his growing panic. “Oikawa took Kageyama somewhere.”

“And with how upset Tooru was at losing his ‘bet’ with you, I doubt it was for benign reasons.” Suga’s gaze drifted toward the window, watching the streetlight outside flicker. “Oikawa’s original plan was to take Asahi to a club named “Poison of Eros”. My bet is that he simply changed out his wingman with Kageyama.”

“But why would he do that? Kageyama doesn’t even have a soulmate string for him to taint!” Hinata’s confusion was met with a hesitant stare from the fair haired setter, Suga quietly stepping closer to his friend while placing a hand on his shoulder.

“He’s not going after Kageyama because of soulmates; he’s going after Kageyama because he’s someone important to you.” The statement stunned Hinata, the small god unsure how to deal with the painful clench in his stomach. Easily sensing the negative feelings from Hinata, the fertility god gave a reassuring smile while squeezing the younger god’s shoulders. “But at least we know where to find him. It doesn’t seem like they left too long ago; the tea kettle on the stove was still hot when we got here. So let’s find this club, okay?”

“Right.” Hinata let Suga take the lead on discovering where the club was located, the older god seeming to understand how to use his phone to get directions. They were on the move in seconds, Suga’s optimism rising when explaining to the spiker that the club wasn’t far. Running in the coldness of the night hurt Hinata’s lungs, but he refused to complained as Suga paid for their cover fee. Rushing into the dimly lit club, Hinata’s eyes were widened when seeing the skimpy clothed human dancing on a bright walkway. The male looked seductive as he slipped the leather jacket he wore off his shoulders, winking at the catcalls of the men in the audience. The sudden rush of embarrassment scalded
Hinata’s cheeks, the small man smacking his face to try and hide his blush. He didn’t know why the scene was bothering him; he had seen many humans in compromising positions. It was how they connected intimately, and Hinata never felt flustered before. Yet in this darkened building, the god couldn’t keep his eyes on the man now gyrating his hips against the steel pole in front of him.

“Oikawa really outdid himself this time.” Suga didn’t seem affected by the scene, his eyes barely looking toward the stripping human before pointing away from the stage. “I asked the bouncer if he knew Oikawa, and the man said our friend owns the club. That’s why this place is flooded with pheromones; Oikawa’s used his powers to make this club drenched with sexual undertones to enhance his business. I asked where Oikawa was, and he said he’s in the VIP section.”

“VIP?”

“It’s a private area where people can rent a room to get to know some of the performers better.” Suga helped locate the mentioned area by pointing to a door with a teal heart over the archway. In front of it stood two bodyguards, seeming to keep the club occupants from entering. “According to the man, Oikawa came in about fifteen minutes ago with a man that matched Kageyama’s description.”

“So let’s go get him!” Before Hinata could get far, Suga had grabbed the back of his shirt, letting out a troubled sigh.

“That’s the problem; for places like this, you normally need your name on the list or some secret codeword. Since neither one of us have ever been here, it’ll be tough to get by without one of those things. And I’m guessing Oikawa wouldn’t roll out the welcome mat for us.”

“So we can’t get in?” The panic he had been pushing to the back of his mind reared up quickly, though the god of love tried to swallow it down. Having a mental breakdown wouldn’t help Kageyama. He could see the setter’s serious gaze in his mind, the strict tone yelling at him for trying to rush to a solution. Taking a slow breath, Hinata ignored his quickened heartbeat to look at Suga’s concentrated face.

“We just need to find someone who’d know the password. Maybe a dancer or—”

“It’s ‘Iwa-chan’.” A deep voice entered the conversation, both gods lifting their heads to see a familiar face. Olive green eyes glowed in the flashing lights of the club, the guardian god crossing his arms while giving his signature scowl. “That bastard seems to think it’s a riot to use that as the code. Then again, I don’t really need one since that idiot decided to make me some sort of business partner.”
“Iwaizumi-san!” Hinata cried out excitedly, Suga giving his own hopeful smile as he stepped closer to the god.

“I don’t suppose you could help us get into the VIP lounge?”

“What did Asskawa do this time?” As he asked his question, the bulky man started to approach the VIP entrance, not seeming intimidated by the men guarding the door.

“He lost a bet with Hinata, and he’s being a sore loser,” Suga supplied, Iwaizumi scoffing before he shook his head.

“That doesn’t even surprise me. Wait until I drag his ass back…” Iwaizumi gave a quick wave to the pair of bouncers they approached, both seeming to relax at the sight of the guardian.

“Ah, Iwaizumi-san. It’s been a while; did you and bossman get into an argument?”

“Same old bullshit, Matsukawa. He in his normal room?” Iwaizumi asked, the second guard giving a lazy smile before nodding.

“Yup, brought a friend this time. Maybe you’ll get replaced as Oikawa’s special guest.”

“I’d never get so lucky, Hanamaki.” Despite the negative reply, the tan god held a tint of a blush before he lifted his thumb to the two gods behind him. “But these two have business with that friend of his. They’ve got my permission to go in.”

“Is it going to piss off the boss?” The first guard asked, giving the hint of a smirk when Iwaizumi nodded. “You really like ruffling his feathers.”

“Just let us have ringside seats for the fight.” The dark haired guard gave no signs of hesitation when opening the door for the two, Iwaizumi sighing before he glanced back to Hinata and Suga.

“Oikawa will be in one of the last rooms down the hall. You’ll know it’s his cause it’s got the bright
teal curtain instead of a door. Says he likes the thrill of someone walking in. You two go ahead; I’m gonna catch up with these two before I take on Oikawa.”

“Thanks!” Hinata wasted no time rushing into the long hallway, Suga on his heels while the two followed Hajime’s instructions. There were some doors closed to them, while others were open and filled with unique scenes. Hinata blocked them out, knowing his focus needed to be on finding Kageyama. So when the flutter of a teal fabric caught his eye, Hinata skidded to a stop in front of it and sighed in relief. Suga pulled Hinata to the side of the doorway, the two men peeking their heads past the curtain to see inside. The room was much more lavish than the previous ones, which only confirmed it was the cocky god’s room. Low lights and sensual music set the scene, the feeling of heavy atmosphere hitting Hinata. The god of love squirmed at the uncomfortable heat seeping into his body.

But all of that meant nothing when Hinata caught sight of Oikawa kissing Kageyama on his couch. Oikawa’s mouth was pressed to Kageyama’s in a deep kiss, the god of lust’s shirt discarded on the floor behind them. The brunet seemed at home straddling the younger setter, his hands wrapped around the wrists of Kageyama and pinning them to the couch. The whole scene looked more intimate than anything Hinata had experienced with his roommate, and he felt his world slow down at the sight. Oikawa was kissing Kageyama.

And the sound of heartbreak rung loud through the god of love’s ears.

“No way…” Hinata’s throat constricted after his whispered sentence, his heart aching with unfamiliar pain. It felt like Oikawa had punched him in the chest. Everything felt overwhelming to the spiker, and he had to blink when realizing he hadn’t torn his eyes from the scene since stumbling onto it. He had never experienced the heartache he was now exposed to. It felt like he was struggling to breath, and no matter how hard he tried, his lungs never had enough air. It was hard to stand, like the rug had been ripped out from under him. And despite not understanding why, the edges of the spiker’s eyes stung.

“It’s Oikawa’s power.” Suga’s words sounded far away, but the soft touch on his shoulder grounded Hinata to hear the rest of the setter’s explanation. “Humans are affected by his aura if they’re not bound by a pink soulmate string, remember? Kageyama’s not on a fair playing field in this situation.”

“I know.” Yet even the logical understanding of what was going on didn’t make the burn in his chest go away. He didn’t voice his pain when the kiss between the two finally broke apart, Kageyama’s lack of kissing expertise obvious when he gasped for air. The god of lust had no such problems, his teasing smile draping over his lips as he leaned down to speak against the corner of Kageyama’s mouth.

“Now isn’t this a lot more fun than some silly setting practice?” To Hinata’s surprise, Kageyama
jerked his head away from the touch to glare up at Oikawa, his cheeks flushed and his voice strained with arousal.

“I only came with you because you said you’d help me be a better setter for Hinata and my team.” A flash of irritation was quick to sweep across Oikawa’s face before he pulled back, slender hips rolling once into the dark haired man’s lap. The shaky breath that escaped Kageyama’s open mouth made Oikawa smirk, eyes bright with power as he spoke.

“I think that your body would rather have a little fun with me, instead. I can feel you under me, you know.” When the only response Oikawa received was Kageyama closing his eyes and shaking his head, the god nuzzled his nose just under the man’s ear before pressing his lips to the sensitive lobe. “I wonder if you’d be resisting this much if it was Shouyou squirming in your lap?”

“Hi-Hinata? We’re not…” The shudder that went through the man’s body made Oikawa release his hold on Kageyama’s wrists. When the younger setter didn’t move his arms, Oikawa smirked before trailing one hand up the vulnerable skin of Kageyama’s jaw.

“Would you like that, Tobio-kun? If it was him pressed to you, begging you to ravage him?” The seductive lithe in the god’s voice caused the redness in Kageyama’s face to darken, though he didn’t speak. Instead his eyes scrunched tighter, his hands balling into fists when Oikawa spoke again. “It’s a shame that our little cupid can’t give you the attention you so desire. You’re just a human he needs to complete his mission; he won’t waste his time with you. But if you’d let yourself stop resisting my sweet aura, I could make you forget about that. I could treat you good.”

“I…” But there was nothing that followed the weak tone in Kageyama’s voice, blue eyes hazy when slowly opening half-way. Oikawa trailed his fingers under Kageyama’s chin, tilting it slightly to look up at his alluring eyes.

“So what do you say, Tobio-kun? Will you let me help you forget about Hinata?”

“Oikawa!” Anger echoed in the voice of Hinata as he pushed into the room, his eyes narrowed and his hands shaking by his sides. If Oikawa was concerned about the interruption, he didn’t show it, his face remaining impassive while he lifted his head to lazily glance at the two intruders.

“Ah, you figured it out. Surprised you made it past the-”

“Get off of Kageyama.” There was no hint of humor in Hinata’s tone, proving his irritation with
Oikawa’s antics had far surpassed his patience. Suga remained silent during the exchange, though he kept a watchful eye on the two as they spoke.

“Oh my, chibi-kun. When I stole your playtoy, I never thought you’d get so mad. I mean, this human doesn’t even have a thread to work with, right? Doesn’t that make him a little useless for you?” Oikawa’s hands continued to trace down the slender neck of Kageyama as he spoke. This was the first time that Hinata had seen Oikawa’s powers in action, as normally the god would only come to the spiker once he had finished whatever troubling plan he had concocted. He wasn’t even sure if Kageyama was coherent enough to realize Hinata and Suga were there. Despite this, Hinata’s gaze remained steady on the god of lust’s face.

“Oikawa, I’m serious! Stop this, or you’ll regret it.”

“Is that a threat?” It was obvious that something Hinata had said aggravated the god, Oikawa’s eyes shooting daggers at him before he snapped out his next sentence. “Please tell me what you’ll do if I don’t. You can’t curse me a second time.”

“A second time?” It was Suga who posed the question, though the spiker’s face was filled with confusion at Oikawa’s words. In response Oikawa scoffed, his eyes lowering back to Kageyama in contempt.

“Did you ever meet the woman who was the goddess of love before you, chibi-kun?” A pause in the air made Oikawa sigh, the bright eyes losing their glow. Kageyama’s head lulled onto the back of the couch, Hinata’s body tensing at the change.

“What did you do to Kageyama?!”

“Relax, I just sedated him. He’ll wake up in a little bit,” Oikawa answered, the god of lust resting his hand onto the Kageyama’s cheek with a grimace. “She looked a lot like our friend here, though her eyes were softer. Everyone thought she was so beautiful. There was nobody who would refuse her; to be graced with her presence was considered a blessing.”

“But she left during the war, right?” Hinata’s question was met with a shake of Oikawa’s head.

“She didn’t leave willingly; Ukai took her title from her right before the revolt. Some thought her losing her position was part of the catalyst for the opposition.”
“What did she do?”

“One of the only things you can do to lose your title; she tried to kill another god.”

“Why would she do that?” Hinata asked, unsure of where the story was leading. A laugh that held no humor came from the brunet, Oikawa finally lifting himself from the couch to stand.

“For the greatest feeling of all; love.” The sarcasm was dripping from his tone as he snagged the shirt he had removed from the floor, casually pulling it back over his chest. “She became infatuated with someone who wouldn’t reciprocate.”

“Who was it?” Oikawa’s eyes sharpened with focus at Hinata’s question, staring the smaller god down. When he responded, his words were laced with unbridled anger and rage.

“She fell in love with me, chibi-kun. And for that, I was cursed.”

Chapter End Notes

....Yup. That's what we call a cliffhanger. BUT before you raise your pitchforks, remember that you can’t get an answer without me being alive to write it out! So, what happened with Oikawa and the previous goddess of love? What curse is he speaking about? Will Hinata be able to find the truth about the god of lust? And what will happen when Kageyama wakes up? Kudos and comments are always welcome!
Hinata learns first hand about Newton's Third Law: "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction"

Ah! So many people commented on the last chapter, and it was amazing to see lots of people's guesses about what was going to happen. So without further adieu, here it is!

"The heart wants what it wants. There's no logic to these things. You meet someone and you fall in love and that's that." -Woody Allen

“I don’t believe it.” Suga’s words were soft, his eyes wide as he stared at the brunet god who scowled in front of him.

“Don’t sound so shocked!” Oikawa scolded, letting his pout only rest for a moment before a look edged with sadness filled his features. “I didn’t know about any of this, of course. I was young, and didn’t know yet of my future as the god of lust. I thought she just liked to spend time with me and Iwa-chan because she always said we were amusing to watch interact. I thought we were...friends.”

“You didn’t love her back, did you?” Suga’s words were filled with sympathy, and Hinata watched the other god glance away to stare out the window of his room.

“I couldn’t. I was in love with someone else.” He said it with a careless tone, but Hinata could see the slight wince under the brown gaze. “It was a male god, and that made me keep it to myself. I never told him, of course. When Ukai and Takeda took over, I felt like there was a chance I could be with him. So I went to her, hoping to get some advice in how to tell him. But when I did, she became upset. She confessed to me, and asked me to give up on him to be with her. I declined, of course, thinking she’d understand it was impossible to simply unlove someone.”

“She didn’t?” It was hard for Hinata to comprehend the slow shake of the god of lust’s head. Being the current god of love, all he believed in would have made him think the woman would have stepped back. Love wasn’t a switch; it was something intricate and too beautiful to simply throw away. He tried to think of how he would have reacted being her in predicament, knowing the person
he loved was in love with someone else. At first he felt conflicted, not having first hand experience with his own love life. Unconsciously his eyes flickered over to Kageyama. If Kageyama found someone he loved...

“Then what did she do?” Suga’s question brought Hinata away from the dangerous thought, Oikawa not answering right away. Delicate fingers twitched by his side before lifting to run through his hair, brown eyes doing their best to hide his dismay.

“She tried to kill him.” The words left Hinata speechless, his eyes wide even as Oikawa continued. “Ukai was able to stop her before she completed the task, of course. But before he could strip her of her title, she made sure I’d never forget her.”

“Did she try to kill you, as well?”

“Nope, that would have been easy to deal with.” He replied to Suga’s question so casually, yet it was quite clear the memory still haunted him. The uncaring facade he used felt misplaced, refusing to meet either of their gazes. “Remember these words, Oikawa Tooru. The one who holds your heart will never return your feelings. This is my final curse as the goddess of love. That was the last thing she said before Ukai dethroned her.”

“She used the curse of the unloved.” Hinata had only heard of it, never once feeling the need to use it. Like Takeda’s power of a soulbreak, “the unloved curse” was a method that could be implemented by the god of love in dire circumstances. The person who had the curse casted on them would never be loved by the one they cared the most for. Humans knew it first as ‘unrequited love’, though myths of the real curse had been watered down and forgotten with time. It was an old and cruel option that had no right to be made, nevermind used.

“No matter how many times I offer myself to the person that I love, he never returns my affection.”

“You’ve asked him?” Suga asked, a tint of skepticism in his eyes even as Tooru answered.

“I didn’t have to; he only sees me as a comrade or even an annoyance.” At the description, Hinata blinked, his head tilting slightly to the side.

“That kind of sounds like-”
“What did you do this time, idiot?” Iwaizumi’s loud voice boomed in the spacious room as he pushed the teal curtain from his entrance, his eyes showing his obvious annoyance with the god of lust. “Why the hell are you dragging humans into your temper tantrum? You know what your powers do to them, or do I have to remind you with my fist in your face?”

“Iwa-chan! Are you the one who let these two in to ruin my fun?” The playful change in Oikawa’s personality was rapid, but didn’t distract Hinata from a sudden observation.

“You’re in love with Hajime-san?!” The realization stunned the whole room, Hinata’s feet rushing toward the guardian even as Oikawa moved to give a joking answer.

“I’d love to get in Iwa-chan’s pants, if that’s what you mean.”

“No, I mean you’re not cursed.” Oikawa looked like he was choking on air at Hinata’s response, the god of love lifting Iwaizumi’s wrist with a tilted head. “You can’t get cursed if you’re connected by a true love thread. That’s how it works with the humans, though I’ve never seen a God soulmate thread—”

“What thread? There’s no soulmate thread between us.”

“Wait, you really can’t see it? It’s right here!” To try and prove his point, Hinata tapped on the string, seeing it sway between the two. But when neither god reacted, the spiker’s mouth dropped in awe. “You can’t see it. I mean, I didn’t see it appear until you two were in the same room. Suga and Daichi’s was the same way; I only saw the connection to Suga when Daichi entered the gym. Before that, there was no sign of Suga having a thread. I wonder… is it just a god thing? Maybe I can’t see the threads unless we’re on earth! And maybe… gods can’t see their own threads? Woah, that means Ukai and Takeda could really be soulmates after all!”

“What the hell is he talking about?” Iwaizumi glanced over to Oikawa, whose face held a look of panic.

“B-But I’m cursed. I’m cursed.”

“You can’t be; there’s a soulmate thread. You know that if there’s a pink soulmate bond, then nothing can break it. That includes curses,” Hinata argued back, his irritation rising when Oikawa continued to shake his head. The feeling of anger was quick to evaporate when the god of love caught the glimmer of tears in the eyes of Oikawa. Trying to hide it, the brunet swiped his palms
over his eyes, though more tears replaced their fallen brethren.

“This isn’t possible. Hajime can’t be my soulmate. He ca-can’t be.”

“What the hell…” Hinata’s hand was dropped to his side when Iwaizumi shook the hold off, his sigh soft as he moved across the room to his now trembling friend. Iwaizumi stopped in front of him, his scowl lacking true annoyance as he grabbed the chin of his slightly taller partner. “Are you going to tell me what’s got you so upset, or do I have to knock some sense into you first?”

“Iwa-chan,” Oikawa sniffled out, his eyes blurry with tears and his voice nasally. Cheeks splotchy from crying, the god of lust looked a mess as he faced the guardian in front of him. “Is it true?”

“Is what true? I don’t know what anyone of you are talking about,” Iwaizumi griped out, nearly falling back when Oikawa launched himself into the man’s chest. Lanky arms were wrapped around Iwaizumi’s shoulders, Oikawa pressing his forehead into Iwaizumi’s neck.

“Do you really love me?”

“Who would love an idiot like you?!”

“Hajime.” The taller god pulled back to look at Iwaizumi, his lips wavering as he tried to keep from crying again. The guardian’s eyes widened for a moment, remaining silent as Oikawa spoke tearfully. “I’ve been in love with you since we were little kids. I love you and I don’t want to sleep with anyone but you ever again. Even if you’ve got weird hair and you always grit your teeth when you sleep, I love you. Iwa-chan, I really really love-“

“Could you be any more embarrassing?” Groaning, Iwaizumi pressed his hand to his face to try and cover it. Despite this, the guardian yanked Oikawa into his chest again, wrapping his other arm around the brunet’s back. Oikawa blinked for a second, the dark haired man yanking his palm away to glare at his friend. The look was soon lost when Iwaizumi leaned up, pressing a quick kiss to Oikawa’s lips. It was lacking finesse or length, but the implication behind the movement was only emphasized when Iwaizumi’s cheeks darkened once pulling away, his lips instantly dropping to a scowl. “If I didn’t love you, do you think I’d put up with all your shit? Seriously, find your brain-“

“Iwa-chan!” The cheerful chirp from Oikawa came seconds before he rushed to kiss the guardian again, Iwaizumi managing to steady them by firmly gripping the god of lust’s hips. The kiss was deeper than the first, Oikawa refusing to pull away until he was sure the other man’s lips would be
“Do you think they forgot about us?” Hinata’s question made Suga laugh, the two admiring the new couple from a distance.

“Give them a minute, they’ll remember.” Before the god of love could reply, a groan wavered through the air, catching their attention. It only took a second to realize who it came from, brown eyes wide as he glanced back to the couch. The once silent Kageyama was curled into himself on the couch, his heavy breathing paired with a trickle of sweat running down his face. Panicked, Hinata rushed across the room, his knees jabbing into the cushions of the couch while he pressed his hands to the setter’s face. The normally pale skin was hot and clammy, Kageyama letting out a hiss when the god moved his hand under his bangs.

“Kageyama? Kageyama, can you hear me?” Hinata’s voice shook with fear, his head lifting to Oikawa when the man only curled into himself more. “What’s going on with him?”

“Opps.” The response didn’t help calm the orange haired god, Oikawa waving the glare away before leaning into Iwaizumi’s chest and sighing. “It’s been awhile since I’ve had a human actually refuse my advances, so I completely forgot about the side effects.”

“What side effects, Asskawa?” For good measure, the guardian smacked the back of Oikawa’s head, making him whine before he pouted.

“No need to be violent to the one you so deeply love, Iwa-chan!”

“Then spill.”

“Fine, fine. When someone fights against my pheromones for long periods of time, it puts a lot of sexual pressure onto their body. Tobio-kun lasted longer than any other being, human or not, has. I’d be impressed if I wasn’t so offended that he refused me.”

“Tоору, what’s going to happen next?” Suga asked, Hinata’s hands cupping the shivering man’s face. Hoping to ease the furrow in his forehead, the god of love stroked Kageyama’s cheeks with his thumbs, though he kept his ears open for Oikawa’s reply.

“Well, for starters, he’ll look for something to release his ‘pressure’ with. Which means that chibi-
chan should really be careful.”

“Me?” Hinata’s head lifted for a second to watch Oikawa shrug, the god of lust leading Iwazumi toward the exit of the room.

“He was able to resist me because I wasn’t the one he truly wanted.” The comment was followed by the departure of Oikawa, yanking his scowling lover behind the fluttering teal curtain. Unsure how to take the information given by the sultry god, Hinata peered down at his roommate.

“Should we bring him home?” At Hinata’s question, Suga shook his head, showing his own concern with his softened voice.

“If Oikawa didn’t kick us out of the room, it’s probably best to stay put.”

“Do you think they have something to help cool him down?”

“I’m sure the bar has ice packs or at least a cloth we can soak for his head.” After Suga’s response, the man quietly glanced to the door before back at Hinata. “Though after what Oikawa said, I’m not sure I should be leaving you alone with him.”

“I’ll be okay!” Giving Suga a thumbs up, Hinata flexed his arm and grinned. “If he tries anything, I’ll beat him up.”

“Try not to hurt him too much, muscle man. We still need him for the team,” Suga teased, laughing before he ruffled Hinata’s hair. “I’ll be right back, okay?”

“Grab some water too; he may want to wash the taste of Oikawa out of his mouth.” The only response he got was a smile and a shake of Suga’s head before the fertility god moved from the room, Hinata letting his grin fade away. Slowly his eyes dropped back to Kageyama, whose back had stiffened in obvious discomfort. Hoping to ease some of the man’s pain, Hinata wiggled behind him, gently coaxing Kageyama into an easier position. Kageyama’s back lost all its tension when the god placed his hand against it, Hinata soothing the heated skin with slow circles.

Sighing while pressing his forehead to Kageyama’s shoulder blade, the small spiker thought back to Oikawa and Kageyama’s conversation. Why hadn’t Kageyama denied the god of lust’s claim about wanting Hinata? Though the two had become closer through the past few weeks, it didn’t mean that
the setter saw him as anything more than a roommate. He would consider it a win if the artist called him his friend. They were partners by circumstances neither could really control. Yet even as Hinata thought about all the reasons that his roommate could deny anything between them, the memories of their achievements also flooded his brain. Kageyama hadn’t turned his back on Hinata when finding out what he was. The setter opened about his past failings with love. The closeness of working as partners on the court and for Hinata’s mission had allowed Kageyama to drop some of his defenses around him. And the physical intimacy between them seemed to grow with each milestone. So then what did Kageyama think of Hinata?

And what did Hinata think of Kageyama?

“This is confusing,” Hinata mumbled softly, his fingers slowing their quiet patterns on the taller man’s back. He closed his eyes tight, disliking the confusion that was clouding his mind. It made his head feel fuzzy, like he was looking through a unfocused lens. The answered were there, but he couldn’t decipher them.

“Ugh.” The displeased noise that entered the air made Hinata tense, the god opening his eyes to watch Kageyama’s consciousness slowly return. Not being able to see the man’s face, Hinata pushed up onto his arm, peeking over the setter’s shoulder. Blue eyes started to flutter open, a relieved sigh falling from the god.

“Kageyama!” He felt the tensing of the body in front of him, a sudden shudder from Kageyama making the spiker snap his mouth close. Had he been too loud? The setter was just waking up from Oikawa’s power trip. But one look back to Kageyama’s face sucked the relief from Hinata. The artist’s eyes were half-lidded with a familiar daze. The warning from Oikawa passed through Hinata’s mind a second before his world tilted, the god gasping when his back was pressed into the couch beneath him. A overheated body was pressed between his legs, Hinata’s ears turning red at the intimate position.

And then, Kageyama was kissing him. The eager mouth of the setter was pressed against his own, Hinata’s whole body freezing at the action. The big claims he had used with Suga went out the window instantly, fear making him forget how to even breathe. The murky fog that had earlier shrouded his mind was thickened by the actions, Hinata’s throat producing a soft gasp when feeling strong hands sliding under his shirt. Kageyama’s mouth barely left his own to suck in a quick breath before it claimed the spiker’s lips again. The tongue that slipped along Hinata’s lower lip sent a shiver down the god’s spine, his hands grasping the back of Kageyama’s shirt instantly. He wasn’t sure if he had intended to push Kageyama away or pull him closer, all train of thought wilting when the setter’s fingers dragged down his sensitive ribcage. Mouth parting in a reflexive moan granted the lust-induced man access to Hinata’s mouth, and he didn’t waste time pressing his tongue inside to explore.

The intensity of the kiss was only matched by the sharp rock of Kageyama’s hips, the shock of
pleasure twining with fear in Hinata’s chest. But Hinata wasn’t scared for himself. Despite how the artist had initiated the intimacy, it wasn’t on his own accord. Oikawa’s power had pushed him to his limit. And even if he had refused to get involved with the older god, that didn’t mean he wanted this impromptu makeout with Hinata. As the dark haired man’s fingers made Hinata arch into their teasing touch, the guilt crept into Hinata’s mind enough to disperse some of the earlier confusion. The kisses and touches were being expressed through Kageyama’s body, but it wasn’t Kageyama inside. This was just a side effect. Hinata didn’t want to kiss a lust-induced human.

Hinata wanted to kiss Kageyama.

His mouth was filled with another lingering kiss, making it hard for Hinata to focus on stopping the sex-fueled make out. Leaning up to return the kiss felt natural despite the lack of history in kissing someone, Hinata allowing his hands to reach up and cup Kageyama’s face. Yanking back, Hinata’s eyes glowed as he angled the setter’s face to look at him. Once catching the unclear blue gaze, the god leaned forward, speaking softly.

“I know this isn’t you right now. But it’s okay; I know you’re in there. And I’m not going anywhere until you’re able to beat this. Because you’re not just my partner, but my roommate, my friend and… I want...” There was a rush of embarrassment in his face after the admission, Hinata’s heart rate accelerating as he took a shaky swallow. “I’m here. No matter what, I’ll always be here for you, Kageyama. You don’t need a soulmate to understand you; you have me.”

Then slowly, Hinata leaned up and initiated a kiss. It held none of the passion or sultry undertones of the previous kisses. Hinata refused to be an object that Kageyama used as a pressure release. He wanted Kageyama to kiss him as Hinata, and nothing else. He continued to press his soft kiss to the setter’s lips, hoping his plan would work. Despite not being connected by a bond, Hinata prayed his aura could still affect Kageyama. If it did, the softness of his romance aura could counteract the aggressive nature of lust. With the lust gone, Kageyama would return to normal, and Hinata would have his roommate back. Tightening his eyes in a prayer, Hinata hoped his aura would work between the two despite the lack of emotional intimacy.

So when Kageyama returned the gentle kiss of the god, the tension that had built into Hinata’s shoulders dissolved. His hands never left Kageyama’s face, enjoying the leisure kiss that was being shared between the two. His body hummed in a way he hadn’t felt before, losing any trace of his previous fear. The hands which had been roaming his body had retreated, warm palms cradling the slim waist of the god. The touch felt protective, not sexual, and Hinata’s back melted into the cushion as he allowed Kageyama to lay him back on the couch. The kisses were slow, Hinata’s stomach pooling with warmth from the feeling of Kageyama’s tongue pressing against his own. Gone was the frantic rutting and rushed need. The god’s mouth felt sore with each new kiss, and his body was tired from exerting so much of his power for a prolonged time. Still he answered the questing lips over his, kissing Kageyama again and again. There was a sweet taste to the mouth against his that the spiker couldn’t name. It was good, though, and Hinata tilted his head back to deepen the kiss.
He didn’t know how much time passed between them. When Kageyama pulled back slowly, it took Hinata few seconds to open his gaze again. He could feel the last sparks of power sizzling out from his gaze, an overwhelming need to sleep hitting him. Still he forced his eye open, watching as the dark blue stare above him finally cleared. A few slow blinks was all Kageyama could muster before he sunk to the side of the couch next to Hinata, proving the toll of the two dueling powers had exhausted him. Hinata yawned silently as his eyes closed again, snuggling to the heat of Kageyama’s body as sleep started to claim him. The arm that draped over his waist was the last thing Hinata felt before falling victim to his dreams.

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When Hinata had woken up on the couch at Oikawa’s now closed club, it had taken him a second to realize where he was. It took one look at the sleeping setter next to him for his memories to kick in. Noya and Asahi, the truth behind Oikawa, and then the kiss came flooding through his mind. Everything felt like a dream, yet there was no other reason for their slumber on the uncomfortable furniture. He kissed Kageyama. Not only did he kiss him, but he enjoyed it. Just thinking about it had the spiker’s heart jumping into his throat. And he didn’t know how to face his roommate when he woke up.

Except when Kageyama finally opened his eyes, he remembered nothing. The confused setter simply asked what had happened, not remembering his entering of the club. He barely remembered the practice the day before, which worried Hinata. Had Kageyama hit his head without Hinata knowing? That thought went out the window when Oikawa moseyed into the room, not seeming surprised by Kageyama’s amnesia. Pulling the smaller man to the side while Iwaizumi introduced himself, the god of lust explained the lost memories to Hinata.

"Sometimes my powers cause some side effects. Tobio-kun probably won’t remember what happened for a few days, so it’ll give you time to explain whatever happened between the two of you. Hope it wasn’t too naughty, chibi-chan."

How Oikawa knew about their kiss, Hinata wasn’t sure. He wanted to deny it, but the knowing look in the brunet’s eyes proved it would be futile. Instead the small god kept close to Oikawa, making sure the man didn’t spill the secret. It seemed the man had no interest in telling the human setter, convincing Iwaizumi to take the duo to breakfast. The god of love had been sure the guardian wouldn’t have money, nearly choking on his own spit when the man rolled his eyes and yanked out a very human wallet. Sharing a meal with the god of lust was weird to Hinata, yet Oikawa seemed to hold none of the same tension. He was content sneaking bacon off of Iwaizumi’s plate and making fun of Kageyama’s bed hair, a much different atmosphere around him.

The bright pink soulmate string caught Hinata’s eye a few times as the two older gods bickered over another pointless topic. Seeing the first soulmate string between two gods looked identical to a human bond. He wasn’t sure why he thought it would be different. It felt different, like something
had changed in the rules of love. He always thought that gods could have soulmates, but this was the proof. Two full fledged gods were soulmates. And even if he hated the way Oikawa continued to call him ‘chibi-kun’, he was happy for his fellow gods.

Once breakfast was over, Oikawa and Iwaizumi decided to leave. But before the god of lust departed, the brunet gave a quiet look to Hinata that made the shorter god step back. Tooru’s eyes were filled with a secret that his lips didn’t want to part with. Instead, the tall man shrugged, leaning forward to flick Hinata’s forehead.

“Good luck with your little love mess. Come find me if you can’t figure out what to do, Chibi-kun.”

And before Hinata could ask what he meant, the god was gone.

“It’s too bad that Oikawa had to go back so soon, I really wanted to watch him serve again.” The freckled brunet’s statement made Hinata frown, his eyes glued to the small TV in front of them. Though much smaller than the one in his own apartment, the screen was still clear enough for Hinata to see the two men wrestling in the colorful ring.

“Trust me, it’s better off he went home,” Hinata muttered, disliking the slight flip in his stomach. It had been constant throughout the day, the god of love doing his best to ignore it. He blamed the feeling on Oikawa’s weird goodbye, never understanding the other god. The feeling only increased whenever he thought of Kageyama, Hinata yanking the fuzzy blanket on his lap closer to him.

“Speaking of home, can I ask you a question?” Hinata glanced over to Yamaguchi, who kept a kind look to his face as he spoke. “Did something happen with you and Kageyama? You never come over here unless you’re hiding from something.”

“I-I’m not hiding! I just missed you guys.”

“Of course, I don’t mind company!” At Yamaguchi’s reassurance, Hinata smiled, though the look quickly disappeared when a snort came from the kitchen.

“I do.” The blonde roommate made sure to give a pointed glare to Hinata, who scowled at the grumpy look.

“Don’t be like that, Tsukki. You won’t be home tonight anyways. You’re going out for dinner with Akiteru-san, remember?”
“You should be coming, as well,” Tsukishima answered, pushing his glasses up his nose and frowning. “My brother claims to miss you, and he’s much more tolerable when you’re there.”

“Ah, sorry! But I’ve got too much homework.” To prove his point, the pinch server lifted his book from his lap and gave his displeased roommate an apologetic smile. “Make sure to tell him I said hello.”

“I won’t.”

“Tsukki...”

“Tsukishima has a brother?” Hinata asked, not waiting for the snarky reply from the blocker to continue. “What’s he like? Nicer than him, I bet.”

“He’s nosey and annoying, like someone else I know.” Despite Tsukishima’s mean description, Yamaguchi clapped his hands together and gave his own answer.

“He’s nice to me, and really funny! He’s always treated me like a little brother.”

“But you’re not his family,” Tsukishima answered, Hinata’s head popping up when hearing a slight bite to the man’s tone.

“What’s wrong with Yamaguchi liking your brother?”

“I’m going to be late.” The blatant way the archeology student ignored him made Hinata’s face burn in anger, making sure to shout his protest even when Tsukishima turned his back to the couch. “Don’t let Hinata distract your from your studies, Yamaguchi.”

“I hope a bird poops on your head!” Hinata’s words didn’t seem to affect the man who was now walking out of the apartment, making the spiker huff and drop back onto the couch. Yamaguchi laughed at the frustrated look of his friend, though quieted himself to look back to the textbook he was studying from. Grumbling on the couch, Hinata turned his attention back onto the TV. “Why does he have to be such an ass?”
“He’s a good person once you get to know him,” Yamaguchi replied, scribbling something into his notebook. Not lifting his head from the homework, the freckled man continued. “Though I get why you didn’t want to talk about avoiding Kageyama while Tsukki was here.”

“I’m not-”

“You were acting really weird at practice today.” Caught off guard by the observation, Hinata’s ears went pink as Yamaguchi peeked up over the pages of his book.

“I...we…”

“You couldn’t hit most of his passes, and whenever he yelled at you, your face got all red.” There was a time when Hinata admired the observation skills of the pinch server. Now, he wished the man was blind. The kind man pushed the book off his lap as he turned to Hinata, hoping his soft voice would ease the tense man. “Hinata, did something happen with Kageyama?”

“It’s all Oikawa’s fault!” The words escaped Hinata’s mouth before he could catch them, both pairs of eyes widening at the sudden confession. Yamaguchi was quick to recover, scrambling over the couch to lean closer to his teammate.

“What happened?”

“He...got Kageyama drunk,” Hinata answered, eyes glancing down to the fidgeting fingers in his lap. The god knew it was the closest explanation he could give for the truth, as Oikawa’s powers tended to leave people feeling buzzed. The long exposure to the pheromones simply intoxicated Kageyama, though it didn’t make it easier for Hinata to explain the after affects. “Things got a little out of hand and then...we kissed.”

“Kageyama kissed you?!”

“Uh, well, he kissed me first. But then I...kissed him back?” Hoping his face wasn’t as red as it felt, Hinata’s hands clamped together tightly, eyes bright as he thought back to the night in question. “It was all kind of a blur, and he couldn’t remember anything this morning. Not to mention I’m not sure he really wanted to kiss me-”

“Was it weird, kissing your roommate?” The god of love didn’t give a second thought to the answer
passing through his lips.

“It felt right.” Hinata lifted his head at the answer, Yamaguchi’s face riddled with contrasting emotions. Though his lips were pulled into a smile, there was a shine to his eyes that reflected a more somber emotion. What was going through Yamaguchi’s mind? Hoping to re-direct the conversation away from the weird rumble in his stomach, the spiker turned his body to fully face Yamaguchi. “Have you ever thought of kissing your roommate before?”

“Tsukki?” Hinata gave a quiet nod, and Yamaguchi’s expression softened. The silence lingered for a few seconds, then the archeology student gave a smile that only lifted half his mouth. “Would it be bad to say I have?”

“Really?! Is there something going on between you two?”

“N-No, I mean…” There was a hint to the brunet’s voice that meant he had more to say. Hinata struggled to keep his voice from bubbling out as he waited, Yamaguchi finally speaking his mind. “I thought there was, before.”

“Before?”

“I shouldn’t be talking about this,” Yamaguchi replied, trying to keep his eyes from meeting Hinata’s. Desperate to keep the man from running away, Hinata reached forward to grab his wrist, feeling his fingers twine with the multi-colored string.

“Yamaguchi, I haven’t told anyone what happened with Bakayama. Not even Suga!” His admission wasn’t a lie; feeling too confused by his emotions, the god of love refused to bring up the topic to anyone before Yamaguchi. Even telling his teammate had been an accident, and he wasn’t sure how his pounding heart was handling the leaked information. Shaking his head to focus on the matter at hand, Hinata stared up at the hesitant man and spoke with conviction. “If you don’t get it out, it’s going to eat you alive. So tell me before that happens.”

It was obvious that Yamaguchi was scared, the fear written on his face. Before coming to earth and meeting these people, maybe Hinata would have questioned this hesitation. What was so bad about talking about the person you loved? The emotion was supposed to be nothing but positive vibes and happy memories. Yet time had passed since then, and with it came personal knowledge the god didn’t ask for. Love wasn’t as easy as he had thought. Seeing so many people he knew struggle with the concept showed there were levels to the complex feeling. It wasn’t always about buying flowers and goodnight kisses. Anxiety and embarrassment tugged at the heart at the worst of times. Seeing the instability of emotions had humbled the god, changing his style of interrogation. Though he
wanted to jump on the couch and demand Yamaguchi respond, he stayed as still he could on the cushion he was sitting on.

And when Yamaguchi’s shoulders relaxed, Hinata knew the torturous patience paid off.

“A few weeks ago, Tsukki and I were studying at the library. He was just finishing up his shift but there was nobody there, so we were working on our deep sea archeology homework. I don’t remember what he said that made me laugh, but then I couldn’t stop.” Just speaking about the night seemed to bright a flush to the man’s face, though the endearing expression he wore proved he remembered the scene fondly. “He kept telling me to be quiet, because we were in the library. But that just made me laugh more, until he leaned over the table and tried to squash my cheeks into submission. I wanted to apologize, but then I realized how close he was and I froze. And Tsukki...I had never seen him look at me like that before.”

“Like what?”

“Like he could only see me.” The words were breathed out quietly, Yamaguchi brushing his fingertips over his bottom lip. “He pressed his thumb right here and told me to shut up again, but it felt different. We stayed like that for a moment, like he was holding something back. But then...he just pulled away. Then that girl showed up, and you know the rest from there.”

“You really like that bastard, huh?” The smile that Yamaguchi gave in reply was pained, the faked happiness evident to Hinata as his teammate spoke.

“I love him. I always have, even as children. He’s been the only one I’ve ever wanted to be with. And I guess I thought one day he’d love me back. But when he said yes to her, I realized I had been getting the wrong idea. Tsukki doesn’t feel the same way I do. I must have just dreamt up the tension and forced my feelings onto him.” Hinata hadn’t disliked the blond blocker as much as he did in this one moment, watching his somber friend hunch his shoulders forward and lower his head in dismay.

“You don’t know that,” Hinata defended, releasing the wrist he had held captive when Yamaguchi lifted it to brush over the cowlick adorning his head.

“I was just trying to push my own feelings onto Tsukki...why would he ever see me as anything but his annoying friend?”

“Yamaguchi...” Hinata wanted to say more, but he felt the words fall flat when the pinch server
lifted his head and laughed, eyes squeezed shut as he waved.

“I’m okay, really! The girl is really smart, and quite pretty, too. There’s no reason that Tsukki wouldn’t hit it off with her.”

“But what if Tsukishima does love you?” Feeling an uneasy pressure settle on his chest when seeing Yamaguchi wave him off, the god of love rushed to speak again. “What if he’s just confused or scared of you rejecting him? I mean, look at what happened with Asahi and Noya!”

“Tsukki’s not like that, though. If he had feelings for me, then he would have told me by now. And he’s going out with that girl tomorrow, so doesn’t that prove he’s interested in someone else?”

“Yamaguchi-”

“Oh, it’s that late already?” Yamaguchi’s eyes peered over at the glowing clock on the cable box, the archeology student leaning down to grab the fallen textbook. “You should probably head home; Tsukki will give you an earful if he thinks you distracted me from getting my homework done.”

“But I didn’t do anything wrong!” Yamaguchi’s laugh was weak at Hinata’s protest, the smile not quite reaching his eyes as he walked Hinata to the door. Even as he called a cheerful ‘goodnight!’ before closing his door, Yamaguchi didn’t have the same optimistic tone Hinata had gotten used to. The change in his friend’s behavior saddened the spiker, knowing that his mess up was the cause of this. What if he hadn’t run from his duties? Would Tsukishima have kissed Yamaguchi? Or would he have simply turned down the girl, keeping the pinch server’s hopes alive? Either way, Hinata had screwed it up, and the guilt on his shoulders when pushing into his own apartment was heavy.

“Hey.” Amber eyes lifted from the entranceway when he shut the door behind him, instantly catching the glare of blue aimed his way. Kageyama was rising from his seat on the couch, the obvious strain in his shoulders showing he wasn’t looking for a casual conversation. “What the hell, Hinata?”

“Huh?”

“Our asshole neighbor texted me an hour ago to rat you out; why were you hiding in their apartment?”
“I wasn’t hiding!” Hinata shouted, his irritation with the blond rising. Leave it to Tsukishima to add gasoline to the fire. For someone who didn’t like to get ‘involved’ he sure liked to stick his nose into places it didn’t belong. He’d have to deal with Tsukishima later; for now, he needed to deal with the irate man now clenching his fists in front of him.

“First you get all weird after Oikawa leaves, then you miss every quick set we do at practice. You were so off that Daichi made you practice with Suga. Then we get home and you literally bolt from the apartment to camp out next door? And to top this whole thing off, you still haven’t told me why we were in that club last night.”

“I’m not really sure what part of that you want an answer to,” Hinata said, expecting the setter to threaten him or try to smack out an answer. Instead, a weird look came over the man’s face, a slight wince from his roommate making Hinata’s eyes widen.

“What’s going on with you, idiot?” Yet even with the insult, the words didn’t scream anger. Instead, it was clear that the discourse between the two of them was impacting Kageyama more than Hinata thought. Despite hiding his feelings better than most, the artist was still human. It was obvious that he was upset about the rift between them, even if he couldn’t express it as openly as their other teammates. The idea that he had been the reason to cause the troubling look on his roommate’s face wasn’t a pleasant feeling. How had Yamaguchi hidden his secret from Tsukishima for decades when Hinata couldn’t go twenty four hours? Humans were stronger than the gods gave them credit for.

“You don’t remember anything from last night?”

“I remember you getting tricked into helping Suga-san clean the gym, which meant I was stuck walking with Yamaguchi and his prick of a roommate. Then Oikawa showed up and offered to show me some tricks for setting, and that’s it.”

“Your amnesia’s a side effect of Oikawa using his aura on you.” There was a brief silence between them, Hinata’s nerves causing his word flow to quicken. “By the time Suga and I got there, Oikawa had tried to seduce you or something. You were all ‘blah’ and then you kind of got sedated? Oikawa told us some crazy story about a goddess who tried to kill someone, we found out Iwaizumi was his soulmate, you woke up and tried to make out with me and then I saved you!”

“Did you just say I made out with you?” Kageyama’s eyes were widened with disbelief when Hinata gave a hesitant nod, his hands lifting in front of him as a sign of peace.

“It was totally okay because you weren’t yourself!” Despite his explanation for Kageyama’s behavior, the setter didn’t relax or dismiss the stunned look. Panicking, the spiker stepped closer to
his roommate to try and diffuse the situation. “And like I said, I saved you so it didn’t get out of hand!”

“How?”

“Oh, I...uh…” Swallowing at the realization his throat had dried out, Hinata tried to give his biggest smile to hide the sudden swell of anxiety. “I just used my own aura to override his.”

“You used your powers on me?”

“Yeah, but mine don’t have any side effects, so don’t worry about that-”

“I’m not a game!” The snapped out sentence and vicious glare sent Hinata’s way made the spiker tense, brown eyes wide in surprise at Kageyama’s angry words. “After spending all of this time with us, you still treat us like we’re toys. That we’re just things to use to get back at each other or something.”

“I don’t think like that at all!” Hinata protested, his breath coming out in short bursts to try and fill his shrinking lungs. He hadn’t meant to belittle Kageyama; he just wanted to save him from making a mistake. He didn’t like using his aura as a weapon like Oikawa. Humans weren’t beneath gods; there were aspects of humanity that Hinata was left awestruck by. But he’d rather do it one hundred times than live in the consequences of what the setter would have done if Hinata hadn’t activated his power.

“I’m done.” Kageyama’s hands were fisted by his sides, the embarrassment overshadowed by the anger simmering from his skin.

“Done?”

“I don’t want to be a part of this anymore.”

“What does that mean?” Instead of an answer, the setter turned away from his roommate, walking out of the living room. It was instinct for Hinata to follow, his head spinning at the broad statement. “Kageyama?”
“Whatever your next plan is, keep me out of it.”

“I can’t do that, we’re partners!” Hinata protested, bumping into the taller man’s back when he paused outside of his bedroom. Instantly Hinata’s palm came to his nose, checking the bumped area before glancing up at his teammate with a glare.

“Maybe we shouldn’t be.” The words hit harder than a suckerpunch to the stomach, leaving Hinata stunned and at a loss for words. Kageyama didn’t wait for him to catch his second wind, moving into his room and closing the door shut behind him. At the sound of the lock sliding into place, Hinata blinked. Never, not since the moment Hinata arrived in the apartment, had Kageyama locked him out of his room. The small action shouldn’t have wounded the god as much as it did.

“Bakayama, this isn’t funny!” Hinata shook his head and proceeded to pound both fists against the door, his anger and unwanted emotions bubbling up inside of him. Even as he hit bruised hands into the solid wood, the man on the other side of the door didn’t answer. Minutes passed with Hinata calling Kageyama any insult he could think of, hoping the irate man would come out and try to hit him. But the insults slowed as time passed, Hinata finally pushing off the sturdy door to move into his own room.

And there, curled up beneath his blankets, he cried.

Chapter End Notes

Nooooo my poor little Hinata! Who would do such a thing to him?! Ah...wait...that was me. ANYWAYS, how did you like the chapter? What will happen with Tsukishima and Yamaguchi? Will Hinata be able to decode the mystery that is the blonde blocker? And will Kageyama forgive Hinata? Kudos/Comment to find out!
Broken Bonds

Chapter Summary

Emotions flare between Yamaguchi and Tsukishima as both Hinata and Kageyama try to understand what it means to fall for someone.

Chapter Notes

Hello hello! Thank you all for not killing me and trusting my love for the Haikyuu characters to light the way of this story. I may throw in some occasional angst, but it's all for the plot. So, with that said, enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn't it? It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that someone can get inside you and mess you up.” - Neil Gaiman

Yamaguchi sometimes wondered if he should have went to culinary school. The feeling he got when putting together a difficult recipe always made his lips perk in a smile. He enjoyed having others try his meals, and it warmed him when people asked for seconds. Noya and Tanaka were always a treat to watch devour his food. Sometimes a meal would be too tough to make, or he would screw up on the ingredients. He would get discouraged for a day, then a single arched eyebrow from his roommate and a “you’re not going to try again?” made Yamaguchi jump right back into the frying pan. He would hammer away at his skill until the dish was right, and he’d be proud of all the hard work he had put into it.

But just like everything else, he wasn’t sure he would be able to keep trying if not for Tsukishima’s push behind him. Whether it was learning how to play volleyball or the meticulous detail of excavations, Yamaguchi tended to work better when having Tsukishima as a motivation point. There was little he was better at than his friend; cooking was a natural talent for Yamaguchi, and his float serves edged him out in the serving department. But those were really the two things he had an advantage with. He didn’t simply call Tsukishima a genius because they were best friends; his mind simply worked better than most. If he put in the effort, there was no doubt in the brunet’s mind that Tsukishima could have been the valedictorian of their class. Yet the selfish part of Yamaguchi was happy that Tsukishima sometimes chose hanging out with him over studying.

Just as Yamaguchi was placing a pepper onto the chopping block, the blond blocker emerged from his room. It only took the pinch server a glance to realize that his roommate had seen better days. With slight bags under his glasses, Tsukishima’s cheeks lacked some of their normal color as he
made his way into the kitchen. Peeking over his shoulder, Yamaguchi watched the archeology student yank the fridge open, giving a small grimace of the loud clanking of the beer bottles in the door.

“Couldn’t sleep off your hangover?” Yamaguchi asked, hoping to keep his voice low enough as to not irritate his roommate more. Despite being friends for years, Yamaguchi could count on one hand how many times he had seen Tsukishima drunk. It not only took a good amount of alcohol to get him intoxicated, but the man always stated he disliked hard liquor. He normally would nurse one beer throughout an entire party, using his sober mind to make scathing comments to the drunk people in his vicinity. Yamaguchi wasn’t a huge fan of drinking, either, which explained why most of the beers in their fridge had been untouched for months.

But when Tsukishima came stumbling into the apartment at 2am last night, it was obvious to Yamaguchi that he had drank more than normal. The first thing that stuck out to the pinch server was the redness of Tsukishima’s knuckles. Had he gotten into a fist fight at the bar? Did he try to hit his brother? He knew that sometimes their relationship was strained, but neither were really known for fighting. Any attempt to get answers from the drunk blond was useless, as he refused to string more than two words together. The anger that flashed in his drunk eyes was concerning to Yamaguchi, though the taller man didn’t lash out at him. Instead, he practically stumbled into Yamaguchi’s arms, making the brunet guide him to his bed. Yamaguchi might have been uncomfortable undressing his friend if they hadn’t known each other for so long. That didn’t take away the guilt he felt when letting his eyes stray on Tsukishima’s grey boxer-briefs before shoving a blanket over the drunk man. Flushed cheeks and pale skin haunted Yamaguchi for hours after he shoved his head under the blanket of his own bed, causing a very restless sleep for the pinch server.

“Screw Akiteru,” Tsukishima muttered before he lifted his head, eyes focusing on his roommate’s current project. “What are you making?”

“Thai stir fry,” Yamaguchi answered, turning his attention back to the vegetable he was cutting. “There’s a water bottle on the counter with some medication for your headache.”

“Hm.” He didn’t need to look back to know that Tsukishima had went to get the aforementioned items, a slight smile tinging his lips as he diced the green pepper.

“I thought I would have seen you come out earlier; isn’t your date at 7?”

“It is.”

“You’re cutting it close,” Yamaguchi supplied, tilting his head toward the clock on the wall. “It’s
already 6:30.”

“Who are you cooking for?” It wasn’t uncommon for Tsukishima to ignore his statements when he didn’t want to talk about the subject at hand. Yamaguchi normally let the conversation go at that point, knowing that Tsukishima tended to have a stubborn streak. This time he hesitated. Why wouldn’t Tsukishima want to talk about the date? He had been okay with agreeing to it in front of him. It wasn’t like he was hiding the event from him, either. The dismal thought made his hand tighten on the handle of the knife, the brunet taking a slow breath to keep himself focused before he resumed the dicing process.

“Kageyama asked if I would be interested in working on serves when he gets out of work. Since you’ll be busy and Hinata went with Sugawara-san for the night, neither one of us have much planned. I figured it’d be good to have some food to sustain us. Kageyama tends to go a little overboard, especially if he’s got something on his mind. And since him and Hinata are having some...disagreements, we may be there a while.”

“If you’re that desperate to do something, I can cancel.” The offhanded comment took Yamaguchi by surprise, his eyes momentarily widening before he caught himself and let out a weak laugh.

“That’s alright, I don’t mind Kageyama’s company. Besides, you’ve been looking forward to this date for some time; I wouldn’t want my boredom to be the reason you didn’t get to go.” It was hard to keep his voice stable as he spoke, knowing that he was putting up a front. In all honestly, there was nothing he wanted Tsukishima to do more than stay home and watch ridiculous TV shows with him. Everything about the date felt wrong to Yamaguchi. Distracted by his thoughts, Yamaguchi nearly chopped off his own finger when something warm pressed down onto his shoulder. It took a moment to realize that Tsukishima had moved. The blond was now standing behind him, his pale fingers resting on the counter Yamaguchi was preparing his dinner on. The forehead that rested on his shoulder wasn’t heavy, yet the touch sent an electric shock through Yamaguchi’s body. Feeling Tsukishima’s body caging him against the counter made it hard for him to breathe. His blush rose when realizing his back skimmed Tsukishima’s chest, making him take a slow breath.

“Do you want me to cancel, Yamaguchi?” The words were quiet, with no sarcasm or snark beneath them. It was an honest question that Yamaguchi knew he couldn’t give an equally honest answer to. The pain that hit into his chest was blinding, the pinch server closing his eyes tightly to try and ignore the burn. Everything felt too close and yet so far away at the same time. Tsukishima was surrounding him, cradling him with his overwhelming presence. Yet even if they were centimeters from molding into one body, Yamaguchi had never felt so distant from his best friend. It was a tortuous thought, and the brunet forced a wobbly smile onto his face as he spoke.

“Why would I stop you from doing what your heart wants?”
There was a sharp change in Tsukishima’s body language, the fingers clenching harder on the hard surface in front of them. Yamaguchi wanted to look back at him to see what type of face Tsukishima was making. Was the blocker mad at how he had answered? Was he able to tell that Yamaguchi was lying? There was no words exchanged between them for a minute, the quiet click of the clock drumming in Yamaguchi’s ears. He had long ago dropped the knife onto the cutting board, knowing his mind was too scattered to cut properly. Instead he focused on the slow breathing of the man behind him, Yamaguchi hesitantly leaning back into him. Tsukishima didn’t pull away, allowing their bodies to rest against one another. Physical intimacy had never been a factor in their friendship. While Tanaka and Noya couldn’t go a day without some showing of “bromance”, Tsukishima was not like that. Yet here, as Yamaguchi leaned his head against the side of Tsukishima’s, the blond blocker didn’t pull away. That made it even harder for Yamaguchi to look back to the clock, swallowing a few times to fight against the dryness of his throat before speaking.

“Tsukki, it’s almost-”

“Shut up, Yamaguchi.” Yet even as he scolded his friend, Tsukishima pulled away, leaving the smaller man’s back cold. Yamaguchi finally looked back at his roommate, Tsukishima’s scowl evident as he moved to put his sneakers on. “Be back for 9:30 tonight.”

“Huh?”

“I rented that movie you wanted to see, so don’t stay out with that moron past 9:30.”

“Ah, okay! I’ll be here,” Yamaguchi agreed, nodding despite Tsukishima’s back facing him.

The blond said nothing after that, simply walking out of the apartment with a silence that was expected from the man. Yamaguchi let out a breath he hadn’t known he had been holding onto, turning back to the forgotten pepper from before. His hand grabbed the knife again, though paused when he realized his fingers were trembling. Trying to shake off the feeling, Yamaguchi turned his focus on the vegetable, wishing the tremor would disappear. The hope dissolved when he realized the green of the pepper was blurry, his eyes unable to blink the fuzziness away. It took a second for Yamaguchi to realize tears were blocking his vision. He tried to blink again, though it only seemed to increase the problem.

Then, before he could stop himself, his lips parted.

“How didn’t you choose me?” The whisper was shaky, followed by a volatile reaction. His hand released the knife as he stepped away from the counter, both covering his mouth in shock. Brown eyes were wide and dripping with tears at the question, but the damage was done. With emotions
flooding his system, a sob muffled into clammy fingers. His knees buckled under the sway of his heart, the brunet slamming into the kitchen floor. Physical pain barely registered when compared to the emotional tidal wave he was currently drowning in. Yamaguchi keeled over, his hands sliding away from his mouth to wrap trembling arms around his abdomen. Gasping for breath, Yamaguchi felt like he couldn’t breath. His face was soaked, his painful sobs retching from his throat and vibrating in pain. Leaning so far over that his forehead smacked into the floor, his cries ricocheted against the cool tile as his words tumbled out. “Please don’t…pick her when I-I love…”

Everything hurt. Tsukishima was on his way to meet with a girl who could truly make him happy, and Yamaguchi knew he should have been happy. His best friend was finally going to find someone who made him laugh and smile. Someone he could share his obsession with dinosaurs and explain everything wrong with any sci-fi movie. He’d let her eat the fries off his plate and would tease her about using bumpers while they bowled. Because that was how Tsukishima showed affection. How he showed Yamaguchi affection. Would it be the same with this girl? Or would she get the kisses that the pinch server imagined on nights he couldn’t get to sleep? Would Tsukishima introduce her to his brother, and make sure she knew about all the “terrible” things Akiteru did to him as a child? Would Akiteru tease them about being an ‘old married couple’ whenever they went out to dinner? Would Tsukishima show her the rare smile he got when finally blocking that one spiker that he could never figure out?

Would Tsukishima say ‘I love you’ to her?

“I know I can’t have him but…but I just love him too much to let go…” The hiccup that followed his pathetic statement made him close his eyes, berating himself for being so weak. What would Tsukishima say if he saw Yamaguchi falling apart on the kitchen floor like this? He wouldn’t want to call him his friend. The thought made Yamaguchi’s heart ache, the hand splayed on the floor fisting before he pushed himself to sit up. Breathing still hurt, but Yamaguchi shook his head as he wiped his nose and eyes on the back of his sleeve. Everything felt wrong, but the pain wouldn’t go away like this. Crying and begging for some unrealistic god to come save him wouldn’t make Tsukishima fall in love with him. The truth was that Tsukishima didn’t love him.

But Yamaguchi had been prepared for that all of his life. The other shoe had finally dropped on his fantasy and shattered it. That didn’t mean he could lay on the floor forever. The world was still moving. Shakily pushing back to his feet, Yamaguchi ignored the ache in his knees as he moved back to the counter, refusing to let himself tremble when snagging the knife. He had to meet Kageyama in a half hour, and he still hadn’t finished dinner. He didn’t have time to mourn.

“Keep it together, Yamaguchi. You’ve gone this long without his love, right?” Focusing on the present, Yamaguchi continued his meal prep, shoving his pain as far into the back of his mind as he could. The words felt unbearable for now.

But with time and practice, he prayed they would eventually stop hurting.
February 3rd. The date rolled around in Hinata’s mind as he stretched for practice, his eyes losing some of their focus at the thought. He only had 10 days until his judgement sentence. Though he had fixed three relationships, the two left were more than a little troubling. Suga was just as polite as ever to Daichi, the two seeming to work flawlessly at practice and at work. Yet even with this information as his ammunition the night before, Suga refused to engage in any conversation involving their captain. It was impossible to be angry at Suga, but Hinata could admit he was frustrated.

Tsukishima and Yamaguchi were even worse. In all honesty, Hinata hadn’t expected the blocker to go through with his date. Even without his involvement, he assumed that the intelligent archeology student would have realized where his heart truly belonged and cancelled. That hope had been completely washed away when Tanaka came in, yelling about seeing his “precious kouhai” walking with a perky blond out of a restaurant the night before. If Tanaka’s big mouth hadn’t given Hinata a hint, the huge space between his neighbors when the two came into practice did. Yamaguchi looked ready to bolt away from Tsukishima the second he appeared, his course leading him straight to the dark haired setter across the floor. The action seemed to bother the blond blocker, but he said nothing out loud. Kageyama looked surprised by the greeting, slowly agreeing to warm up with Yamaguchi before practice.

The other elephant in the room was the strain in his own apartment. Kageyama and Hinata had barely spoken since the fight, which was now going on to two days. Kageyama’s obvious desire to keep away from the god had Hinata practicing with Suga, which was nice on occasion. But his palm itched to spike a quick set, something that Suga hadn’t been able to master. Even if he had, Hinata wondered if it’d feel the same. There was a connection between him and Kageyama, and he didn’t think it was something he could replicate with someone else. The thought was confusing and frustrating, occupying his mind enough for him to completely miss a bump Suga had sent him.

“Shouyou!” Suga was quick to check on the younger god, Hinata’s face scrunching at the pain now throbbing in his nose. “Are you okay?”

“Fine, fine! I kinda got distracted,” Hinata admitted, giving a cheeky smile to the fertility god. Suga sighed and shook his head, taking a step away to retrieve the ball they had been practicing with.

“I’m guessing last night didn’t go so well at the apartment?”

“As soon as he got home, he went right to his room.” There was frustration in his voice that he couldn’t hide, Hinata sending a weak glance over to the man in question. “Even in class, he doesn’t talk to me. I understand that he’s really mad at me, but I don’t know how to fix it!”
“It’s okay that you’re upset, but you can’t make him forgive you. Sometimes people just need some time to think things through. I’m sure Kageyama will get there very soon,” Suga replied, hoping to keep his voice compassionate for his friend. Hinata’s body sagged in obvious defeat, the strain between the two affecting his body. When he was mad, he understood the physical responses to the emotion. But this heavy feeling in his limbs was something completely different. It made his eyes itch and his stomach hurt, yet it was different than hunger or cramps. Even seeing Noya and Asahi come to practice with a very healthy soulmate string didn’t pick up the added weight on his shoulders.

“I don’t get what’s wrong with me. Even when I was getting punished by Ukai and Takeda, I didn’t feel this...gwah.” Hinata’s teeth dug into his lower lip at the admission, unsure of how to explain himself. But the small glimpse into his heart seemed to hit Suga, who hesitantly kneeled in front of his friend and spoke gently.

“Shouyou, I know you don’t want to hear this, but...is it possible that you like Kageyama?” When brown eyes widened at the question, the setter simply gave a calm smile. “You’ve grown really attached to him over the past few weeks. You’re more affected by his moods than even your own. And you kissed him, which is out of character for you. I just can’t help but wonder if maybe, without realizing it, you’ve let Kageyama into your heart a little more than you meant to.”

“I...like Kageyama?” The words felt weird in Hinata’s mouth, the smaller god hesitantly glancing toward the man in question. Kageyama’s eyes were focused on the ball in his hand as he spoke to Yamaguchi, who was attempting to follow his lead. The sudden uptake in his heartbeat was immediate as he stared at his roommate, his skin warming without reason. Was it really possible that he had started to see Kageyama as someone special? Despite him being a human without a soulmate, Hinata’s mind felt settled when repeating Suga’s thought. The truth was easy to see when he thought about it; Hinata liked Kageyama. He thought the realization would feel like a suckerpunch or a bucket of cold water. He had heard many humans talk about their burst of emotions at the sensation of liking someone. Yet Hinata didn’t feel calamity; his peace of mind steadied the storm that had been raging inside of him for days.

Hinata liked Kageyama, and...he was actually okay with it.

“You guys ready to start practice?” Daichi’s call to the team had the group answering in sync, Hinata’s eyes lingering on the dark haired setter before turning to face their captain. The group jogged over to where the man was standing, Noya and Tanaka laughing as they slid across the floor on their stomachs like penguins. Asahi flushed at his rambunctious boyfriend’s actions, though took a quiet seat next to him. The rest started to shuffle in, Hinata’s eye catching one person lagging behind. Yamaguchi’s hesitation was obvious as he glanced to Tsukishima, who was sighing as he dropped down to sit. Despite the confliction on the freckled man’s face, Yamaguchi looked away from the blocker, shuffling to sit in the large space separating Hinata and Kageyama. Tsukishima’s head didn’t look back at the three men, though his eyes slightly narrowed at he stared at the floor in front of him.
“Do you need me to pull out any extra equipment, Daichi?” Suga’s question was met with a shake of the head from the captain, who placed his hands onto his hips and gave his awaiting team a strong grin.

“Nope, not today. I think it’d be best to use this practice to work on blocking. The opponent we’re meeting next is a heavy spiking team, with two separate men fighting to be the ace of their team. Sometimes, the best way to counter a good offense is to have a stronger defense. Asahi and Hinata will be spiking Suga’s sets so that the rest of you can work on becoming a team of blockers. Tsukishima, I’ll have you work as the center for this. Since you’re our key blocker, you’re observations will be needed to better the rest of the team.”

“Hm.” The soft noise from the blond didn’t show signs of protest despite the obvious frown on his face. Hinata stole another glance to his brunet friend beside him, whose eyes had fallen onto the back of his roommate. Then, as if catching himself, Yamaguchi bit his lower lip and turned his head into his knees, hugging the lean limbs closer to his chest. Blocking his view from Tsukishima meant the man missed the fleeting look his way before the blocker rose, Daichi beginning the training.

Jogging over to where Suga and Asahi were setting up, Hinata blinked when realizing the previous weight on his shoulders felt lessened. He still was bummed that it wasn’t Kageyama that was setting up his spikes, but there wasn’t a bitter feeling anymore. The earlier conversation had helped let go of some of his stress that had been created by trying to rationalize his responses to his roommate. When his eyes drifted to the tall setter, he didn’t try to smother the rising heartbeat and warm feeling in his stomach. He was the god of love, yet he had tried to treat the magic like a burden. Allowing himself to accept the giddy rush he got when seeing Kageyama look over to him made his smile genuine, causing the art student to scowl. But with his mind cleared, Hinata could see that his face didn’t hold a look of hatred or disgust. Instead, it held confliction, as if Kageyama was trying to wrestle with how to respond to his roommate. To know that Kageyama didn’t hate him was enough to lift his spirits, the spiker making solid contact with the balls Suga set.

It was obvious through the first half hour of practice that their team was not a blocking fortitude. Tsukishima held his own, as expected. Tanaka was driven to do well, even if he could only manage to block a few with his forehead. More times than not Yamaguchi was off with his jump, quick to scamper away from the stoic blond when Daici called for a switch. Surprising everyone was Ennoshita who, despite not being a starter, was in sync with the taller man. The gentle film maker claimed it was from being able to observe from the sidelines, though Tanaka had no problem bragging enough for the both of them. Noya continued to dig out balls instead of blocking, though Daichi seemed to expect that from the libero. Never being in the front meant the shorter man would hardly need to block, but Noya enjoyed trying to stop his larger boyfriend’s attack. Asahi didn’t seem as excited, his worry quite evident each time he aimed for the energetic libero. Tsukishima would only roll his eyes at the scene, mumbling quiet comments too low for his teammates to hear.

But there was one pair which held obvious tension whenever they stepped in front of the net
together. Kageyama was one of their better blockers, using his height and natural talent to his advantage. Despite this, nothing he did was good enough for Tsukishima. Complaints about the ‘king’ not jumping high enough or tilting his hands the right way were quick to spew from Tsukishima’s mouth, and the setter was picking up on the unwanted attention. Daichi’s grim expression showed that he wasn’t blind to the situation, keeping his watchful eye on the two whenever they exchanged words. Hinata wasn’t sure who to focus on; Tsukishima’s voice begged for Kageyama to snap at him, and the obvious irritation was starting to show in Kageyama’s grimace. Sweat poured down the two’s necks from the energy they were using to best each other, which was a rare sight for the blocker. He hardly put effort into the games, nevermind practice. But here, as one of Asahi’s spikes deflected on the reddened hand of Kageyama, Tsukishima didn’t hesitate to voice himself.

“Tilt your hand forwards, King, or is that too much work for royalty?”

“I did tilt it,” Kageyama answered, though a condescending smirk from the archeology student made the setter grit his teeth.

“I knew you were dumb, but you’ve surpassed my expectations of stupidity.” The final insult seemed to snap something in the artist, Kageyama letting out a growl before he rushed forward to snag Tsukishima’s shirt. Hinata’s eyes widened at the sudden intensity, the two men’s faces now inches away from each other.

“What is your problem?” Kageyama’s demanding voice didn’t wipe the demeaning look from Tsukishima, who casually shrugged despite being yanked by his teammate.

“I’m not the one upset.”

“Do you’ve got something you want to say to me or something? You’ve been targeting me all night; even Yamaguchi would agree.” The mention of the pinch server did drop the smirk from Tsukishima’s face, the blocker making a sharp ‘tsk’ sound while fixing his goggles.

“You’re paranoid, king.” There was a bite to the man’s voice that Hinata was sure he didn’t mean to express, the tone throwing off his apathetic facade. Kageyama seemed too distracted by the building up anger to notice. He yanked at the shirt again before Tsukishima pushed his shoulders hard enough to break their connection. The movement sent the whole team into motion, Hinata the first to rush under the net in order to slide in front of his roommate.

“Don’t be stupid, Bakayama!” Little arms latched around the bicep of Kageyama, making sure to hold him back from starting a fight with the blocker. Even though Kageyama’s face continued to
scrunch with obvious anger, he didn’t pull away from Hinata’s touch, allowing the spiker to keep him immobile. Yamaguchi seemed to have the same idea, his hands now resting on Tsukishima’s chest to keep him from advancing.

“Tsukki, don’t goad Kageyama. You’re both just mad, and Daichi-san looks ready to make us all do suicides until next week.” The advice seemed to catch Tsukishima’s attention, the man flicking his gaze to Yamaguchi’s concerned face. A second later his shoulders rolled into a relaxed position, his arm slipping behind the pinch server’s back. The motion caused Yamaguchi to stumble closer to his roommate, making their chests bump and the brunet squeak in surprise. Despite the obvious blush on Yamaguchi’s face, Tsukishima didn’t loosen his hold, keeping his gaze steady on the shocked man’s face.

“Time for the best bros to keep the peace!” Tanaka’s burst into the tense air was unexpected, sliding across the space between the two men on his kneepads. Noya was quick to follow, cartwheeling to land beside his now posing best friend.

“That’s right. Our kouhai should not be trying to fight! Especially you, Tsukishima.” When the libero pointed a finger toward the moody blocker, he only received an arched eyebrow in response. Snickering, Tanaka jumped up to his feet before tossing an arm around Noya’s shoulders.

“You’d think after making out with Juliet last night our Romeo wouldn’t be so moody.” Tanaka’s words were filled with devious implication, wiggling his eyebrows to add to the statement. Though Tsukishima barely showed a response to the teasing, the same could not be said for the man now tucked in his arm. Yamaguchi’s face paled, and Hinata’s stomach stiffened when hearing several snaps of string. In seconds the thick soulmate string was tattered, with only a couple threads left to keep it together. The rapid breakdown in Yamaguchi’s eyes had Hinata fumbling to think of something to say in order to repair the damage.

But before he could, the pinch server reacted. Yamaguchi’s strong shove against Tsukishima’s side made the unsuspecting man drop to the ground, the blocker wincing at how hard his tailbone hit into the floor. The whole gym dove into a hushed silence at the scene, Noya and Tanaka’s laughter stolen by the astonished looks now painting their faces. Tsukishima himself was knocked off his stoic game, golden eyes lifting to look at his trembling roommate in confusion. Yamaguchi’s head was bowed, his shoulders heaving from the strangled breaths he was trying to capture. Nobody moved, Hinata’s fingers digging into the arm of the setter next to him. He wasn’t shaken away, the duo watching as Yamaguchi finally turned toward Daichi and bowed.

“I-I’m sorry, but I’m not feeling good. May I please be excused for the night?”

“Yes, that’s fine,” Daichi answered, keeping his voice calm and levelheaded. Yamaguchi didn’t look back at his fallen roommate as he scurried to the exit of the gym, not saying another word to the team
he left behind. Even as the heavy gym door slammed shut behind him, the air was still thick with tension, nobody seeming to know how to disperse it. Hinata’s eyes felt fidgety from the silence, making them dart around the gym. When his eyes fell on a familiar black bag that belonged to the pinch server, the man was quick to move.

“I’m going to bring him his bag and make sure he doesn’t puke on the road!” He didn’t ask for permission as he snatched the bag, using his speed to his advantage. Before anyone could protest his decision, Hinata was out of the gym, relapsing the building into its awkward quiet.

“I can’t run a practice with half the team missing and half the team wanting to rip each other’s throats out. Everyone, clean up!” Daichi’s timber voice shattered the uneasy gap, snapping the remaining players into action. Noya and Tanaka were quick to heed the captain’s words, as his dark gaze followed their every movement with a grimace. Despite Kageyama being free to move without Hinata on him, he felt no desire to go after Tsukishima again. The blocker had yet to right himself from the floor, glasses aimed toward the door their roommates had escaped through. The contrast of anger and an emotion Kageyama couldn’t place swept down Tsukishima’s face before he scoffed, finally pushing himself up to assist in cleaning the gym.

Without Hinata and Yamaguchi, the process took a little longer, but they still got out before normal practice would have ended. Kageyama grimaced when noticing the snow had started to fall again, his hands shoved deep into his pockets. The weather was an annoying reminder of the night he had first met Hinata. Not wanting to think about the small spiker or the clashing emotions inside him, Kageyama glanced around for a distraction. It wasn’t hard to find, the setter picking up on Suga’s presence before the god spoke.

“Wanna walk to the apartments together?” Kageyama wanted to deny the request, knowing that Suga’s intentions weren’t benign. Even with this knowledge, Kageyama’s resolve wavered at the kind eyes gazing up at him. Disliking how easily he gave in to the request, Kageyama looked away, simply walking in the direction of the apartments. Suga took the hint, letting the younger man set the pace for which they walked. “How are you holding up? Things got pretty tense at practice between you and Tsukishima.”

“He’s a prick.”

“At times, he can be,” Suga admitted with a laugh, allowing Kageyama’s shoulders to relax. “But I think this time was more of extenuating circumstances fraying both of your nerves.”

“I’m fine,” Kageyama replied instantly, disliking the intuitive look the fertility god gave him.
“I’m not sure I’d be if I had been put in your shoes the night at the club-”

“I don’t want to talk about that.” The steady voice Kageyama wanted to use was non-existent, his words wavering while he glanced away from Suga. “I’m not involved with that stuff anymore. Whatever happened, happened, and I’ve moved on from it. For now, I’m just going to focus on volleyball.”

“That’s fair,” Suga agreed, their feet filling the moment of silence by scuffing against the sidewalk. Being around Suga was a contradiction to Kageyama; while the aura he presented was easy to relax into, Kageyama also felt like he was waiting for a scolding. Despite knowing he’d regret it, the younger man glanced toward his walking partner, seeing the gentle gaze already focused on him. “But does that mean you can’t still be friends with Shouyou?”

“He’s the reason I’m in this mess,” Kageyama defended, Suga shaking his head.

“No, that would be Tooru. Oikawa’s lust aura is what caused Shouyou to use his power on you. At the time, it was the only thing he could think of to stop you from doing something you may have regretted when sobering up. I can’t say I would have reacted differently in the situation.” After Suga’s counterpoint, Kageyama stopped walking, watching his breath’s smoky form lift into the night sky.

“He should have just punched me or something. He had no right to use his powers on me.”

“I don’t think you have the entire picture of that night. Then again, I don’t really think Shouyou does, either.” Suga’s words paused Kageyama long enough for the man to smile and step in front of him, his explanation soft and without judgement. “Last night, Shouyou explained what had happened between the two of you in Tooru’s club. He said that you were affected by Tooru’s lust aura, and in order to null out the effects, he used his own to overpower it by kissing you.”

“U-Uh, yeah we...kissed.” Kageyama’s cheeks dusted with pink at the reminder that the two had actually made out, despite his lack of memory of the night. Why he felt a sting of disappointment over the lost recollection, he wasn’t sure, but he tried to ignore it as Suga continued.

“But something about the story was off to me, and so I went back this morning to check in our archives. In it, there’s a...let’s call it a encyclopedia of sorts. It’s used normally for younger gods to help better understand the powers and weaknesses of each deity.”
“Like a rule book,” Kageyama compared, Suga’s smile brightening as he nodded.

“Yes, exactly. And from there, I learned the god of love’s aura is unique from the other gods; I can use mine on any human close to me to help calm them. Oikawa’s lust aura brings the best of men to the side of sin unless bound by a pink soulmate string. Most of the gods have special auras that affect all people equally. But this isn’t true for Shouyou.”

“How so?”

“You see, in order for the aura to work, the people involved must have a mutual attraction. Shouyou’s probably never even thought about this because he’s never tried to use his aura unless fate told him to. If the god of love was able to simply have two people fall in love with each other because of his aura, then he could ignore the strings weaved by fate and simply do as he pleases. I guess it’d be more like what you people call Cupid; lovers would be shot with Shouyou’s aura and would fall madly in love. But just like when he first showed you his powers, Shouyou has to find two people who want to be together in order to activate his aura. If those were simply strangers, then they wouldn’t have done what he wanted.”

“I don’t get what you’re saying,” Kageyama said, though the flush on his face begged to differ. Suga also didn’t seem fooled, quietly resting his hand on Kageyama’s shoulder and meeting his gaze.

“I think you do, Tobio.” Hearing the gentle way Suga said his name made Kageyama shake his head, pushing away from the other setter and nearly slipping on the snowy ground around them.

“I just...I need time to think.”

“Unfortunately, you don’t have much of that.” The ominous words froze Kageyama, slowly turning back to the fertility god’s somber face. “Shouyou is only here for another ten days. After his mission is complete, he’ll be returning home.”

“Oh, right.” How had he forgotten about the timeline? Since day one, Hinata was not meant to be his roommate forever. Hell, that was the reason he had first agreed to help out the annoying spiker. But somehow, through the weeks and crazy adventures the two had experienced together, Kageyama forgot that. He had been swept up in Hinata’s pace, and hadn’t really looked back since. Yet like a foreshadowed ending, the truth exposed itself. Hinata was leaving, and Kageyama wasn’t sure how he felt about that.
“I’m not as naive to the human brain as Shouyou; I understand you like to think things through logically before you make a decision. But I also know if you don’t tell him how you feel before this is over, you’ll never forgive yourself.” This time, when Suga reached forwards to grab the art student’s hands, Kageyama didn’t reel back from the touch. Suga’s eyes reflected experience, as if he was speaking to a past version of himself. “Don’t let him go home thinking you feel nothing for him, when it’s the exact opposite.”

The words rung through Kageyama’s head when he pushed open the front door of his apartment alone. Suga had ‘remembered’ he needed to check in with someone, though the setter was sure the god was giving him space to think. It was hard to admit how reliving it was to have Suga be so perceptive without verbal communication. The art student sighed as he dropped his bag in the doorway, his eyes scanning the two pairs of shoes already tossed to the side. One pair was easy to recognize, as Hinata’s feet were tiny. The second pair took a second to connect, though the familiar bag Hinata had been desperate to return gave a helpful hint. Eyes scanning the apartment, he saw no sign of either in the living room or kitchen. But from the muffled voices and light shining under Hinata’s bedroom door, the setter could take a guess at where they were. He approached the door, his hand hovering to knock when hearing Yamaguchi’s watery voice.

“I didn’t think they would kiss on the first date.” It was obvious that they were speaking of Tsukishima, which made the setter drop his hand to his side. He had said he wasn’t going to get involved in Hinata’s mission anymore. He had no right to barge in now. Still, he couldn’t force himself to move away from the door, listening as one of the men shuffled around the room.

“Why would he kiss her? He’s never even shown interest in talking to her. Maybe Tanaka saw the wrong person, or maybe someone was wearing a mask that looked like Stingysama—”

“unlikely.” Yet there was a slight lift in Yamaguchi’s voice, showing Hinata’s strange theories had picked up his spirits. The moment didn’t seem to last long, though, as a soft sniffle implied that Yamaguchi was still crying. “Why did I have to fall in love with Tsukki? Why couldn’t I just be happy for him being happy?”

“He’s not happy.” Was Hinata’s automatic answer, but the sound of the server choking back a sob meant Yamaguchi didn’t believe him. Kageyama felt a pinch of guilt at listening to the personal conversation, yet his feet continued to stay stagnant. “And I guess... that’s the one thing that kind of stinks about feelings. We don’t get to choose whose important to us. They just kind of show up and then whoosh, they’re in your heart. They become this warm feeling in your chest that you never really want to go away, even if it sort of burns and makes you heart sore. It’s just... worth it. You feel that way about Tsukishima, right?”

“I do,” Yamaguchi admitted weakly, his voice rising from his emotional upheaval. “I don’t want anyone else to take that spot but Tsukki.”
“I’ll help you, okay? I promise you’ll end up happy.” There was a clap on the other side of the door before Hinata continued, his voice radiating in confidence. “But for now, let me show you this awesome game Noya let me borrow. Have you played Mario Kart before? We can pretend Stingyshima is Bowser and knock him off the road!”

The small laughter that came from the room dismissed the serious conversation, though it still shook the setter outside. Closing his eyes, Kageyama silently pressed his forehead to the door, thinking about his roommate. The hand that rested against his heart tried to soothe the feeling that Hinata was currently describing, wondering how the dumb god had been able to explain it so well. He spoke like he was inside Kageyama’s body, experiencing the same feverish heat. Had he felt this way the night at the club? Closing his eyes tighter, Kageyama tried to think of the night which was a painful blur. He couldn’t clearly remember the way he had felt when Oikawa had turned on his charm, or how Hinata’s aura had subdued the haze. There was no phantom feel of lips on his, no scent or touch that cleared the murky memory.

But there was one thing he could recall; Hinata’s voice.

“You don’t need a soulmate to understand you; you have me.”

The words yanked Kageyama away from the doorway, his eyes shooting open in surprise. And like magic, the image of Hinata’s stupid grin and bright eyes brought a blaze scorching through Kageyama’s body. The dull ache was there, but just as the god of love had explained, the burn was bearable. This was a new feeling for Kageyama, who had only one brush with the idea of liking someone. But when he had allowed his high school teammate to kiss him, it had felt nothing like this. Panic and disbelief had Kageyama rushing to his room, unable to catch his breath even when he was buried underneath his warm blankets. His heartbeat throbbed in his ears, his fingertips tingling with anxiety or excitement. Nothing felt right, yet he couldn’t say he wanted the feeling to go away. But if he didn’t hate it, then what did it mean? And what did that imply about him and Hinata?

“This is all Suga’s fault,” Kageyama mumbled, turning to bury his face into his pillow.

But even as he forced himself to sleep, Kageyama knew he was blaming the wrong god.

Chapter End Notes

The feels of tugging at Yamaguchi's heart hit me way more than I expected in this chapter. And our idiotic duo are starting to see their true feelings! So, will Kageyama and Hinata make up? Will Yamaguchi confront Tsukishima about his date? Will
Tsukishima and Kageyama have another fight? Give me your thoughts/kudos and tell me how you liked the chapter!
The Truth of Tsukishima Kei

Chapter Summary

A snow storm blows in, trapping four neighbors in one emotionally charged apartment

Chapter Notes

So I'm a little late...but the wait will TOTALLY be worth it! I promise! Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I saw that you were perfect, and so I loved you. Then I saw that you were not perfect and I loved you even more." - Angelita Lim

Waking up to a darkened room wasn’t what Hinata had expected after a full night of tossing and turning. Slightly worried that he had forgotten to turn on his alarms (Sugawara put four on his phone because of his track record), Hinata tumbled out of his bed with feet fully entangled in the blanket he had been cocooned in. After rubbing the sore spot on his cheek from the embarrassing face plant, Hinata glanced over to his window, eyes blinking twice to make sure he wasn’t still dreaming. The darkness in his room was easy to explain when seeing the wall of snow blocking any chance of sunlight from getting in. Surprised at the weather, Hinata snagged the blanket and yanked it tight over his shoulders before making his way out of his room. Kageyama was easy to detect on the sofa, his long legs stretched over the cushions while his eyes focused on the screen of the TV.

“You’re watching the news?” Hinata’s voice sounded groggy from his sleep, though Kageyama didn’t comment on it. If the god was being honest, he wasn’t expecting his roommate to answer. It had been days since the two had engaged in a real conversation, the hope of mending their relationship all but extinguished. The setter gave a slow nod, his hands buried under his own blanket. Expecting nothing more to come from the setter, Hinata scrambled to think of something to say in order to excuse himself from the room. He jumped when a calm voice reached his ears, Kageyama’s eyes never leaving the screen.

“We’re in the middle of a freak snow storm. It’s not supposed to slow down until tonight, so I was just making sure that school was canceled.” At Kageyama’s explanation, Hinata tensed, his hands nervously toying with the tag of the blanket.

“So we’re stuck in the apartment?”
“There’s a travel ban on the roads.” After a heartbeat of silence fell between them, Kageyama took a slow breath and turned his head to glance back at Hinata. The dark eyes resting on his face felt out of place now, and Hinata fought the urge to drop his own gaze in order to focus on Kageyama’s voice. “It means that nobody can go on the roads; we’re supposed to stay in our apartment until the ban is lifted.”

“I, uh…” Was he going to be alone with Kageyama all day? It wasn’t the first time that he would be left with the setter, but with their friendship on the rocks, Hinata felt uneasy. A long stretch of silence fizzled between the two, the god trying to think back to Suga’s words of wisdom. He had said that Kageyama wanted space, right? How was he supposed to do that when they were cramped in an apartment together all day?! But he didn’t want to force Kageyama to hang out with him. Well, he did, his heartbeat rising when allowing himself to look at his roommate more than he had in days. But Suga had told him that wasn’t going to help. Kageyama had to come to him when he was ready. Disliking the ache in his chest at the thought, Hinata pulled the comforter closer and took a slow step backward. “I’m gonna just hang out in my room.”

“Wait.”

“O-Okay!” Hinata’s loud response made Kageyama wince, the smaller man’s back stiff in anticipation of Kageyama’s order. The slight glare and scowl etched into the setter’s features didn’t look like the conversation was going to be pleasant, Kageyama only turning his head to shut off the television. With the lack of background noise, the tension felt even thicker, Hinata wondering if his roommate intended to get into another fight. They hadn’t talked in days; what else was there to fight about? Then again this was Kageyama, so Hinata was sure the grumpy human could find something. The dark haired man rose from his seat on the couch, and Hinata noticed a slight hesitation in his movements when turning to face the frozen god. Still, no words came from his roommate, making Hinata blink and tilt his head. “Kageyama?”

“I...spoke with Suga-san.” The caution that Kageyama was using when formulating his sentences was strange to Hinata, though it made his shoulders drop and his spine relax. Somehow, the odd strain in Kageyama’s features helped settle something in him. Kageyama had been acting like the tear in their friendship had only affected their chemistry on the court. The thought that the man had no reaction to their tension had been upsetting to Hinata, no matter how often Suga reminded him that Kageyama was used to hiding his own feelings. But now, as the taller man nervously flexed his fingers by his sides and stared up at the ceiling, Hinata’s anxiety disappeared. “He said you were just trying to protect me when you...uh, you know.”

“I just didn’t think you’d want to stay under Oikawa’s stupid lust spell and so I tried to fix it. But I kind of get why you were mad.” Scuffing his foot on the rug, Hinata shrugged. “You shouldn’t have been put in the middle of it. I should have asked Suga for help or knocked you out.”

“As if you could.” The grumble from the setter made Hinata huff, his hands quick to shoot into the
“I’m a god. If I wanted to pummel you, I totally could! It’d be all ‘wham’ and ‘bam’ and then you’d be all ‘bwah’ on the floor.” The outburst made Kageyama scoff, finally dropping his eyes back down to the spiker now jumping around in front of him.

“You’re an idiot.”

“Hey!”

“So it’s pointless to keep fighting with you.” The words made Hinata miss his landing, stumbling over his own feet for a few seconds before crashing into the floor. Ignoring the pain, Hinata popped his head up to look at Kageyama, who had moved from around the couch in order to check on his roommate. Amber eyes glimmered with surprise as Hinata stared up at the setter from the floor.

“Wait, does that mean we’re friends again?”

“It’s not like we ever stopped being friends, you moron!” Kageyama snapped out, crossing his arms and doing his best to glare down at his roommate. Hinata didn’t seem bothered by either, quick to hop back on his feet and send a grin at his roommate.

“That’s great! I really didn’t like fighting with you, Kageyama.” A laugh that the setter was no longer used to hearing echoed in the room, Hinata’s whole demeanor changing.

Kageyama had been aware of how Hinata’s aura had been off over the past few days; he wasn’t as oblivious as his counterpart. Being at practice, class, or the apartment didn’t matter. Hinata’s mood had been dismal at best, the spiker barely able to fake smiles and bouts of laughter for their teammates. The lack of genuine happiness from Hinata had rubbed Kageyama the wrong way the whole time, even if he refused to admit it. Now seeing the change sent a wave of contentment flowing through the art student, threatening to make his own smile break through his annoyed expression. Why did seeing Hinata happy make his whole body unwind? The familiar tingle he had felt two nights ago was prickling at his skin, intensifying when those wide brown eyes focused their gaze on him.

“So does that mean you’re going to help me fix Tsukishima and Yamaguchi’s soulmate thread?” The words made Kageyama hesitate, the god of love quick to pick up on the mood shift. A smile which had finally found its rightful place on Hinata’s lips started to disappear again, but before Kageyama
could answer, the lights of the living room snapped off. Darkness swept through the space as Hinata yelped, Kageyama sending a look toward the window. Seeing how quick the snow was being whipped around outside, it was easy for the art student to realize what had happened.

“Looks like the power got knocked out by the storm.” Kageyama was used to power outages, as the wintry seasons always brought out at least a few snowstorms a year. Hinata didn’t seem as accustomed to the shift in weather, looking concerned over the lack of power despite the calm composure of Kageyama. “It probably won’t come back on until tomorrow; the trucks aren’t going to be able to come out until the storm blows over.”

“So what are we going to do?” As soon as the words came out of Hinata’s mouth, a sturdy knock came from the front door of the apartment. Both glanced over to see the doorknob turn, two familiar faces exposed by the flashlight in Tsukishima’s hand.

“Yamaguchi?” Hinata’s surprised tone at the sheepish smile from his neighbor made Yamaguchi wave, Tsukishima not waiting for an invitation to enter the apartment.

“We were on our way over here when the power went out. I thought you may be bored by yourselves, so Tsukki and I brought some games for us to play.” It was only then that the roommates noticed the stack of boxes being balanced in Yamaguchi’s other hand, Kageyama giving a quiet sigh as he walked over to help take some of the games from the top of the pile.

“He brought games; I was coming for the television.” The clarification from the tall blocker was expected, Hinata ignoring his annoyed tone to peer at the games the other two were carrying to the living room table. Colorful prints and quirky names made the spiker’s excitement grow, eagerly kneeling in front of the stacks of games to look at all the choices.

“These look like so much fun! Can we play this game?” Yanking at the top choice, Hinata held up a box which had Yamaguchi showing his surprise before giving a hesitant smile.

“You’ve never played Twister before?”

“Nope! But I wanna now.” Then he grinned, earning an easy ‘okay’ from his freckled neighbor. Kageyama and Tsukishima were far more difficult, neither enjoying the colorful mat now being displayed on the floor. Yamaguchi was prepared for the resistance, focusing his cheerful smile and soft spoken words on the setter. Kageyama’s will wasn’t quite as solid as he had wanted, and he caved slowly to the pair now promising meat buns and milk cartons after the next practice. Three against one seemed too much of a hassle for Tsukishima to fight against, and the final man agreed to man the spinner for their ‘childish’ game.
"Twister" was made for the spiker to play. His flexibility and inability to lose paired nicely, helping him twist into positions that were impossible for his taller roommate. The height that Kageyama did have gave him more range, though, which meant more options to choose from when picking spots. Even if Hinata could turn his body into a pretzel, it wouldn’t elongate his limbs. The two were matched in the game, but were easily outshined by the third player. Yamaguchi had both qualities; his height did not hamper how easily he could bend his body. Tsukishima didn’t seem surprised by the complicated positions that Yamaguchi held during the match. Kageyama and Hinata’s limbs were trembling from the taxing game, while Yamaguchi simply closed his eyes and steadied his body with calm breaths. And when one pivot from Hinata’s left foot caused the owners of the apartment to tumble over each other, Yamaguchi remained poised and victorious.

“That’s why I didn’t bother playing; Yamaguchi will always win.” Tsukishima’s dry statement made his roommate blush, Yamaguchi trying to cover his embarrassment with a half-laugh.

“I don’t always win.” Yet from the arched eyebrow that Tsukishima gave, it was obvious that wasn’t the truth. Hoping to take some of the attention off his shoulders, Yamaguchi picked up another game, suggesting they switch to one which they could all play. Sorry seemed to be a favorite for the blocker, who took a little too much enjoyment from sending Kageyama’s pieces back to their starting spot. Hinata enjoyed the slides more than the actual point of the game, and didn’t feel any irritation when Tsukishima ended up getting his last piece home. From there the group jumped into a few card games, Yamaguchi patiently explaining each set of rules for Hinata. The ones involving statistics, such as blackjack and rummy, were easy for Tsukishima to master. Kageyama reigned supreme in Kings in a Corner, a notion which did not go unmentioned from the snorting blond. Though Hinata was unhappy with his lack of marks in the winning column, the god enjoyed the time spent playing games with his teammates. He was happy that the neighbors had come over to keep them company, even if the tattered soul thread continued to steal his attention.

“It’s a good thing we have gas stoves,” Yamaguchi said, adjusting his legs on the mattress that Hinata had pulled out earlier. Though their couch was big, it wouldn’t fit all four comfortably, so Hinata improvised, allowing his neighbors to use his bed as a floor seat. The brunet was currently alone, Hinata also solo on his couch cushion. The grumpy pair were currently in the kitchen, attempting to use Tsukishima’s matchbox to light the stove’s flames. Hot chocolate ingredients were scattered on the counter, the pair’s bickering making the two left in the living room laugh.

“I’m so excited for hot chocolate!” Hinata’s happy chirp made Yamaguchi smile, the pinch server scooting closer to the table as he rested his arms on the edge.

“It seems like you’re back to normal.” The sentence caught Hinata off guard, the archeology student resting his chin on his crossed arms. “You were fighting with Kageyama before, right? I was a little nervous that you guys hadn’t been able to forgive each other yet, so I convinced Tsukki to come and check on you.”
“Wah, Yamaguchi you’re so nice!” Hinata’s compliment was quickly shushed by his teammate, the two peeking up to see if either roommate had heard their conversation. When realizing that Tsukishima was too busy berating Kageyama for his cooking skills to notice Hinata’s outburst, the two sunk back down to the table, Hinata trying to keep his voice to a dull roar. “Me and Kageyama made up this morning. We kind of talked it out and we’re back to being friends again.”

“That’s a relief. Our team doesn’t function as well when you’re not on the same page.” The genuine look of solace in Yamaguchi’s eyes proved to the god that was how he truly felt. Their moment of comfort was disrupted when a mug was placed in front of them, brown eyes flickering up to the annoyed look plastered on Tsukishima’s face.

“As if these two idiots could stay away from each other for long. I told you not to worry.”

“Ah, sorry Tsukki!” The server’s hands wrapped around the yellow mug as he pulled the drink closer to him, Yamaguchi’s lips pressing together to produce a soft hum. “And thank you for the hot chocolate.”

“It wasn’t hard,” Tsukishima replied, dropping down to the mattress after placing his own cup onto the table. Hinata glanced to his left when the couch shifted, Kageyama handing him his own drink while getting comfortable in his regular spot. The movement made their arms brush, Hinata’s stomach starting to twist with a familiar feeling. The sudden proximity between the two caused Hinata to snap his head forward, burying his face into the mug as he took a scalding gulp of his drink. Kageyama didn’t seem to notice the strange behavior, rotating his shoulder while glancing to their guests.

“What game are we playing next?”

“We could play ‘the question game’.” Yamaguchi’s suggestion received a slow shake of Kageyama’s head.

“Never heard of it,” Kageyama replied, Hinata giving a short nod in agreement. That didn’t come as a shock to anyone in the group, as Hinata’s range of game knowledge was non-existent. Yamaguchi glanced around the room before reaching over to snag one of Kageyama’s empty water bottles, resting it onto the middle of the table.

“It’s really simple. Someone spins this bottle and then asks a question to the person it lands on. The person has to answer the question, then gets to spin the bottle. It’s just something we could do while
we’re enjoying our cocoa.” A quiet shrug from Tsukishima showed he didn’t oppose the idea, though a smirk morphed the side of his lip when glancing toward the dark haired setter.

“It may get boring; every one of the king’s answers is going to revolve around volleyball or milk.” Blue eyes glared over at the neighbor, Kageyama crossing his arms over his chest.

“Shut up,” the setter griped out, Hinata perking up on his seat while glancing at the bottle.

“This sounds fun, let’s play!”

“Then we’re all in agreement.” Yamaguchi took another sip of his drink before he placed the mug down, his fingers drifting to the bottle. “I’ll go first, if that’s okay with everyone else.”

“It’s your suggestion.” Tsukishima’s roundabout confirmation made Yamaguchi nod, the pinch server flicking his wrist to spin the bottle. It wasn’t hard, and within seconds the tip of the bottle rested in front of the orange haired god. Eager to be the first, Hinata’s body vibrated on the cushion as he glanced over to his mild-mannered neighbor.

“That’s me! Ask away, Yamaguchi.”

“Okay, um...since you’ve moved here, what is your favorite memory?” At Yamaguchi’s soft question, Hinata blinked once before he gave a quick shrug.

“Probably playing on the team.” Before Yamaguchi could answer, Hinata flipped his gaze to Kageyama. “I really like hitting Kageyama’s pass.”

“Shockingly.” Despite Tsukishima’s dry tone, Kageyama exposed a twitch of his lips, the flash of a smile involuntary. Still it made Hinata’s eyes lighten with intrigue, the two sharing a small glance before Hinata returned his attention to the bottle.

“My turn.” The force he turned the bottle with was double of the server’s, trying to follow the shift of the bottle with his eyes. Starting to get dizzy, the god of love was relieved to see the slowing spin. When it finally stopped, the tip was aiming at the man sitting next to him. Kageyama gave a weak grunt at the pick, not seeming as eager to answer as Hinata had been.
“Don’t ask anything weird,” the setter grumbled, keeping his narrowed glare on the bottle despite speaking to Hinata.

“I’m not!” Huffing, Hinata swiped the back of his hand against his nose before flopping his body against the back of the couch. “I just wanna know if you regret having me as your roommate.”

“Why would I?” The pure lack of understanding in Kageyama’s voice had Hinata looking up at his teammate, the taller setter’s scowl missing his normal aggravation. “We have a similar schedule, and you’re useful on the court. Plus you like watching volleyball games with me. You’re weird, but it could be worse.”

“You really think so?” A short nod from Kageyama had the familiar warmth rising in Hinata’s chest. It didn’t burn as badly as the previous days, but the god wondered if he was simply getting accustomed to the feeling Kageyama stirred inside him. Remembering Suga’s words, Hinata didn’t fight the feeling, knowing it was futile. He hoped it didn’t show on his face when Kageyama leaned forward, giving the bottle a spin. All eyes stayed on the bottle while it moved, blue eyes darting forward when realizing where it was going to land. The god had to wait for the motion to stop before making the connection to the blond blocker.

“To what do I owe the pleasure of gaining the King’s eye?” Smug in his response, Tsukishima casually fixed his glasses before resting both hands behind him on the mattress. Despite the obvious jab, Kageyama didn’t respond. Instead, he sent a casual glance toward his roommate, Hinata unsure of the setter’s intentions. There was a weird emotion edging his features, one that the god wasn’t sure how to interpret. But then it was gone, evolving into determination when the art student turned his focus on the arched eyebrow Tsukishima had raised at him.

“Why did you agree to go on that date Tuesday?” There was no hesitation in Kageyama’s voice when he asked his question, keeping his eyes steady on the now narrowed gaze of the blocker.

“What kind of question is that? I expected pure nonsense, but you’ve surpassed my expectations.” The bite that curled around Tsukishima’s tone was harsher than normal. Kageyama didn’t flinch like Hinata, the setter refusing to take the archeology student’s bait.

“That’s not an answer.”

“I don’t respond to obvious questions.”
“I bumped into your brother yesterday.” Kageyama’s sentence shut Tsukishima’s mouth, Hinata detecting the slight widening of gold behind Tsukishima’s glasses. Yamaguchi’s curiosity was mixed with confusion, showing he didn’t understand the importance of the statement either. “I went to the store because I ran out of ramen, and he was working.”

“Does this story have a point?”

“He told me about your conversation at the bar.” A pregnant pause left the air sizzling with tension between the two, though the atmosphere was different than their previous argument at practice. This time it was Kageyama engaging the argument with Tsukishima tossing up his defenses.

“If that idiot already blabbed to you, then you have your answer.”

“Yamaguchi doesn’t.” The air felt sucked from the room at Kageyama’s response, both men staring each other down across the table. The notches of Tsukishima’s back were rigid, having moved from his relaxed position at the mention of his roommate. The freckled man in question was now staring at his best friend, the taller man refusing to make eye contact with him. Instead, he scowled at Kageyama, the art student lacking any animosity in his voice. “If anyone deserves an answer tonight, it’s him.”

“This is a waste of my time.” Shoving to his feet, Tsukishima tried to make the movement casual by brushing his shirt off. “I can’t stand being around you anymore; I’m going back to the apartment.”

“W-Wait!” Before Tsukishima could move, Yamaguchi was on his knees, both hands wrapping around one of the blonde’s. The action seemed to catch Tsukishima by surprise, Yamaguchi’s shaky voice showing his unbalanced emotions. “Why won’t you answer him, Tsukki?”

“Why should I? Because of some childish game-”

“I want to know!” Yamaguchi’s shout made the brunet lower his head, eyes closed tightly and his shoulders tense. “Please.”

“Yamaguchi…” Hinata’s voice trailed off as he watched his friend, his heart clenching at the sight. If anyone deserved to be loved in this world, it was Yamaguchi. The man had sacrificed so much for his friend, suffering in silence with a smile. Even when he had been crying in Hinata’s room, Yamaguchi has no ill thoughts for his frustrating roommate. All he wanted was to see Tsukishima happy. But even the purest of men had their limits. And here, kneeling in front of his silent best
friend, Yamaguchi had found his.

“Yo.” Kageyama’s voice caught Hinata’s ear, the spiker tilting to his side to see the setter moving toward his room. “Come with me.”

“Ri-right!” Hinata shouted, quick to follow his roommate away from their neighbors.

The intention was obvious to Yamaguchi; Kageyama was trying to give them privacy. Having the two neighbors sitting on the couch would make it impossible for the pinch server to get his answer. Keeping his eyes closed, Yamaguchi could hear the smaller feet of Hinata scurrying across the floor and into the other room, though Kageyama’s pace sounded less rushed. The quiet click of Kageyama’s door sounded more like a gunshot for the brunet, who felt his lungs shutter when trying to take a breath. Mentally preparing himself, Yamaguchi finally lifted his head, catching Tsukishima’s eyes already on him. The intense stare was too much for the pinch server, who lowered his gaze to the hand held captive between his own. Quietly he ran his fingers over the knuckles of his roommate, remembering the previous bruising that had once painted the pale skin.

“They look like they healed up well,” Yamaguchi said, hoping to ease the strained tension surrounding them. Tsukishima gave a weak shrug in reply, lowering back down to sit on the mattress again.

“I expected the bruises to last longer; I punched the table pretty hard.” Tsukishima’s reply was low but still caught his roommate by surprise.

“Tsukki, you’ve never gotten violent when you were drunk.”

“I was sober; my idiotic brother made me drink to help numb the pain. Akiteru felt responsible since he was the reason I punched the table in the first place.”

“Akiteru-san? What did he do?” The innocent question didn’t get an immediate answer, fraying Yamaguchi’s now sensitive nerves. He tried not to flush when realizing his fingers were still stroking Tsukishima’s hand, though the blonde made no mention of the contact. Instead the blocker kept his gaze on the window, watching the blowing snow whipping past the glass.

“He told me I wasn’t being honest with you.” The casual sentence made Tsukishima sound bored, but being best friends with the blocker meant Yamaguchi could read the minute hitches in his roommate’s voice. There was a strained tone lurking, and it yanked on Yamaguchi’s attention.
“I know you wouldn’t lie to me! I trust you.” Hoping to ease the tension, Yamaguchi gave a small smile to try and support his claim. The effort was not met with the predicted eye roll or snappy reply, but another stretch of silence. The strange response made Yamaguchi hyper aware of Tsukishima, making the pinch server speak again. “But, Tsukki, I have to ask...why won’t you answer Kageyama’s question?”

“Do you remember the night she approached me?” Not prepared for Tsukishima’s question, Yamaguchi winced, the pinch server giving a hesitant answer.

“We were in the library studying, right?”

“I was studying; you were cackling like a hyena.” Tsukishima’s snarky edit made the brunet flush, though he didn’t get a chance to defend himself. “You were quite distracting, so I grabbed your face to try and get you to be quiet.”

“Ah, sorry-”

“And then you looked up at me.” The softer edge of the stoic man’s response cut Yamaguchi’s apology off, the man unable to look away from the serious expression staring down at him. “In that moment, I wanted to kiss you.”

“You...” No words were willing to come to mind for Yamaguchi, Tsukishima not hesitating to continue.

“The emotion was conflicting, since it’s not the first time the thought’s come across my mind. It was, however, the only instance I felt compelled to act on it. I noticed we weren’t alone in the library, so I changed my plan and pulled away. I believe the unexpected surge of emotions was why I made the mistake of agreeing to her offer. The plan became to decline her, but when you became overly supportive of our coupling, I reconsidered it.”

“Why?”

“I needed to see if I got the same conflicting emotions with her as I did with you.” The words fell flat as if Tsukishima felt defeated by the explanation. “When I told Akiteru this, he claimed I was running away from my feelings for you. We argued, and I punched the table.”
“This is...a lot.” Breathless, Yamaguchi couldn’t make his heart stop from pounding. Everything felt surreal, and the brunet was sure he was going to wake up from this dream. Had Tsukishima just admitted he was romantically interested in Yamaguchi? Was he reading into this too much? Trying to get his mind from spinning, the pinch server tried to get his thoughts to focus on one topic. “But your date--Tanaka-senpai said you-”

“The date went fine. She was intelligent, and could keep up with conversation. Under normal circumstances, she could be considered a fine candidate for me.” The words were harder for Yamaguchi to bear than he had originally thought they’d be. Casting his gaze away from Tsukishima, the freckled man forced a fake laugh through his shaky lungs.

“T-That’s great, Tsukki. I’m happy for you!”

“You're lying skills are only comparable to your poor listening.” Tsukishima’s hand reached out to snag Yamaguchi’s cheek, guiding the trembling man beside him to tilt his head up. Staring at his counterpart’s face for a brief moment of silence, the blocker grimaced before dropping his hand back to his side and continuing. “Normal isn’t thinking about your best friend in order to force yourself to kiss your date. Unless I had you in my brain, kissing her was repulsive.”

“You thought of me.” The whispered statement was meant to be a question, but Yamaguchi’s heart leap into his throat and changed the hopeful tone of the brunet. Tsukishima’s face remained unreadable even as he nodded.

“That’s what Tanaka-san saw the other day. What he didn’t see was me explaining to our classmate that there wouldn’t be a second date. Even I understand that dating someone with no romantic interest isn’t appropriate.”

“So you’re not dating her? I mean, she’s not your girlfriend?”

“No, she’s not.” Tsukishima’s confirmation had the breath leaving Yamaguchi’s chest, though the pinch server couldn’t find any reason to care. Tsukishima hadn’t fallen in love with someone else. Did that mean that Yamaguchi could continue to hope that he never would? It was a selfish thought that ate at his stomach in guilt, yet Yamaguchi couldn’t deny there was a sense of relief as well. The feeling made his hand tighten around his roommate’s, Yamaguchi flushing when realizing they were still holding hands. Panicked, he tried to pull back, but quick reflexes from the blonde sealed their palms together.
Ah, wait—

“I don’t expect you to answer my feelings; I never intended to act upon it. If not for that heathen of a neighbor, you wouldn’t be burdened with this knowledge at all.” Narrowed golden eyes stared at the mattress beneath them, Tsukishima’s lips curling into a scowl at the mention of Kageyama. Yamaguchi tried to process the words, his ears sure they weren’t functioning properly. Did Tsukishima think the feelings were unrequited? Throat too dry to interrupt, the brunet watched helplessly as Tsukishima parted his lips again. “However, I would like to confirm that our friendship and living arrangements won’t be affected by this new discovery. If you do feel uncomfortable, we’d need to speak with the landlord—”

“Tsukki, you idiot!” Yamaguchi’s words were wobbly as he shouted, making his roommate flinch from the sudden raise of his voice. His vision started to blur from his tears, Yamaguchi’s free palm rubbing under his eye as he continued to cry. The grasp he had on Tsukishima’s hand was probably painful, yet the brunet refused to let go in fear that it was just a dream. Sobs floated through the air as Yamaguchi tried to formulate a sentence, failing a few times before his lips finally started to function. “It’s not a problem at all, Tsukki. I want to live with you forever.”

“Why would you want to do that?” The strain in the quiet man’s tone made Yamaguchi shake his head, refusing to back away from the overwhelming feelings crashing inside of him.

“Because I love you.” Sniffling to hide a runny nose from crying, Yamaguchi lifted his head to stare up at his shocked roommate. Tears welled up again as he felt the emotions he had desperately tried to submerge spiral to the surface. “I’ve loved you since we were kids. Maybe even from the first day I met you. That’s why I’ve always followed you, no matter where you go. I can’t remember a time I loved someone more than you! Yo—You’re my everything.”

“You never told me,” Tsukishima said, Yamaguchi rubbing his swollen eyes again. The defiant look the pinch server tried to use seemed pointless with flushed cheeks and watery eyes.

“Wasn’t it obvious? I didn’t think I had to,” He protested, his voice weak despite his fingers tightening between the blocker’s. Everything felt like a dream for Yamaguchi, who continued to cry despite his best attempts to stop. The seconds rolled by between the two after Yamaguchi’s admission, and the pinch server was worried that his words had creeped his roommate out. But then the blocker’s eyes lost their edge of awe, Tsukishima slowly leaning closer to the tense man beside him.

“Fine. Then prove it.”
“Pr-Prove it?” After watching his roommate nod, Yamaguchi’s confusion was obvious. “How?”

He didn’t wear the expression long, his eyes widening in surprise when Tsukishima slid his palm onto the soft jawline. Breath hitching, Yamaguchi barely hesitated to close his eyes and lean into the touch. The show of trust was rewarded quickly when he felt warm lips press against his. Overwhelmed by the feeling, Yamaguchi went boneless, easily relaxing into the touch of his best friend. The warmth and slow pace that Tsukishima used to deepen the kiss had the brunet shuttering, Yamaguchi eager to return the affection. The two didn’t hesitate to fall back against the mattress, Tsukishima’s larger shoulders framing the man underneath them. Hands were laced beside messy brunet hair, freckles hidden in a blush as Yamaguchi willingly parted his mouth for the blocker above him.

As the two continued to make up for lost time, two sets of eyes kept watch from behind a newly cracked door.

“Did it work?” Kageyama’s voice was close to Hinata’s ear, the smaller god allowing his eyes to flash gold before his lips spread in a wide grin.

“It’s fixed, and really pink,” Hinata reported, his happiness evident as he peered back at the man standing behind him. Kageyama nodded, Hinata stepping to the side of the door before turning to his roommate. Letting his back lean against the doorframe, Hinata looked up at the setter while giving a nibble to his lower lip. Taking a slow breath, Hinata released his aura and allowed his gaze to return to normal. The god only let a moment pass between them before he spoke. “You knew that this was going to happen when you asked Tsukishima that question, didn’t you?”

“I just read the situation,” Kageyama replied, Hinata giving a short nod to show he understood the comment.

“I didn’t know if you would help me, since you hesitated earlier when I asked.”

“I didn’t say no, you know.”

“It wasn’t a yes either,” Hinata argued, Kageyama rolling his eyes before flicking Hinata’s forehead.

“That’s because I thought it was obvious, idiot.” The declaration made Hinata’s eyes pop open, the setter huffing at the stunned look. “I know I said some...stuff these past few days. I was annoyed and didn’t want to think about my promise. But my head’s on straight and I’m seeing it through until the
“Okay,” Hinata answered, his eyes unable to stay locked with the blue gaze. The words made Hinata’s stomach feel jumbled, but it was the strong stare that flared up the blush in his cheeks. Hinata moved his gaze behind him, noticing quickly that the two roommates hadn’t separated from their kiss. The image made him happy, though a pinch of guilt still remained at the site. Remembering his previous interaction with Kageyama, the god of love balled his hands by his side. “I’m sorry about the kiss.”

“You said that already.”

“I shouldn’t have made you do that,” Hinata continued, ignoring the dismissive tone of his partner. Lowering his head to hide his shame, the spiker pressed his toes into the carpet to try and distract himself from the annoyed huff from his setter. “You should be kissing someone you like. Someone who makes your heart go ‘bwah’ or something. The same way Yamaguchi feels for Stingyshima or-”

“Shut up.” When he felt a strong hand grasping his shoulder, he winced, wondering if the taller man would flick him again. Instead, he was yanked forward, his chest bumping into the other man’s.

“H-Hey!” Reflexively Hinata lifted his head to complain, but the words were left in his mind when his mouth was occupied by Kageyama. The sudden press of lips against his made the god tense, eyes unable to close from shock. His hands laid limp by his side, his spine relaxing from the pleasure trickling through him. Kageyama’s eyes were tightly shut as he pressed forward, lips lacking finesse or precision the setter was known for. Despite this, the taller man was assertive, and Hinata’s lips became pliant when the god finally closed his eyes. Giving into the warm sensation, the spiker lifted to his toes, one arm flopping over the broad shoulders of his roommate to return the kiss. Their movement synchronized with ease, Hinata noticing the difference between the kisses instantly. When Kageyama had been under Oikawa’s persuasion, the movements were full of confidence and sensual undertone. Hinata’s influence had limited that, softening the kiss to an appealing exchange that still lacked something.

This kiss felt like Kageyama. It was bossy yet steady, Kageyama guiding their mouths open with a sharp swipe of his tongue. Even when his back hit into the frame of the door, Hinata didn’t complain, too eager to return the sloppy kiss. The fingers that had lingered on his shoulder trailed over his bare arm, igniting goosebumps in their wake. Their final destination laid between Hinata’s fingers, and Hinata eagerly deepened the kiss at the touch. Everything felt authentic, the spiker knowing the art student was acting on his own. Feeling a cool hand press to the side of his neck had Hinata shivering, though it was far from unpleasant. Inexperience had the two pulling away again, shaky breathing and flushed skin identical on the pair. Hinata’s eyes sought out the stare he had avoided before, confirming that the blue eyes were clear. Seeing the dark gaze focused on him had Hinata pressing back closer to the wall, unsure of what the setter’s next words would be.
“If you’re going to kiss someone, make sure they can remember it!” The snapped sentence straightened out Hinata’s spine, though the statement lost some of its bite from the reddened cheeks of the art student. It was obvious that the kiss had been more than a tutorial in how to kiss someone. The setter was simply trying to cover his embarrassment with a tough act. Seeing Kageyama embarrassed made Hinata’s own modesty rise, making a witty comeback or insult impossible. Instead, he gave a few nods of his head, keeping his fumbling mouth shut. His lips still tingled from the exchange, the god resisting the urge to grin.

“Even now your noble blood overcomes you.” That didn’t stop the peanut gallery in the living room from throwing in a barb. Both roommates peered back into the room to see Yamaguchi and Tsukishima now watching them from the couch. Though Yamaguchi’s tug of his roommate’s sleeve proved his knew the comment wasn’t appropriate, Tsukishima smirked, leaning his free arm along the back of the couch. “Pardon the peasant for not bowing to His Majesty.”

“You’re an ass,” Kageyama griped, hands yanking from Hinata to ball into fists by his hips. He huffed as he stormed over to the snickering blond, the two quick to engage in another verbal fight. Hinata would have moved after Kageyama to join in on the fun if not needing the support of the frame to keep him standing. His smile wide as he pressed his fingertips to his lips, Hinata nearly jumped out of his skin when an elbow poked into his side. Glancing up, he caught sight of Yamaguchi’s pleased gaze before the brown eyes flickered toward the couch again.

“Thank you.”

“Eh?” At Hinata’s confusion, Yamaguchi shrugged, keeping his gaze on the blocker now smirking at his growling neighbor.

“I just feel like I should be thanking you, though I don’t have a reason as to why. Still, thanks.” The instincts that Yamaguchi possessed were scary, and Hinata knew it was better to simply accept the gratitude than try to press the subject.

“Are you happy?” Hinata’s quiet question was met with an instant nod, cheeks bright with a blush Yamaguchi didn’t seem ashamed to show off.

“Yes, very. How about you?” Having the question reversed should have worried Hinata. The encroaching deadline for his mission was impossible to ignore. He still had to fix Suga and Daichi, which looked dismal with each passing day. The odds were stacked against him, and he wasn’t sure what his next plan was. Adding romantic feelings into the mix for a human who possessed no soulmate string wasn’t helping his focus. Yet even with the stress weighing him down, Hinata felt light, his own amber eyes easily following the grouchy movements of his roommate. And in that
moment, there was only one response he could give to Yamaguchi.

“Yeah, I really am.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh, look. An ending where I don't have to beg for my life! So, how did you like it? What adventures are ahead for Hinata and Kageyama? Will Suga and Daichi be able to be fixed? Or will a secret from the past come back to haunt them? Kudos/comments are so lovely and I hope to hear from you soon!
A look into Suga's past, and Hinata learns not all love stories end happily.

Okay, so I totally knew it was Saturday....I swear I didn't just remember right now as I was watching hysterical YouTube videos!! Ah...enjoy?

“The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves” - Victor Hugo

Eight Years Ago

“I think my legs are going to fall off.” Suga’s remorseful groan sizzled through the balmy summer night, youthful hazel eyes lifting when hearing his companion laugh. Daichi was a few inches taller than the setter, hitting a growth spurt after his fourteenth birthday that still left Suga huffing in protest. Brown eyes were tilted toward the night sky they walked under, tanned hands linking behind Daichi’s head while shrugging.

“Then I guess my job as your captain is complete.” The words were meant to be a tease, yet Suga felt his smile slightly dampen at the reminder. Despite their normal conversation, Suga knew this walk was different. It was the last time the two would come home from volleyball practice together. Or at all, for that matter.

“I think you overdid it a bit,” Suga finally answered, letting his shoulders sag under the disguise of exhaustion. If Daichi noticed the softening of the setter’s voice, he didn’t speak about it. Instead, the brunet took a casual look to his neighbor when the two crossed onto the empty sidewalk.

“You told me earlier that you finished your packing this morning, so it’s not like you have anything to do when you get home.”
“I still have to get up early; my plane leaves at 8am.” It was weird lying to Daichi. He had rarely done it, only using misleading words when speaking of his mother’s past or why he was really moving away. Daichi was a human; it wasn’t feasible to think he’d believe in the truth anyways. Though he did have to get up at the break of dawn, it wasn’t to get on a plane or to travel to a new state. Suga’s training to take over the position of the fertility god started the next day, and gods didn’t like to wait for oversleeping demi teenagers. Thinking of the next morning made his stomach twitch in discomfort, the fair haired god placing a hand to his abdomen to try and settle it.

“That’s really early for someone who thinks noon is still a part of the morning.”

“It’s not my fault; I live for the night!” The previous aches disappeared when Suga’s attention was drawn up to the stars, his grin brighter than before. “How could someone not want to stay up to stare at the moon and its beauty?”

“You’ll have to send me a picture when you get to your uncle’s house.” The words were hard for Suga to swallow, the two stepping onto their street while the demi-god spoke.

“I may not have good cell service up there, but I’ll see what I can do.” Another lie weighed heavy on his tongue, making hazel eyes drop to the scuffling feet below him. Finding their homes wasn’t hard, as they were the first two in the large cul de sac. Daichi’s came first, the setter surprised when his friend didn’t stop at the walkway to his door. Seeming to sense Suga’s shock, Daichi caught his friend’s gaze and gave a smile that melted Suga’s heart.

“You didn’t think I was going to walk you home? What kind of a friend would I be if I didn’t see you off properly?” The questions weren’t meant to be answered, not that Suga could form one if he wanted to. Daichi’s hands slipped into his pockets as he walked, keeping a casual aura despite the dismal mood surrounding them. Quietly the demi god followed, unsure why the small gesture filled his body with warmth. Across the lawn they went, the captain hopping over two stairs and landing on the squeaky boards of the porch. He shifted his weight between his feet, making the board continue to sing. Suga sighed at the motion, knowing that despite his higher level of maturity, Daichi was still a child. Moving up the stairs reminded Suga of the sore back of his calves, pressing a hand onto the railing of his porch once leveling out with his best friend.

“One of these days, that board is going to snap and you’ll fall through it.” He doubted it; Daichi was in great shape for his age, and had good enough reflexes to avoid the imagined disaster. Still Suga shot Daichi a playful smile, making his friend laugh and shake his head.

“If I do, I’ll make sure you never hear about it.” Because he wouldn’t be there to see it; Suga continued to forget the lack of time he had left on earth. Daichi didn’t look bothered by the same thoughts, the captain leaning on the porch railing while staring off into the distance. The smile he wore was small, and for once, Suga wished one of his celestial powers was telekinesis. Moonlight
spilled across the front lawn, capturing the droplets of rain that had come through earlier in the day. The neighborhood was quiet, the team’s goodbye party for Suga lasting late into the night. Thinking of the friends that he was leaving behind made it hard to remember the good he was going to do for the world. Being a god was an honor, and to be asked to step up as a demi-god was almost never heard of. But Takeda and Ukai were different than the previous rulers, and Suga had barely been able to think of the consequences of saying yes when the God of Fate had come personally to offer him the position.

For a second, he wondered if he had made the wrong choice.

“They’re really going to miss you.” Daichi’s voice was firm despite the lowered tone, proving he believed in his statement. Elbows pressing onto the wet railing, Suga leaned forward while trying to count the stars in the sky above them.

“I’ll miss them, too.”

“And I…” The drifting off from the captain caught the setter’s interest, though he tried not to show how eager he was to hear the end of the sentence. Keeping his eyes off the face of his friend was hard, and he was sure he had counted the same star four times before the brunet spoke. “It’s…it’s going to be different without you.”

“Different?” Suga parroted, finally dropping his gaze to take in the appearance of his teammate. Daichi was back to star-gazing, his hand pointed up at the sky Suga had just abandoned.

“Shooting star.” By the time the demi-god looked, the only thing left was the flicker of the star’s trail. Still, the image was beautiful, and Suga’s breathless ‘wow’ was unconscious.

“I’ve never seen one before,” Suga admitted softly, eyes wide with intrigue. Then like a speeding train, a distant memory flew through his mind. The setter turned back to Daichi, his voice showing his childish excitement. “We have to make a wish!”

“It likely won’t come true.” Daichi’s realistic answer was not acceptable for Suga, who shook his head and reached out to snag Daichi’s unexpected hand within his own.

“But what if it does? Just think about it; what is it you really want?” The question made broad shoulders tense, and Suga felt the space between them disappear when Daichi turned to face him. The unreadable emotion in his friend’s eyes was intense, Suga conflicted in how to respond to the
sudden close proximity. “Daichi?”

“Koushi.” The soft way his name was spoken sent a warm shiver through his spine, the setter feeling his breath momentarily hitch. Trying to keep his heart from jumping out his chest, Suga could only stand in silence and wait for Daichi to break it. The shifting emotions on the captain’s face were moving too fast for the demi-god to process. And like he was snapped from a spell, Daichi released Suga’s hand and stepped away, casting his eyes away. “I should go; you have an early morning tomorrow.”

“Right. My plane.” The words lacked conviction in the worst way. He watched Daichi’s fingers trail along the railing as he moved down the steps, a strong look turned back toward the setter once the brunet was off the porch.

“We shouldn’t say goodbye, since we’re going to see each other again.” There was a sense of confidence in Daichi’s voice that was awe-inspiring, and for a split second Suga was tempted to believe in it.

“But what if we don’t?”

“We will.” If he hadn’t personally met the God of Fate, Suga would have questioned if Daichi was just a human. The steady, convinced aura he possessed was genuine; Daichi truly believed the two were meant to meet up again. What was Suga supposed to say? That he was leaving earth tomorrow, and the chances of them ever meeting again were worst than impossible? In the end, he didn’t have to say anything, as Daichi didn’t wait for an answer. Turning back toward the walkway, Daichi waved a hand over his shoulder. “See you around.”

“Yeah…” He didn’t move from his spot on the porch until Daichi was out of sight. Suga slow to enter his home. The house was enshrouded in shadows, his parents asleep already. The demi god moved up to his room, his face meeting his pillow with little resistance. Even as his closed his eyes, the gentle touch of Daichi’s hand and the conviction in his words filled his head. But instead of the hopeful warmth that had previously ensnared him, sadness seeped into his veins. That was the last time he’d ever get to share the same night sky with Daichi Sawamura.

And silently, Suga cried.

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“We’ll see you tomorrow, Naila!” Waving to the small redhead who was walking with her mother down the path, Suga let a smile curl over his lips when walking back into the daycare. Mondays were a little hectic, but the demigod enjoyed the experience by the end of the day. The children were always throwing him for an unexpected loop, yet the feeling of helplessness was refreshing. Even as the god of fertility, he was left stumped or laughing after hearing some of the things the children asked. Knowing there were things even he didn’t understand about the mind of a little one meant humanity was still fresh. A new story was written every day, and that was the greatest thing about this world.

“Asahi,” Suga called out into the playroom, his laugh light when the giant smashed his head under the tiny table he was crouched under. The crayons he had been collecting were now splayed on the floor, the god quick to kneel down and help re-collect them. Sending a sympathetic glance while holding out the peace offering, the setter waited for his ace to reclaim the drawing utensils before speaking again. “Was Niala the last one to go home?”

“Daichi is currently waiting for Zarek’s mother to come pick him up. He wanted to make sure that she got the real story behind the fight earlier today.” At the mention of the black haired child, Suga nodded his head in understanding. Zarek was one of Suga’s favorites, despite trying not to show that outwardly. He was energetic and loud, but was full of optimism and cheer. Part of the demi-god was reminded of a certain small spiker when he looked at Zarek, which was why he was taken aback by the fight that broke out during their break. Zarek had tackled another boy to the ground, only being separated when Daichi and Asahi managed to pull the two apart. Despite the obvious anger that Zarek showed in his facial expression, he refused to explain what happened or why he had gone after the other boy. It was a rare show of violence from a normally friendly child, which explained why Daichi felt it important to explain that to his mother.

“I’ll go check in with him to see if he wants me to start their lunches for tomorrow.”

“Thank you for your hard work,” Asahi replied, giving a bow of his head to the setter who rolled his eyes.

“No need to be so polite, you big softie.” To emphasize his point, Suga gave a punch to the crouched man’s shoulder, nearly knocking him off balance at the motion. Satisfied with his strength, Suga grinned widely and dropped his hands onto his hips. “I’d like to think we’re friends, after all.”

“I-It’s not that!” The rushed tone in Asahi’s voice made Suga lift an eyebrow, the ace fumbling to his feet as his eyes checked the door of the room. Seeming assured that the two were alone, the tall brunet focused his attention back to the waiting demi-god. “Since you’ve come to the daycare, Daichi’s relaxed more than I’ve ever seen before. He’s not a bad boss by any means, but you...calm him. He smiles more, and I haven’t heard him laugh this much in all the years I’ve known him. It’s nice to see Daichi like this, so I wanted to tell you how much I appreciate that.”
“I don’t know if I really deserve that, but thanks. It means a lot to hear that.” Except the words sunk a little deeper than Suga wanted to admit, making it hard to hide his worried expression when excusing himself from the playroom. Slender fingers rubbed against the side of a pale neck as Suga walked through the building, wondering if what Asahi said was true. Despite his first instinct to believe him, Suga still hesitated. Could his short presence really affect the strong-willed captain as much as the ace was claiming? Even if it was true, that didn’t change their predicament; Suga was still destined to leave again, while Daichi…

What was Dachi’s fated path?

“I’m so sorry about his behavior.” The apologetic words paused Suga’s steps, the slender god peeking his head into the waiting room of the daycare. A petite woman stood in front of the captain, her dazzling blue eyes full of embarrassment while she continued to speak. “He’s never been like that before; I promise we’ll be having a conversation when we get home tonight.”

“Don’t be too harsh on him; Zarek’s always been a well-behaved kid. It was really out of character, but I plan to see if any of the other children know what happened tomorrow.” So Daichi’s mindset was the same as Suga’s. Knowing that his instincts on the situation weren’t wrong was a relief. He took a step through the doorway to introduce himself to Zarek’s mother, but the words were lost in his throat when the woman’s manicured hand was placed on Daichi’s bicep.

“You’ve always been so good with Zarek, your wife must be very proud.”

“Thank you, but I’m actually not married.” The way that the woman was angled gave Suga a full view of her face, and the demigod watched the look of hope enter her features at the information.

“That’s good to know.” The woman let her gaze linger on Daichi’s before she stepped away, her fingers trailing over the curved muscle of Daichi’s arm. Her eyes only left the captain’s when she exited the waiting room, leaving the owner of the daycare perplexed in his spot. The small snicker that escaped Suga’s mouth whipped Daichi’s head in his direction, the setter holding his hands up in peace.

“Sorry for intruding.”

“Why didn’t you say something sooner? I’m sure Zarek’s mother would have liked to hear your side of what happened today.” Sometimes Daichi’s focus was endearing to Suga, who felt a genuine smile perch on his lips when he walked to where the captain stood. Teasingly he jabbed his elbow in
the taller man’s side, pretending to sigh after the captain gave him a muted grunt.

“Unlike someone, I can read a situation.” The words returned the wary look to the daycare owner.

“I don’t follow.”

“That beautiful mother of an amazing child was hitting on you.” There was a moment of silence between them, Suga waiting patiently for Daichi to process the information he presented. He expected an embarrassed look or some sort of denial, yet the furrowing of Daichi’s brows and slight frown didn’t match the predicted behavior.

“Did you come to get me for something?” The obvious change of conversation troubled Suga, but he bit his lip before he could confront his teammate. The information that Daichi was withholding wasn’t the demi-god’s business, and the man was allowed his privacy. So instead Suga nodded, allowing the conversation to derail.

“I wanted to check in to see if you’d made lunches for tomorrow. If not, I saw this really fun recipe I wanted to try making with the kids. Do we have french bread, or will I have to buy some on the way in tomorrow? And pizza toppings, we’ll need lots of those. It may get a little messy, but I think they’ll love it!” Thinking about the homemade pizzas had Suga’s eyes bright, a childish excitement running through him. He enjoyed looking for interesting things to do with their daycare children. They weren’t always successes (trying to make a volcano was a horrible idea), but the ones that were made the attempt worth it.

“You should stay.” The words that came from the captain snapped Suga’s mental checklist in half, the setter looking up at the man who had stepped closer to him. Pale skin took on a flushed tone at the thumb that brushed over his cheek, though his eyes were unable to look away from the brown gaze staring down at him. The palm resting on his jaw was familiar, Suga’s shoulder easing at the smooth tone of Daichi’s voice. “You really should. Yui told me she’ll be able to come back next week, but we could really use an extra hand in the daycare. You’re excellent with the kids, too. They’ve all fallen in love with you.”

“Daichi…” Suga’s hand twitched against his side, yearning to grasp the hand resting on his cheek. Instead he bit his lip, hoping his eyes didn’t reflect his guilt when Daichi gave a side smile.

“Would you consider it?”
“I don’t know,” Suga admitted, a physical pain grasping his chest at the drop of Daichi’s lips. “Now that Hinata is settled, I should be getting ready to go back home. I didn’t think I’d be here as long as I have been, but I...when I saw you again, I wanted to repay you.”

“For what?”

“I should have kept in touch, yet I ended it so childishly.” The truth was, Suga could have contacted his best friend where he was. Takeda and Ukai had both been understanding of what Suga was giving up, and they had encouraged him to occasionally visit his family and friends. Even a simple call wouldn’t have been impossible. Yet Suga hadn’t taken up their offer, knowing that it would do more harm than good. How was he supposed to entertain the thought that one day, he’d be able to return to Daichi’s side? He didn’t want to put his friend through that pain. So he kept his distance, sure that the best friend from his childhood would forget him. But then, in a twist of fate, the two were bound by a force that the captain staring down at him knew nothing about. It dragged the two together without permission, and Suga refused to damage his friend a second time.

“You don’t owe me anything, Koushi.” The soft way he used his first name made Suga close his eyes, his mind flashing back to their final moments on his porch. He had used the same tone that night, though Suga never could understand why. Once again he was left in the dark, Daichi’s voice returning to normal. “Just think about it, okay? If not for me, then the kids.”

“It’s unlikely I’ll change my mind.”

“I’ve had the odds against me before.” The warm hand pulled away from him, Daichi’s laugh washing over Suga’s troubled heart with ease. Turning his attention back to the man in front of him, the setter watched a confident look set over Daichi’s face. The captain wore it when facing a tough opponent or when a child refused to take a nap. It was one that never seemed to fail, and even Suga felt compelled to believe in him, despite knowing the truth. “In the meantime, can you check out the pantry and make a list of what we’ll need? I’ll check in on our scaredy cat in the meantime.”

“Aye aye, captain!”

“You’re letting Noya and Tanaka rub off on you.” The laugh he produced at Daichi’s eye-roll was genuine, but the demigod lost his smile when the dark-haired man left the waiting room. Instantly his hand reached for his chest, fingers twining in the shirt’s fabric as he closed his eyes.

“Just hold out for a little longer; it’ll be over soon.”
Yet somehow, he knew the pain in his heart was there to stay.

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“Yes!” The loud smack of the ball careening into the floorboards had the spiker’s cheer echoing through the empty gym. Hinata was quick to jerk his head back and look at Kageyama, the smug look on the setter’s face enough to show he was satisfied with their move. The two had gotten to the gym hours ago, knowing it would be empty on the dreary Tuesday afternoon. Their practice would be starting soon, so the two utilized the time to work on a new set for the upcoming match. It wasn’t coming as easy as either wanted, and Hinata had missed the ball more times than he’d admit. Insults were flung, arguments had, yet the two hadn’t given up. And finally, the contact proved their hard work was worth something.

“Okay, so aim the ball lower than normal.” Kageyama’s quiet mumbling to himself, while he stared down at his twitching fingers, made Hinata scrunch his nose, the spiker quick to dart across the floor.

“Stop doing that; you look like the mad scientist from that movie we watched last night.” Instantly a blue-eyed glare was sent his way, making the god beam with a winning grin. Somehow, getting under Kageyama’s skin was even more rewarding now than when they first met.

“Shut up, or you can work with Suga tonight.” The grumbled reply only rewarded Hinata more, though some of his smile disappeared when Kageyama lost the edge of anger in his stare. “Have you thought about what to do about Daichi and Suga’s thread?”

“Not exactly,” Hinata admitted, his shoe scuffing against the floorboards when he kicked his foot absentmindedly. He watched as Kageyama grabbed another ball from the cart, spinning it between his fingers quietly. “It’s not like their string is broken; it’s fully pink and functional.”

“Then why was Daichi on your list?” A nod from Kageyama made Hinata shrug, jogging back to his position on the other side of the court. He prepared for the set by passing his weight between his feet, eyes focused on the ball in Kageyama’s hands.

“Because despite the two being comfortable with their love for each other, Suga doesn’t want to be Daichi’s soulmate. I’ve never encountered this before, so I’m not really sure what I can do before I leave.” As soon as Kageyama threw the ball into the air to set, Hinata moved, his body easily tossing itself into the air to spike the incoming set.
“Before you leave…” The ball that dropped into the artist’s hands was held, not set, causing another crash between Hinata and the net. His back hit the ground hard, making a loud smack echo in the gym. Knowing that the pain that was now shooting through his backside wasn’t his fault, the small spiker gave a loud shout to his roommate while rubbing his back.

“Bakayama! What was that?!” Yet despite the insult, Kageyama didn’t respond, his attention zoned in on the volleyball in his hands. Hinata gave a huff before jumping to his feet, wincing as his spine protested the sudden movement. His focus was on giving the setter a piece of his mind, but he only got two steps before Kageyama’s voice entered the space between them.

“If you don’t figure out what’s wrong with them, does that mean you fail your mission?”

“Oh…what?”

“If you didn’t fix them before the 14th, where would you go?” Now it was his roommate closing the distance between them, his fingers gripping tightly into the volleyball. Hinata tried to think of an answer for his setter, but his mind came up with nothing. All he had been focused on was beating the challenge. He had fixed the four strings that were ruined, a feat that he had once thought was impossible. Yet Suga’s thread still remained. While it was true that the color and strength of the string was in healthy condition, it had been placed on his list for a reason. If he didn’t try to figure out the purpose behind Daichi appearing on his tasks, would he still be kicked out of his position as the god of love?

“I guess I don’t really know.” The words were hard to admit, and the consuming silence that followed made Hinata feel like he had answered incorrectly. Sneaking a glance up to his roommate, he expected the glare that he was receiving. But upon a second glance, the intent behind the heated gaze wasn’t anger. Heartbreak was something Hinata was used to seeing after a disastrous break-up or the death of a loved one. He never expected to see it on the face of the man who now stood mere inches from his own body. “Kageyama? What’s wrong?”

“Forget it.” Kageyama tried to step away, but Hinata was faster. Little hands scrambled to grab onto the lean wrists of his teammate, forcing the taller man to drop the volleyball during their struggle.

“Wait! Don’t just run away from me you weirdo!”

“Like you can talk,” Kageyama snapped back, the god of love sending the stubborn man a glare before charging into his personal space. Their chests slammed together from the intrusive motion, making the setter grunt from the unexpected force of his teammate. Hinata stayed balanced on the front of his feet, making sure to grab the attention of his roommate by yanking his wrists down.
“Kageyama.” Before he could get his next question out, Kageyama went on the offense, Hinata’s mouth sealed within a kiss.

It wasn’t the first time that the two had kissed since the snowstorm four days ago. Their intentions or levels of intimacy varied, from quick pecks on the lips to open-mouthed kisses that seemed to last forever. Some were random, like when they passed each other in the kitchen. Others, like the lingering connections that occurred while the two were getting settled for bed, had hidden meanings behind them. None were really talked about, both men red-faced and unable to meet each other’s gazes afterward. Even now, as Hinata let his eyes flutter close while slender fingers slipped between his, the god of love couldn’t make rhyme or reason out of why they were kissing. His stomach was flooded with butterflies as he pressed into the gentle lips moving against his own. Kageyama’s free hand found its spot on the small of Hinata’s back, urging the smaller man to lift higher into the kiss. Moments slipped by with ease as the two kissed, Hinata finally pulling back with a gasp when realizing he had forgotten to breathe.

“Idiot.” The shove on his shoulders caused the distracted spiker to stumble back, Kageyama’s cheeks full of color as he bent down to grab the ball he had previously dropped. Blue eyes glanced over to the shorter man, seeming to dare Hinata to speak of the previous kiss. “Focus on the competition this weekend.”

“I was!” The protest from Hinata was instant, which caused a scowl to appear on Kageyama’s mouth.

“Say that when we’ve mastered our new quick.” The fight was bound to continue if not for the opening of the gym door, both men looking to see who the newcomer was. It came to no surprise that it was Daichi standing in the doorway.

“Why are you two here so early?”

“We wanted to get our new quick set up for the next game!” Hinata chirped out, showing his excitement by bouncing on the front of his feet. The movement seemed to irritate the setter, who gave a well-placed elbow into Hinata’s unsuspecting side. Instantly the spiker yelped, giving a heated glare to his roommate while Daichi sighed.

“I admire your hard work ethic, but you two know there is a world out there besides volleyball?” The duo’s reaction looked practiced as they blinked before sending each other confused side glances.
“We know that-,” Hinata started, the setter cutting in to complete the thought.

“-but we like playing volleyball.” Shaking his head, Daichi moved across the gym, tugging his gym bag higher on his shoulder while walking toward the locker room.

“I guess I can’t argue with that logic, then. Just make sure to pick up these volleyballs; practice is about to start.” At Daichi’s request, the two nodded, waiting until he got into the locker room to move. Instantly the collection of the balls became a competition despite the lack of vocal acknowledgment. Kageyama’s long arms gave him more room to place volleyballs, though Hinata’s speed gave him an easier way to deposit them into the cart. By the time the two finished their task (Hinata didn’t remember hitting this many during their drill), the two laid sprawled out on the squeaky clean floor.

“I win,” the smaller man huffed out, a weak slap to the side of his head showing Kageyama disagreed. The words were left unspoken, both feeling tired from their busy day. And they hadn’t even had practice yet. Despite the exhaustion, Hinata lifted his head when he heard a low whistle, the god of love catching sight of Suga’s bright smile when entering the gym.

“You two set up the gym all by yourselves? I’m quite impressed.”

“Why do I feel insulted?” Kageyama mumbled, forcing himself to sit up in order to give a polite bow of his head toward the demigod approaching them. Hinata beamed when the older god gave him a pat on the head, Suga adjusting his scarf while he glanced around.

“Is anyone else here?”

“Just me.” Daichi’s timber voice held enough volume to echo in the spacious gym, Suga’s hand pausing for a moment on the spiker’s head. Curious, Hinata peeked up from his messy bangs, noticing the stiffness of Suga’s arm as he spoke.

“Aah, good afternoon Daichi.”

“Same to you.” Then a pregnant pause entered the conversation, a clearing of the throat showing that Daichi wasn’t finished speaking. “Can I have a word with you?”

“Aam I in trouble?” Suga seemed to try to keep the tone light, his voice teasing and his eyebrow
arched. Daichi didn’t react to either, the captain taking a step away from the group to indicate the conversation should be had away from the two roommates. Suga dropped his hand away from Hinata, giving the confused god a cheerful smile before he followed the daycare owner to the other side of the room. It was instinct that made the spiker hop to his feet once the two were out of hearing range.

“What are you doing?” Kageyama’s question received no answer, the small god keeping his steps silent as he scurried toward the bleachers. He moved behind the wooden structure in order to listen in on the conversation which had already started between the pair.

“—grateful for your work at the daycare.”

“I already told you that I’ve enjoyed my time there,” Suga answered softly, a shuffling of movement hinting to Hinata that Daichi had stepped closer.

“I want to repay you, before you leave.”

“Isn’t that what a paycheck is? Really, there’s nothing—”

“I’d like to take you out tomorrow night.” The words were said with the same voice Daichi used when calling a good receive, full of confidence and unwillingness to bend. Too tempted by the situation, Hinata poked his head out from his hiding spot, quick to catch the stunned look on Suga’s face. Lips were parted on the demigod’s mouth, yet no sound came out as he stared at Daichi’s composed face. It was obvious that Daichi was aware of his feelings for the fair-haired setter, and was willing to lay it all out on the line for him. Moved by his captain’s brave actions, Hinata rushed forward, forgetting his attempt at stealth to speak.

“He’d love to!” Both men jumped from the unexpected interruption, but the god of love ignored the reactions to push his agenda forward. “Suga was just telling me the other night that he wanted to do something with you before he left.”

“Really?” The surprise was spread across Daichi’s face, Hinata giving several nods before he turned his attention to the setter. The look of confliction was only evident for a second in Suga’s expression before he was turning back to Daichi, his signature smile and cheerful voice sounding genuine.

“I’d love to.”
The victory that the god of love felt during the rest of practice should have made him practically float. Not only was the gym filled with pink strings, but the atmosphere in the practice was smoother than ever before. Even with the snarky remarks from Tsukishima and outlandish shouts of manliness from Tanaka, everyone seemed to be in good spirits. Each break given, Hinata noticed the true beauty of love. There weren’t lavish shows of affection or over the top expressions of devotion. It was the smaller things. Asahi made sure Noya’s knees were wrapped while the smaller libero recounted the “impossible” spike his taller boyfriend had hit. Yamaguchi offered half of his granola bar to the grumpy blond blocker who seemed to ignore the rest of the bench to lean his shoulder against his roommate’s. Ennoshita gave Tanaka’s head a rub after a good spike, and the bald man snuck a kiss to the other man’s cheek when he thought nobody was watching. Even Yachi came to bring a perfectly timed coffee for Kiyoko, who smiled just a little brighter at the blushing blond. Everything felt right, and yet…

One look at Suga and his suddenly frayed string proved that Hinata had missed something. It was a weird feeling, knowing that Suga’s soulmate string was breaking. Before today, the soulmate thread had been solid in both color and strength. But when Daichi offered to take Suga on a date, it had seemed to do more damage than good. What was going on with Suga? In all the years he had been the god of love, Hinata had never seen someone refuse their fated mate as much as his friend. It was confusing to the god, who had just recently discovered some of the benefits of liking someone.

Hinata took his time cleaning up the closet after practice, making sure he and Suga were the last two to leave. He silently communicated with his roommate to go ahead of them, though the awkward artist couldn’t act normal if it hit him in the face. The setter didn’t comment on this fact, keeping a smile that was a smidge too wide to be real when turning his attention on Hinata.

“Ready to go?”

“Yeah!” The two wandered out of the gym, the coldness of February quick to sink into Hinata’s bones. It hadn’t snowed since the storm, which seemed to be a rarity for the town. It didn’t make the wintery night any warmer, and Hinata blew into his hands before peeking over at his fellow god. Suga seemed to have prepared for the weather, keeping his face covered with a scarf. Suga was always thinking ahead in ways that Hinata could only dream of. It was just another wonderful quality of the setter, who Hinata was sure would make a perfect partner for his soulmate. Realizing that Suga was fighting against it was frustrating, and it had Hinata’s mouth opening.

“Did Daichi tell you where you’re going on your date?”

“No, we didn’t talk about it.”

“But that kind of makes it more exciting, right?” At Hinata’s question, Suga sighed, his feet coming to a halt once passing through the campus courtyard. The spiker was quick to turn toward his
counterpart, watching the light dim in his friend’s eyes.

“Shouyou...it’s not right to play with Daichi’s feelings like this.”

“You don’t like Daichi?” The words were answered with a quick shake of Suga’s head, confusing the god of love. “Then I don’t understand what you mean.”

“We’re leaving in five days, and I have no intention of telling Daichi about our soulmate thread during that time.” The firm tone that the fertility god used was unusual for Suga, and it sparked a moment of anger inside Hinata.

“Why won’t you give him a chance? I know we don’t tell humans about our god status normally, but this is a rare circumstance. Takeda must know he’s your soulmate; that’s why they were willing to let you come down with me. They want you to be happy, I’m sure of it!”

“I’m happy now,” Suga responded, and Hinata’s fists clenched by his sides.

“Don’t you believe in love? Don’t you believe in me?”

“You know I do, Shouyou.”

“Then why are you fighting this so much?!” Hinata’s loud question made a flicker of pain stretch over Suga’s face, making the god of love pause in his anger. It wasn’t hard to realize the conversation between the two had hit a nerve with Suga. The spiker hadn’t wanted to hurt his friend; he just wanted answers. Yet the way the fertility god winced proved that Hinata had pushed the envelope too hard. The apology was on the tip of his tongue when Suga sighed, his shoulders dropping to show something had snapped inside.

“Because Gods and humans rarely work out.”

“But your parents-”

“Aren’t together anymore.” Suga’s word stunned Hinata, the fertility god moving to sit on the empty bench next to the sidewalk. “My mother was pregnant when she decided to give up her position and
raise her child on earth with my father. She loved all the new and exciting things that were on earth and having a baby really made her happy. That was why Ukai and Takeda were okay with letting her go; they wanted her to be at peace with her life.”

“So...what happened?” Hinata’s voice was lowered when dropping onto the bench next to Suga, the fair-haired setter keeping a weak smile on his lips despite the topic.

“Well, after the glamour of this life wore off, my mother struggled to adapt to her new role. She was used to being taken care of by our servants and having the world at her fingertips. As a god, you don’t need to do laundry or take your children to school. It led her to put unreasonable expectations on my father, who was doing his best to help her adjust. I remember thinking he always tried to be the best husband that he could be. No matter what he did, she couldn’t feel comfortable “just being human”. My mother needed more because deep down, she was still a god. She wouldn’t let go of her past glory, which destroyed him. And eventually, their love simply...died. A few months after I turned fifteen, my father left her for another woman.”

“He really left her?” Suga nodded, eyes cast out on the empty courtyard.

“Afterwards, my mother lost any semblance of who she was. In the end, she was neither human or god and she couldn’t cope with the consequences of her decisions. My mother ended up losing her sanity because of it. Ukai and Takeda allowed her to come back, even though she was technically no longer a god by title.”

“I didn’t know any of this,” Hinata whispered weakly, feeling his stomach clench at the news. His feet felt heavy as they swayed in front of him, a laugh from Suga sounding forced and ungenuine.

“That’s because they swore those who knew about it to secrecy. She’s kept in a home hidden by most gods to keep others from questioning her about the situation. It’s one of the biggest insults for a god to be rejected by a human, after all. If not for Ukai and Takeda, I’m not sure my mother would be alive. It’s their kindness that’s made me promise to never betray them like my mother had all those years ago.”

“So your dad...do you still speak with him?” Suga hummed at the question, trying to buy time in steadying his still shaky voice.

“He moved soon after the divorce, and he has a new family to take care of. It’s too painful for him to see me, you know? I look so much like my mother and it makes him remember the love they once had.” Hinata wondered if the fertility god was trying to convince the spiker or himself, a side glance showing the glistening of tears over the setter’s serene smile. “But I’m not mad at him. I check in on
him from time to time; his wife is expecting a little girl this spring. They don’t have a bond, but it
doesn’t seem to matter; they’re truly happy together. He’s not a bad man, Shouyou; he’s simply
human. I can’t hate him for wanting to find true love with someone who will understand him.”

“Suga…” Hinata was unsure of how to continue, his words failing him. Despite knowing that the
setter’s situation was different than his parents, the god of love couldn’t speak. Suga wasn’t thinking
about himself; he was sure that he was going to hurt Daichi with his love, just as his mother had
before him. How could Hinata convince him that he was wrong after hearing that story? Slowly the
smaller god closed his mouth, watching as Suga pushed off the bench and let out a slow sigh.

“It’s getting late; you should hurry home before your ears freeze off.”

“Oh! R-Right.” The two said goodbyes quickly, though Hinata’s feeling of helplessness grew as he
watched the setter walk away. Balling his hands into his shirt, the god of love winced, wondering
what he could do to save the slowly fraying string between them.

Because if anyone deserved Daichi’s love, it was Sugawara.

Chapter End Notes

...Yeah, about that good mood I made last chapter...I tend to ruin that a lot. So, what will
happen with Suga and Daichi's date? Will Hinata be able to fix their string? Or will the
god of love be handed his first defeat? And what about his own fate? With only three
chapters left, things are about to get hectic for our lovable duo! Kudos, comments, and
let me know what you think!
Almost Lovers

Chapter Summary

Suga and Daichi go on their date, and Hinata has an epiphany

Chapter Notes

Hello hello! I am so happy that you all enjoyed the last chapter, and I wanna thank you all that commented on it. Hope that you continue to tell me what you think! ^.^ Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I am nothing special, of this I am sure. I am a common man with common thoughts and I’ve led a common life. There are no monuments dedicated to me and my name will soon be forgotten, but I’ve loved another with all my heart and soul, and to me, this has always been enough.” -Nicholas Sparks

“It’s gotten so cold.” The wistful tone in the fair-haired man’s voice wasn’t heard by anyone else, Suga alone outside of the coffee shop. Blowing warm breath into his bare hands, Suga shivered, hoping that he hadn’t gotten the location wrong. But he didn’t know of another place that Yachi worked, and the fertility god could see the perky blonde bopping around the deserted coffee shop. He had the option of waiting in the cafe, but he didn’t want to pull any attention from the barista. Instead, he leaned against the brick wall, feeling the cold seep in through his back. Explaining why he was about to go on a date that couldn’t mean anything with his fated soul mate was not something he wanted to do. Humans tended to get overly curious about situations that didn’t involve themselves, though it was pretty similar to the gods above.

Suga tried to think being a demigod had perks. He had the ability to understand the ethereal beings while still sympathizing with humans. But that was about it for positives. It was a balancing act to see things from both sides and it didn’t always make him a favorite with full-blooded gods. His mother’s abandonment of her role did him no favors, either. Despite most people being friendly with Suga, he knew there were others who still whispered. The questions of him being chosen over other more “suitable” candidates were still in circuit. They never spoke about the subject to his face, and Suga was never one to initiate a confrontation.

Sometimes, he wondered if Takeda and Ukai had made a mistake in choosing him for the fertility god. The reason that the leaders of the gods had reached out to him was still a mystery to all. Though Suga loved his position and felt he did a good job, he knew it would have made more sense to simply train one of the gods already at their side. The question bothered the fair-haired demigod more times than he wanted to admit. He never spoke to them about the subject, as he was too well mannered for that. If they gave him the responsibility, there was a reason for it, and Suga wasn’t one
to question what the god of fate had put in front of him.

But then there was the situation with Daichi…

Just thinking of his captain made him yank his knitted scarf over his face, hoping to hide his blush as he tried to distract himself. With one peek into the slightly fogged window Suga could see that the coffee shop wasn’t completely deserted. Kiyoko was in the corner, her calm demeanor focused on a book lying open on her table. There were an empty plate and a half filled cup of coffee in front of her, something which the blond employee was quick to catch onto. Yachi moved over to the table, exchanging pleasantries with the dark-haired woman while she re-filled the cup. So distracted by pouring the coffee, the younger woman didn’t notice the way Kiyoko leaned up and peppered a soft kiss to her cheek. The motion looked to stun Yachi, who nearly dropped the coffee pot in shock before her face exploded in color. The barista was quick to scamper back to the counter when a pair of girls walked into the establishment, but Suga could see the hint of a smile on Kiyoko’s face before she turned back to her studying.

And no matter how much he wanted to cheer for the thought of a new budding love, it burned. The pain in his chest was hard to ignore, even as Suga closed his eyes and tried to re-focus his mind. If he was being honest, gods could love the same way as humans. Some of the older traditions of “power pairings” or simply sleeping with another god to scratch a mutual itch was falling to the wayside. Though Iwaizumi and Oikawa were the first confirmed pair of soulmates in the world of the gods, that didn’t mean others weren’t present. Ukai and Takeda simply loved each other, and their bonding had nothing to do with rules or expectations. And yet for someone like Suga, the thought of simply being with his soulmate was impossible. Sawamura Daichi was a human, and he had learned the hard way that humans and gods should stay with their own kind.

“Suga?” Slowly the god opened his eyes, his breath momentarily pausing when taking in the man stopped in front of him. The cold was nipping pink into the edges of Daichi’s ears, but his soft smile showed that it didn’t bother him. His hands were hidden in the thick black jacket, with brown eyes relaxed as they stared down at Suga. Flushed cheeks looked good on the man, though Suga bit the inside of his cheek to keep himself from blurting the admittance out loud. The dark hair was wispy at the front, barely brushing the tan skin of Daichi’s forehead. Even with the darkness of the night dimming some of the captain’s face, Suga knew the increased heartbeat and steady warmth in his stomach was a reaction to Daichi’s handsome features. He hoped his smile didn’t show his nerves as he stepped closer to the human.

“About time you got here. I thought I was going to turn into an icicle.”

“Sorry, I was getting ready and I lost track of time.” The excuse caught the setter’s attention, who was quick to fall into step with Daichi when he started to move.
“Getting ready? Just what kind of adventure are you planning?” It felt natural, walking beside Daichi like this. He couldn’t remember how many times they had done it as children. Whether it was home, school, or to practice, their walks had always been one of Suga’s highlights throughout the day. He never thought twice about this feeling before Hinata had told him the truth of their soulmate link. But now, as he cast a side glance to the chuckling man on his left, Suga could practically see the fated string that linked them together.

“It’s not much of a secret if I tell you, now is it?” Charming. Sawamura Daichi was too charming for Suga. Swept up in the simple smile and the relaxing aura between them, Suga’s previous fears seemed to melt as he lifted his eyes to the sky above them.

“The last time you tried to keep a secret from me, you fell off the roof and got a broken arm.” Daichi couldn’t blame the cold air for his blushing face, Suga laughing despite the other man’s scowl.

“A guy tries to hang up Christmas lights outside his best friend’s window for his favorite holiday and that’s the thanks he gets. I should have never listened to Kuroo, that idiot.”

“The thought was really sweet,” Suga replied, showing his appreciation for the gesture with a warm smile. Daichi didn’t lift his frown, wiggling his arm as if imagining the pain from the fall.

“Hurt like hell, too.” Suga’s eyes dipped down to the hand that brushed against his when Daichi rotated his shoulder, quick to glance away and brush some of his hair behind his ear. Bringing up the old memories was making Suga’s stomach twist in a pleasant warmth, but the demigod refused to recognize it. He could not let himself fall any deeper into Daichi’s spell. Determined to change the subject, Suga switched to something that felt more neutral and safe.

“So what do you think about our little friend, Zarek?”

“That these kids are growing up way earlier than we ever did.” Well, Daichi’s observation wasn’t wrong. Though the boy had stayed tight-lipped about the incident, Suga and Daichi had been able to learn the truth about the fight. It had been Nalia, a girl that was a year younger than Zarek, who had come to them with watery eyes and the truth. According to the redhead, Zarek had seen the boy pulling on her pigtail and had defended her. When the other kid called her ugly, Zarek tackled the boy. Nalia felt extremely guilty that Zarek had gotten in trouble, claiming it wasn’t his fault. Throughout the day, Suga had noticed that the boy had kept close to Nalia, the two even sleeping next to each other during nap time.

“Maybe our little friend has gotten bitten by the love bug.” The suggestion made Daichi groan before he tugged Suga around a curve in the street. Suga hid his laugh behind his scarf as Daichi shook his
“Nope, not in my daycare. They don’t know the first thing about love.”

“Aw, come on. We were like them at one time, too.” Seeing the arched eyebrow from his captain, Suga tried to ignore the warm hand still tangled with his own as he explained. “Remember the time you and I got into an argument about that really popular girl in middle school?”

“The ‘Valentine’s Day Debacle’, as I used to call it.” The once painful memory didn’t hold the same weight as it had when he was a teenager, Suga humming to show he agreed.

“I don’t even remember her name, honestly.”

“Me either, but I barely knew her. You were the one who was getting all cozy with her.” Though there was a level of humor in Daichi’s voice, Suga was quick to catch on to the small lining of another emotion. “You gave her so much attention that I thought you were going to become one person. You were with her all the time; I can’t be held responsible for my actions that day.”

“You do know why I was hanging out with her so much, right?”

“Because you liked her?” Daichi spoke the words like they were obvious, and it was enough to make Suga gasp in laughter and shake his head.

“No way! She told me she had a crush on you, and I got nervous that the two of you were going to start dating. I was just trying to learn more about her to see if you two were a good match.” The fact that he was trying to find any negative side of her was left silent on his lips, though it ran through Suga’s mind as he watched Daichi’s eyes glance away.

“This is why I say they’re too young. We were double their age and look at how badly we screwed it up.”

“By we, you mean you, right?” The scrunch of Daichi’s nose proved that he knew that the setter was right, and Suga basked in his victory with a content sigh. His body relaxed at the warm feeling slipping through his chest, and unconsciously the demigod leaned his shoulder into Daichi’s. The sturdy feeling of his co-worker’s arm against his felt safe, like coming home. Despite the warning bells sounding off in his head, Suga closed his eyes, letting his heart have a few moments of peace.
Daichi didn’t seem to mind the movement, keeping quiet as he guided Suga along a path that Suga forgot to question. It wasn’t until Daichi’s feet stopped moving that Suga felt reason echo in his mind, reminding him of the wall he allowed to crumble between them.

“You ready to climb?” The question caught the demi-god by surprise, glancing up to see a small hill standing in front of them. He didn’t get much of a choice, Daichi not hesitating to pull the man up the side of the hill. It wasn’t steep, and the practices from volleyball made the small bout of exercise feel like nothing. In minutes the two reached the top of the hill, Suga’s eyes instantly drawn to the bench that rested at the peak. Two blankets were spread out over the wood, with metal thermoses accompanying them.

“So this is what you meant by preparing.”

“I know it’s cold out, but I figured this was a little more interesting than an expensive dinner or a movie. Then I heard that there’s a meteor shower tonight and it made me think of that night on your porch.” Suddenly Daichi stopped, and Suga could feel his toes curl in his shoes as he peered up at the coughing captain. He had planned this because of their last night together? Maybe a human would have appreciated the excitement of a movie and the ease it brought when not knowing what to speak of. A god would desire the luxury of expensive and lavish choices of food that they would consider an offering from the weaker human. But Suga, not human or god, felt his heart fill with love at the intimate and personal date Daichi had thought up for them.

“I love this.”

“Really?” The nod the demigod gave was instant, his throat drying when seeing the look of relief spreading over Daichi’s face. Suga felt weightless as Daichi gently led him to the bench, their fingers only separating so the dark haired man could wrap Suga in the thick blanket. The setter lifted his head to look back to the dark sky, amazed at the clear sky above them. The stars looked close enough to touch, and the smile that graced his lips was full of pure elation. How was Daichi so...perfect?

“This is amazing,” Suga whispered, the bench dipping slightly as Daichi settled himself under the other blanket. He didn’t want to take his eyes away from the beautiful scenery, but he forced himself to when hearing the ruffling of plastic beside him. Daichi’s hands held one of the thermoses, the rich smell of melted chocolate filling the air when the cover was twisted off.

“Want some?” There was a hint of a tease sparkling in the brown gaze, Suga melting in his seat when the captain lifted a Ziploc bag. “I even brought you marshmallows, though I wasn’t sure you still liked them-“
“They’re the best part!” Suga argued instantly, a roll of the eyes showing Daichi still didn’t agree with the statement. He kept his disagreement to himself, simply pouring the sugary treats into the canister before offering it to the setter. The steam from the hot beverage hit Suga’s cheeks as he pulled it to his lips, letting the cocoa sweeten his tongue while he sipped it. His hum of approval was loud, pressing the thermos between his palms to try and keep him warm. Daichi took a sip of his own beverage as he looked up at the sky, his broad shoulders leaning against the back of the bench. One arm laid limp on the top of the bench, the other keeping a secure hold on his canister.

“Hopefully the hot chocolate will keep you warm enough.”

“Probably not; I’ve never been one to retain heat well.” Which had been true since he was little. Even during the summer, Suga could get a chill when the sun was low enough. Winters were terrible, yet he never seemed to mind going out to play in the snow with Daichi and the other children in the neighborhood. Memories of their time together continued to swish through his head as he swallowed, hoping the heat of the drink would wash them away.

“I’d take ice block over being a living heater.” Daichi’s complaint made Suga smile into the curve of his thermos, peeking through silver strands to catch the slight grimace on his teammate’s face.

“But that can come in handy.”

“How so?” The challenging tone of Daichi and his lack of defense made it impossible for Suga to ignore the tug of his own mind. Before he could think twice, the setter was on the move, pressing his side snug against the opening Daichi had inadvertently offered him. The ease of resting his head against the taller man’s shoulder was impossible to resist, Suga’s cheeks buried in his scarf and blanket to hide his blush. He tried to make the movement seem logical as he kept his eyes on the sky, though he didn’t hear a protest from his friend. Daichi stiffened for only a moment, Suga’s nerves instantly soothed when a warm hand slid around his shoulder with a sigh. “I feel used.”

“Shush, it’s starting.”

The well-placed time of the first meteor felt planned, though Suga wasn’t going to complain. It kept the conversation from getting awkward, and the sight of several lights flashing through the sky was breathtaking. They came at different times, with no rhyme or reason behind them. The beauty of it left both men quiet for several minutes, neither wanting to disturb the peace with words. And really, what needed to be said? The cold that had once bothered Suga was all but gone between the warmth of the cocoa and Daichi’s personal heat. His body was lax in the semi embrace, the strength of Daichi’s arm making him feel safer than ever before. Suga wanted time to simply freeze so that for a moment, he didn’t have to think about what happened once the night was over. The meteors shot through the air with no plan or expectation; they simply did what they wanted. And through that, they became a beautiful spectacle to all who gazed upon them.
But the demigod knew he didn’t have that luxury; in a matter of days, he would be forced to leave Daichi again. The bitter bite in his chest wasn’t from the night of winter but from the cold truth of his existence. It felt painful, like the night they had watched the star fall at his house. But the agony ran deeper when realizing this could have been his fate. If he had just said no to their offer, he could have stayed with the man now gently rubbing his arm through the blanket around him. Why hadn’t he made the right choice?

“I wish-” The words caught in his throat when he felt himself choke on his tears, Suga forcing his laugh to cover any clue of his mental breakdown. “I wish these meteors could grant wishes like stars, you know?”

“It worked for me just fine.” Daichi’s soft reply made Suga’s head lift, looking up at the relaxed smile the dark-haired man held. “Remember the night that you left we saw that shooting star? It wasn’t really a star; it had been a part of a meteor shower just like this. I didn’t realize it until my mom said something the next morning, and by then you were gone. But it didn’t really matter, I guess. I still got to see your smile again, which was all I wanted at the time.”

“Daichi…” But he wasn’t sure what he wanted to say. The words felt heavy on his tongue like it wasn’t his time to speak. Everything he had been pushing away for the man was suddenly spiraling through him, causing Suga’s hands to nearly dent the thermos from how tight he was grasping it. His heartbeat was in his ears, his mind muddled as the captain’s gaze finally drop back down to his own.

“Back then, if I had known my wish could come true… I would have asked for you to stay with me.” The raw pain whispered in Daichi’s statement broke something inside Suga, and his body moved without a second thought.

Suga’s canister was dropped to the ground while warm hands grasped the chilled cheeks in front of him, Suga’s mouth finding Daichi without guidance. The sweetness of cocoa was pressed to his lips as the demigod leaned closer to Daichi, refusing to allow any space or winter chill to keep them apart. He rose up on his knees through the kiss, deepening it when feeling desperate hands grasping his newly exposed hips. The heat that poured into him from the lips under his was sweltering, but Suga’s body bathed in the warmth. Their lips continued to seek more, the unspoken secrets of their hearts desperate to breach the surface. Nothing felt better than Suga’s fingers running through Daichi’s hair, pulling him closer as his lips parted for Suga’s tongue to conquer. He wanted to kiss until their lungs combusted, but then Daichi’s lips trailed away from his mouth without warning.

“Koushi.” The name was mumbled into his throat, and Suga’s whole body tensed when feeling a gentle kiss pressed just underneath his ear. The heated passion between them simmered instantly at the softer kiss Daichi pressed to his pulse, which Suga was sure was trying to rip its way through his pale skin. Underlying meanings of the movement hit into Suga like a truck, his chest concaving as he
tried to breathe. Arms that felt heavy now dropped onto Daichi’s shoulders, the demi god’s mind scrambling to rear its ugly head with guilt and disgust.

He shouldn’t be doing this. He had responsibilities and there were rules—he had no business being here. No matter what his heart was telling him, Suga knew the truth; he couldn’t love Daichi. Not the way he deserved. His mind flashed back to his mother and the damage she had left behind. How his father had cried the night he had to let go of their love. What if he put Daichi through that same pain? Even as his hands clutched onto the jacket on his soulmate, his blood ran cold. Warmth clashed with a foreboding feeling in his heart, and everything felt out of his control. He just needed to breathe, why couldn’t he breathe? Why couldn’t he-

Why can’t I happy?

“I love-”

“I can’t!” The words were shoved through the panic as Suga ripped away from Daichi, the blanket falling at his feet as he stumbled a few feet from the stunned man still sitting on the bench. Pricks of pain stung his eyes as Suga grasped his heart, refusing to look back even as he heard Daichi rise from his seat.

“Suga?”

Why can’t I stay with Daichi?

“I can’t do this. I’m so sorry, I...I’m sorry, Daichi.” There was nothing else he could say. His feet were running long before he realized what he was doing, his eyes blurred and the sudden stinging around his wrist meaning nothing to him. All he felt was terrible pain constricting his heart, his feet unable to outrun the selfish wish still pounding in his head. The same wish he had prayed for years ago, knowing it wouldn’t come true.

Soulmate or not, he would never be able to tell Daichi he was in love with him.

~**~

“If you move that piece, it’s going to fall.” Tsukishima’s dry tone made Kageyama’s eye twitch, the setter sending a stern glare toward the stoic blocker sitting across the coffee table. Why he hung out
with the neighbor, he wasn’t sure. Wait, scratch that. The sound of the running dryer reminded him that he hadn’t asked for Tsukishima’s company; the blond had broken in *again.*

“Tsukki, don’t jinx him.” At least Yamaguchi had come with him this time. The brunet neighbor was much easier to deal with, making sure to apologize several times for his boyfriend’s (Were they dating? Kageyama had caught them kissing outside of their apartment when he came back from class the other day) rude behavior. Tsukishima didn’t seem to think the action was needed, openly telling both teammates that. Seeming to want to keep the peace between the two arguing men, Yamaguchi had suggested the three play a game while the laundry was finishing. Why they had decided on Jenja, the setter didn’t know, but he was starting to think it was a bad choice as he went to grab a piece on the corner of the structure.

“That piece is even worse than the first one you picked.” Smug didn’t begin to describe the look gleaming in the eyes behind the glasses of the blond, his voice holding volumes of condescending depth. “You do understand the point of this game is to keep the tower standing?”

“I know the rules, asshole.” The grumbled insult had Tsukishima’s eyebrow raised and Yamaguchi’s eyes wide in panic.

“Then you must just enjoy losing.”

“Ah, Tsukki—”

“Kageyama!” The loud slam of the front door jolted the three at the table, though it was Tsukishima’s knee knocking into the table that sent the tower careening over. Small wooden blocks were scattered on the living room rug, though the second of victory that Kageyama felt was quick to disappear. His eyes were locked on the panicked look of his roommate, Hinata’s eyes wide and frantic as he spoke. “The string—it’s changing!”

“Hinata—” Kageyama tried to speak, but the adrenaline in the middle blocker was quick to overflow into the conversation.

“Suga and Daichi’s soulmate string is going haywire and it’s all my fault!” The words froze Kageyama, who stared in shock as Hinata’s heavy breathing filled the suddenly silent room. The new information was unnerving, but Kageyama would have to deal with that later. For now, his eyes flipped back to the two neighbors on the floor. Yamaguchi was busying himself with picking up the pieces that had scattered on the floor, though his attention seemed to stay on where the conversation was heading. Tsukishima was open with his stare, watching Hinata’s heaving form in the doorway with a frown.
“Their what?” Tsukishima’s slow question made Hinata’s body jolt, finally realizing that they had guests in the small apartment. A new set of fear crossed over the spiker’s face, though Kageyama was sure it had nothing to do with his previous concern.

“Stingyshima?! Wh-what are you doing here?”

“Laundry.” He said it like it was obvious, and Yamaguchi tried to hide his small chuckle, recognizing the serious tone of the situation. “What’s a soulmate thread?”

“Th-That’s none of your business!” The high pitched tone Hinata used made the blocker’s eyes narrow on his sweating form, the silence lingering for several seconds. Surprisingly, it was Tsukishima who spoke first, his movements slow as he moved to his feet.

“You’re weirder than normal; I’m leaving before I catch it. Text me when my laundry is done.” The ease in which the man gave up on the subject wasn’t surprising; Tsukishima could care less about things that didn’t directly affect him. Other people’s drama was not his style, and he did his best to avoid it. The same could not be said for his brunet boyfriend, the curious look on the freckled man’s face proving he was still intrigued even as he rushed out a ‘goodbye’ and moved after Tsukishima. The two were barely out of the door when Hinata slammed it shut, making sure to lock it before scampering over toward Kageyama.

“You know he can break in if he wants.”

“Suga kissed Daichi.” It was obvious that Hinata only had one thing on his mind, dropping onto the floor next to Kageyama. The setter’s back was resting against the couch, making it easy for him to lean his head back onto the couch cushions and sigh.

“That’s a good thing.”

“I just went to the daycare; Asahi told me that Suga has been actively avoiding Daichi all day.”

“That’s...less good.” Kageyama’s lame answer resulted in Hinata slapping his arm, the setter wincing but not moving from the relaxing position.
“I got a glimpse of Suga and Daichi’s string; it’s barely being held together. And the color, it’s... changing. Darker, like it’s going to turn black. I’ve never seen a fully pink string like this. I... I don’t know if I can fix this one.” He had heard Hinata doubt himself before, but there was a lost edge to the god’s voice that snapped Kageyama’s head up to look. Orange hair was drooping as amber eyes stared down at his hands, the helplessness clear in his voice. “If anything, I think I just sped up the process of their string breaking.”

“But their string is still connected, right?” Kageyama’s firm question received a weak nod, the setter taking a slow breath before he spoke. “Then the fight’s not over. We’ve beaten the impossible before, right? Stop feeling sorry for yourself and let’s think of a plan of action.”

“I know, it’s just... ugh!” Hinata’s groan of frustration was followed by the smaller man laying down, Kageyama’s back straightening when the spiker’s head found it’s way into his lap. He hated the quick bloom of heat rising in his face almost as much as the crack in his voice.

“Wh-What the hell, Hinata?”

“It helps me feel better, Bakayama!” A shift in Hinata’s mop of hair showed that he was affected by the movement as well. Pink cheeks and avoiding eyes were enough to prove to Kageyama that his roommate was embarrassed, yet he didn’t move away as he continued. “I can’t help it; Suga normally just listens to me rant and pets my hair until I fell better. But he... probably hates me right now.”

“He doesn’t hate you, idiot.” The slight pinch of guilt in his stomach made Kageyama sigh, the setter hesitating before placing a firm hand on his roommate’s head. He tried to ignore the twitch in his fingers at feeling the soft hair, focusing on giving a slow stroke over Hinata’s head. “He knows you’re just trying to do your job.”

“How can I finish my mission if he doesn’t think staying with Daichi is the right thing to do? I thought their date would make Suga realize that Daichi gets super happy around him. I didn’t mean to hurt anyone like this. If Suga really doesn’t want to be with Daichi, then I don’t want to keep pushing him. That’s not how love works, even for soulmates.” Hinata’s face pressed into the lean thigh underneath it, though he didn’t pull away from the soft petting from his setter. “I’ve only got three days to make this right, but I don’t know which path is the right one.”

“Maybe Suga’s just not ready to be in love.”

“But I see the way he looks at Daichi. If it wasn’t for his guilt and debt to my parents, I think Suga would give up his duty as the fertility god to stay with Daichi.” A stretch of silence between them
made Hinata blink, recognizing that the hand sifting through his hair had stopped moving. He wiggled a bit in his spot, hoping to jump-start the motion again. He had always enjoyed having his hair played with, but Kageyama’s touch felt different than others. Each small brush of the man’s fingertips against his scalp turned his spine to putty, and Hinata had to conceal his hums of enjoyment at how gentle Kageyama was being. He was careful with his touch, occasionally scratching along the scalp with a firm stroke. The intimate exchange chased the lingering feelings of doubt or confusion away, basking Hinata in a warmth of contentment.

So when he refused to continue, Hinata lifted his head to glance up at the strained artist looking away from him.

“Gods can choose to stay on earth?”

“Well, yeah. It’s rare, but it happens. Ukai and Takeda would never make them stay against their will. They’re not like that.” Hinata could tell the information was why Kageyama winced, the spiker quick to scramble to his knees in concern. “Kageyama? Are you worried about Suga’s status with the gods if I fix their string? I’m telling you, my parents wouldn’t-”

“It’s not that.” Black bangs hung over the hidden face of the setter, Hinata’s worry increasing at the way Kageyama’s body hunched forwards. Little hands slid to press into the tense shoulders, trying to lean down to catch his roommate’s face.

“Then what’s wrong?”

“It’s...nothing.”

“You said that at practice the other day, too. What’s going on with you?” Giving a rough shake to his friend, Hinata’s nails clenched tighter into Kageyama’s shirt when he refused to answer. “You can’t just ignore me, you know. If I did something wrong, I deserve to know.”

“Just forget about it.” The cold way that his roommate brushed him off snapped something inside the god, his anger shaking his vocal chords with a growl.

“Bakayama!” Giving a hard shove, Hinata knocked Kageyama back onto the floor. He didn’t hesitate to scramble over the stunned setter, legs on either side of the lean hips in order to glare down at wide blue eyes. “Don’t you dare try to shut me out now! You promised that we would finish this together, right? Whatever is bothering you, I need to know or else I can’t help fix it.”
“This isn’t something you can fix. Now get off me, idiot.” Yet when Kageyama tried to sit up, Hinata shoved him again, his orange hair swishing from the force of the setter’s shoulders smashing into the ground.

“You don’t know that!”

“I do.”

“How?”

“I just do.”

“Would you stop being so stubborn?!”

“Would you choose to stay?” Suddenly, the tension and anger that brewed between them dissolved, the god of love confused by the random question. Kageyama’s eyes, which once sparked with anger, fizzled out, the dark blue stare holding the pain Hinata had seen at practice.

“Stay?” Hinata repeated, the artist glancing away from his roommate to glare at the couch beside them.

“Our team is better with you and Suga on it. I hate leaving games, but switching up setter keeps the other team unsure of what we’re doing next. And it’s not the worst thing to have a decoy on the team; everyone’s gotten really attached to you. They’re probably going to cry or something if you leave. Noya and Tanaka will be asking questions non stop. Yamaguchi will be a mess, I’m sure.” A pause in Kageyama’s words had Hinata slowly sitting back on his folded legs, feeling how tense the setter’s body was from the strained muscles in the thighs under his butt. “Classes don’t suck as much when your big mouth is asking stupid questions. Even if you’re worthless with homework, it’s not horrible to have someone to bounce ideas off of. And I—would it really be the worst thing to just...stay here with me, idiot?”

“I don’t…” Thoughts of supporting Kageyama derailed themselves as his roommate’s words brought up something Hinata hadn’t thought of before. After the mission was over, Hinata would go back to his world. While that had always been his goal, he forgot one thing; he’d have to leave the world he had created on earth. The aggravation of getting up early for class or the jubilation he felt when seeing Noya perform his ‘Rolling Thunder’ technique would be impossible to replicate. He wouldn’t
get to argue with Tsukishima and tease Yamaguchi about how he drooled when he fell asleep on the ride to their game. Having Suga teach him how to finally cook a full meal and striving to hit a spike as hard as Asahi would be goals that he’d never be able to complete. Laughing as Kiyoko denied Tanaka’s terrible flirting tips, or whining into a cup of Yachi’s soul-warming cocoa after Daichi’s brutal practices...would he forget everything? When he left, would his heart forget what it felt like to kiss Kageyama for the first time?

Would Kageyama forget him?

Suddenly, his world blurred. Tears felt hot rolling down Hinata’s cheeks, the spiker’s fingers feeling foreign to him as he touched his face in confusion. Instantly Kageyama tensed under him, pushing up from the floor so they were on an even playing field. The panicked look on his roommate’s face didn’t register for Hinata, whose other arm fell limp at his side. Emotions swelled inside of him, bringing pain and heartache with each inch of his chest they invaded. Still, Hinata couldn’t stop himself from crying, his mind broken and lost as he covered his face.

“Hinata-”

“I don’t want that!” His shout bounced off the walls, his body vibrating from feelings he couldn’t describe. Everything felt too raw, and the defenses that he had unknowingly dropped couldn’t save him from the anguish that ripped through his heart. He didn’t want to leave his friends. His school, his team, his apartment were all intricate parts of his life now. How had he forgotten that he would have to leave all of this? Why had he been so naive?

“Shit.” The arms that wrapped around him made his panic spike, Hinata instantly trying to struggle from the tight grasp around him.

“Let me go!” But even as he shouted and tried to shove the warm chest in front of him away, Kageyama didn’t let go. A strong hand pressed to the back of his neck, forcing Hinata’s shouts and sobs into the crook of the setter’s neck. “Why would you bring that up? You’re such a bully!”

“It’s okay-”

“It’s not okay! I hate you. I hate you I hate you I hate you-” The chant was forced through clenched teeth and blinding tears, the god of love determined to make the words a reality. Despite this, Kageyama shook his head, a warm hand running through Hinata’s hair.
“I’m sorry.” There was a strain in the apology, and Hinata’s muddled mind couldn’t figure out just what the man was apologizing for. Anger and desperation to find some semblance of control made Hinata bite into the collarbone of his roommate in retaliation. There was a flinch under him from the vicious bite, though Kageyama’s arms tightened on the trembling form sitting in his lap.

It was a rare moment of weakness for the setter, reminding the god of love how much his roommate had changed since they first had met. Before, Kageyama would have never initiated a physical touch like this. He would have avoided Hinata’s outburst and continued to focus on his own goals and ambitions. But he had changed; they had both changed together.

Hinata’s lips pulled away from the indented skin to let out a broken sob before burrowing his face into Kageyama’s neck. Small hands scrambled up the back of Kageyama’s shirt, clenching the fabric into his grasp while he rapidly shook his head against Kageyama. The setter didn’t move away from the embrace, even as Hinata’s tears started to soak the collar of his shirt. Instead, Hinata felt a soft pressure resting against his temple, the god of love realizing that Kageyama had his cheek pressed against it.

“You’re getting snot all over my shirt, idiot.” There was a hitch in Kageyama’s voice that proved that he wasn’t as composed as he pretended to be. Hinata wanted to look up at his roommate to confirm what he thought was the reason for the waiver, but the angle of the setter’s head kept his face hidden. Not wanting to move away from the comfort of the setter’s shoulder, Hinata closed his eyes, trying to keep his new set of tears from showing. He was tired from his breakdown, but voicing that risked the chance of Kageyama forcing him to go to bed. A bed without Kageyama, which was the opposite of what he needed right now. Selfishly he shoved the earlier fears of broken soulmate strings and his mission out of his head to hold Kageyama’s trembling body closer.

And for just a moment, Hinata pretended that he wouldn’t have to say goodbye to the human who had completely captured his heart.

Chapter End Notes

The feels in this chapter are so strong! Gah, sometimes I don’t know if I’m a better angst writer or a romance writer. So, with only a couple days left, what will Hinata do? Will Suga and Daichi’s string finally snap? How will Hinata deal with losing his new life? And what secrets are still waiting to be discovered? With two chapters left, we’re down to the wire. So comments and kudos will help fuel me! Until next time
Sugawara's Choice

Chapter Summary

An unlikely aid comes to the rescue, but will it be too late?

Chapter Notes

Holy crap it's totally Sunday! I had plans to put this up yesterday but I just transitioned jobs this week so it's been a bit of a roller coaster. The GOOD news is with my new job I'll have more time to write HQ (hopefully)! So yay for that! Now onto the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“When you meet the one who changes the way your heart beats, dance with them to that rhythm for as long as the song lasts” -Kirk Diedrich

When telling the children at Daichi’s daycare that this would be his last day, Sugawara hadn’t expected the onslaught of tears. Age, gender, or time spent at the daycare didn’t seem to matter; each child was upset when realizing this was the last time they’d get to play with the fair-haired demigod. It was upsetting to Suga, who disliked seeing the children he had grown so fond of become blubbering messes because of him. He made sure to give each of the children a little of his time throughout the day, playing favorite games or making special lunches the way they liked them. The river of tears started to wane, each child distracted by a movie or what kind of popsicle Asahi offered them. And toward the end of the day, Suga’s heart felt a little lighter.

“Heather, I’ve got your scrunchie.” The setter looked around the rambunctious group in the backyard, unable to find the girl in question. It was to be expected; Heather loved playing hide-and-seek, even when the other person wasn’t aware they were in the game. Knowing the girl would pop her head out in a few minutes, Suga took a moment to breathe, casually walking around the large area of the playground. It was a smart idea for Daichi to get a location which had a huge backyard. The playground set was a favorite spot for many kids and helped keep some distracted if Daichi and Asahi had to deal with an upset child alone.

If only it could distract Suga from his own tumultuous feelings. Two days had passed since he ran away from Daichi and his possible love confession. Though they had worked together since then, the daycare owner had been respectful in giving Suga space. He hadn’t tried to question the setter on the escape or the reasoning for the kiss. He didn’t scowl or glare at Suga when passing; Daichi was the same understanding person who had stolen the demi god’s heart years ago. And that made it even harder for Suga to say goodbye. Daichi was everything that he wanted, yet he knew the truth; he couldn’t have him, and in days he would never see him again.
So distracted by his thoughts, Suga let out a small yelp when a firm hand wrapped around his small wrist. He was yanked down to crouch behind a tub of toys, Suga taking a moment to realize who had grabbed him. Daichi had a finger pressed to his lips silently, signaling the setter to be quiet before he pointed to the side of the bin. Curiosity made Suga peek his head out to where Daichi was signaling, catching sight of two of their children. It was easy to tell Zarak and Nalia apart from the other students, though it took him a moment to realize what they were doing.

Teddy bears and actions figures were arranged in sloppy aisles, propped up by books and building blocks. One bear stood away from the rest, a book in his lap and Nalia’s cross around his neck. A red blanket that Suga knew to be Zarek’s was flopped between the toys, making a messy carpet that led to the two children. The high ponytail Nalia wore had a long line of toilet paper stuffed into the elastic, which matched the princess costume she had tugged over her clothes. Her hands squeezed a dirty clump of dandelions that were known to grow in the corner of the playground. Zarek’s head was being swallowed by a much too large top hat, a Halloween bow tie snug around his neck. The scene was amusing to Suga, who leaned closer to Daichi to ask his whispered question.

“Are they...”

“Yes, they’re having a wedding.” Daichi’s confirmation made Suga’s hand rise to his lips, hiding his small laugh to listen to the blushing boy’s loud declaration.

“I promise that I’ll always share my orange juice with you, and I’ll kill any bug that comes in our house! Well, except spiders. My mommy will have to kill those.” Yanking the top hat back out of his line of vision, Zarek focused his eyes on the little girl standing in front of him. “And I promise I’ll love you for the rest of my life!”

“Me too, I-I promise.” was Nalia’s quiet answer, the nervous girl stepping closer to the boy in front of her. Zarek gave a solid nod before he planted his hands onto Nalia’s shoulders, shutting his eyes tightly after seeing Nalia do the same. Suga’s gasp was quick to escape when he realized the ‘newlyweds’ were leaning closer, though it was Daichi who spoke first.

“Hold it right there!” The two older men revealed their position to the children when they stood up, Nalia quick to hide behind the taller Zarek. The boy puffed his chest with a glare, Suga struggling to take him seriously when seeing the top hat slip back over his eyes. “Zarek, Nalia, how did you get into the costume closet?”

“It was left open!” Zarek answered instantly, his cheeks dark with embarrassment as he spoke again. “I-I snuck in wh-when Asahi-san wasn’t looking.”
“We don’t mind you playing with the costumes, Zarek. But why didn’t you ask one of us first?”
Suga’s quiet question made the girl peek her head over Zarek’s shoulder, eyes sad as her hand grasped onto the boy’s shirt.

“It was my idea. I’m sorry.”

“Ah, don’t apologize!” Instantly the angry boy was gone, the dark-haired child quick to pull Nalia to his side. “I wanted to do it, too. We both did!”

“Because you wanted to have a wedding?” Daichi asked, his voice lacking any anger as he watched the two children in front of him. Slowly crouching to meet their level, the daycare owner spoke softly. “What’s going on, buddy?”

“Nalia’s moving away, and she doesn’t want to.” Zarek’s answer made sense to Suga, who remembered speaking with Nalia’s parents the week before about the move. It wasn’t going to affect her in the daycare, though they were still unsure of her placement in school. For an adult, the idea didn’t sound terrible; she would still be in the area and the new neighborhood was a small drive from where she was currently living. But to the shy girl now staring down at the ground, it must have felt life-shattering.

“But why did you decide to get married?”

“My big sister was watching a movie where the woman was going to be sent far away, but the guy married her and she got to stay!” Zarek’s explanation put some of the final pieces of the puzzle together, the little boy now grasping the hand of Nalia and shaking his head. “I don’t want her to go away; I want her to stay with me.”

“I understand that you don’t want her to leave, but you’re far too young to get married. There are rules to these things.” Daichi’s explanation didn’t seem to affect Nalia, who grasped the bigger hand in hers tightly.

“That’s not what my mommy said. She said when you love someone, it doesn’t matter if they don’t like chocolate milk or that their favorite show isn’t Bratz. You just wanna be with them!” The shaky words from the young girl made Suga glance to his co-worker, who had fallen silent. Daichi’s eyes flickered toward the demigod, but before Suga could blink, they went back to the couple, slowly extending his hand.
“Nalia, will you come with me for a second?” Instantly the girl pressed closer to her friend, though her fear started to sway when Daichi gave her a soft smile. “I promise we’ll come right back to Zarek and Suga, okay?”

“...Okay.” Timidly Nalia let go of Zarek, giving the dark haired boy a glance over her shoulder as Daichi led them back toward the daycare. Suga was unsure of what Daichi had planned, but he knew he could trust the captain. He took a slow breath and turned his attention back to Zarek, who had now dropped his top hat onto the ground with a frown.

“It’s really scary to say goodbye to people we love, huh?” Why he asked the question, Suga wasn’t sure, but he was more surprised by the answer Zarek gave.

“Did Daichi ask you to marry him, too?” Maybe his shock was written on his face, for the young boy didn’t hesitate to continue talking. “Cause I heard Daichi-san tell Asahi-san that he’s really sad you’re leaving because he loves you. You two are really old, so you could get married, right? Then you wouldn’t have to leave!”

“Oh...” The pain the struck Suga’s heart momentarily blinded him, his breath impossible to catch at the information. His heart ached when thinking of just how simple the little boy made love sound. He was jealous, in a way, of Zarek’s naivety. Maybe when he was this age, he thought staying with Daichi would be simple. The captain had stolen his heart long before he could remember, so the thought must have crossed his mind a time or two. But then life got in the way, just as it would with Zarek and Nalia, and there was no way-

“Alright, you two.” Daichi’s soothing voice brought Suga back to the present time, looking up to see the side grin plastered on Daichi’s lips. Nalia’s face was cheerful as she scampered over to Zarek, a crinkle of plastic catching Suga’s ear. His eyes glanced over to the girl, who was eagerly placing a small package into Zarek’s hand.

“A ring pop?” It only took a second to recognize the candy treat, though the information did little to clarify the situation. Slowly, Suga watched as the two unwrapped their rings, Nalia’s blue contrasting the bright green of Zarek’s.

“You two still can’t get married, so Nalia and I made a compromise.” Daichi dropped down in front of the two children, placing his hands on their heads and giving a soft pat. “These are what we call ‘promise rings’. This is how they work; after you eat the candy, keep the rings. And when you’re older, if you two still love each other, then find each other and switch rings. If you both still have them, then get married.”
“We can do that?” Zarek’s voice was filled with awe when Daichi nodded, pulling back to reclaim his normal height.

“You can. But only if you promise not to try and get married like this. Deal?” The answer he got was instant as the two children nodded eagerly before jumping to hug him. Daichi’s laugh was loud as he swung his arms down to hug them back, Suga rising to his feet quietly. His eyes couldn’t pull away from the content look on Daichi’s face, the daycare worker releasing the children when hearing Asahi calling out for snacks. “Alright you two, go get your treat and get ready for nap time.”

“Come on Nalia.” Zarek held the younger girl’s hand as he ran toward the building, leaving the two older men in their wake. Daichi’s sigh was released when they were out of earshot, his hand rubbing his temple even as he glanced to Suga and smiled.

“Like I said, they’re growing up way too fast.”

“And yet you didn’t tell them that,” Suga said, watching Daichi drop his hand and shrug.

“I think they’re too young to know what love is, but I can’t say for sure they aren’t meant to be together.” A hand was shoved into Daichi’s pocket before he tossed something to Suga, who fumbled to catch the crinkling packet. Seeing the familiar candy jewelry, Suga turned his attention back to Daichi, whose eyes were staring up at the sky above them. “After all, I knew who my heart belonged to a long time ago.”

“Daichi…”

“Keep the ring for your trip back home.” There was no command in his voice, Daichi’s body showing how calm he was. A raising of his left hand showed his own finger was already adorned with a ring pop that Suga had missed until now. “And when you’re ready to switch rings, come back. I’ll be waiting.”

“You...can’t keep waiting for me.” Suga’s weak whisper made Daichi shrug, dropping his gaze to look down at Suga. Hoping to hide the tremble in his body, the demigod dropped his head, his fingers twitching around the packaging. “There’s no reason for me to keep this because I can’t be with you. We’re not kids-”

“I love you.” The confession was spoken with no hesitation, and Suga flinched as the words both
warmed and sickened him. “I love you, Koushi. Whether you live across the street or across the world, my heart knows what it wants. It’s you; always has been, always will be. So trust me when I say I don’t want to give up on this.”

There was a heartbeat of silence that seemed to echo in Suga’s ears, but the setter couldn’t figure out how to reply to Daichi’s confession. The tear in his heart and mind was dead even between denying his feelings and rushing into the daycare owner’s arms. He didn’t want to hurt his captain. He just wanted Daichi to be happy. The teeth that sunk into his lower lip hurt, but helped Suga keep from saying something he couldn’t take back. The crinkling of Daichi’s shoes hinted that the daycare owner was approaching the demigod, though they paused when Asahi called out to him.

“Daichi, you-oh.” The obvious embarrassment in Asahi’s voice meant he knew he was walking into a tense situation, the ace hastily quickening his voice. “So—Sorry for interrupting, it’s just—Urion’s father is on the phone for you and— I’m so sorry—”

“Stop freaking out; we’re coming in now.” Suga’s eyes slowly opened up to look at Daichi, whose back was facing him as the man walked toward the entrance. The setter could feel the guilty eyes of Asahi fall on him, yet he couldn’t turn his attention away from Daichi’s disappearing form. His hand shoved the ring pop into his jacket’s pocket as he walked, making a mental note to return it before he let out a weary sigh. His smile was easy to fake as he walked over to Asahi, slapping him on the back before he followed their captain’s lead. He didn’t have time to process his feelings right now.

And even if he did, Suga wasn’t sure he could make the right decision.

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For the first time since he had entered the spacious gymnasium, Hinata’s desire to play volleyball was non-existent. Amber eyes watched quietly from the corner of the gym as his teammates crowded around Suga. Tanka and Noya were horrible at containing their emotions, both teary-eyed and loud with their protests over Sugawara departing the team. While others, like Ennoshita and Asahi, were able to keep their feelings under control, it was obvious they were sad as well. Despite the tears, Suga continued to smile, laughing as he pulled Noya and Tanaka into far too tight hugs.

Hinata wasn’t sure if he could do the same when it came time for him to leave. He loved being here with his team. The feeling he got when playing with the others was unlike anything he had ever experienced before. They treated him like an equal. Even if he was short and younger than them, the others never held that against him. Asahi was always willing to work with Hinata despite having the stronger spike. It never felt like a competition here; they all wanted to see Hinata do well. Would they get this emotional when Hinata left, too? The ugly feelings that welled inside made Hinata pull his knees to his chest, his eyes sliding to Kageyama.
Neither had brought up the breakdown in the living room since it had happened. It wasn’t that they were fighting, though. The two still spoke during classes, Kageyama yelling at Hinata and Hinata insulting him in return. Throughout the practice, their ability to sync up for tosses had been perfect, too. When he looked over to his roommate, he didn’t see anger or disgust. Kageyama simply looked back with his normally constipated look before barking at him to get back and play defense. But even now, as Kageyama grimaced when Suga leaned over to ruffle his hair, Hinata’s heart hurt. It had been a steady pain throughout the past few days, the spiker doing his best to ignore it. He had accomplished so much since coming to earth. He knew his parents would be proud of him. There would be no question as to if he could do his job or not.

So then why didn’t he feel happy?

“They sure are rowdy tonight.” Yamaguchi’s voice was soft, but it made Hinata lift his head to watch the pinch server slide down the wall to sit next to him. “Mind if I sit here with you?”

“Aren’t you going to say goodbye with the others?” Hinata’s question made Yamaguchi smile, the brunet turning his attention back to the group on the other side of the gym.

“I want to let everyone else get their time to say goodbye first.” Selfless as always, Yamaguchi didn’t seem to mind waiting in order to give his teammates their turn first. The freckled man took a slow drink from his water bottle before wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, nudging Hinata’s side gently. “Plus, I wanted to check in with you.”

“I’m okay.” The words were said too fast to be taken seriously, Hinata frowning and pulling his knees closer to his chest. Yamaguchi was slow to stretch his feet out in front of him, letting his water bottle rest in the space between his thighs.

“Yeah, I said that when you asked me about Tsukki’s date, too. But you told me that you knew it was a lie.” Unable to think of a comeback for the intuitive man, Hinata shrugged, hoping his face didn’t give away too much of his pain. Yamaguchi allowed the silence to linger for a few seconds before he spoke. “Does this have anything to do with Daichi and Suga’s soulmate string?”

“Yo-You-”

“I wasn’t trying to spy on you and Kageyama’s conversation,” Yamaguchi answered instantly, his face bright pink as he nervously chewed the side of his cheek. “But after you shouted about it, I got curious. So I went to the library to do a little research, and I ended up in the mythology section.”
“You did?” The pinch server was quick to nod, and Hinata hesitated before he curled his toes in his shoes nervously. “What did it say?”

“I read that back in ancient times, there were legends of gods who controlled these strings that linked soulmates together. And it said that if you were paired together, then it meant you were fated to love them. Is that what you were talking about?”

“If those were real, then gods would have to be true, too. And nobody would want that,” Hinata mumbled, unable to meet his neighbor’s eyes. Yamaguchi hummed at the statement, but his voice sounded genuine as he answered.

“But wouldn’t it be beautiful in its own way?” The wording of the question threw Hinata off, peering over to see the small smile spread over Yamaguchi’s lips. “To have someone up there making sure we all ended up loved, one way or another. It’s really romantic.”

“Wouldn’t you be scared?” Hinata’s words rushed from his mouth before he could stop them, the little god forcing himself to straighten up to face Yamaguchi completely. “What if the gods put you with someone you weren’t happy with? Or what if he caused you pain? What if he was an air head and he made a mistake and then you got hurt because of it?”

“If I ended up with my soulmate in the end, then it’s okay.” Yamaguchi tangled his slender fingers in the edge of his shorts to distract himself from the blush that was staining his cheeks. “Even gods are allowed to make mistakes. Nobody’s perfect. And isn’t a love like that worth a little bit of pain?”

“I’m...not sure,” Hinata admitted, slowly sitting back on his legs while his shoulders slouched.

“Well, what about Kageyama?” The mention of his roommate had Hinata’s eyes widening, the pinch server tilting his head to the side to look up at Hinata. “If he was your soulmate, would you be upset?”

“I don’t love Kageyama.” Hinata’s answer made Yamaguchi pause, struggling with a thought before he stretched his arms over his head and smiled.

“Well, regardless, I think having one person in this world who is your other half is a really nice idea. Even if you have a quirk or two that you’re sure everyone hates, they won’t. They’ll probably make you chase your dreams or push to be a better person. And being your soulmate means they’ll love
you, regardless of your secrets and insecurities.”

“Regardless of…” Hinata’s mind tossed the statement over in his head as he turned his attention back to the other side of the gym, which had started to grow in noise. Tanaka and Noya were currently yanking Daichi across the gym floor, demanding he say goodbye to the suddenly quiet Suga. The image sent a bolt of realization through the god of love, who sprung up to his feet. “I know how to fix it. Thanks, Yamaguchi!”

“Good luck,” Yamaguchi’s words barely hit Hinata’s ear as he scurried across the gymnasium, skirting past the blond blocker to slide in front of Daichi and Suga. His hands were quick to grab both of their wrists, ignoring the stunned looks of the older men to drag them out of the protesting group.

“I’m borrowing them!” Hinata called out over his shoulder, refusing to slow his speed until he was out of the gymnasium. The air was as cold as it had been when coming to practice, the darkness of night cloaking the three now standing outside of the building.

“Hinata, what are you doing? It’s freezing out here!” Suga’s breath was visible as he quickly crossed his arms, trying to warm his bare skin by rubbing them with his hands. Daichi was quick to shrug off his jacket at the sight, ignoring the confused look of Suga in order to wrap the warm fabric around his shoulders.

“Living furnace, remember?” Daichi answered the silent question, waiting for Suga to sigh and slip his arms through the larger jacket before he turned his attention to Hinata. “Want to tell us what this is all about now?”

“Daichi deserves to know the truth.” The chatter of Hinata’s teeth didn’t pull away from the seriousness of the statement, his dark eyes now connecting with the hazel gaze of the fertility god.

“Shouyou-” Not willing to let Suga try and dismiss his words, Hinata took a deep breath and steeled his nerves.

“I know that your parents didn’t work out, and you’re scared that you’ll let him down. And maybe you will hurt him at times, but that’s okay! You’re not your mother; you’ve been putting your happiness aside for years for him. Daichi isn’t going to just abandon you, either. This is your soulmate. It’s okay to make mistakes with him. Even if you tell him the truth, he’ll always love you. That’s the best part about humans, right?”
“Am I missing something here?” The confusion from Daichi was expected, but Hinata knew that he wasn’t the person who needed to answer. He hoped his words would fully sink into the demigod now staring at him with confliction.

“You can be happy, Suga. This isn’t about responsibility or your duty to my parents; this is about you. Don’t you see? That’s why you two were on my list; this is your second chance to fix your mistake and make the right choice.”

Several times the older god had asked Hinata to step away from the situation. As far as Hinata knew, Suga had made his decision. But if he didn’t make this final stand for true love, did he deserve to call himself the god of love? Yamaguchi had said that even gods made mistakes, but that it could be forgiven. And Hinata knew that even if he was unsure about his feelings about completing his mission, he wanted to see Sugawara happy. Maybe he wouldn’t succeed. There was a chance that Suga would deny there was anything to Hinata’s claim and simply leave Daichi’s life again. But Kageyama had never lost hope in Hinata. Even when Hinata stumbled and made mistakes that hurt him, Kageyama stood by his side and forgave him. How could he face his roommate if he didn’t give it his all?

“Shouyou.” Hearing his name spoken softly made the god of love flinch, wondering if Suga would chastise him. Instead, a soft hand dropped onto his head, giving a warm ruffle of his hair before Suga smiled down at him. “Thank you.”

“Mhm,” Hinata mumbled weakly, knowing not to pull the attention back toward him when Suga turned to face Daichi.

“Suga?” Daichi’s gentle call of the demi god’s name made Suga close his eyes, taking a slow breath to try and stop his rapidly beating heart. The moment felt like an hour to the setter. Suga finally opened his eyes again, letting his guard fall to the wayside as he spoke.

“When we were six, you told me you liked swimming in the pond and I said I liked it too. But I hated it. The pond water felt slimy on my skin and I always was scared that a leech was going to attack me.”

“That’s...not that surprising,” Daichi admitted, though it was obvious that the turn of the conversation was unexpected.

“And when you cut your hair in the eighth grade? It looked really stupid but I told you it was a good look.” As soon as Suga finished the sentence he was moving, slowly walking toward the dark-haired man in front of him.
“Suga-”

“Remember the day before that Valentine’s day, when I said I was sick? I wasn’t; that girl that liked you told me she was going to ask you out and I didn’t want to be there.”

“Why are you telling me all of this now?” The question made Suga hesitate to speak, the setter quietly staring up at Daichi. He was close enough to reach out and touch the captain, but the fair-haired man kept his hands balled to his side while replying.

“Because you need to know that sometimes I don’t tell the truth. Like when I moved away, I said I was going to live in the mountains. I wasn’t, I was...going to work for Hinata’s parents.”

“Doing what, exactly?”

“I’m not sure if you’ll believe me.” Suga lifted his hands from his sides, facing his palms up in an offering for the other man to take. There should have been some hesitation or wariness from Daichi after the warning, yet the man’s warm grasp was within his own with no signs of caution.

"I trust you, Koushi.” Suga’s eyes took a final glance to Daichi, imprinting his face to memory. Even if the man was his soulmate, there was no guarantee that he would be willing to accept the final secret Suga held from him. But Hinata was speaking the truth; Daichi had the right to know everything, even if it tore their final strings apart completely.

“I’m not human...well, fully human. I’m what humans would call a demigod.” It took a blink of his eyes to activate his aura, allowing the glow of his eyes and hands to light the darkened sky around them. It was obvious that Daichi noticed the difference from the tightened grip on his hands, Suga resisting the urge to use his powers to help calm his soulmate. Daichi had the right to his own feelings in this moment, and no matter how he reacted to the reveal, Suga wanted to hear his genuine thoughts. It didn’t make keeping eye-contact easy, so Suga looked to the side and spoke through his own apprehension. “It’s no-not like I’m some super special god or something; Hinata’s the god of love, you know! I’m just the one who watches over pregnant women. Oh, and I can see things like the gender of the baby and when they’ll be delivered. I can also calm little children and anxious humans with my aura, but I only use that in small doses. And I...I’m totally rambling right now, so please just yell at me or freak out-”

“Hold on.” The hands which had been in his own slipped away, though they made a quick return when pressing over Suga’s cheeks. There was little force in Daichi’s touch as he turned Suga’s face
back toward his, the brown stare connecting with the glowing eyes in front of him. “This is...a lot more than pond water and bad haircuts.”

“I’m sorry,” Suga whispered, feeling his anxiety surge through his throat and into his eyes. The tears that lined his eyes were hard to hide with Daichi’s face so close, the taller man frowning while swiping his thumbs over Suga’s cheeks softly.

“Hey, I’m not mad. I’m...still sort of processing what you’re saying, and the fact that I’ve been playing volleyball with two gods for the past month-” Daichi cut himself off, giving a shake of his head and smoothing his thumb just under Suga’s eyes. “Is this why you’ve been pushing me away all this time? Why you keep saying you can’t stay?”

“Even as a demigod, I’ve got a lot of responsibility to Ukai and Takeda. They’ve done so much for me, I can’t stay even if I want to.”

“Do you get days off?”

“Huh?” Suga’s eyes lost their glow as his lack of concentration disarmed his aura, though the demigod didn’t notice. Instead, his focus was on Daichi, who quickly moved his hands away from Suga to scratch the back of his neck awkwardly.

“I’m totally lost about how this whole god thing works. I’m probably still in shock. But...I mean, even gods need to take breaks or something, right? You’ve been down on earth for the past month, so who’s taking care of your position right now?”

“Each god has lesser gods who work with them. It’s...sort of like your daycare.” It felt strange to compare the two “jobs”, yet Suga could see the clear comparisons as he started to explain. “You’re the one with your name on the daycare, but you have workers that help you take care of the children. You may not work every day, but if anything happens, you’re the one who makes decisions about what to do. If something goes wrong, then you’re responsible. It’s the same for Hinata, Oikawa, myself.”

“Wait, Oikawa is one, too?” For the first time since the admission, Daichi groaned, running his palm over his face. “Somehow, that freaks me out more than knowing I’m in love with a god.”

“You still...love me?” There was a hitch in Suga’s voice that he couldn’t hide as he stared at Daichi in surprise. He was sure that his heart was going to burst from his chest when Daichi quirked his
“Of course. Didn’t Hinata say we were soulmates? I’ve been chasing you since we were little kids; you being a god won’t stop me from being in love with you. Actually, knowing we’re connected by something other-worldly makes me feel better about pining after you for so long.” Daichi’s open admission was followed by a look of hesitation, the captain slow to drop his hands to his sides. “Unless this was just some really weird way of you trying to say you don’t love me.”

“No!” Suga didn’t stop to think about his actions when he jumped into Daichi’s chest, lean arms wrapping securely around the man’s neck. The shift of weight nearly dropped the two onto the cold ground, though the strong thighs of the wing spiker kept them steady. Suga’s eyes closed tightly while he pressed his forehead into Daichi’s shoulder, his words rushing out of his mouth. “That’s definitely not what I’m trying to say.”

“Then maybe you should make yourself a little clearer.” The low tone that warmed the setter’s ear held patience and kindness, Suga’s heart refusing to hide a second longer.

“You can take that stupid ring pop back now, Daichi Sawamura, because I love you.” And it felt like his world was finally right. Just feeling the words crossing across his lips made the pain and heartache worth it. Sturdy arms wrapped around his back, pulling him closer so Daichi could bury his face into Suga’s neck.

“Say it again.”

“I love you.”

“One more time.”

“Daichi-”

“I’m sorry, it’s just...Thank god.” Before Suga could smile, Daichi pulled back, his eyebrows pulled together as he questioned the demigod in his arms. “Wait, gods? Do prayers go to a specific god or— you know what? Forget it.”

The small giggle that escaped Suga’s lips was smothered by the kiss Daichi gave him. It lacked the fire and urgency their kiss on the hill had, but the tender care his soulmate used to show his affection
soothed Suga. Gone was the guilt and need to hide his feelings. Instead, the demigod leaned into Daichi’s chest, his arms resting on the broad shoulders of his captain while he deepened their kiss. Suga didn’t need Hinata’s eyes to tell him the soulmate string snugly wrapped around his wrist was healing itself. He could feel it in his bones, in his smile that couldn’t remove itself from his face even as Daichi kissed him again. He would have to speak with Ukai and Takeda about the situation and try to find a schedule that could fit all of their needs. But the future headache would be worth it if he got to kiss Daichi senseless for the rest of his life. This was the only place in the world he wanted to be.

“It’s finally okay.” Hinata’s eyes were glowing with happiness as he watched the final pair’s soulmate string entwine together, a familiar healthy glow revealing itself to the god. Each of the pairings had carried a weight of importance to it, all for different reasons. Whether it was the severity of the damage, the stress of fixing the string, or learning the beauty of love when it finally clicked together, the god was forever changed by the experience. And while he could feel his pride swelling in his chest at the work done, his body was quick to turn away from the scene. Because this mission was no longer a solo endeavor. For a second, he wondered if it ever was. His eyes darted to the building, knowing the only thing he wanted to do was tell Kageyama the success between Suga and Daichi.

“Hey.” Except he didn’t have to go far. The setter in question was leaning in the doorway of the gym, his eyes focused on the spiker at the bottom of the small stairway.

“Kageyama!” Hinata’s happy chirp was followed by his quick ascent up the steps, his hands waving around him as his grin nearly split his lips in joy. “Suga finally confessed!”

“I saw.” The clipped tone of the setter was waved off by the god, Hinata balancing on his toes when reaching the final step in front of his stiff setter.

“We did it, Kageyama! Man, I wasn’t sure we could for a second, but we’re the best duo ever. We actually finished our mission, isn’t that great!?” Small hands reached out to grab Kageyama’s, Hinata blinking once when noticing how limp the setter’s grasp was. Suddenly concerned, the spiker turned his face back up at Kageyama, squeezing his hands once when seeing an unreadable edge to the eyes in front of him. “Kageyama?”

“Damnit.” The swear was followed by Kageyama’s head dropping, the setter’s teeth crashing into Hinata’s with little warning. The smidge of pain buzzing through the spiker’s mouth was small and easy to cover with the hard kiss that was now overwhelming the smaller man’s senses. Kageyama’s fingers had sparked back to life, desperately grasping Hinata’s hands like a lifeline as he poured his energy into the heat pooling between their mouths. The gasp that sprouted through Hinata’s bruised lips was swallowed by the artist, Kageyama slipping his tongue along the inner seam of the god’s mouth. The motion set Hinata’s nerves of fire, instantly making him arch closer to his roommate. The desire to leave his mark in Kageyama’s mouth was instant, but it was impossible to accomplish when
the setter yanked himself away with a shuddering breath. Eyes Hinata hadn’t known he closed tightly tightened when a forehead pressed into his own, a heavy breath brushing past his sensitive lips. His mind was whirling, and he felt lightheaded as he tried to grasp onto a single thought.

“What just...huh?” But words were the enemy at the moment, and Hinata couldn’t get his head on straight. He was hyper-aware of when the cold air of night swept between his now empty hands, and Hinata fought the urge to search out the heat of Kageyama’s fingers again.

“That’s enough.” The force in his roommate’s voice turned his once hot blood to ice in seconds, Hinata rushing to open his eyes.

“What do you mean?” The dark blue stare that was so close to his own was filled with emotions, the mesh of anger and longing making a heavy ache settle at the bottom of Hinata’s stomach. It was obvious that the artist was hiding something, and his mouth continued to wobble around a word that the dark-haired human wasn’t able to produce. Hinata’s hand shot up from his side, needing to cradle the torn face of his setter to assure him that it was okay. Whatever he wanted to say was going to be okay because this was Kageyama, and everything, *everything*, about Kageyama was perfectly fine for Hinata. Even when Hinata wanted to punch him, it was because he was just being so Kageyama. It was a crazy thought that made little sense, but none of it really mattered to the god as he went to press his hand against the red cheek of his roommate.

But his palm felt none of the warmth of human skin, and it took a second for Hinata to realize why. The sudden glow that shone from his skin was a sight that he was only used to seeing when he was home, not holding his human form. He stared down at the gold shine before looking back to Kageyama, who seemed to understand the meaning of the shimmer without Hinata speaking. Hinata was being sent back home. The mission was finished; there was no reason for Hinata to stay on earth. He had naively thought he would have two more days on earth, but Ukai and Takeda hadn’t said what would happen if he finished early. Panic swept through him as he tried to think of how to stall, but he could already feel the familiar prickling he got when he had been sent to earth the first time.

“Of course you’re...I’m an idiot.” Hinata turned his frantic gaze back onto the setter in front of him, his stomach cramping at the sight. A glare of anger and betrayal shone in the dim glow of the streetlights, Kageyama’s fists trembling by his sides. “So you’re done with us. Finally. I was getting tired of you, anyways.”

“Y-You don’t mean that,” Hinata whispered, his heart shaking as Kageyama scoffed and turned away from the god.

“Of course I do. That’s all I’ve wanted since you got here. So just hurry up and go *home.*” The sharp tone that Kageyama used stunned Hinata, unsure how to respond. Before he could think of
something to say, the world in front of him brightened, the little god blocking the light with his palm to protect his eyes. The moment was quick, Hinata lowering his arm once sure the light wasn’t going to cause him harm. As soon as his vision returned, Hinata recognized the beautiful scenery around him. Instead of cold winds and ugly brick buildings, his vision was filled with bright meadows and his favorite lake. A place where just a month ago he had been desperate to return to. Hinata was finally home, where the god of love belonged.

A home without Kageyama.

Chapter End Notes

Pllooooot twist! Well, sort of. I mean, I doubt most were expecting that? So with all the strings fixed, Hinata is brought back home. How will Hinata acclimate back to life as a god? What will Kageyama tell the team? Can the two learn to live without each other? Or will someone decide to step in?

With ONE chapter left, all these loose ends will be tied up! Kudos/comments are always welcome, and I'll catch you guys in the final chapter with some upcoming news =)
Chapter Summary

When an unexpected informant reveals the truth, Hinata is faced with a decision he's not sure he can make.

Chapter Notes

Hello! I cannot believe we are finally at the end of this story! I just want to give a big thanks to everyone who gave me kudos and comments throughout this time, and know that you guys are the reason I was able to complete this! Again, I hope that you all enjoy, and make sure to read my announcement at the end of the story!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I would rather spend one lifetime with you, than face all the ages of this world alone.” - J.RR Tolkien.

Valentine’s day had always been Hinata’s favorite holiday. The love, the intimacy, and the changing of pink soulmate strings were always at its highest on this particular day. It made sense, as the silly holiday was aimed toward others appreciating their loved ones. From children to the elderly, most celebrated it in one way or another. It meant that the day was filled with work for the god of love and his helpers, barely giving him time to breathe. He loved it, knowing that all of his hard work would result in the happiness of the people of earth. Even if some did get their hearts wounded in the process, the small god was able to see the benefit of having such a positive holiday showering the earth with feel-good emotions for twenty-four hours.

And yet…

“He said we’ve got fourteen strings about ready to switch over.” The second assistant, Koji, filled in the answer for his friend, a soft sigh showing the fatigue of the dwindling holiday was getting to him.
“It’s going to be our final sweep on earth before we call it a day. You’ve got Suzuki and Mori’s teams coming in to assist you for the night. Do you need anything else before we go out?”

“Nope, you guys are all set to go.” Hinata gave a grin and a thumbs up, hoping his enthusiasm would overshadow the twisting pain gripping his heart.

“Okay then.” But Izumi didn’t move, keeping a soft gaze on the god of love. It took a moment for the blonde to speak, showing the concern his features already gave away. “Are you sure that you’re doing okay?”

“Why wouldn’t I be? I got my job back, didn’t I?” There were no repercussions for the trial, according to Ukai. He had earned his title, fair and square since he had completed his mission. He knew that Ukai wouldn’t hold a grudge, and had believed in him despite the hard task. He was a good leader, and wouldn’t set someone up for failure. Knowing that Ukai had faith in him should have made him happy. All he ever wanted was to be recognized as an equal as the other gods. Finally, he had proven his worth.

“You just seem quieter than usual.” Koji’s observation made Hinata’s answer tangle in his throat. He wanted to push away his friend’s concern, knowing that if he didn’t, they would press the conversation into a place that Hinata wasn’t sure he wanted to go. Yet even as the two men stared at him, the god of love remained silent.

“Shouyou is still adjusting to being back here.” The sweet voice of the fertility god caught the attention of the group, Suga giving a friendly wave. “Sometimes it takes a little bit to get back into the swing of things.”

“R-Right.” Hinata gave a sharp nod, moving to stand by the older god. Feeling a warm arm drop over his shoulders gave the short god the confidence to look back at his assistants and smile. “So don’t worry about me, and go share the love.”

“You got it, boss.” In seconds the two lesser gods dispersed, leaving Hinata and Suga alone. A slow sigh dropped from the short god’s lips, giving a grateful glance up to his friend.

“Thanks.”

“No problem, though I can understand why they’re worried about you.”
“What do you mean?” At Hinata’s question, Suga smiled, though it didn’t seem to reach his eyes. The look made Hinata uncomfortable, the younger god taking a step away from Suga in order to face him.

“I know that the transition back here must be hard for you.”

“It’s not. This is my home, after all. Why wouldn’t I want to be back here?” He hadn’t meant to sound annoyed with Suga’s observation, but the snap in his voice gave way to his true feelings. If Suga noticed, he didn’t voice it, instead moving closer to place his hands onto Hinata’s shoulders.

“You could come down and see them, you know.” Suga’s quiet words made the inside of Hinata’s throat itch, keeping him quiet as he tried to swallow the scratch away. The fertility god took the moment to continue, his voice gentle and understanding. “I know today would be hard for you, as you’re so busy and most of them already have plans for the night. But the team misses you, and since you left so unexpectedly-”

“I can’t do that,” was Hinata’s reply, forcing the words through a tightened throat before staring down at the ground. His fingers clenched into fists by his sides, and he noticed an increase in the way his eyelashes blinked. “The last time I let my personal feelings get in the way of my job, I screwed everything up. I want to prove that my position as the god of love is the most important thing to me.”

“Is it, though?” There was no judgment in the demi god’s voice, but it still hit Hinata’s chest hard enough to knock his breath away. The quietness of the meadow surrounding them gave no reprieve to the god, who tried to avoid looking back at his friend. If a month ago, someone had presented the question of Hinata’s commitment to his job, he would be furious. Nothing had mattered more than helping love bloom in the world under him. Even if Oikawa had snaked his way into making Hinata momentarily lose focus on that, he had down what his place in the world had been. But now, the question swam in his head with more sway than the god wanted to admit. Days had passed since he had come back, and he wanted to feel at ease with that. This was where he was supposed to be.

Right?

“Why aren’t you with Daichi? I thought Ukai gave you permission to go see him tonight?” Switching the subject felt safer to Hinata, brown eyes only rising back to Suga’s face when hearing him answer.

“I was on my way to see him before I saw you over here. Our reservations aren’t for another few hours.” Suga’s eyes no longer held the pain or confliction they had before when speaking about the
captain. Suga was truly happy with Daichi and seemed to have no qualm in sharing his responsibilities of the fertility god. Because of the lower status, Suga’s role did not require the constant attention that Hinata or Takeda’s position did. A spark of envy boiled in Hinata’s stomach for only a moment, though it was quickly submerged by guilt. It wasn’t Suga’s fault that he had been chosen to have the position or soulmate he did. Having any negative feelings for the kind demi-god was out of line.

“But you should still be taking advantage of the time you can spend together! Don’t let me keep you.” Hinata made sure to emphasize his smile to make up for his previous envy, Suga’s observant gaze seeming to pick up on something that the shorter god wasn’t aware of.

“I was planning on checking in with Kageyama while I was down there. Would you like me to say hello for you?”

“Kageyama…” The name felt strange falling from his lips after actively avoiding it. Whether it was sharing stories of his adventure on earth to other gods, or giving reports to his parents on the soulmates he mended, the dark-haired spiker’s name was always absent. Despite this, there was a tingle in his mouth after mumbling the name automatically. Fearful of the emotions that immediately started to surge in his chest, Hinata shook his head, desperate to escape the pain now nipping at the edges of his eyes. “N-No way! Why would I want to say anything to Bakayama? It’s not like I care about him or miss him or...or...”

“Shouyou...it’s okay.”

“I’m fine!” Hinata protested instantly, his body tensing when Suga calmly pulled him into a hug.

“It’s okay. He misses you too.” Warm words swept over his ear, followed by gentle fingers running through his hair. The soothing motion was paired with a painful memory of a particular roommate using the same method to relax him. Though Sugawara had done this same motion hundreds of times in comparison, it was the moment with Kageyama that stood out to him. Hinata’s eyes closing tightly at the onslaught of emotions bouncing in his stomach and chest, little arms trembling from the helplessness he felt. Even if he banished Kageyama’s name and face to the furthest part of his mind, one motion brought all of it barreling back through him like a hurricane.

And even with the pain and unspoken anger he felt, it was the gaping hole of want that truly sidelined him. He just wanted to see his roommate. To look at him, to hear how his voice tightened when he was annoyed or see the changes his eyes made when he was feeling anger or joy. Hinata wanted to watch Kageyama’s flawless jump serve and then laugh at how clumsy the man became when Noya rushed to compliment him. The moments of frustration and happiness that the two shared always begged to play through Hinata’s mind at random moments of the day, whether he was alone or in crowds of gods. If he didn’t keep his head filled with tasks for the day, questions about his
roommate and partner in crime would bubble up without permission. And each time they did, the burn in his heart made the unexplainable ache in his soul grow.

“It’s okay, Shouyou; let it all out.” The comforting words made Hinata’s lungs gasp for breath, the god realizing his cheeks were soaked with tears. Once limp hands were now clutched into Suga’s shirt as if clenching the fabric would eradicate the pain now coming out as cries from the god’s throat. A dam that Hinata hadn’t know he had built was now broken, and the god couldn’t stop the wails from coming between clench teeth. Empathetic rubs of Suga’s hands on his trembling back made Hinata feel safe, soft words of comfort being spoken to him. So he cried, letting his heartache and pain finally consume him. In this moment, the god saw the one downside to such a beautiful holiday he had always celebrated.

Unrequited love had no place to call home on Valentine’s Day.

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“Hinata didn’t tell you when he was coming back?” Yamaguchi’s concerned question made Kageyama shrug, the setter keeping his stare down on the salad his fork was currently poking at. The desire to eat the leafy meal had left him the second the god’s name came from his friend’s lips, but Kageyama tried not to make that obvious by taking a swig of his milk. The setter heard the pinch server give a displeased sigh, glancing up to see Yamaguchi lean on his arm. “And he didn’t say why he had to go back home?”

“No.” Blue eyes glanced toward the door of the college cafeteria, wondering if he could make a simple escape from the conversation by leaving. They had been there for some time, and the setter could make the excuse of having to go back to the apartment before class. It wasn’t that he hated spending time with Yamaguchi; the neighbor had become a good friend over the past month. He didn’t want the brunet to get the wrong idea.

“Considering he left in the middle of practice, I doubt that idiot had anything planned.” He would, however, have no problem walking out on Tsukishima. The blonde blocker gave a roll of his eyes when Yamaguchi poked an elbow into his side. “I’m just stating facts.”

“Suga-san said he left because it was an emergency. I’m just happy to know it wasn’t too serious since Suga-san was able to come back for valentine’s day.” Yamaguchi, as well as most of the members of the volleyball team, had not been present when Hinata had been pulled back to his homeland. Daichi, Sugawara, and Kageyama were left with little time to come up with an excuse for the sudden disappearance, but the fertility god was a quick thinker. When moving back into the gym, Suga took the lead, grabbing his and Hinata’s stuff while explaining a sudden text that the spiker had received from his parents. The fair-haired setter made sure to ‘keep in contact’ with the team about the situation when he visited, reporting that Hinata wouldn’t be back for a few days. He kept the
details vague about the emergency, saying that it wasn’t his place. He would always tell the team that it was Hinata’s choice to tell them when he came back.

That had been three days ago. Though the occasional question about his short roommate would still come up, most of the team soon became distracted by the lover’s holiday. Suga had told Kageyama to keep Hinata’s room as it was in the apartment, for the time being, hinting that packing up any of his things would cast suspicion from their observant neighbors. The plan was to inform the team that Hinata would have to take some time off from school after a week, making a claim that the emergency required him helping his family out back home. Though Kageyama felt uneasy with lying to his team about the situation, he knew there was nothing else he could do. After all, telling them that Hinata was the god of love and was sent to fix all of their relationships before going back home was completely out of the question. Even having Daichi know the information was strange, though the setter felt confident in his captain being able to keep a secret.

“The apartment complex has been kind of lonely with Hinata,” Yamaguchi mumbled quietly, swirling his spoon through his applesauce with a frown. Kageyama forced his lips into a straight line of indifference, his tongue swelling with guilt as he spoke.

“It’s better this way.”

“Do I sense a lover spat?” There was a coy glimmer in Tsukishima’s eyes as he arched an eyebrow at Kageyama, the setter reflexively clenching his fingers around his newly bent fork. “Or is the king simply trying to hide that he misses his peasant lover?”

“Tsukki,” Yamaguchi started, but both roommates jumped at the sound of Kageyama slamming his hand onto the table.

“I don’t love Hinata.” The growl that rolled across his lips warned of either man to challenge him, sending a heated glare toward the stunned blocker before pushing out of his chair. His half-eaten salad was dumped into the nearest trashcan as he stormed out of the cafeteria. The coldness that bit at his cheeks was barely felt as Kageyama stuffed his hands into his pockets, silently cursing when his bare arms were riddled with goosebumps. He had left the dining room so fast, he had forgotten his jacket on the back of the chair. Knowing he couldn’t go back and face Tsukishima’s smug smirk at getting under the setter’s skin, Kageyama pressed his arms closer to his side and sighed.

To say his mood as of late was dismal would be taking an optimistic view on the situation. His lack of concentration in school was apparent, though he had to admit that it had never been the best, to begin with. The sudden occurrences of zoning out in practice, however, were alarming. Though he wanted to be there, Kageyama couldn’t keep his head in the game. His setting was off, his spikes were easily blocked, and his serves were comparable to a middle schooler. He wanted to blame it on the lack of sleep he had been getting, or the stress of homework. But it was hard to point the finger at
either of those situations when both of them could be solved with Kageyama simply going back to his home at a reasonable time. The lack of time the man had spent in his own apartment over the past three days was abysmal. And yet Kageyama continued to offer to close up the gymnasium after practice or keep Yachi company at her job late into the night. Because when he was forced to go to his apartment, he felt...empty. And he knew on a subconscious level that the feeling wasn’t going away anytime soon.

“Kageyama!” The setter puffed out a cloud of white smoke before turning his head, catching sight of the freckled neighbor now jogging toward him. Tucked in his arms was a familiar jacket, the brunet holding the piece of clothing like a peace offering. “You left this in the cafeteria.”

“Uh, thanks.” Kageyama was grateful for the warmth that the coat gave to his body when wrapping it around him. The moment of comfort was washed away when he noticed that Yamaguchi hadn’t moved from his side, an ulterior motive obvious in his gaze.

“I also wanted to say sorry about Tsukki. He doesn’t mean to be insensitive about the situation, he just doesn’t know how to admit that he misses Hinata.” The explanation took Kageyama by surprise, Yamaguchi giving a soft smile to show he was speaking the truth about his stoic roommate. “Hinata isn’t just your roommate; he’s become a member of our volleyball family. I’d be more surprised if someone didn’t miss him.”

“Tsukishima doesn’t seem torn up about it,” Kageyama replied, scowling.

“He’s not the biggest on showing how he feels, but he’s not the only one.”

“What’s what supposed to mean?” He knew he sounded defensive at Yamaguchi’s implication, but the pinch server didn’t react to the curt reply. Instead, he glanced around them, his cheeks reddened by the coldness of the winter air.

“It’s okay to miss him. He’s your roommate, your best friend, your...well, you know.” Then the brown eyes were back on him, an openness making them darker than Kageyama was prepared for. “He’s your person.”

“I...I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Kageyama evaded, trying to keep his face from breaking from his displeased frown. Yamaguchi didn’t relent, however, taking a small step closer to his neighbor.
“I know that you two haven’t had time to really talk about your own relationship since you’ve been busy helping everyone else fix theirs. But that doesn’t mean that the feelings between the two of you aren’t real.” Something about the confidence in Yamaguchi’s statement made Kageyama wonder if the brunet knew more than he let on, but he didn’t have time to question his thought. “It’s written all over Hinata’s face when he looks at you.”

“I’ve got to go to class-” Unwilling to get swept up in the current of emotions now flowing in his veins, Kageyama tried to move from the situation, though stopped when Yamaguchi’s hand snatched his wrist.

“It’s love, Kageyama.” Yamaguchi’s words made Kageyama’s spine tense, his eyes widening despite his desire to remain unaffected. Slowly turning back to his neighbor, the setter’s throat dried up to keep him from forcing the conversation to end. Yamaguchi took his chance, nodding once to show the other man had heard him. “Hinata looks at you like you’re the best thing that’s ever happened to him. He truly is in love with you, even if he hasn’t been able to tell you yet.”

“That’s...not true,” Kageyama mumbled, his free hand quick to yank at the bottom of his jacket in discomfort. Though the temperature outside hadn’t changed, he suddenly felt too hot, wanting to bury his face into the closest snow pile.

“I wouldn’t lie to you.”

“He can’t love me.” Because he had no soulmate string. Because he was a human and Hinata was a god. Because Hinata was nice and caring, and could never truly love someone as dark and grumpy as him. Because Kageyama didn’t deserve him. Because-

“Would you reject him?” The question that Yamaguchi posed was unexpected, leaving little time for Kageyama to stop himself from answering.

“Never.” It wasn’t the words that took Kageyama by surprise, but the confidence that he had when saying it. But the firm answer only brightened Yamaguchi’s smile, releasing the grasp on Kageyama’s wrist to step away from him.

“Maybe you should think about why that is before Hinata comes back.” There was a moment of silence between them, but it was quickly broken up by the chiming of the clock tower. Glancing up, Yamaguchi gasped at the time, quick to move away from his neighbor with a wave. “I’ve got to go to work, but we’re having lasagna tonight if you want some dinner. Text me!”
“Okay.” The setter wasn’t sure if his friend heard his response from how quietly he had spoken, watching in silence as Yamaguchi ran out of sight. The bustle of the campus was background noise to the art student as he walked back to his apartment, his eyes staying on the way his feet scraped against the sidewalk. He tried to mentally go over schedule, yet even his mind lacked the ability to focus. And his heart…Kageyama couldn’t explain the happiness now filling his heart or the implications that came with it.

He’s not coming back, his mind reasoned, a fact that he knew to be true. No matter what anyone thought or felt, Hinata had made his choice. It was a decision that he had shoved in Hinata’s face on the night he left. He had known from day one that Hinata was never meant to stay with him. There was no reason to. Hinata would continue on with his life as a god spreading joy and love, and would probably never think twice about the setter he had been forced to room with. Hinata didn’t love him. And yet his heart couldn’t be silenced. Underneath the anger, the sadness, and the pain, there was one thought that flickered with hope.

But what if he did?

~**~

“I shouldn’t do this.” Even as Hinata’s words left his lips, the smaller god found himself slowly lowering to his knees beside the pond. These waters were the same that had bared witness to Hinata and Oikawa’s fight and had always been a favorite place for Hinata to go when he was free from his obligations for the night. He could spend hours with his fingers dipped into the water, watching the soulmates on earth. Seeing these couples sharing happiness always gave him purpose and reminded him of why he loved his job so much. They gave him the strength to continue when a day had been rough or when a couple hadn’t been able to make the connection he knew they so desperately needed. It was his favorite place to be, one that he had never thought could be replaced by a dingy gymnasium on earth.

Just a little peek wouldn’t hurt; it’s my responsibility to make sure that their strings are still strong. The argument sounded reasonable in Hinata’s mind, the little god giving one strong nod of commitment before pushing his hand into the water. The water accepted his touch with no resistance, the glow of his power quick to fill the pond. In seconds, Hinata’s eyes matched the glow, staring down at the first image that had appeared in front of him.

The small apartment that now showed up was a familiar sight to Hinata, as well as the pair on the beat up couch. Tanaka looked frustrated as he shouted at the television in front of him and Ennoshita, a game controller being clenched in his hands. His boyfriend, in contrast, had a sly smile on his lips, his own hands relaxed as they guided their joystick through whatever game they were playing. The ‘Player 2 wins’ flashed over the screen, Tanaka’s defeated face proving that he was the loser. Though Hinata couldn’t hear the words spoken by the film student, the mirth in his eyes proved it was a teasing statement. Tanaka didn’t hesitate to jump onto his boyfriend, the two engaging in a ‘fight’. The mood shifted when the bald man kissed his boyfriend, a hint of a smile still apparent on Ennoshita’s face as he easily forfeited the fight and kissed him back.
Kiyoko and Yachi weren’t at Yachi’s job, a place that the two normally had to meet up at because of the blonde’s hectic school and work schedule. Though Hinata did not recognize the location, he did know from his own experiences on earth what the two wooden structures in front of them were. Each had their own easel with a small canvas for them to use. Paints were shared between the two as they looked up to the instructor in front of them, who seemed to be teaching the group what to put next on their pictures. Despite the concentration from the others in the room, the two girls seemed in their own world, sharing glances and mutual blushes each time their eyes made contact. Their hands were rested on top of each other’s next to their art supplies, paint-splotched fingers messily entwined to enhance their connection.

At first glance, Asahi and Noya looked like a mess. One of their kitchens, Hinata assumed, was now decorated with several different foods and messes that the god of love couldn’t clearly decipher. Noya himself was splashed with colors of all different kinds, though the bright grin that was plastered on his face seemed to show that he didn’t mind. Asahi’s face lacked the pure joy of his boyfriend, though it did have a streak of orange sauce along his cheek. In front of them sat a complete meal, which seemed to be the main contributing factor of the disaster zone. Noya’s excitement was radiating off of him as he looked back at Asahi in joy, pointing to the meal they had made together with pride. And like magic, Asahi’s previous look of anxiety melted to contentment, a change that his co-cook picked up on. The stain on Asahi’s cheek was quickly covered by Noya’s palm as the younger man pulled his boyfriend down for a loving kiss.

In comparison, Tsukishima and Yamaguchi seemed serene in their moment. The library was a comfortable place for the two, both men engrossed in their own tasks. Tsukishima was organizing items on one of the shelves in the library, implying that it was his time at work. Yamaguchi was transfixed by the book in front of him, scattered papers and a glowing laptop showing his homework was his focus. The dimly lit area looked scarce of other students, though Hinata knew from experience the library was not a place people dwelled on Tuesday nights. Maybe the isolation was what made Tsukishima pause on his walk back to the front desk, touching the shoulder of his roommate with enough pressure to jostle him from his homework. The blonde leaned over to whisper something in Yamaguchi’s ear, and though the comment was short, it was enough to erupt the pinch server’s face with color. A smirk was evident on Tsukishima’s face as he walked away from the scene of his crime, Yamaguchi dropping his head to the table and covering his embarrassed smile with his arms.

If Hinata hadn’t known how fresh the relationship between Suga and Daichi was, he would have assumed that they were married. As the couple strolled through a park that looked familiar to Hinata, there were no nerves or signs of hesitation. Their arms were entwined in their stroll, their eyes only leaving the others to watch the path they were walking. Both wore smiles that weren’t bursting with excitement or nerves. They were warm and comfortable like they knew there was nowhere else in the world they needed to be but with each other. The pain, the hesitation and the obstacles that the two had to go through to get to this point no longer mattered. Even the simplicity of a walk through the park was enough for the two, so long as they were together. And just like the four couples before them, their pink soulmate strings were glowing with healthy, pure love. It was a sight that filled Hinata’s heart with warmth, and he slowly pulled his hand away from the water as he gave a silent sigh.
But his fingers pause on the edge of the pond, his stomach flipping when the idea of checking on one more human crossed his mind.

“I...can’t. I shouldn’t even be thinking about him,” he whispered, his fingers curling away from the water to dig into his palm.

“You really are hopeless, Chibi-kun.” Hinata’s eyes widened at the voice next to his ear, though he didn’t have the reflexes to pull away from the slender grasp now dragging his hand back into the warm water.

“Oikawa? What are you-”

“Iwa-chan’s in some stupid meeting and I’m bored.” The statement was said with a flippant tone that proved that it wasn’t the topic that Oikawa planned to stay on, his own eyes flashing with power as their hands illuminated the water again. “So let’s see what Tobio-kun is up to, shall we?”

“Wait!” Yet the god of lust didn’t bother to listen, and Hinata felt his desire to fight dissolve when an image appeared in front of him. The gymnasium was a sight for sore eyes, despite how empty it was. In fact, there was only one person who currently inhabited the building. Slender fingers grasped the colorful volleyball before tossing it into the air, black hair swaying with the man’s movements. Blue eyes that made Hinata’s blood heat were focused and sharp as they zeroed in on their target, a loud smack echoing in the gym from the powerful serve. It was only then that Hinata was able to see the floor littered with volleyballs, each seeming to come from the man now scowling at the net which had caught the brunt of his serve. Sweat was pooling off of Kageyama’s face and neck, while the darkness under the man’s eyes was concerning. He looked beyond tired, even as he went to grab another ball to serve. Despite how angry Kageyama looked, Hinata couldn’t keep his eyes off of him. It felt unreal seeing the setter again, and he could feel his palm itching by his side. The only problem was he wasn’t sure if it was to hit another spike or to hold Kageyama’s hand again.

“He does this every night, you know.” The bored way that Oikawa spit out the information made Hinata blink, hesitating to respond.

“Why do you know that?”

“Because I’ve got a bet going on with Iwa-chan, you see, about which one of you would realize it first. But honestly, it’s been four days and this is pathetic. You of all people should be ashamed since this is your department and all.” Oikawa’s words made Hinata’s eyes pull away from the water,
“Watching the god of lust given a dramatic sigh. “I mean I guess it makes sense since you can’t see it, but still.”

“See what?” The older god paused at the question, his face taking on a look of contemplation. After finishing whatever mental argument he was having, Oikawa gave a roll of his eyes and yanked their hands out of the water.

“Just so you know, Chibi-kun, I’m only doing it this because I want brownie points with Iwa-chan.” The god of lust didn’t elaborate much as he flipped Hinata’s wrist in his hand, letting his fingertip tap over the pulse once. “Tobio-kun has a soulmate string.”

“Wh...what?” Oikawa nodded once at Hinata’s breathless reply, his eyes staying trained on the pale wrist. Unable to accept the sudden declaration, Hinata shook his head, trying to pull away from Oikawa’s strong grip. “But th-that’s not possible! I never saw a string-”

“Remember when you told me that I had a soulmate string, but I couldn’t see it? And then you said that gods can’t see their own strings?” The implication was heavy in the brunet’s voice, and the world seemed to slow when Hinata caught on to what the god was hinting at. Humming when seeing the realization Hinata made, Oikawa slipped his grasp away from Hinata’s skin, shrugging once. “I can’t see yours at the moment since you’re up here. But I can still see his. When I first met Tobio-kun, he had a white string. I was tempted to tell you, but I figured it was something I could hold over your head later on, so I kept mum about it. Then the club fiasco happened. The next morning, not only was it pink, but it was connected to you. I probably didn’t even notice you had a soulmate string because I wasn’t looking for it. I gave you a hint and everything about it, and yet here we are.”

“This...isn’t possible.” Unable to accept the words coming from Oikawa’s mouth, Hinata pushed up to his feet, his body trembling with anger and confusion. He tried to glare at Oikawa, who gave a shrug of his shoulders while he pushed up to his feet.

“If you don’t believe me, go talk to Takeda. It’s not like he’ll lie to you.” Hinata didn’t hesitate to run away from the other god, barely hearing Oikawa’s “you’re welcome!” as he sprinted to where he knew Takeda would be. The thoughts and feelings filling Hinata were jumbled and overwhelming, the god of love continuing to glance at his wrist during his sprint. No matter how many times he tried to activate his powers, he couldn’t see a thread around his wrist. Was Oikawa lying? Was he just trying to kick Hinata when he was down? He wouldn’t put it past the man who had spent years tormenting him. It had to be a lie, because if it wasn’t...

“Takeda!” Hinata’s voice echoed in the large room as he entered the building, his eyes frantic as they searched for the god of fate. His chest heaved from the lack of air, but the pain in his lungs was thrown back to the back of his mind when the familiar brown eyes of his father appeared in front of him.
“Hinata? Are you okay?”

“I don’t know,” the younger god answered honestly, swallowing once before he held up the wrist that Oikawa had held previously. “I just spoke with Oikawa and he said-am I Kageyama’s soulmate?!”

“You...yes, Hinata.” The confirmation made any air left in Hinata’s lungs disappear, the god gasping as he dropped to his knees. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to laugh or cry, his emotions tearing him in different directions. Takeda was slow as he knelt in front of the young god, Hinata tensing as a warm hand cupped his cheek. “You are Kageyama’s true soulmate.”

“This isn’t possible. You told me Kageyama’s doesn’t have a soulmate.”

“He didn’t, at the time at least. I wasn’t lying to you. Do you want me to explain?” Instantly Hinata nodded, lifting his head to give his full attention to the soft-spoken god in front of him. “People are designated with soulmate strings before they are born, but their strings aren’t created up here; they’re created on earth. That’s because it’s expected that their soulmate is also living on earth as a human. But I believe that this is the reason that Kageyama didn’t have a soulmate thread when he was born. Daichi’s string appeared because Sugawara was born on earth, so even when Sugawara returned and his string disappeared here, Daichi’s still remained. Just like Sugawara, Oikawa and Iwaizumi’s string are unable to be seen here, so we were unaware that they were soulmates until you saw them on earth. Kageyama didn’t present with a string because the soul that he was destined to fall in love with hadn’t come to earth yet.”

“When did you realize this? Why didn’t anyone tell me?” There were a thousand questions that Hinata had flipping through his mind, but he could only get his mouth to form two. If he asked anymore, he was scared he would break down completely from the shock he was feeling.

“The same reason I couldn’t stop your fight with Oikawa or tell Sugawara about his soulmate string; there were a time and place for you to make this discovery. If I had disrupted any of the paths, it would have changed your fates and had the potential risk of breaking your soulmate string.” The small smile that lifted Takeda’s lips was humble, proving yet again that the god would never think to abuse his immense power for his own gain. Hinata felt all traces of anger slip away from him at the explanation, knowing that his father had been able to look at the greater picture. But the pain and sadness over the results remained intertwined with Hinata’s joy.

“But...Kageyama rejected our soulmate string.” Using his other hand to cover his wrist, Hinata winced at the implication.
“I must admit, in all the years that I’ve been the god of fate, I’ve never seen a human like your soulmate.” Takeda’s tone was light and humorous, which took the younger god by surprise. Seeming to notice the confusion, Takeda pulled Hinata closer to him, keeping a warm brown gaze linked with amber eyes. “Have you ever wondered why we let humans believe we are nothing but myths?”

“Not really,” Hinata admitted, realizing that it wasn’t an absurd question to have. What he didn’t understand was what this had to do with his current predicament.

“There’s a truth behind the saying ‘there is power in knowledge’. The second a human knows about the gods, they aren’t as susceptible to our powers. It’s not to say they are impervious; Kageyama was able to resist against Tooru but not completely ignore Tooru’s...skill set.” The blush that Hinata saw stretch over Takeda’s face showed his naturally shy demeanor, the god of fate pushing through his embarrassment to continue. “In this case, I had foreseen Kageyama confessing to you the night you were pulled back here in fear of losing you forever. But he didn’t do that; Kageyama fought his fate and sacrificed his own happiness...for yours.”

“For me?”

“Kageyama is still under the impression that he doesn’t have a soulmate string. No soulmate string means no true love bond. He thought that staying with him wouldn’t make you truly happy. In the end, he decided not to confess to you so you could continue being the god of love without feeling guilty over his unrequited love.”

“But it’s not unrequited!” Scrambling to grab Takeda’s hands, Hinata’s fingers trembled as he stared up at the taller god in earnest. “I love Kageyama. I’m in love with him!”

“Then you have a decision to make, Hinata.” Giving the hands a gentle squeeze, Takeda placed their hands into his lap and spoke quietly. “The god of love needs a focused mind and complete dedication. This isn’t a power that can be slacked on or split up like others. The power of love is crucial. If you truly want to be with Kageyama, you’ll have to step down from being the god of love.”

“I’ll...lose my godhood?” Hinata whispered quietly, Takeda giving a soft shake of his head.

“You’ll still be a god and our son. Nothing will ever change that. No matter what you choose, we will be proud of you and stand by your decision.” The slight pain that appeared in Takeda’s eyes made Hinata tense, pausing his breath as he waited for the other god to continue. “If you choose to
stay Kageyama’s soulmate, you’ll have to transition out of the position as the god of love. You may have some aftereffects, such as seeing soulmate strings. But you won’t have any power to change them or influence their romance if they start to break, other than your natural charm.”

“And if I don’t?”

“If you choose to stay the god of love, the soulmate string between you and Kageyama has the high chance to become toxic. In order to stop that, I’d have to perform a soulbreak on Kageyama. He truly will not have a soulmate string.”

“He’ll...he’ll feel nothing for me?” Hinata whispered, the words feeling like glass crossing his lips. Takeda gave a slow nod, and the god of love felt his stomach clench. “I...what am I supposed to do?”

“Unfortunately, only you know that answer.” Takeda’s words made Hinata close his eyes, fearing they would shed the tears he felt filling them.

“I’m the god of love. I fought so hard to prove that I’m the right person for the job. But I love him.” The words choked Hinata up, his hand reaching up to clutch over where his heart thudded in his chest. “I’m in love with Kageyama. What am I supposed to do?”

“Hinata.” Instantly the smaller god was pulled into the warm hug of Takeda, who placed a gentle kiss onto his temple. “I don’t want to sway you one way or the other, but I do have one thing that I feel you need to know before you make your decision. Do you want me to say it?”

“Okay,” the god answered quietly, taking a slow breath to try and calm himself. Being over-anxious could make him jump to the wrong answer, and he wanted to be as stable as he could be when Takeda spoke. Focus. He needed focus, the same thing that Kageyama-his soulmate-had helped him find in order to complete his mission. The older god seemed to understand this and waited silently for Hinata. It took some time for the emotions to subside, and Hinata nodded once to show his calmer state. “Okay.”

“If I do the soulbreak, then he won’t feel anything for you. Which means...it will be like he never fell in love with you.”

And instantly, the god of love knew his answer.
“Fantastic.”

Kageyama stared down at the test in his hand, which was displaying the failing grade in the right-hand corner of the paper. It had been a horrible score, and the teacher had made Kageyama set up an appointment Wednesday afternoon between work and practice to speak with him about it. Though he was never the scholar of his friends, art was something that came naturally to him. Art history was something he found interest in, and this had been the first time that he had failed in the class. The conversation was embarrassing for the student, as he had no reason to give to his professor for why he had failed. The man offered a makeup exam the next week, saying Kageyama could average the two scores to keep his grade from slipping too far. It was a gracious offer than the setter didn’t hesitate to take.

Sighing quietly, Kageyama stuffed the test into his backpack before slinging it over his shoulder, shoving his hand into his pocket to fetch his phone. His stomach was growling, reminding him that he hadn’t eaten since that morning. The meeting had given him little time to think of making dinner, and he wasn’t in the mood for cafeteria food. Maybe Yamaguchi had saved him some of their dinners. Ever since Hinata had left, the pinch server had taken it upon himself to make sure the setter was eating. It was a weird situation that Kageyama felt too uncomfortable to talk about, so he simply went with the flow. Yamaguchi was a good cook, and it beat the fast food and soggy cereal that the art student had been forcing himself to eat while avoiding his apartment.

But when he turned his phone’s screen on, his eye twitched. His other neighbor’s name was displayed on his screen, with the words ‘New Message’ now taunting him. Had he found out about his meeting with his teacher? The last thing he needed was a text taunting him about his lack of a brain or need for ‘peasant tutoring’. Letting out another weary sigh, Kageyama swiped open the message, his eyes staring in surprise at the caption that lingered just under an eerily familiar picture.

I want a reward for finding him. -Tsukishima Kei

Kageyama nearly dropped his phone from how quickly he sprinted to his apartment. He ignored the strange looks that people through the campus gave him as he ran, the cold wind and snowy weather forgotten as he sprinted across his parking lot. His feet skipped a few steps in his hallway as he moved, his shoulder screeching in pain when he rounded a corner too quickly and smacked into it. The setter ignored it to stumbled through his hallway, barely giving notice to the closing of his neighbor’s door before skidding to a stop in front of his own. His hand was turning the knob the same time his other hand was pushing it open, nearly slamming the door into the wall as he burst into his living room.

“Gah!” A squeaky voice from the couch made Kageyama’s eyes snap toward it, his spine tensing
when catching the wide-eyed gaze of amber he never expected to see again. The orange hair looked more vibrant than he remembered, and the couch looked ready to swallow the smaller man. And yet even when Kageyama blinked twice, the image on his sofa stayed.

“Hi-Hinata?!”

“Uh...I’m back.” A moment of silence broke through their interaction before Hinata’s eyes flickered to the laundry station. “So Tsukishima said to switch his laundry over before we go to practice as his reward or something?”

“What the hell are you doing here?” There was a nervous edge to the smile that his roommate gave him, and Kageyama instantly narrowed his eyes as he shut the door behind him and walked toward the couch. “Don’t tell me you did something stupid again.”

“It’s kind of more complicated than that,” Hinata protested quickly, shooting up to his feet when the setter stopped next to him. Unable to understand exactly where his emotions were planning to settle, Kageyama growled down at the smaller man and glared.

“How can you be this stupid? Complicated, you say? You’ve only been gone five days! What the hell could you have done to get sent back down here?!”

“Stop yelling at me!” Kageyama had planned to do the exact opposite of that, but the small hands that grabbed his shirt and yanked him forward caught him off guard. His mouth had already parted when lips were pressed against his own, the pressure of Hinata’s kiss taking him by surprise. Hands that had once pulled him closer were now shoving him back, the two tumbling onto the couch beside them. Their lips didn’t separate as Hinata crawled onto the setter’s lap, continuing to press deep kisses against his mouth. There was a moment of hesitation from Kageyama before he easily gave into the feeling, his hands grabbing Hinata’s waist while he poured his emotional upheaval into their connection. It was a kiss fueled by the culmination of their relationship, from unlikely partners to inseparable. Their lips were bruised from the kisses shared, Hinata tilting Kageyama’s head with his hands to get a better angle at his lips. Kageyama took the opportunity to finally pull away from Hinata, forcing his eyes open to focus the spiker on more than trying to meld their mouths together.

“We can’t do this.” Because with each kiss that the two shared, Kageyama knew how much harder it would be to let go of the man sitting in his lap. Letting out a slow breath before he spoke again, Kageyama tried to keep his scowl strong. “You’ve got to go back home.”

“I am home.” There was no hesitation in Hinata’s voice as he stared down at Kageyama, who gave a roll of his eyes to try and hide any sense of hope his heart was trying to ignite within him.
“This isn’t your home, idiot. You’re the god of love, not some student-”

“I stepped down.” The interruption of the setter’s argument was quiet but loud enough to pump the breaks for the dark-haired man. Stunned, he stared up at the man above him, who gave a weak shrug and glanced to the window. “I mean, I’m technically still the god of love for the moment. I’ve got to train my replacement still, but he’s a fast learner so it won’t take long.”

“What are you doing?” This time the growl was real, Kageyama quickly shoving his hands under Hinata’s arms to lift him off his lap. The loud protest from the smaller man was loud, but Kageyama ignored it as he started to shove him toward the door. “You need to go back and talk to whoever it is you need to talk to and tell them you made a mistake.”

“Wait a minute!” But even as Hinata tried to squirm away from his grasp, Kageyama continued to talk.

“All this time, you’ve been yapping about love and how important it is to you, and you just give the position away? Why did we do all of that work? What the hell would make you think this was a good idea?”

“Because of you, Bakayama!” The god slammed his feet hard into the ground, finally stopping their forward movement. Kageyama stepped back as his roommate spun around, the setter quick to cross his arms to guard himself.

“I told you already, I don’t-”

“Will you just listen to me?” Hinata’s eyes shifted from irritation to something that pinched at Kageyama’s heart, shoving any vocal signs of protest back down his throat. Seeming to take the silence as an agreement, Hinata took a slow breath before he spoke. “There’s no easy way to say this, so...gah, this all sounded so cool in my head before I got here! But now you’re here and my heart’s doing the ‘bwah’ thing and I don’t know if it’s cause we’re soulmates or just because I’m still adjusting from coming back into this body-”

“Soulmates?” Kageyama broke his attempt at staying silent at the word, his eyes refusing to stop blinking as the bomb of information that came spewing out of the god’s mouth. “You just said...but you told me I don’t have a soulmate.”
“I didn’t know you had a soulmate!” Hinata defended, his hands waving around him showing he was just as overwhelmed as Kageyama. “Okay, well nobody really knew you were my soulmate until after I already came down here. But we are, and so I had to make a choice.”

“Which was?”

“Either I stayed the god of love or I stayed your soulmate. If I chose you, then I had to step down from my position. If I stayed the god of love, they would have had to sever our soulmate bond and I…” Hinata’s cheeks burst with color as he stared down at his fingers, which were jammed together in front of him from his sudden nerves. Kageyama’s chaotic mind started to slow as he watched the spiker squirm in front of him, starting to piece the puzzle together as the silence lingered. When Hinata finally continued, his voice had lowered to a quiet murmur. “I didn’t want that.”

“You chose one soulmate thread over the job you loved and dedicated your whole life to?” Instantly Hinata shook his head, the god stepping forwards to grab Kageyama’s hands. It was only when the god linked their fingers together did the setter notice his own trembling, though he wasn’t sure why.

“That’s not it, idiot.” Amber eyes lifted to stare up at Kageyama, the art student unprepared for the bright smile Hinata gave him. “Kageyama… I love you.”

“Wh-what? Why would you—what the hell…” Unable to shield his face from Hinata’s admission, Kageyama felt his cheeks light up with color, his scowl automatically battling the smile that wanted to burst across his lips. Hinata’s face perked up at the reaction, his hands squeezing onto his while he stepped closer to Kageyama.

“All this time, I’d been trying to convince myself that I couldn’t be with you. And when you told me you didn’t want me around, I was sure that meant that you really didn’t feel the same way I did. Maybe my heart didn’t believe it, but my mind wouldn’t change. I thought the best thing was to leave you alone and let you move on with your life without me. But when Takeda told me that breaking our soulmate bond meant that you’d fall out of love with me, I realized it meant you did feel the same things I did. I was so happy! And that’s why I’m not going to change my mind about stepping down.”

“You…” The words of protest didn’t make it far, as Kageyama stared down at the man in front of him.

“You do love me, right?” The pause of silence seemed to rattle Hinata, who suddenly lost his smile for a look of slight panic. “Takeda’s the god of fate and all, but he said you’re a weird human and sometimes you fight against stuff because you’re stubborn and I know you think soulmates are
“They are.” The words were followed by the dipping of Kageyama’s head, kissing the fumbling words out of Hinata’s mouth. There was a squeak of protest muffled into his mouth, but the setter ignored it to deepen the kiss between the two. Their fingers tightened against each other as they prolonged the connection, Hinata’s body relaxing from its previous tense state. Kageyama parted his lips against the god’s, his tongue sweeping across a familiar lower lip and pushing forward when Hinata gave him no resistance. Their bodies pressed closer than before, and the spiker gave a happy hum at the affection that the setter gave to his mouth. Kageyama took his time pulling away from the sweetness of Hinata’s mouth, his breath brushing over Hinata’s lips as he spoke. “They make you fall in love with idiots.”

“Hey!” The cry of outrage was quick to disappear when Hinata thought over the comment, Kageyama feeling the shorter man pull back to stare up at him. “Wait, you just admitted that you love me.”

“We’re going to be late for practice.”

“You really love me.” Kageyama quickly pulled away from Hinata, ignoring the victorious grin now splashed on Hinata’s face to move to his room.

“I’ll leave without you.”

“You’re really not going to say it properly?!” He paused at the entrance, his hand resting on the door frame as he stared at the oak in front of him.

“Hey.” Sending a glance over his shoulder, Kageyama watched as the pouting Hinata looked back at him.

“What now?”

“Welcome home.”

“I’m...I’m home,” Hinata whispered, and Kageyama felt something in his soul fill when seeing amber eyes filled with happiness. As the joy poured over Hinata’s face in tears, Kageyama realized what it was that had shifted inside him.
For the first time, Kageyama knew what it meant to be truly be loved.

~*BONUS*~

“-and that’s basically why Takeda said we had to do that mission in a nutshell.”

“So...because you’re a screw-up, you completed your fate?” Hinata let out a huff into the night air, rolling his eyes as he jabbed his elbow into Kageyama’s arm.

“Well, if you weren’t such an annoying jerk, maybe it wouldn’t take the god of love to be your soulmate.” The two sent equal glares at each other as they walked down a familiar path toward the gym, Hinata’s smile growing when seeing the gymnasium in the distance. Despite only being away for a few days, he knew that he was looking forward to seeing all his friends and getting back on the court. The downside of having a mountain of homework to catch up on (which Kageyama had pointed to right before they left the apartment) was small in comparison to how happy Hinata was to be back on the campus.

“You know, you never told me who is taking over your spot as the god of love.”

“Oh, I thought it’d be obvious.” When his roommate gave him an arched eyebrow, Hinata grinned up at him before answering. “Iwaizumi.”

“W-what?!” The shock from Kageyama made Hinata laugh, nodding despite the horrified look on his setter’s face. “How is that obvious?”

“Okay, maybe not obvious to a human. But for me, it’s a no-brainer! Takeda knew that I was going to choose to be with you, so he told Ukai to interview someone for the job. I guess Iwaizumi was already working with this god named Kyoutani to take over the next new god opportunity. Except Kyoutani’s not...well, he’s a little intimidating, so Ukai thought it’d make more sense to have Iwaizumi take over my position and Kyoutani can be the guardian god. Plus, having Iwaizumi would mend some tension between the god of lust and the love department.”

“Somehow, I feel like Oikawa isn’t going to be as happy about this as you,” Kageyama muttered, though Hinata shrugged.
“If Oikawa gets too annoying, Iwaizumi will probably just beat him up. Another reason it works out!” Hinata hummed in satisfaction before hopping up the stairs of the building. He felt his feet stop at the edge of the doorway, amber eyes staring into the gymnasium. He could feel the natural pull of the soulmate strings now decorating the gym, and for a moment he wondered if he would miss the feeling when he truly stepped down from his position. Takeda wasn’t sure what parts of Hinata’s powers would stay or go, as transfers affected each god differently. Maybe he wouldn’t even be able to see the strings by the end of it.

“You can still change your mind.” Hinata peeked up at Kageyama, his hand being warmed by the palm that was now pressed against his. The setter kept his eyes focused on the team across the floor from them, but Hinata knew that the conversation was directed at him. “I’ve already thought of what to say to them if you wanted to go back to being the god of love.”

“That’s the trouble with soulmates.” Hinata’s statement did catch the interest of his soulmate, Hinata’s smile refusing to dim as he squeezed the hand in his own. “We’re so busy trying to make the other person happy, we don’t realize we’re the ones who make our soulmates the happiest. Am I right?”

“.Dumbass.” But the deep blush that covered Kageyama’s face proved that Hinata’s point was made. Even if he would miss his job, and the moments of happiness that it gave him, nothing would compare to seeing the man standing next to him happy.

“Shouyou!” The call of his name brought both of their attention to the team, Noya and Tanaka already sprinting over to them. The look of panic on Asahi’s face looked funny compared to the angry shout from Daichi at the rambunctious duo, Suga placing a soothing hand onto both male’s shoulders while he smiled. Yamaguchi laughed at the antics while Tsukishima rolled his eyes. Kiyoko gave the god a gentle wave before turning her attention back to the phone on her lap, probably informing Yachi of his return. The moment felt surreal, and Hinata’s mind took a snapshot of the scene, feeling his heart warm at the sight.

He was finally home, and nothing would ever pull him away again.

Chapter End Notes

And all is well in the world =) Well, until Oikawa finds out his lover is going to be the new god of love. Funny how everything works out like that. SO, what did you think? Which parts were your favorite? Whose story pulled at your heart the most? Let me know in the comments!

ALSO!!! I just wanted to let you guys know that while I'll still be working on my other story 'The Wedding' every other week, I'm happy to announce a NEW KageHina centric
story (though other couples will be involved like this one) is in the works! I'm still in the outlining and editing stage of the story line, so it may not come out until January, but keep an eye out for it! ^^ Hope you'll read that, too!

End Notes

And that's the end of the first chapter! What did you think of it? Any thoughts of who the five couples are going to be? How does Kageyama fit into this? And will Hinata be able to complete his mission before Valentine's day comes around? Let me know what you thought in the comments! Until next time. =D

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!