**Love Is Not Possession**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Explicit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Choose Not To Use Archive Warnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>F/M, M/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship:</td>
<td>Jeon Jungkook/Kim Seokjin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Kim Seokjin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Pack Dynamics, Pack Family, Pack Bonding, Smut, Fluff, jinkook - Freeform, Sope, vmin - Freeform, Kim Bros., some violence, alphalnamjoon, alphahoseok, omegalyoongi, Heats, ruts, hunts, Werewolves, Shapeshifting, slowburn, Kinky Shit, I'll tag with the kinks and warn at the start of chapter properly, You know me. I write the fanfics I wanna read., Alpha Kim Seokjin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Series:**

Part 2 of [Love Is Not Possession: The Collection](http://archiveofourown.org/works/10577796)

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**Love Is Not Possession**

*by kuragecharms*

**Summary**

Jungkook was never one to wax much philosophy- he left that up to his hyungs, who had taken him in with welcoming arms into their pack and showered him with gentle affection. It was comfortable and safe, knowing he was protected under the careful eye of their lead Alpha, Namjoon, who led them with a deep understanding and consideration that
transcended some of the more traditional pack rules.

But when Namjoon's brothers (soft-cheeked Seokjin and dark-eyed Taehyung) move in, things change. For one thing, Seokjin doesn't seem to like him very much, watching him with an unreadable expression and avoiding him. But there's something about the Alpha's scent that has Jungkook inexplicably drawn in.
“Love is not possession. It is not ‘being completed.’ It is two people walking along the path of life and saying, “I want to hold your hand along the way.”

133 DAYS

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“Fuck,” Hoseok groaned, shifting under the sheets as the banging continued against the wall. “Does it ever stop?”

“Not for another three to seven days,” Yoongi chuckled from across the room, pulling his pants on, the block-shaped camouflage design of the stiff material bunching up around his thighs. There was a groan of the mattress as Yoongi sat down on the foot of the bed to put his socks on. Hoseok opened up one eye, watching the way Yoongi’s pale shoulders curved and molded under the white tank top. It was barely light outside, that pale sort of pink-blue morning glow peeking in between the slits left uncovered by the crappy sheet they’d tacked up over the window. The house was quiet, except for a distinctive thudding noise against the wall from Namjoon’s room.

“But it’s fucking 5am, don’t they sleep?” With a whine Hoseok rolled over onto his side, curling his shins up against Yoongi’s back in a silent gesture for him to stay a little longer, drawn to the warmth emanating off the elder.

“You know they’ve been all antsy all summer, and Kiara’s in her heat. It’ll cool down after a while and they’ll be more bearable.” Yoongi’s morning voice was still crackly, and Hoseok smiled a little at the sound, awake enough now to draw his ankles around the older boy’s waist, tucking his toes into the pockets and making Yoongi chuckle.

“You’re gonna make me late, dumbass,” Yoongi teased, tickling at the soles of his feet and making Hoseok squeak and draw away with a pout.

“I have ways of making you stay.” It wasn’t voiced like a threat, but Yoongi glanced over in question anyways, arching an eyebrow.
“Not today.” Yoongi rolled his eyes, leaning over to brush Hoseok’s bangs back and kiss his forehead.

“Do you have stuff after PT?”

“Yeah, there’s just some lecture thing all cadets have to do. Most of us didn’t fill out our paperwork properly and people got pissed. Then I just have Com and I’m done for the day. I should be back by around 10:40.”

“Okay. Maybe I’ll wait here for you to get back.” Hoseok snuggled more deeply into his pillow, smirking. Yoongi patted his shoulder and stood up to leave. “Have fun~” Hoseok half-sang, half-moaned into his pillowcase, and all he got was a chuckle in response. The distant sound of the door shutting echoed up the stairs, and the banging from the adjoining wall finally quieted down, and the house suddenly felt empty and somber.

Hoseok tried to get back to sleep - he really wanted to. He just couldn’t, now that Yoongi’s soft form was no longer just behind him. The sheets felt itchy and uncomfortable, and his brain was on hyperdrive. With a sigh he leaned over and lifted his phone cord up until he could grasp a hold of his phone and see that it was only 6:30. He decided to get up and start some coffee anyways. Maybe he could get started on some homework, like a good student? Probably not. He’d never been much of a good student, that was Namjoon’s job.

When Hoseok turned the water on to fill up the coffee pot, he heard a rustling behind him and a small whimper. Craning his head to look over his shoulder, he saw a dark form moving around underneath the dining room table. A wet muzzle poked its way out from between the rungs of the chairs, and the scrawny black wolf looked up at him curiously through bright golden eyes. A grey line streaked in the fur on his left cheek, like a scar. Hoseok smiled softly, reaching for the coffee filters.

“Morning, Jungkook, did I wake you?” he asked. “I’m sorry, Yoongi woke me up too early for PT.”

Jungkook said nothing, but quietly padded over to bump his nose up against the back of Hoseok’s knees affectionately. Hoseok turned away, opening up the red container and letting the biting scent of coffee grounds fill his nostrils.

“I hope you’re ready for our new roommates today,” Hoseok said with a smile, “We’ll finally be getting the rest of the Kim brothers under the same roof again. They’ll probably be glad to be out of the countryside.” He glanced back over to see Jungkook curled up at his feet, ears down in a sign of distress. “Oh, come on, don’t be so worried. Of course they’ll like you. You’re our pup, after all.”
Jungkook’s ear twirled a little, as if asking a silent question. “Yes, really,” Hoseok continued with a
laugh, leaning down to rub at the boy’s head. He cocked his lip to one side, stage-whispering, “And
if they don’t like you, you know Namjoon will beat it into them anyways.”

Jungkook did not seem reassured at that, so Hoseok gave him a warm smile. “Don’t worry. I’ve met
them a couple times and they’re both really nice. And Taehyung is closer to your age, so that should
make you happy, right? Who knows? Just do your best.”

With a little droop to his tail, Jungkook slid back underneath the table, curling up into the nest of
blankets he had dragged underneath it last night and lying back down. Hoseok crossed his arms for a
moment, listening to the coffee pot hiss and strain away, then sat down at the table and pulled out his
phone. Several minutes of comfortable silence passed between them, and eventually Hoseok’s
socked feet found their way to the soft fuzziness that was Jungkook’s back, and he absentmindedly
rubbed against the boy in reassurance. By the time the coffee was done, the back he was resting his
feet up against was covered in a bulky T-shirt, and Jungkook was fully shifted into human form. He
stayed under the table a little longer, however, enjoying the quiet of the morning. When he poked his
head out, Hoseok couldn’t help but smile at the sleep-ridden puffiness to the boy’s young face.

“Do you want some toast?” Jungkook asked, crawling out and pulling his jeans on.

“Sure, if you’re making some.” Hoseok wrapped his fingertips around the harsh heat from his coffee
cup. A door opened and shut upstairs, followed soon by Namjoon, wearing pajama pants, an
expression of utter exhaustion and nothing else. His blond hair stood up on end and his eyes were
practically sealed shut. He sunk noisily into the seat across from Hoseok, looking half-dead.

“Coffee?” he croaked. Jungkook reached up and grabbed a cup, filling it and handing it to him.

“Angel,” Namjoon called him with a grunt, drinking it black and scowling at the bitterness.

“Kiara having a rough time of it, huh?” Hoseok asked lightly, feeling the coffee warming him up
from the inside out and feeling less tired about the bit of sleep he had lost because of Yoongi, now
that he had seen the misery written in Namjoon’s eyes.

“Nothing helps. I haven’t slept more than five minutes at a time since night before last,” he sighed.
“But she has it worse. I don’t think she’s slept at all.”

“More like the night before night before last,” Hoseok corrected, sipping at his coffee. Namjoon was
draining the last of his first cup, and Jungkook wordlessly filled it again, setting the milk and sugar on the table as a hint to the lead Alpha, now that he had survived his first cup. Namjoon dumped a - in Hoseok’s opinion - disgusting amount of sugar in, arching an eyebrow at Hoseok.

“What?”

“It’s Tuesday, Namjoon,” Hoseok informed him. “You guys have been in heat for three days now. Saturday, Sunday and Monday.”

“Oh fuck, are you serious?!” Namjoon groaned, rubbing at his face with his hands in a way that looked painful. “Doesn’t that mean--?”

“Yeah, your brothers will be here in a couple of hours. You’d better get some sleep while you can. You look like shit.”

“But I have a paper for my Gender & Diversities class that’s due by midnight tonight,” Namjoon groaned. “It’s worth half our grade.”

“Email the professor and tell him you’re having a heat,” Hoseok offered diplomatically, reaching over and slipping the sugar away from Namjoon’s reach, now that he’d scooped his fourth spoonful in between adding milk. “I’m sure she’ll understand. She likes you, right?”

“Yeah, I guess. I hate to do that to her so last minute, though.”

Jungkook set down a plate next to Hoseok, then crawled underneath the table with his own toast and milk to sit cross-legged between his and Namjoon’s knees.

“Listen, Namjoon, professors are people, too. And if she doesn’t believe you’re in a heat, just send her a photo of your face right now and I promise she’ll give you as much time as you need.”

There was a slight clinking of glass under the table, then Jungkook’s pale hand reached up over the edge of the table, his fingers wriggling a little. Hoseok passed the sugar container over to him.

“I guess you’re right. Kiara’s in the shower right now so I should do it while I have a chance.” He sighed. “I don’t think I have anything else major coming up right now. But shit, this means I missed a night of work, too.”
“Again, just send them your face.” Hoseok shrugged. Then he leaned halfway under the table, seeing Jungkook in the middle of folding his heavily sugar-coated toast in half to eat it. “Oh, Jungkookie, did you finish that paper for English?”

“Not yet,” Jungkook frowned, taking a large bite and finishing off half the toast in one go. Around a cheekful of bread he added, “But I’ve got all my sources ready, and the outline done. Jimin and I have been working on them together in the library during our break.”

“Good,” Hoseok nodded, straightening back up and starting to tear off the crust of his toast, leaving it abandoned on the edge of his plate and licking the bits of melted butter from his fingertips. Namjoon took his half-empty sugary mess back upstairs with him. Hoseok slipped his plate of crusts down to Jungkook, who took it eagerly. The kid was about to hit another growth spurt, Hoseok could tell just from the way he’d been eating. It was probably time to take him out for another hunt, too.

“I guess that leaves you and me to do the clean up around the house before they get here, Jungkook. You only have your evening shift today, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, since Jimin slept in, he gets the bathroom duty. So I guess that leaves the living room and the kitchen for you and me.” Hoseok paused, trying to sound casual as he left the next decision up in the air, waiting to see if Jungkook would take the bait.

“Mm? Well, whichever one you want, hyung.” Jungkook mumbled around the crusts of bread. Hoseok pressed his lips together a little, curious. Jungkook was coming up on his birthday soon, but he hadn’t shown any signs of presenting, like he normally should be. Hoseok and Namjoon had discussed a little about it when the boy was definitively out of earshot, but they were both a little concerned. Not that he wouldn’t present as a clear type, (if the boy was a Beta it was quite common to not have any clear heats or ruts all the way up to their 20th birthday, when a blood test was the only way to tell for sure) but that the boy wasn’t keeping up with his peers, at least psychologically, when it came to his wolf form. He was quicker at transforming than anyone Hoseok had met, and he had already exceeded their expectations at hunting. But the boy didn’t really have friends. He stuck close only to the pack members, and never mingled with his classmates. He of course had a great deal of admiration for Namjoon, who was not only their pack leader but was also the one who had also taken Jungkook under his wing as a sort of protege since the night he’d found him. But Namjoon was claimed by Kiara. Hoseok was worried about Jungkook finding a mate, and the struggles of his delicate demeanor weighed on the Alpha’s mind a lot.
It looked to Hoseok like Jungkook was going to present, and probably soon. But was he going to be ready for all that came along with that? This was the hard part about being Jungkook’s unofficial surrogate parents. Maybe he should pick up some pamphlets at the clinic on his way to the grocery store later that afternoon…

“I’ll take the kitchen, so you clean the living room,” Hoseok said decisively, swallowing the last of his lukewarm coffee and moving to the sink. Jungkook nodded, slipping out of the kitchen like a ghost.

It was nearly eleven o’clock by the time Yoongi sighed his way into the door, shrugging off his boots and jacket and oozing the scent of freshly tilled earth into the house, his unique Omega smell. Jungkook looked up from where he was rolling up game controller cords, sniffing the air subconsciously.

“They come yet?” Yoongi asked, and Jungkook shook his head. The Omega flopped down onto the couch, groaning. “They had us doing superman stretches this morning for their own amusement. They really wanted to punish the cadets today, and I’ve been slacking off due to it being so hot.”

“Superman stretches?” Jungkook queried, tilting his head.

“Yeah, I’ll show them to you later if you want,” Yoongi tilted back until his cheek rested against the back of the couch. “The place looks nice, by the way. Is Hoseok awake?”

“He said he couldn’t get back to sleep after you left, so he’s been cleaning. He finished the kitchen and now he’s trying to air the hallway out after Namjoon and Kiara this morning.”

Yoongi sighed, looking apologetic. “I’ll go help him out, then.”

It was only a matter of minutes later when Jungkook heard the crunch of gravel in the driveway, and he peered carefully through the curtains to see an old blue pickup truck. Two forms were moving inside, and he could hear their voices. The spindly pine tree in the front yard obscured his view, but he could see the glimpse of a brown head of hair, and suddenly his heart seemed to leap into his throat, although he wasn’t sure why. Jungkook found himself ducking back into the kitchen and curling up underneath the table again. He hurriedly arranged his blankets around himself and pulled out one of his comics, laying it out on the seat of one of the chairs and trying to look settled in. The doorbell rang, and he jumped out of nervousness, praying someone else would answer. After the third ring Namjoon tumbled down the stairs, looking much more put-together than he had that morning and calling out, “Coming!”
Jungkook watched him throw open the door and warm greetings started to mingle together in a family-reunion sort of air. Kiara came down the stairs just after, as did the other three boys, and introductions were tossed between them.

“This is my little brother Taehyung, and my older brother Seokjin.”

Jungkook could only see the two of them from the waist down, but he watched from his spot solemnly while Yoongi and Hoseok exchanged greetings. One of them wore black jeans with rips in the thighs, pale skin showing through and a pair of sensible blue sneakers. The other wore a dark sweater and a pair of oversized black pants that made Jungkook want to snort with laughter, since his clothes looked more like old man pants cut into a large, unskillful rectangle shape than anything else. There was a gap between the tops of his black leather sandals and the bottom of the pant leg that was several centimeters, and Jungkook watched the skin of the boy’s tanned ankles curiously while the others made small talk.

Kiara sat down on the couch, and Jungkook could see her clearly through the open double-wide doorway to the living room. She looked exhausted but pretty as usual, and she brushed her curly bangs out of her eyes as she smiled. “I can see the resemblance between you three, must be a Kim family trait to be so handsome.”

Jungkook was about to snort with laughter, but Yoongi beat him to it. “Namjoon is a lot of things, but let’s be real, here. They look nothing alike.”

“I take after our dad’s side,” came a voice that could only belong to Taehyung, based on where everyone had been standing when Namjoon gestured his introductions, and Jungkook was surprised at how deep and gruff he sounded. He leaned forward a little, trying to catch a glimpse of the new kid. Taehyung’s hand dangled down at his waist, long, pretty, tanned fingers curled around a cell phone and entangled with a set of green earbuds.

“Where’s Jungkookie at?” Namjoon queried, taking a step towards the spare bedroom. “He knew they were on their way, right?”

“Yeah, he was just here,” Yoongi murmured contemplatively. “So maybe he’s--”

Jungkook jumped when Taehyung bent at the waist and suddenly popped his head below the surface of the table mere inches from Jungkook’s face. Both of them stared at each other for a long moment, eyes wide in equal parts surprise and curiosity. Jungkook’s first thought was that Yoongi was right, Namjoon and Taehyung looked nothing alike. Not that Namjoon was ugly (honestly, Jungkook thought that a somber, coffee-blooded Namjoon hard at work, with his eyebrows knitted a bit together was intimidatingly handsome) but Taehyung looked unearthly pretty, with dark, intense eyes and a high, noble arch to his nose and a deep warmth to his skin tone that made Jungkook
suddenly compelled to reach out and touch to see if he emanated a little heat of his own, like his coloring would suggest. His hair was dyed to a reddish-brown color, and his bangs fell heavily into his eyes, framing his face as though trying to downplay the beauty there.

After a moment, Taehyung’s serious appraisal of Jungkook was ended with a low sniffle, and then Taehyung beamed at him with a squarish sort of grin that looked unbridled and down-to-earth in a way that threw Jungkook off more than him popping under the table had. It was disarming, the way he smiled, and Jungkook found himself starting to smile back.

“Jungkookie, right?” Taehyung asked, and he got a quiet nod in response. He expected Taehyung to poke fun of the fact that he was sitting under the table when there was a perfectly good half-empty couch just a few feet away, but instead Taehyung fell to his hands and knees and crawled under with him. “I’m Taehyung!”

“Hi,” Jungkook said awkwardly. There was a moment in the atmosphere between them where Taehyung put off an aura of kind acceptance, and Jungkook was still reeling from that particular sensation when suddenly Tae leaned forward into his personal space, almost touching his nose to Jungkook’s neck, and sniffing audibly. “W-what--?”

“You smell nice,” Taehyung commented candidly, pulling back with a contented look. “You smell like an Omega, too.”

Jungkook stared at him for a moment, a little dumbfounded. “I...I haven’t presented yet.”

“Me neither,” Taehyung tilted his head to the side, his lips spread wide into an understanding smile. “But I’ll bet you’re an Omega. I was right about all my friends.”

“I guess we’ll leave the kids alone to bond for a while,” Hoseok chuckled, drawing the two of them back out of their private conversation for a moment. “Oh, don’t mind us,” Hoseok waved dismissively at them, then stretched his long, slender arms out in front of him. “We’re gonna go take Seokjin on a tour of the house.”

Jungkook looked up, craning his neck to see properly from under the table, and felt his heart stop momentarily at the look that Seokjin was giving him. Yoongi had been right - Taehyung and Seokjin looked nothing like Namjoon, like they were all three different branches of their family tree. But just as Taehyung had been beautiful, Seokjin was breathtaking. Jungkook was starting to feel his palms sweat. He’d heard from Namjoon that his older brother was pre-med, and had gone through a lot of murderous months of study to get into a better program in the city on scholarships, so he was already intimidating, as far as Jeong ‘Cs Make Degrees’ Jungkook was concerned. But now Seokjin was staring at him with the cold sort of stare one gave a recently presented problem, with lips slightly parted and his hands tightly clutching his backpack, brown hair curling down into dark eyes. Even
from the distance between them, Jungkook could smell the Alpha coming off of him. He looked cold. Beautiful but cold.

In that moment, he was sure Kim Seokjin didn’t like him. Not one bit.

Jimin looked between the two newcomers and Jungkook, looking a little concerned, before following Yoongi up the stairs after hearing his name called.

Taehyung sent Hoseok a thumbs up, and the four elder wolves shuffled upstairs, and Jungkook could breathe again. Once they had left, Taehyung sent Jungkook another beaming smile, but this one was laced with a little shyness. “You’re younger than me, right? I’m finally a hyung!”

Jungkook’s lips twitched in amusement. “So you’re Taehyung-hyung.”

That made the angel-faced boy roll his eyes. “Can you shift much yet?”

“Yeah, you?”

“I can, but it takes me a long time to shift back,” Taehyung said.

Giving a nod, Jungkook said, “I’m trying to cut down my shift-back time, too.”

It was then that Tae gave a little tilt of his head. “What’s your major?”

“Um...I haven’t decided yet,” Jungkook mumbled. “I was thinking something like social work or law enforcement?”

“Ah, I’m studying criminal justice!” Taehyung shifted in, gingerly tucking the edge of Jungkook’s blanket over his legs so that they were sharing. “You should major in it, and we can study together. I’m going to be a private investigator.”

“I was thinking about the police force...” Jungkook found himself saying. He hadn’t even told
Namjoon that yet, but Taehyung’s eyes sparkled with interest, compelling him to share.

“Wow, that’d be cool!”

By the time Hoseok came downstairs later, the two wolves under the table were curled up around each other, asleep.

“They’re so cute,” he sighed, straightening his back and sending a fond smile at the sleeping boys. “It’s good that he has someone closer to his age in the house now. Jimin is great, but he tends to have a bit of a hyung complex...and Jungkook passing him up in height last month hasn’t helped, in all honesty.”

“How old is Jungkook?” Seokjin asked quietly, gently opening the cupboards and glancing mindlessly through their contents out of habit. It wasn’t that he was hungry, it was more like a dulled survival instinct, checking that there was food in the new place so his mind could rest assured.

“He’s about to turn 18 in September, so there’s about 2 years between them?”

Seokjin, however, was doing a different calculation in his head. He nodded quietly. An awkward silence passed between the two Alphas, and Seokjin shuffled his weight from foot to foot. True, moving in with Namjoon had been the most economical decision, but Seokjin wasn’t sure how he should deal with being adopted into a pack at last. His last attempt at it hadn’t gone so well. Hoseok reached out and laid his hand on Seokjin’s shoulder, and the weight of that tender hand wasn’t lost on him.

“Hey, you okay? It’ll take some time to find out where, but you two will fit in, I promise.” Hoseok sent Seokjin a warm smile, and he nodded gratefully. “I know you’re older than me and another Alpha to boot but, you know… you can come to me if you need anything at all.”

“Thanks, I really appreciate that.” Seokjin’s eyes sparkled a little, and he covered the hand on his shoulder with his own knobbly ones. “And I may be the oldest Alpha, but in the end, Namjoon’s the leader here, so… don’t worry about it too much. It’s not like I’ll be challenging his authority.”

Hoseok met Seokjin’s gaze for a minute, an understanding on his face. He smiled. “I think we’re gonna get along just fine.”
The first morning after the Kim brothers moved in Jungkook woke up to the sound of dishes clanging and oil sizzling. The smell was even more poignant, and Jungkook sniffed appreciatively at the air - the warm, greasy smell of eggs and bacon drifted through the air like a welcome home. Jungkook shifted, peeking around until his head and pillow were sticking out of the bottom of one of the kitchen chairs, surprised to see none other than Seokjin. His back was turned as he stirred the contents of the pan with a pair of long metal chopsticks.

Jungkook frowned, his brow furrowing. He somehow hadn’t thought Seokjin was the domestic cooking type, but based on the smell in the kitchen he wasn’t burning it, at least, and that was something. Too bad he doesn’t like me. He probably wouldn’t give me scraps, either. Jungkook stared up at the broad back stretched before him, bare and muscular. Seokjin turned his head and Jungkook caught full view of his serious-faced profile. He didn’t even look real.

Make him like you, a voice in his head screeched. He didn’t want to be the cause of tension in the household, especially if it was going to cause problems with the whole pack if he didn’t get along with Seokjin. He just didn’t know why Seokjin seemed to have a bad first impression of him.

Try something cool and casual-like. Like ‘What’s cooking, good looking?’

Jungkook bit back first a groan, then a laugh. Oh god, no. I would punch myself if I said that.

It turned out he didn’t have a chance for any sort of comment, cringe-worthy or not, because suddenly Jin turned around, and seeing Jungkook’s head poking out from under the dining room chair, the cool, handsome exterior evaporated in an instant as Seokjin screamed, the sound making Jungkook jump and whack his funny bone against the table leg.

“Oh my god!” Seokjin laid a hand on his chest, gasping as he realized who it was. Jungkook’s first thought was that his scream sounded masculine but nothing at all like he would have imagined. “J-Jungkook? Are you always under there or something?”

“Oh my god!” Seokjin laid a hand on his chest, gasping as he realized who it was. Jungkook’s first thought was that his scream sounded masculine but nothing at all like he would have imagined. “J-Jungkook? Are you always under there or something?”

“Only when I want to be,” Jungkook replied quietly, shrugging as he crawled out from underneath the table. To his surprise, Seokjin looked a little thrown off by his off-the-cuff reply, his lips pursed as he stared, first at Jungkook, then at the ugly owl clock on the wall (which Yoongi had picked out
at a yard sale a few months ago and repaired by himself, much to everyone’s chagrin).

“What are you making?” Jungkook asked, sniffing the air and stepping toward the stove and (by default) Seokjin. The scent of scrambled eggs was suddenly consumed by a smell a lot like the smell of powdered detergent. Seokjin held up a hand, backing up until he was bumped up against the counter with his hips. “Uh, what are you doing?” he asked.

“Looking?” Jungkook arched an eyebrow, unsure where the cool, calm exterior had gone.

“Um, I’m making scrambled eggs and bacon, is all. Nothing fancy.” Seokjin wasn’t meeting his eyes, probably still thrown by thinking a random head had appeared on the kitchen floor at his feet.

“Smells good.” Jungkook looked over at the pan, watching as Jin swooped in to save his breakfast.

“Thanks, do you want some?”

“Um, sure. If that’s okay.” Jungkook hoped his stomach wouldn’t growl and give away how hungry for real-looking food he was “You cook, then, huh?”

“Yeah, my mom taught me how to cook. She said it’s good for a man to be able to feed himself. Or others.”

“That’s cool, “Jungkook said, leaning in. A thought caught his attention. “Hey, could you teach me? Hoseok can make some things, but to be honest, they’re more like weird concoctions than real food…”

“Um…sure, I guess.”

Jungkook looked up to see Seokjin seemingly busying himself with a container of salt, and instantly he wondered if he had gotten too comfortable again. Seokjin’s cool, distant exterior was slipping back in. “Um, if you don’t want to, you don’t have to, really.”

“No, it’s fine,” Seokjin amended. Jungkook was in the process of determining whether or not to believe him when he looked up and smiled at him. Jungkook instantly felt goosebumps rise up on his arms. Seokjin’s whole face seemed to transform under just that change of expression, looking warm
and childlike, the edges of his jaw squaring out and his lips wrapped in endearing creases, as if he someone had tucked his mouth into parentheses. Jungkook completely forgot for a moment the cold impression he had initially been clinging onto. What had suddenly made him look so happy, almost blissful?

“Hey,” Seokjin started to chuckle, “Just as a warning, I’m not eggactly a professional chef.”

Jungkook stared at Seokjin for a moment, dumbfounded as his words sunk in. Then, a smile crept and crackled its way across his face unbidden. “Did you really just…?”

Seokjin, meanwhile, had started to laugh at Jungkook’s reaction, a surprisingly breathlessly high-pitched sound, a series of tight little gasps, a contagious sort of laugh that made Jungkook grin. It was only 8 in the morning on a Friday but Jungkook had already experienced more than his daily share of surprises.

Then, Seokjin’s laughing expression dropped, and he looked at Jungkook as if he had just said something wrong. Seokjin twitched his nose, wiping at it with the back of his hand before moving to sit at the table.

They ate breakfast in a silence that was mostly awkward, especially since Jungkook hesitated, looking forlornly at his bedding under the table before taking a seat across from Seokjin. He could feel the elder’s eyes on him, as if silently asking if he was going to crawl under or not out of curiosity, and Jungkook felt his cheeks flush. Now that their moment of talking about cooking was gone, they faltered off suddenly down a precipice into awkward silence. Eventually, they both ended up scrolling mindlessly through their phones, not meeting each other’s eyes.

118 DAYS

It was two weeks after the Kim brothers moved in, and Jungkook was on dish duty with Jimin. Normally, that wouldn’t be a problem, but Jimin was extra clingy these days. It had been worse before Taehyung had moved in, able to split Jimin’s attentions between them depending on who was in a better, more welcoming mood, but he was still extremely needy. He nuzzled against Jungkook’s neck, his nose and lips pressed to the little raise of his skin where he knew he’d find Jungkook’s scent gland. He inhaled deeply after he’d finished scenting, the mix of his own pepperminty smell and Jungkook’s salt and leather one causing an appreciative purr in his throat. It had taken almost a full year of living together before Jungkook had let Jimin Scent him, but now that he had, it was just
a part of living in the pack house. Sometimes, he woke up and Jimin was curled up over the edge of his mattress, nose buried deep in the crook of Jungkook’s neck. It had been a shock the first time, but now Jimin clung to him so much he tended to just let him do as he pleased. Jungkook had severely disappointed the older boy by not being particularly inclined to chase after and Scent Jimin in reply, a cause of constant consternation between them.

“You smell like my hometown sometimes, Jungkookie,” Jimin brushed his hand at the hair on the nape of Jungkook’s neck, causing him to shiver involuntarily as goosebumps rose on his skin. “Are you sure we aren’t both from Busan?”

“I dunno,” Jungkook said dismissively, drying a plate with a small hand towel that probably was already in that questionable state of ‘is it stained or dirty?’ that none of them tended to question too closely. “I don’t remember.”

“It smells so nice, like the beach.” Jimin sighed, caught up in the nostalgia.

“You’re supposed to be washing, Jimin.”

Jimin hummed, acknowledging and moving closer to the sink but his attention was still on the youngest wolf. “When you present I bet you’ll smell even prettier. All the other packs will want you to join them, maybe even Nobles. Just remember your loving hyung Park Jimin, okay?” He leaned in and nuzzled against Jungkook’s jawline, bumping him upwards a little crudely and making Jungkook’s teeth clunk together a bit. “Jiminnie loved you first.”

“What are you even talking about?” Jungkook laughed a little, despite himself. He was still unused to some of the more complicated pack dynamics, since he had been without one for so long. Normally Namjoon or Hoseok tried to help him keep up by explaining, but it’s hard to know what holes in education to fill when you grew up with the privilege of a proper pack.

“Well, you know wolves can move between packs,” Jimin pulled his plastic gloves back on and reached into the bubbly dishwater wrist-deep. “Some packs are made out of more ‘elite’ wolves, like Nobles.”

“Nobles? That’s like purebreds, right?”

“Mmm... kinda,” Jimin’s voice had taken on the gentle air it did when he was taking care of Jungkook more like a little brother than a packmate, his expression light-hearted which meant his
words were more important to pay attention to. “It’s kind of a complicated term nowadays, since there are more strict rules on in-breeding because of all the medical issues it caused. But basically, Nobles have more of the pure blood from older, established families.” He rinsed off a plate and handed it to Jungkook, adding with a smile, “They tend to have older, established money, too. Namjoon comes from a Noble bloodline.”

“He does?” Jungkook’s eyes were wide and curious, and he dried the plate with only half the attention he should have.

“Yeah, all the Kim brothers do. That’s why we’ll finally be able to hunt properly on established territory, instead of using the public parks. So you’ll get to a real, proper hunt in a few weeks.”

Jungkook crinkled his nose, thinking about the public parks set aside for hunts, reservations that had more wolves coming through than hands to tend to it, leaving mostly a barren wasteland with too many mingled scents and not enough game. His hyungs had talked fondly of established territories, lush forests left exclusively for a certain pack that owned it, with trees that were actually alive and game aplenty, and no acres of fields with thousands of footpaths from wolves pounding through on the daily. “That sounds a lot nicer.”

“You’ll love it, Jungkookie. You’re already better at hunting than I was at your age.” Jimin gave a sly little smile, tilting his head to the side cutely as he sighed, “Ahh, to be young again.”

In response, Jungkook jutted his hip out and bumped it into Jimin, who stumbled over, dishwater dripping over the edges of the sink. “Hey!” Jimin cried out, lifting his knee up until he could kick at Jungkook’s waist, making him chuckle as he fended off the attack by grabbing the spray nozzle and turning the water on, splatting Jimin with a single shot of water, and making him screech.

There was a sudden yip behind them, a young wolf padding into the kitchen, his fur a sort of white with gray spots dotted across his face, and his eyes were a vibrant gold. Taehyung yipped again, his front paws lifting off the ground like he was patting at the tile, and Jungkook laughed before shooting the wolf with a spray of water as well. Taehyung snapped at the spray of water excitedly, trying to catch it in his mouth as Jungkook tried to get him in the face instead. He blinked, wiping a paw at his nose for a moment, before happily yipping again.

“Taehyung, what are yo--” Seokjin stepped into the kitchen, slipping instantly on the soaked tile and flailing back and forth for a few comedic moments, his bare feet dashing back and forth before he leaned back and to the side, catching himself on the island by his elbow with a painful-sounding grunt. Jungkook and Jimin froze, the nozzle still in Jungkook’s hand, and Taehyung’s ears twitching up and down in shocked wonder. Seokjin caught his breath for a moment before turning to glare at them. “Are you trying to kill someone?!” he snapped. Jungkook took note of the fact that his eyes were locked on Jungkook, not the other two, and he felt his neck heat up from embarrassment.
“S-sorry..” he said quietly, slipping the spray nozzle back in its holder. Seokjin stood for a moment, staring at Jungkook as if to add something else, and then promptly turned and walked out of the kitchen without another word.

With all the wounded ignominy of children berated by their parent, the two boys quietly went back to their task. Jungkook dropped one of the hand towels to the floor and half-heartedly pushed it around with his foot, while Jimin went back to washing.

“I told you he hated me,” Jungkook mumbled under his breath.

Jimin sighed, “He does not. He’s probably just like that.”

“He’ll get over it soon,” Taehyung said before them, now transformed and leaning heavily over Jimin’s shoulder. “He usually doesn’t get angry for long.” In the last couple of weeks, Taehyung had slipped in naturally with the younger wolves, and during that time they had discovered he had a propensity for nibbling. His teeth dug gently into Jimin’s shoulder, not scratching the skin there but irritating it until it was raised and reddening. “He’s really a big softie.”

“I just don’t know what I did to make him dislike me,” Jungkook murmured quietly.

“Seokjin is easy, he gets along with most anybody,” Taehyung reassured him. “He’s not the one to worry about.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means you can be a little standoffish too, Jungkookie,” Jimin chided in his quiet way, “You haven’t exactly tried to talk to him in more than monosyllables since he’s been here.”

Jungkook wanted to say that that was because Seokjin scared him just a little, intimidated him with his cool beauty, but that seemed too much to admit. They hadn’t had a proper conversation since that first morning, and Jungkook tended to hover silently on the edge of the room whenever Seokjin was present. He frowned, and Jimin nudged up against him, also effectively shaking Taehyung off his shoulder.
“Just talk to him!”

Tucking his chin into his chest, Jungkook blinked hard, trying to relax the way his throat constricted in nerves. He knew Jimin was right. Jimin had been right to push him when he’d first moved in, and he’d been so shy that whenever they told him to talk, he’d gotten so nervous he cried. Jimin had been right that Namjoon was someone Jungkook could trust with his life. Jimin was right about a lot of things, a deep source of wisdom wrapped in a soft sweetness. Peppermint suited Jimin.

“Okay…” Jungkook swallowed heavily, drying the last pan. “I’ll try.”

“Fighting!” Jimin encouraged with a cheer.

A few hours later, Jungkook was sitting on the ground behind the couch reading a comic book when he heard the springs creak and a soft groan as someone sat down. He tilted his face upwards to look and saw the back of Seokjin’s head. He was dressed in a bright-orange T-shirt and grey sweatpants, a medical textbook balanced on his knees as he sucked on a popsicle. There was a long moment where Jungkook froze, uncertainty bubbling up in the pit of his stomach, but then Seokjin unknowingly made the first move. Absentmindedly, Seokjin scratched at the back of his neck, and Jungkook caught a strong whiff of Seokjin’s scent again. Without thinking, Jungkook found himself up on his knees behind the couch, his hands gently draped across the headrest as he leaned in and sniffed into the base of that long, pale neck. It really was like some kind of soap or detergent, a strong smell but not overwhelming. He just smelled clean and homey and comforting. At first he had thought it was actually the soap Seokjin used, but this smell was different, it emanated from his skin and drew Jungkook in, until his nose brushed up against the skin there with a feather-light touch.

Seokjin gave a yelp at the contact, jerking up from the couch like he had spotted a spider and craning his head around. Jungkook’s eyes shot open, even though he didn’t remember having shut them in the first place, and he instinctively shrunk until he was almost hidden behind the couch. He expected Seokjin to snap at him or yell, but instead the man’s eyes just flashed at him in surprise and warning, his lips slightly parted.

“S-sorry! I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you…” He swallowed thickly, forcing himself to meet the elder’s eyes, that still flickered with the red around the irises with the signs of an Alpha. He stood up from behind the couch, feeling somehow exposed. “It’s just… your scent is really nice.”

In response, Seokjin suddenly blinked hard at him, his eyes no longer their dangerous red, looking confused. “What?”

“Your scent? It’s like soap or something. I… I like it.”
There was an awkward moment of tense silence that hung between them, making Jungkook feel a bit nauseated, and then Seokjin gave a little sniff at the air. “You’re not presented, though?”

Jungkook bit his lip, shuffling his weight from foot to foot. “No, I’m not.” He stared down at his feet for a moment, then back up at Seokjin, adding a quiet, “Sorry.”

“Why do you keep doing that?” Seokjin frowned, and that taut expression Jungkook could only label as dislike flashed across his face again.

“Doing what?”

“Apologizing. Every time I see you, you’re apologizing to me.”

“Sorry?” tumbled out of Jungkook’s mouth, and then he gave a little smirk as he looked up at Seokjin, who rolled his eyes and chuckled.

“Brat,” he lifted the popsicle back to his mouth to catch before it started dripping. “But I’m your hyung, right? So you should just treat me normally.” Jungkook somehow felt that buried within the light-hearted tone, Seokjin was trying to convince himself as well that that was how it should be. But the effort was still appreciated.

“Okay, Seokjin-hyung.”

Another silence enveloped them, with Seokjin nibbling at his popsicle while Jungkook fiddled with the edges of his T-shirt, wondering what constituted a comfortable or uncomfortable silence. At last, Seokjin removed the popsicle stick from his mouth, smacking his lips as though he’d made a big decision.

“You can finish Scenting me if you’d like, you know,” Seokjin told him casually, “I don’t mind. You just surprised me.”

Jungkook’s eyes widened. “Really?”
Seokjin nodded, and he got the impression that the offer wasn’t going to be stated twice, so Jungkook slipped around the couch, his hand tentatively reaching out to rest on Seokjin’s shoulder as he leaned in to the man’s neck again. His movements were tantalizingly slow, afraid at any moment that Seokjin would change his mind or snap at him, but the curiosity towards the calming smell overpowered his timidity. After a few moments, Seokjin’s shoulders relaxed, and he tugged aside the collar of his T-shirt with one hand, revealing the skin of his shoulder and collarbone. Jungkook sighed heavily, closing his eyes and laying his cheek against the delicate warmth of Seokjin’s shoulder. It was like crawling beneath the softness of freshly laundered sheets, curling up within it and having nothing to rush off and do, nowhere to hurry, so Jungkook allowed himself to sink within that comforting image.

After awhile, he felt Seokjin’s hands on his shoulders, and he lifted his head up in concern only to find Seokjin’s face buried below his jaw a moment later, the quiet sounds and slight coolness of Seokjin’s breath as he inhaled Jungkook’s scent, making him shudder involuntarily, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides. He was suddenly overwhelmed by the inclination to wrap his arms around those shoulders, much broader and more intimidating than his own. It confused him, since he usually didn’t feel inclined to such moments of skinship, even with Jimin. So why was it different now?

“Mmm,” Seokjin hummed appreciatively into the delicate skin of Jungkook’s neck, and he actually shivered, then. “You smell like saltwater and… leather?”

Jungkook nodded, not sure why he was suddenly unable to speak. Then, Seokjin’s face pressed closer, until Jungkook could feel the hot wetness of Seokjin’s lips pressed against his shoulder. There was a ring of coolness at the center of Seokjin’s lips from when he’d been eating the popsicle a minute ago, and Jungkook could feel his body suddenly heat up, goosebumps rising on his arms and his eyes rolling back slightly into his head, lashes fluttering until his eyes were closed. He reached out his hands to grab at Seokjin’s sleeves, and then--

“Have you guys seen my helmet?” Hoseok’s voice interrupted abruptly as he strode into the living room, halting suddenly when he saw Seokjin and Jungkook leaping away from each other like the other was a hot-iron, their faces flushed. Seokjin wiped at his lips conspicuously with the back of his hand. “Um… everything okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, of course.” Seokjin said, a quite natural-looking smile coming to his face, but Jungkook could see that the man’s neck was flushing a bright pink. Despite himself, he smiled bashfully, biting at his lip to try and hold it back as he lifted his eyes to Hoseok. They were just Scenting, that wasn’t a big deal within a pack, so why did he feel guilty?

Hoseok gave them both a wary look, glancing between them with his gaze lingering a little longer on Seokjin, before he walked out of the room.
“Um, I'll go help him look for his helmet,” Jungkook said suddenly, rushing out of the room.

He didn’t see Seokjin staring at his retreating back, a dark look on his face.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies! KurageCharms here!

At last, here is the long-awaited new ABO from yours truly! As you can tell, this is very different from Wolves In Captivity, but I hope these new dynamics are compelling enough for you to enjoy.

The original first chapter to this was already at 12k with no signs of stopping, so I had to cut it off here, unfortunately. lol There was a lot to establish, and still more to explain as the story progresses!

I'm cranking up the heats this time and going to play with actual shapeshifting/mating/pack dynamics, which I neglected in WIC due to my own sloppiness, to be honest. Haha. But expect smut in the future, a slowburn that I hope will be worth it! :) I've been trying to work on my writing so that I'll be prepared to deliver more solid material this time around!

Thanks to my beta-reader potterndresden, as always, for giving me such beautiful feedback on each chapter. She's a sweet soul we do not deserve. lol

Thank you for reading! Expect chapter 2 very soon, it's halfway written already!

Later, my lovelies~~ ♥
"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like."

- Lao Tzu

88 DAYS

“JK, hand me that bungee cord, will you?” Seokjin called out from his perch, standing in the bed of the truck, bent awkwardly over a pile of military-grade backpacks and supplies. Jungkook stretched out, lifting one foot out behind him to give his arms a couple more inches of reach as Seokjin’s crooked fingers curled around the cool black hook on the bungee. The Alpha nodded his thanks, strapping the cord around the pile of sleeping bags stacked against the window of the cab, threading the black rubber through the nylon ties on each bag to secure them.

“Jin-hyung.” Yoongi stepped out onto the porch, the screen door clattering behind him. “I fixed the generator, you still got room?”

“I literally just strapped the last of the luggage in,” Seokjin sighed in exasperation, leaning against the truck roof. “But I’ll figure it out if you bring it out here.”

“Hey, muscle pig, go get the 2x4s from the shed,” Yoongi jutted his thumb over at the aforementioned shed, slipping back inside just long enough to roll out a large, heavy gas generator. There was a groaning sound as it pressed down on the two wheels attached to the back when he lifted the red metal handlebar. Jungkook hurried to retrieve the 2x4s before Yoongi could reach the back of the truck, helping Seokjin drop the hatch and lay the boards down as a sort of basic ramp, then helping Yoongi line the wheels up. It only took a few moments between them to push the generator up into Seokjin’s waiting hands. Jungkook leaned against the side of the truck, watching Seokjin’s bare upper arms pulse and strain as he pumped at the crank on Yoongi’s spare adjustable straps, each pull accompanied by an audible click and the rising smell of axle grease until the generator was virtually immovable from its spot against the side, wrapped up in one of the sleeping
Yoongi raised two full gas tanks and tucked them into the back corner with an echoing thunk of metal being struck, then went inside to collect the others. The mid morning light was still drying the last of the chilly dew from the surface of the grass and the truck, but it still promised to be a clear, sunny day ahead.

“How far away is the island?” Jungkook asked, resting his cheek against his palm.

“Only about...three, maybe three and a half hours? Depending on if we hit traffic on the freeway or not.” Seokjin tugged at the sleeping bag that covered the generator. “Did you call in to the campus police and tell them you won’t be taking the night shift for a few days?”

“I texted my boss,” Jungkook said. “He said it’s fine. Since I’m only a first year, I’m not on the priority call list anyways.” After a moment, he stared at the generator and the pile of bags, then asked, “Will we really need all of this stuff, if we’re only going overnight?”

“Hopefully not,” Seokjin hummed, “But this is basic safety procedures. You never know if you’ll run into a pack going into a high heat, or if someone will get injured, if the weather will get bad, or you’ll get lost or separated. So even if it’s just one night, we have to pack carefully, as if we’re going for a couple weeks.” He lifted his face up to smile. “Don’t worry. Yoongi seems like a really professional packer, I’m sure we have everything we need and more.”

Seokjin dropped down from the truck, crossing his arms to look approvingly at their packing job. After a moment, he looked over at Jungkook and sent him one of his atmosphere-altering smiles. “Well, then. We did pretty well, huh?”

Jungkook nodded, and something in the gesture made Seokjin halt.

“You’re really excited about this hunt, aren’t you?” Seokjin asked, almost incredulous in his tone. When Jungkook nodded, Seokjin gave a little chuckle and ruffled at the boy’s hair. “Can’t wait to see what you’re made of, pup.”

Jungkook smiled broadly, all teeth and crinkled nose. “I wanna see hyung hunt, too,” he said. Suddenly, Seokjin’s hand froze on his head. Jungkook lifted his chin so as to nudge his way closer into Seokjin’s palm, and the Alpha’s smile returned.

The others started to pile out of the house, Jimin tugging on the sleeve of Taehyung’s oversized black sweatshirt as they clambered into the bed of the truck. Jungkook watched Seokjin walk over to the driver’s side door, the Alpha laughing as he teased Namjoon about his brown-gray beanie with the stitching of a duck on the front. As the youngest, Jungkook was also designated to the bed of the
truck for the ride. He looked on as Yoongi gestured Kiara and Hoseok into the back, before he slid into the last open seat in the cab, right behind Seokjin.

“Jungkook, come on, let’s go!” Jimin called out, waving him on. With a nod, he stepped up onto the bumper and swung himself into the bed, snuggling in between the boys as they arranged themselves as comfortably as they could against the small wall of sleeping bags. The truck roared to life and they pulled out of the driveway, and Jungkook watched the house vanish behind the half-dead oak tree on the corner. He hugged his knees to his chest, the cool wind of early October blowing around their faces and brushing their hair into their eyes. Taehyung and Jimin leaned in against his shoulders, laughing as they discussed what kind of game they hoped they’d catch. Jungkook didn’t have much to add, since he had only been able to catch small game like rabbits or some birds during their short excursions to the public parks. That in itself was quite a feat, since the land was so dead nowadays, but Jungkook wondered if he was ready to take on bigger game, or if he could keep up with the others. There was also the nagging feeling that he’d forgotten something, and he sniffed at the air, catching a whiff of Jimin’s peppermint scent pretty strongly today, He wondered why he felt like he’d left something behind when they were packing the truck or had forgotten to do something important.

“Jungkookie, don’t look so worried!” Taehyung said, nuzzling in and biting at the collar of Jungkook’s T-shirt where it was exposed from inside his jacket. “Just stick with us!”

Riding in the back of the truck was very fun at first, in all honesty. Once they left the city and got to the wide open air, the boys were positively wicked, standing up with their hands on the roof of the cab and whooping, an arm outstretched like they could catch the wind. Kiara and Hoseok kept voicing concerns that the boys would fall out, but Namjoon didn’t seem overly worried, and Jungkook could hear Seokjin’s laughter from inside, occasionally able to see his eyes crinkled by a smile in the reflection of the rearview mirror, and he knew Seokjin was driving carefully. He took turns reenacting the Titanic scene with Taehyung and Jimin, and they practically fell over when Taehyung accidentally swallowed and started choking on some kind of bug. It was only an overnight trip but it felt like they were going on a vacation, a real get-away.

Two hours down the road, however, and the ‘fun’ of riding in the back of the truck was over. They all started tapping on the window into the cab, complaining of thirst and cold and soreness. Jimin started getting irritable at Taehyung, whining loudly and shoving the boy away and claiming he’d sat on his hand. After some discussion between the three eldest, they decided to pull over into a rest stop for a few minutes.

“We’re not doing as great on time as I’d hoped,” Yoongi mused, pouring over the map application on his phone and pinching and scrolling around on it. He was following behind Hoseok around the little convenience store at the rest stop half-blindly, with his head tucked down as the Alpha tossed some snacks into a shopping basket.
“We’re doing just fine,” Namjoon reassured him. “We’ll reach the bridge before lunch, so we can set up at camp properly before setting out.”

Yoongi gave a little grunt to signal that he’d heard, then looked up and blinked with the realization that Hoseok had vanished down one of the aisles.

He slipped into the next aisle, calling out, “Hoseok, are we getting beer? We should get beer.”

“Do we really need it? I thought you already packed some in the cooler,” came the cry back, and Yoongi followed the voice until he found the Alpha.

“My butt hurts so much!” Jimin quietly moaned to Taehyung, rubbing the aforementioned as they walked around the store, more to stretch their legs than to actually pick out anything. “And the bed of the truck is so cold to sit on.”

“I told you to bring two jackets,” Taehyung stated simply, tightening the straps of his hoodie, “Warmth over fashion.”

Jimin frowned, “I did bring two jackets, they’re just in my backpack. It was supposed to be warming up by now, so I thought it’d be fine.”

“Here, Jiminie,” Hoseok slipped up to their side, pulling two hot packs out of the plastic bag. “Why don’t you guys unstrap a couple of the sleeping bags and use those on the next half of the trip?”

“Or just use alcohol to warm up,” Yoongi suggested, holding out a beer. Jimin sighed, taking the heat packs but waving off the offered can.

Seokjin was crouched down in front of some individually packed boxes of cereal, contemplating cornflakes when he sensed Jungkook behind him. He looked up, offering a little smile to the younger. “Hyung… would it be alright if I switch places with Yoongi-hyung?”

“Hm? That’s really up to Yoongi,” Seokjin hummed, picking up two different cereals and turning them over in his hands, as though holding them would offer better insight as to which he was craving more. “Why?”
“Um, I’m feeling carsick, and it’d be easier to watch the road from the cab,” Jungkook lied. It was one of those small lies he almost made himself believe, a small lie told without knowing why it had to be a lie. “I think Jimin should come out from the cold, too, actually. So maybe we could all switch for the last hour?”

“That seems reasonable, but you should be asking Namjoon about it, not me, don’t you think?” Seokjin was staring at Jungkook now, his cereal forgotten as he arched an eyebrow. Jungkook felt his neck heat up with embarrassment as he realized Seokjin was right - it wasn’t his decision, he wasn’t the pack leader or ‘in charge’ of this trip, in the proper sense of the word.

“Um, yeah, I just wanted to check with you first? Because you’re the driver.” Jungkook felt awash with relief at his own fast-thinking recovery. Seokjin seemed to buy the reason as suitable, nodding his head and patting the back of Jungkook’s neck.

“Well, it’s fine with me.”

A few minutes later, Jungkook was tucked into the seat behind Seokjin’s, his arms around the driver seat headrest as he rested his mouth against the upholstery there. The others were still readjusting the blankets in the back for those now shifted to the truck bed, and Jungkook, Seokjin and Jimin were waiting in the car. Jungkook leaned forward, his fingers reaching into Seokjin’s hair and massaging lightly at the back of the man’s head. Seokjin’s expression relaxed, his blinks coming a little more lazily. In little waves and drifts, Seokjin’s clean, refreshing scent wafted back to Jungkook, catching his attention. He inhaled before straining to squeeze into confining space around the headrest, rising halfway out of his seat to press as closely as he could to the scent gland on the Alpha’s neck and breathing in long and deep. His head gave a little rush and the traces of a headache that he’d been harboring and not been paying attention to suddenly lifted like a curtain.

Oh, that was what I forgot to do today, he thought curiously. He had fallen into the habit of Scenting Seokjin a lot, but he hadn’t realized how much he had gotten accustomed to it until he had almost missed a morning. Seokjin hadn’t Scented him since that first day Hoseok had stumbled in on them, and Jungkook never asked why, but he could tell Seokjin was at least okay with Jungkook leaving his scent lingering against his mark on the regular. Frankly, the thought of a return Scenting happening again was a little frightening, even as he felt more and more comfortable with Seokjin himself. He sat back into his seat, his mouth quirking in puzzlement before he turned to look out the side window. At his side, Jimin gave a little whimper, leaning in to curl up against Jungkook’s side, Scenting him with the slight smell of jealousy to his movements. Jungkook let him Scent as long as he liked, but didn’t Scent back. The silence in the cab felt suddenly oppressive and awkward.

“Oh, we’re ready to go!” Namjoon declared, the doors slamming shut and Taehyung’s citrusy smell filling the back of the cab.
“Aw, are we cuddling?” Taehyung cooed, leaning in with a goofy smile and making childish little noises as he nuzzled up into their crooked pile of shoulders and elbows. Jimin squeaked, saying he was too sore from sitting in the bed of the truck and then insisting on using both of them as his human pillows.

Seokjin glanced into the rearview mirror, his eyes locking with Jungkook’s for the briefest moment as he pulled back out onto the highway. Jungkook noted with some trepidation that Seokjin was the first to look away.

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Jungkook was listening to music on his earphones with his eyes shut when he felt Jimin poke him in the side.

“Here we are, boys.” Namjoon was saying with pride, looking over his shoulder at the back seat.

As the lead Alpha had predicted, they were crossing the bridge to the island well before noon, and all three of the young pups in the cab pressed up as tightly as they could against the windows, staring out at the water as it glistened and shone from the sunlight. Seagulls bobbed apathetically on the small waves that tipped and moved them along, and Jungkook’s mouth dropped slack as a long, white beach stretched out in front of them, hedged by a large lush forest of more greens than Jungkook thought he’d ever seen in his life. Shallow waters quivered up against the smaller coves, smooth rocks jutting their heads out of the water like watching sea creatures, and the trees appeared infinite, curving upward into sizeable hills that seemed to roll and hold secrets in their depths. There was a chuckle from the front seat, and Namjoon turned to smile at Jungkook.

“Much nicer than a public park, right?”

“It’s beautiful.” Jungkook breathed, pressing his nose to the glass. “Is it really all for us?”

“Well, actually it’s split between four families in total, since it’s one of the bigger islands around here. Two of them are retired families, however, so they never come up here but collect taxes on it from the government for keeping it as a nature preserve. The other family has never given us any trouble, so long as we stay on our portion of the island, which is marked. It’s still a good-sized area, though. It’s...what...250 acres?” Namjoon looked over to Seokjin in question.

“248.3, to be exact,” Seokjin’s warm voice responded, his eyes trained on the road ahead. “Because the Locklears claimed that burial site at the northern point.”
“Right,” Namjoon hummed. “But we wouldn’t want to use that anyways.” He craned his head over his shoulder to signal that he was speaking to the kids in the back again, and added, “It’s one of three islands that our father owns. I talked to him last summer about letting me have my own hunting ground, since our pack has gotten so big so quickly, and he said it was time enough for me to run the place myself. But this island was originally supposed to be inherited by Seokjin, and I was supposed to get an island about an hour north along the main shoreline, so he knows more about it than I do.”

“Why isn’t Seokjin inheriting the island?” Jungkook asked.

Silence fell into the car, and Jimin stiffened a little at his side, making him feel like he’d done something wrong. The atmosphere seemed to crackle uncomfortably. The roar of the engine echoed into the quiet of the cab, and Namjoon just looked over at Seokjin with a look of concern on his face.

At last, Seokjin spoke up, putting on a little smile as he looked up at Jungkook through the rearview. “Because Namjoon is a pack leader, Jungkook, and I’m not. So I have no need for it unless I decide to break off and make my own pack in the future. It’s not unheard of for a firstborn to be under a younger lead Alpha, but it’s not very common. If I decide to leave our pack and make my own, there is still the smaller island that can be left to me, depending on what our father decides.”

“No...I don’t plan on leaving,” Seokjin said placidly. “I like being part of this pack, and I honestly think Namjoon’s a good leader. I chose to join because I trust him as an Alpha.”

Namjoon smiled over at Seokjin, and Jungkook felt the constriction in his chest loosen a little of its ties. The window behind their heads opened, the rush of the wind deafening in their ears as Yoongi reached in a hand and slipped it into the back of Taehyung’s jacket, making the boy yip in shock at the touch of cold skin while the Omega laughed from the bed of the truck.

“Taehyungie, are you cold?” he teased in an impish voice, making Hoseok chide him even as he laughed as well. They pulled off the paved road onto one of rough gravel, and all of them bumped well out of their seats from the unevenness of the terrain, and Hoseok’s shouts came loudly from the
back as his thin form was tossed. They could hear Kiara and Yoongi laughing, and Jungkook craned his head around to see Hoseok clutching onto the male Omega as his booted feet flew up into view.

When Jungkook turned back around, his head bumping up against the roof of the cab, Seokjin was pulling off onto a little dirt path off to the side, swinging smoothly into a sizable campsite. There were three wooden cabins (a large one and two smaller ones) and a large fire pit with a spit over it, surrounded by ash-covered stones and two picnic tables that stood crooked and gray off to the side. It looked somehow homey and familiar to Jungkook, despite the fact that he knew he had never been here in his life.

“Here we are!” Namjoon declared dramatically. The doors clattered open and they all tumbled out onto the soft overturned earth, well-trampled ground that was mostly even, save for some gnarled roots that jutted up at random intervals. Jungkook gave a deep inhale and relished in the overwhelming scent of pine, fur, dampness, and dirt that surrounded them on all sides. His hair stood on end like a thousand little pinpricks as his senses picked up on many, many little and big things that were moving out into the woods, a thunderous but silent roar of life waiting to be explored and hunted. The air was sweet and salty, green and brown, and he sighed in contentment.

Yoongi handed down designated bags and containers to go to the main cabin, and Namjoon led the way to the building furthest from the fire pit, the largest of the buildings. It had a slanted roof that had vines hanging from the gutter and a small wooden porch with a railing. The lead Alpha dug the keys out of his pocket and slipped one into the large metal lock, pushing the door open with a jolting creak as he handed Kiara the only other set of keys to the cabin with a purposeful smile. She laid a hand on his shoulder and followed him into the dimness.

The main cabin, which Namjoon called the Main Hall, was single roomed and made almost entirely out of wood. Jungkook noted that most corners of cabinets and furniture below waist level had been gnawed at, splinters of wood dangling off as signs of young teething pups that had come before. There was a simple kitchen to the left, the window over the sink facing the front porch (and therefore the dirt path leading to the main road) and a fireplace on the far wall, where sat two couches with white dust sheets clinging lazily to them.

After unloading most of their supplies into the security of the main cabin in a big messy heap along the empty wall, the boys grabbed their own bags from the truck and went to find their bunks.

“Normally it’s separated out Alphas and Omegas, with Betas choosing between,” Namjoon explained to Jimin as he walked them up the short path, leaves and branches crunching under their feet. “But I never really liked that set up, to be honest. And almost half of our pack are younger pups that haven’t presented yet, so I’m assigning you three youngest to this cabin with Seokjin, while Hoseok, Yoongi, Kiara and I will be in the other bedding cabin over there.”
“Aw, you mean we don’t get cuddly Yoongi to play with in our cabin?” Taehyung pouted. Yoongi rolled his eyes unconvincingly as Taehyung placed his chin on the Omega’s shoulder.

“Well,” Namjoon said diplomatically, “Although they won’t be officially claimed until the New Year, I’ve already approved of Yoongi becoming Hoseok’s mate, so this arrangement was made with that in mind.”

“Yeah, so paws off,” Hoseok sniffed dramatically, turning his nose up as he nudged Taehyung off of Yoongi. Taehyung giggled, moving to follow the others into the cabin. Jungkook lagged a bit behind, wondering why the room situation felt a little surreal for him. Maybe because he usually slept on the first floor, away from both of the newer Kim brothers, the idea of the four of them sharing the very small cabin seemed strange to him. That must have been it. But Taehyung naps with me all the time, he thought with a sigh. Maybe the long drive coupled with the nervous excitement for the hunt was just getting to him. Part of him missed his dining room table.

The cabin was simplistic, just two sets of rough wooden bunk beds with a small bathroom at the end. Each bunk had a little curtain to pull across for some privacy, and had a night-light and outlet for each.

“Wow, it’s pretty nice, huh, Jungkookie?” Jimin said, already having crawled into the lower bunk. He tugged on the little cord attached to his night-light, but no light came on.

“Yeah, is this even camping?” Jungkook mumbled, tossing his hefty military-grade backpack up onto his bunk. Jimin had actually lost the rock-paper-scissors match but Jungkook knew he hated sleeping so high up, so he’d chosen the top bunk and let Jimin take the bottom.

“Chim-Chim! Let’s share!” Taehyung crowed, barreling in and throwing himself onto Jimin, bowling them both over and making Jimin snarl grouchily.

“Tae, I’m still sore from the drive, you’re hurting me.” Jimin growled, pushing the boy off without ceremony. Looking wounded, Taehyung pouted, slipping off the bed and dramatically dragging his things to his own bunk.

“Where’s Seokjin?” Jungkook asked.

“Probably checking on the firewood supply with Namjoon. There’s a storage shed off the Main Hall with a couple cords at the ready, but it leaks sometimes and the wood gets a bit damp.” Taehyung
explained, crawling across the mattress and tucking his sheet in. “I hope they’re quick, because I wanna get going!”

Jungkook wasn’t sure if it was because Taehyung was more familiar with the island or because he had been exposed to more hunts in general since being a puppy, but he seemed the most energized of the three of them by far.

There was a little tapping noise like glass clinking, and the night-light next to Jimin lit up. Jungkook raised his head suddenly at the sound of something rustling around beneath the window, and he pressed up against it with concern until he heard Yoongi’s distinct grunt and Seokjin’s voice. He forced the window open and peered out in time to see Yoongi sticking labels inside a light-gray metal box attached to the cabin wall. Seokjin was standing behind him with a small box of tools that it didn’t look as if it had been needed, and was talking to him about the weather forecast.

“These were totally unreadable,” Yoongi was mumbling under his breath, a black face mask pulled down under his chin.

“Hyung!” Jungkook called out, and both men looked up at him in question. He paused. He really had had no reason to call out to them, but he had wanted them both to look up and notice him. “What are you doing?”

“We’re going around and checking all the circuit breakers for the camp. We could do without it tonight, in all honesty, but it’s been awhile since anyone’s been up here, so it probably needs a test-run.” Yoongi shut the door of the breaker box with a loud clatter, bits of dew and leaves dripping from the top.

Jungkook nodded in interest, his eyes flickering over to Seokjin, who was looking at him with a soft smile. “Are you ready for the hunt, Jungkookie?”

“Yeah, I think we’re all settled in here.”

Taehyung pressed into the small opening of the window next to Jungkook, his shoulder bumping against him painfully. “Hyung, let’s go I’m ready.”

“Look at this excited pup,” Seokjin chuckled, playfully mimicking Taehyung’s eagerness by hunching his shoulders up and panting a little as if in excitement. Taehyung shifted a little as if he was going to do it back to Seokjin, but then decided not to, although an amused smile still softened
“Hyuuung don’t be weird.” Taehyung rolled his eyes, stepping away from the window. Jungkook smiled toothily at the two hyungs, laughing when Seokjin did it one more time for him before turning to walk away with Yoongi.

“Seokjin acts different when we’re on the island,” Jungkook noted, as they made sure to empty their pockets and started for the cabin door.

“Yeah, he’s such a nerd,” Taehyung sighed, as if his older brother was a source of constant shame and embarrassment. But Jungkook thought that Taehyung secretly enjoyed it. Taehyung naturally led their way across the campsite.

“Wow, look at the beach!” Jimin said as they broke through the line of trees, the grass gradually reducing to straggling clumps dotted here and there until it broke away entirely to the white sandiness of the shoreline. The others were already there, standing looking out at the ocean. The saltiness stung at Jungkook’s nostrils, and despite the brightness of the sun overhead there was a chill to the air, making him shiver. He wondered if this was what he really smelled liked to the others, this salty coolness. “It’s so beautiful!”

Suddenly, Taehyung was giggling delightedly at his side, and the boys’ shoes flew away with abandon as he raced to the water’s edge, holding his pant legs up as he splashed his way in. “Uwah! It feels so nice!”

Seokjin kicked off his shoes, too, laying his socks across the laces before Taehyung tugged him in closer. Through laughter, Seokjin let out a dramatic cry, lifting one foot up above the foam. “Ah! It’s so cold!”

“Of course it’s cold, it’s fucking October,” Yoongi stated in a deadpan, his arms crossed over his chest as Hoseok smirked, chin tucked into Yoongi’s shoulder as he Scented him.

“Come on, Jungkookie!” Jimin said, grabbing Jungkook’s hand, his shoes already laid out neatly next to Seokjin’s. Jungkook nodded, leaning in on his hand clasped with Jimin’s as he lifted one boot to tug it off, nearly tripping in the process but managing it. They splashed into the frigid water, getting Taehyung’s pants wet and making him groan.

Namjoon and Kiara were taking photos together with the waves in the background, and he was leaning down to press a kiss to her cheek. She let him take one photo like that, then poked at his dimples and used them to turn his face away from hers, scrunching up her nose at him and laughing
as he continued to click away at the camera.

“Hello, there,” Taehyung said, bending down and picking up a thick strand of greenish-yellow kelp. “What’s your name?”

Jungkook had wandered off into the area mostly blocked off by rocks, his hand still locked with Jimin’s. The current wasn’t as strong there and there was stranded debris tossed up against the slimy surface of the rocks, little hermit crabs stuck stubbornly clinging on to fight against the tide.

“Jungkookie,” Jimin drew out the word in a bit of a long whine, “I don’t fee-”

“Look, hyung!” Jungkook’s eyes widened and he dropped down to the water suddenly, twisting his wrist until it was out of Jimin’s grasp and casually slipping his fingers around a large fish that had just started lazily swimming between his legs. Surprised that it didn’t seem concerned with swimming away or fighting, he picked it up and straightened, staring at it in disbelief. It must have been stunned, thrown up against the rocks on the shore unexpectedly, leaving it at the mercy of any passersby.

“What the--?!” Jimin gasped.

“Jungkook, what the fuck?!” Yoongi called out, his mouth agape over his camera as he blinked at Jungkook. Seokjin was just stepping out of the water but turned to look and instantly started laughing at the dumbfounded look on Jungkook’s face.

Hoseok stepped forward, his expression utterly confused. “Where did you get that?!”

Dumbly, still stunned at the catch himself, he just pointed down at the spot in front of him and said, “Here.”

They all started laughing, mostly from disbelief, and Jungkook found his chest warming a little in the hilarity of the moment. He looked at Seokjin, trying to catch his breath while leaning heavily against Hoseok. Emboldened, either by the salt air or the freedom of the island, Jungkook felt like being a little silly, laying the very limp and lifeless fish against his chest so it was like a tie for a suit, the long body stretching from his neck to just below his waist.

“Business fish,” he declared proudly, straightening his back as everyone almost collapsed in loud
guffaws. But Jungkook noticed that Seokjin’s was the loudest, an endearing wheeze as he bent half-over and slapped at his knee. Jimin laughed at Jungkook’s side, leaning against his shoulder and laughing so hard he started to let out a little breathless squeak.

“Oh my god, Jungkookie, it looks dead,” Taehyung cried, wiping tears from his eyes as he laughed. Jungkook leaned over to set the fish gently back into the water, but it just laid there, motionless save for the ocean tugging it back and forth.

“You killed it,” Jimin wheezed.

“I did not! It was already like this!” Jungkook poked the fish in the side, and it rolled halfway over, then slowly started to move its tail fin back and forth, slowly regaining its awareness. It didn’t get very far, however, and Jungkook started to feel genuinely concerned for its well-being.

“Okay, it’s time to set out!” Namjoon called out, traces of that Alpha voice in his tone despite the merriment also there. They all splashed their way to circle around him and Kiara, the wind pulling at their hair as he looked intently at each of them in turn.

“All right, the woods here are very big, and there should be a lot of wildlife out there. But I want all of us to stay safe and healthy, okay? That’s the biggest priority. Don’t wander off on your own, always travel with at least one other wolf at your side. At least for today, I want you to avoid all large game. No bears, no boars, you know the procedure if you come across them. All catches are to be shared. Any injuries and you assume you have to return to the main pack, and then back to the cabins, unless I state otherwise. If one wolf can’t return you call out and wait there for me or another Alpha to come. The perimeters are marked by scent and by red tape, so they should be easy to spot. Don’t cross the perimeter, under any circumstances. We don’t want wars with our neighbors.”

“If you find yourself lost, you can smell your way back here by this,” Namjoon pulled a balled up pair of socks out of his pockets, and instantly all members of the current party leaned back and groaned in disgust.

“Oh my god, Namjoon, are those your dirty socks?” Jimin pinched at his nose, waving in front of his face as if that would help the smell.

“It’s so you can definitely remember your way back,” Namjoon explained, “It has my scent and the scent of the pack house, so if you get lost, just try to pick up on the scent. And besides, they just haven’t been washed, it’s normal dirty-smell, I swear.”
Seokjin hiccupped with laughter, holding his hand in front of his mouth as he whispered, “As opposed to all the other smells men put into their socks.”

Namjoon frowned, and Seokjin struggled to bite back his smile, the veins on his neck strained as he tried not to laugh. Namjoon shut him up really quickly by shoving the socks really close up against Seokjin’s face, making him cough and gag, then holding it out for every member to give a begrudging sniff. Namjoon turned to tie the socks to a small pole set up along the edge of the beach where the grass met the sand, the wind tugging at the grey, stained material like a gross little flag.

“We’ll be out until almost eleven. Now…” Namjoon laid out his hand, and they all placed their palms down one by one until they were a human-made star-shape of a connection. “After me, ‘teamwork makes the dream work!’

But to his surprise, no one shouted it after him, staring at him in judging silence. Bewildered, he looked up at them. “W-what?”

“‘Teamwork makes the dream work?’ Where did you get that, a quote-a-day calendar?” Yoongi snorted.

“Couldn’t you have picked something cooler, like ‘All for one and one for all’?” Taehyung teased.

Jimin shook his head, giggling, “All right, all right, I’ll admit, it’s very funny. But hyung is the lead Alpha, so…” Jimin had to pause a moment, nearly falling forward onto their still-entwined hand pile as he gave a snort of laughter, “So he gets to choose our motto.”

“What’s the motto with you?” Seokjin wheezed suddenly, and they were already crumbling their focus again into loud bursts of unbridled laughter until Yoongi waved them into calming down again. But even then, Jungkook had to gnaw at his lips to try and maintain control.

“Okay, one more time,” Namjoon said in warning, “Teamwork makes the dream work!”

“Teamwork makes the dream work!” Their hands shot up between them, and as they turned away, each of them shifted, snarls and groans cutting across the thunderous sound of the waves. Jungkook felt the sand rise up to meet his paws as he shifted mid-drop, barking excitedly and turning to Jimin. The older wolf was at his side, and gave a happy noise in return. Jimin’s wolf form was one of the cutest, in Jungkook’s opinion, but he never admitted it aloud because he knew Jimin wouldn’t like his wolf form of all things to be called cute. But he was definitely more rounded and muscular than Jungkook, warm golden-brown fur that was short and soft, and his tail had the sweetest curl at the end, with dark eyes and a short snout. He looked rounded and warm like a bun fresh out of the oven.
Jungkook wanted to laugh at the thought, but settled for shaking the chill out of his fur, trying to get a feel for his wolf form in the new environment. Jimin nuzzled in at Jungkook, and since today was a special day, Jungkook nuzzled in back, shutting his eyes as he drowned himself momentarily in Scenting Jimin, brushing his neck up against the golden wolf’s fur and leaving his own smell. Taehyung of course nudged his way in, followed by Yoongi and Hoseok.

Kiara slipped over to Jungkook’s side, and the comforting, motherly scent of her Omega washed over him as she leaned in. Her fur was a complex design, like a painting of reds, blacks, and browns, and she had flecks of white all across her muzzle like the freckles she bore in human form, and her eyes were angular and attentive. She licked at his face tenderly, and he responded in kind, tucking his head beneath her chin and submitting to her, pleased at the feeling of familiar care. She nudged at him a bit roughly before leading them all back towards the edge of the beach, where the woods stretched out into dimness, an orchestra of greens, browns and grays. Namjoon, notably broader and larger than most of the other wolves, stood waiting patiently at the start of the trees. Kiara rushed to his side, her movements graceful and still quite feminine, and they brushed against each other before running off into the woods.

Jungkook moved to follow, when a flash of pure white caught his attention out of the corner of his eye. Whereas Namjoon and Jimin were stocky, round-limb wolves, and Jungkook and Yoongi were more of the gangly all-legs and angles type, this wolf had broad, even shoulders and thick front paws, his hip bones prominent and graceful on slender legs with a full, bristled-out tail of pure white. The fur around his head was thick and looked like a cloud. He was the wolf that people dreamed out onto the surface of paintings that hung in art galleries, emanating his own effervescent glow. Jungkook blinked. Seokjin.

Jimin rushed past him, waking Jungkook out of his thoughts, and they all rushed into the hunt. Jungkook’s first real hunt. The forest bed was mostly soft, made of dead leaves from autumn’s past and half-dying ferns, but it was very uneven. Jungkook had to adjust his weight carefully, unused to the rougher terrain, and found himself lagging a bit behind with Jimin. Surprisingly, only a few minutes in and the latter was already panting, uncharacteristic of the boy who often rough-housed with both Taehyung and Jungkook at once and held his own.

The leaves brushed against Jungkook’s black fur, dangerously sweeping past his eyes and almost cutting into them. He could see Hoseok’s dapple-gray tail up ahead of him, vanishing just around the trunk of a tree, and he raced to follow. Despite the difficulty of navigating the terrain, the slightly cool dampness of the ground beneath his feet was comforting, and the sweet smell that hovered beneath the branches of the trees, trapped in like a biosphere of nature’s gentle perfumes, was intoxicating.

Another flash of white and Seokjin was at Jungkook’s side, long strides letting him keep pace and a surprising confidence to his steps. He had been ahead of Jungkook but circled back around to run at his side, and Jungkook wanted to shiver from the aura that screamed Alpha at him. Jimin was at his other side, and seemed to deliberately bump up against him. Jungkook gave a bit of a snort warningly at the golden brown wolf, wanting him to back off a bit.
Somewhere ahead of them, Namjoon’s distinctive howl rose in signal of a scent discovered, making the fur on the back of Jungkook’s neck rise in excitement. He felt Seokjin’s eyes on him and turned. He could have sworn he could read amusement in the Alpha’s eyes before he pulled away to run ahead. Not to be outdone, Jungkook sped up, passing up the elder soon enough and catching up to Namjoon within a couple of heart-racing minutes. They were already closing in on a lone stag, the white of the fur underneath its tail and on its belly like a white flag of surrender, even as it leapt and bound over a small, dried up brook. Namjoon’s ear flickered a little, and Jungkook took the signal, moving over to the leader’s right flank and hurrying around to try and cut the stag off. In the corner of his eye he saw Yoongi’s form flickering through the underbrush, bent low and looking like a dark gray arrow shooting ahead, sure of its aim. Jungkook’s heart raced, his legs screaming from the exercise but his chest feeling light and eager.

They ran for several more minutes, weaving in closer together, then farther apart, avoiding briars and naked branches until they were out into a sizeable clearing. The stag was able to increase his pace but so were the wolves hot on his heels, and Jungkook forced his muscles to push off with more speed at the same time Yoongi did across from him, until they were able to circle around and cut off the stag’s escape. Long, spindly legs flailed, and the stag’s pupils were blown and panicked as it sought any escape. But as it was watching Yoongi, waiting for a moment to bolt, Namjoon and Kiara moved in. The former leapt straight for the stag’s throat and bit down ferociously, even as the Omega took hold of the stag’s back leg, using her own weight to pull the stag to the ground and helping Namjoon wrestle him down long enough to end him. The stag fought back as bravely as he could, headbutting at Namjoon and trying to throw him off. The stag lifted his front hooves in a valiant attempt to wriggle his flank out from Kiara’s relentless, bloody grip. Yoongi and Jungkook raced forward to press in at the stag’s front legs, and Jungkook felt the acrid bite of blood in his mouth as he took a mouthful of the stag’s right foreleg, shaking his head back and forth violently and helping force the stag to lie on its side.

It was strange, to see the stag finally yield, as though the energy was suddenly sapped from him like a dying battery as he bent his legs, almost calm as he laid down across the grass, exposed and doomed. Namjoon snapped at them after they had torn into the stag sufficiently to satisfy him, and Yoongi warning nudged Jungkook’s bloody muzzle out from the stag’s belly, and they stepped aside and let Hoseok pass them, the Alphas with first priority at the meal. Jungkook sat and watched, waiting his turn and licking at his paws in impatience. At the stag’s head, Jimin pressed in with ears pressed low, as though trying to pass by unnoticed as he reached for the tender meat of the deer’s neck. As he wasn’t noticed by Namjoon or the other Alphas, he was allowed to continue for the time being. Emboldened by that, Jungkook pressed in again, only to get snapped at by Hoseok, his teeth bared as his pink lip curled in aggressive warning. Jungkook’s ears angled down in apology, and he dipped his head as he stepped back.

A few minutes later and it was the Omegas turn, and since there were only two of them, the unpresented pups were allowed to join them. Jungkook buried himself in gleefully, the raw meat more pungent and appealing for the effort he had put in to earn it. He was happy have not only kept up, but helped in the chase.
But a snarl at his side suddenly interrupted the feeding time, as Jimin had tried to steal away the head that Namjoon had been gnawing on, provoking the leader to snap at the pup. Jimin yipped but tried again, until Namjoon bit at him in warning. The other wolves paused, the atmosphere suddenly tense again as they tried to continue to feed while avoiding getting caught up in the inevitable brawl. To Jungkook’s surprise, Jimin snapped his jaws back at Namjoon, even while he was bent low with his head raised to the Alpha, a defensive posture to protect his neck, to no avail as Namjoon grabbed Jimin and tossed him aside, fur bristled and eyes snapping into a fiery red. Kiara moved in with a smooth, quick step and placed her head beneath Namjoon’s chin, snarling at Jimin in her own wordless warning. Jungkook didn’t know why Jimin was being provocative, especially when there was plenty of meat for them to share without causing problems. Jimin let out a whimper, but stood up again and braced his paws against the grass, leaping forward with a growl and biting toward Namjoon’s front paw. A scuffle ensued, then, faster than Jungkook’s eyes could catch it, but he knew that every hair on his body stood on end at the dark, deep sound that Namjoon emitted, biting again at the pup and with none of the previous caution. Jimin let out a high-pitched cry, whimpering several loud painful yelps as he limped a bit away, one paw bent at his side. Namjoon stood firmly, as though just daring Jimin to continue the unnecessary assault.

Then, the breeze changed, and a new scent rose in the air. Jungkook lifted his nose, distracted from watching the fight, and wondered why it smelled so sweet. It made him shiver, something in his belly glowing warm and heavy. Yoongi whimpered at his side, once, then twice, with a deliberation. There seemed to be a piercing, shrill-sound in the air, like an unspoken scream, and Jungkook felt like Yoongi was trying to warn him of something. Namjoon’s ears twitched in realization, and it was several long moments until Jungkook figured it out, too.

That was the scent of a new Alpha, mingled with the powerful sweetness of a familiar smell.

The smell of peppermint.

Jimin was presenting.

Yoongi growled deeply in his throat, looking toward Hoseok, who bobbed his head up and down in understanding. The gray Omega wolf pushed roughly at Jungkook’s side, telling him to follow as he ran out of the clearing. Seokjin and Hoseok waited, but Taehyung, Jungkook and Kiara were corralled away, soon flanked by the two Alphas. As they started off into the trees, Jungkook couldn’t help but look over his shoulder, seeing Namjoon and Jimin alone in the clearing. Jimin still had crimson dripping from his jaw from their kill, both wolves with their ears pressed low and teeth bared in challenge. Just as they were falling out of sight, Jungkook saw Namjoon leap forward, maw open wide and menacing.

He was jolted back into gear when Yoongi bumped up against him roughly, shaking him into focus enough so that they could run back toward the camp. The distant smell of Namjoon’s scent marker drifted to him when the wind changed, and almost as one all the wolves shifted their direction.
slightly to the right. It was almost an hour before Jungkook started to feel the ground was familiar, and then the beach suddenly opened up before them.

They sat for a minute, panting, drool and drying blood alike hanging from their chins, before Hoseok led the way back toward the cabins. Jungkook followed, his steps a little shaky as he realized he couldn’t get the image of Namjoon and Jimin out of his mind.

Seeing both Seokjin and Hoseok back in their human forms, the former wiping absently at the blood on his pale skin as the two Alphas leaned close in heated discussion, Jungkook was about to start transforming back, when he noticed Taehyung for the first time since the fight had broken out. The wolf had his tail between his legs as though he had been the one berated, both ears tilted low and head hung near the sand. Jungkook twitched an ear at him in curiosity, moving forward to use his muzzle to attempt to lift Taehyung’s face upward. He seemed to ignore Jungkook’s presence entirely.

“I can’t believe he went into a fucking rut in the middle of a hunt, though,” Yoongi was saying, now having joined the others. “That was so dangerous! Didn’t he give off any signs?!”

“Um, he did say he wasn’t feeling well on the drive over,” Kiara offered, her mouth quirking to the side in concern.

“I wondered if he had a bit of a fever, when we stopped at the rest stop, but he said he would be fine if he just rested a bit,” Hoseok sighed. “And then during the hunt I hung back with him because he seemed to be struggling to keep up. I should have smelled it on him, though. I could have stayed back with him at the cabins.”

“No,” Yoongi snapped. Jungkook felt the air crackle as Yoongi’s possessive Omega scent rose, somehow blacker and more dangerous than the regular smell of earth around them. “You’re not his Alpha. Either way, Namjoon would have had to take him off. Let’s just hope he’s not too wired up to listen to some sense.”

Meanwhile, Jungkook heard Taehyung give a little whimper, and he turned to him, trying to nuzzle against him in reassurance. *It'll be okay, Taehyung-hyung. Namjoon will take care of it! He’s our lead Alpha, after all.* Truth be told, Jungkook didn’t understand everything that was going on, but he knew Namjoon wouldn’t really hurt Jimin. He just needed to establish his role as a lead Alpha in the pack. With Jimin’s new raging Alpha hormones, he just wasn’t thinking straight.

“What’s wrong with the boys?” Kiara breathed, stepping over and brushing a hand across Taehyung’s head, her pale hand gentle, even as Jungkook saw that there was still blood encrusted
under her fingernails. “Taehyungie? What’s wrong?”

Taehyung still didn’t move, whimpering a little and holding his head low.

“Do you feel sick? Why won’t you transform back? Are you stuck?”

In response, Taehyung just lowered himself onto his belly on the sand. Jungkook whimpered, burying his nose in as many places of Taehyung’s fur as he could, feeling slightly panicked with worry as he messily tried to nudge the older wolf into standing up again.

“I don’t understand,” Hoseok said. Then, to Kiara in a quieter voice, he suggested, “Maybe he’s upset about Jimin?”

“Mm…” Kiara ran a hand under Taehyung’s chin, gently rubbing at the fur there with a motherly hand. “It’ll be all right, Taehyung, I promise. Jimin is just presenting, that’s all. That’s a very wonderful thing! It means he can finally have his own place in the pack, like an adult wolf. He was just a few days before his 20th birthday, too, so he chose a good day! We’ll just wait here for them to come back, all right?” She paused a moment, turning to Jungkook and asking, “Jungkook? Are you okay?”

Jungkook had laid down at Taehyung’s side, but at Kiara’s words he lifted his ears, tail lifting and wagging back and forth in reassurance. He was fine. But somehow he didn’t want to leave Taehyung alone. If Taehyung didn’t feel okay enough to transform back, then he wouldn’t, either.

“All right, you boys take your time and take it easy, okay? And let us know if you need us.” Then, in a deliberate, calm voice, emphasizing every syllable, she added, “We’re a pack, after all.” Kiara stood up, then, running a hand through her short, wavy red hair, letting out a sigh as she went to the Main Hall with the other boys.

Taehyung didn’t move, so Jungkook laid down at his side, their paws brushed up against each other as they rested their heads against the sand, facing the path that led into the woods. Over an hour passed, and Jungkook found himself dozing off, waking himself up with little snorts as he got jolted from a dream by the occasional sigh from Taehyung. At one point, he got up to stretch his legs, circling Taehyung as he walked slowly, arching his back to get the crick out of it. Still, Taehyung didn’t move. The sky started to darken, and the wind felt cooler as a grayness covered the sky. It looked like rain, but Taehyung just closed his eyes and sighed again, his nose sniffing for the millionth time as the breeze shifted. Jungkook spotted a black tree frog out of the corner of his eye and bounded over to play with it, not trying too hard to catch it because he liked seeing the way the sand flew up around it as it tried to leap away.
Kiara brought them food when it really got dark, but Taehyung didn’t touch any of it. Jungkook swore to himself that he would be strong and leave Taehyung’s portion alone, but a nibble became a bite, which became another bite, and soon he’d ended up eating both. Kiara insisted they sleep in their cabins, promising to come tell him if anyone came. Taehyung relented, but walked so weakly and reluctantly it was as if he had become an invalid, with Jungkook leaning into his shoulder for both physical and moral support. He crawled straight onto Jimin’s bunk and Jungkook crawled up after him without hesitation, curling around him and tucking his nose over the wolf’s pale golden fur, the smell of citrus stinging at his sensitive nostrils.

Somewhere deep into the night, there was a yip, and a long wolf’s howl. Taehyung whimpered, and Jungkook curled in closer, as if embracing him. It was Jungkook’s turn to let out a sigh of his own as they settled in for a restless night’s sleep. And although Jungkook didn’t know it, there were now only 87 days left.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies! KurageCharms here~! ♥

I was simply blown away by so many subscribers/comments on the first chapter!! Thank you all so much. (;~;) Reading your comments and messaging you all on twitter really makes my day and makes me feel so special and loved.

There's a lot going on in this chapter, but it was a complete treat to write, especially the hunting scene! I did hold back on the gore because I didn't originally tag for much violence, but it seemed like people were looking forward to action scenes, so I hope this suits! I may add quite a bit more like it, if it goes over well.

I'm sure there are a lot of unanswered questions about the pack dynamics and Alpha/Beta/Omega particulars, such as presenting and mating, but I've planned it out in such a way as to hopefully explain more clearly as time goes on, so feel free to let me know your questions/theories/confusion, but there should be answers in the future. ♥

I don't know when I'll get chapter 3 done, but I already have about half of it written as of this morning, so please continue to support and look forward to the upcoming chapters~ (^o^)

Later, my lovelies~!♥
The Waiting Period Part 1

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter includes moderate scenes of sexual activities, dubcon(?), and mild violence. There is also talk of underage drinking but it doesn't actually happen.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“\textit{I wanted to see you again, touch you, know who you were, see if I would find you identical with the ideal image of you which had remained with me and perhaps shatter my dream with the aid of reality.}”

- Victor Hugo

87 DAYS

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Lightning streaked across the sky almost constantly, flashing the earth with cold illumination as a loud crash resounded until it felt like the world was breaking apart. The two wolves entangled in each other were a mass of wet fur, blood and teeth. Paws thrashed, maws snapped, and echoing across the valley was the constant mingling of pain-stricken cries and infuriated snarls. Jungkook stood at the bottom of the valley, just a few feet from them, and he could hear the squelch of the puddle-covered ground beneath his feet, could smell the musky dampness of their fur. The pain in his chest doubled, his eyes widening as he tried in vain to distinguish the dark brown body from the golden brown one in the midst of the brawl, but he was powerless to stop them.

“\textit{Hyung, leave him alone! He’s just in his rut!”} Jungkook cried out, but his words were swallowed by another crash of thunder. “\textit{Leave Jimin alone! He needs you!”}

Namjoon wasn’t listening. Jungkook felt tears stinging at his eyes, biting at his lip until it bled. This wasn’t how presenting was supposed to be, was it? This wasn’t familial and safe, this was scary and uncertain. This wasn’t like the usual Namjoon or Jimin at all. He saw Namjoon’s teeth sinking into Jimin’s neck, causing the younger the whimper so loud it stung Jungkook’s ears.

“\textit{Stop it!”} Jungkook cried, stepping forward, tempted to physically try and break it up, even though every instinct told him that that would do no good. “\textit{He’s presenting, he needs you to take care of him!”}
“He is taking care of him,” said a voice at Jungkook’s side. He jumped, looking over and seeing Seokjin, looking calm and judgmental with his arms crossed. “This is how a lead Alpha takes care of a newly presented Alpha.”

“By hurting him?!” Jungkook snapped, his angry accusation choked with another sob.

Seokjin watched him for a long moment, as though trying to gauge Jungkook’s expression before adding on the next part. “He’ll only hurt him for awhile. Then it will feel good.”

“W-what? How will that feel good?” Jungkook pointed at the tumbling wolves. Now the cries had evened out into little whimpers from Jimin.

Seokjin moved forward, his hands on Jungkook’s shoulders the same way it had been that first day (that only day) he had Scented Jungkook. The weightiness on Jungkook’s shoulders felt familiar and warm, but the look on Seokjin’s face scared him. Seokjin turned Jungkook back to the others, and Jungkook’s eyes widened as he realized that their positions had changed. Instead of being curled around each other messily, Namjoon now had Jimin’s small, round body pinned beneath him, Jimin’s soft stomach pressed to the wet pit of mud and grass, his paws at either side of his face and his bottom in the air as he continued to whimper. Namjoon was crouched over Jimin in a way Jungkook could only see as lewd, moving back and forth violently as if they were mating. And the funny thing was, Jimin wasn’t trying to escape. He was quietly pushing back into Namjoon, nose buried between his paws as his eyes flickered shut, as though he had wanted it this way, as though it was bringing him relief. Jungkook gasped, and Seokjin’s hands felt heavier on his shoulders.

“Jungkook,” he said, lowly and in a voice he only heard when the elder was trying to be patient, when the warm, teasing, friendly hyung he had come to know in the last couple of months had vanished in favor of one that actually felt much, much older. “Jungkook, look at me.”

And of course he did, he looked at Seokjin. But suddenly Namjoon and Jimin were gone, and the world seemed to spin, and it was no longer Jimin pressed to the earth but himself, and the dark paws at either side were now white and larger. His cheek was pressed to well-trampled grass, and rain stung at his eyes, rain-smell swam around him, making it hard for him to see, hard to smell, hard to think. He gasped into the pools he was halfway sunk into, his heart pounding in his chest.

“Jungkook,” Seokjin said again, his voice exactly the same as before, even though Jungkook was crying out in shock, trying to decide whether to scramble away and look for Jimin or to stay and answer his hyung obediently. His hands dug into the grass but he couldn’t feel the wetness there anymore. There were other forms of wetness pooling above and below him, and he felt Seokjin’s stomach pressing against his raised hips....
“Jungkook!”

With a little cry Jungkook jolted out of his dream into a different kind of darkness. The cabin was dark and humid, the windows foggy and dripping condensation. There was the thick, distant roar of rain on the roof, as it had been storming all day and deep into the night, with no sign of stopping and no sign of their missing pack members. Jungkook touched a hand to his face, finding it clammy and covered in sweat, just like his sleeping bag. He was gasping for air like he had just been running, his chest rising and falling as he turned his head. In the dim, bluish-gray light in the room, he could see Taehyung curled up on the bottom bunk below and across, a strange looking form of fur curled up into a tight circle. He glanced up and saw Seokjin asleep in the top bunk above Taehyung, and his chest constricted like someone was sitting on it. Tentatively, Jungkook flicked on his night-light, facing it toward the wall so it wasn’t too bright, and blinked over at the Alpha’s still form. Even in his sleep Seokjin looked somehow more regal than he should be allowed, his lips pressed gently together and his arms crossed over his chest, head laid to the side and his cheek squished slightly up against the fabric of the pillow. The Kims always looked so peaceful when they slept.

Jungkook moved to roll over, but then found himself tensing up suddenly. To his surprise, his boxers now felt uncomfortably tight, the muscles of his groin taut like a rubber band pushed to his limits. *Fuck.*

It wasn’t as if it was the first time this sort of thing had happened, but he didn’t like the idea of it happening while Taehyung and Seokjin were sleeping just a few feet away. But there was no way he’d be going back to sleep like this. With a sigh, he rolled back over onto his back, biting his lip as he tucked his fingers inside the waistband of his boxers. He could just take care of it really quick once, then go back to sleep and it’d be like it never happened. It was late, anyways, so they were definitely asleep. Jungkook wrapped his hands around his stiff and complaining member, brushing his thumb over the tip to find it already moist and warm. Bending his knees up a bit, he shifted his hips on the bunk as quietly as he could, to avoid any telltale creaks. He noticed then that his body felt heavy, as though every sense was on hyperdrive. It was a lot harder tonight than it usually was from morning wood, and he wondered vaguely what had set it off. His palm curved around the base, twisting smoothly and applying a bit more pressure. A giveaway squelch of skin moving against lubricated skin, and he bit at his lip hard to hold back from making a sound. But despite himself, a deep little sigh escaped him.

That was when Seokjin spoke.

Or rather, mumbled. Jungkook’s whole body froze, his hand still wrapped around his cock inside his boxers, and he turned in horror over towards the Alpha’s bed. However, Seokjin lay as he did before, still and relaxed, deep in sleep. Confused, Jungkook stared at him, until Seokjin’s lips parted and incoherent babble tumbled from his lips. Jungkook sighed in relief. Seokjin was a sleep-talker. He smiled at the elder fondly, until his brain decided to remind him of what dream had tormented his sleep in the first place. His eyes widened to almost double their normal size, and he felt goosebumps
rise on his arms.

The dark valley, the cries through the storm. Namjoon and Jimin, snarling and bloody. Seokjin and him.

*Seokjin and him.*

Images flashed through Jungkook’s mind from his dream, images of Seokjin pressing him roughly into the wet earth, and he shivered. The involuntary movement caused his hand to shift on his member, making his back curl a little in reaction. It wasn’t really a conscious decision to continue pumping at his erection, it was just something that happened. And to his shame, Jungkook’s face remained glued to Seokjin’s face as he did it, watching the princely pallor of his cheeks, the sweet pinkness of his lips. His face started to burn with embarrassment, praying to god that Seokjin didn’t wake up, that Taehyung couldn’t hear, that neither of them would smell him in the morning. The fear of being discovered only added to the difficulty of keeping his moans swallowed down, and Jungkook ended up slipping his forearm between his teeth, biting lightly down and muffling his cries.

He felt close, tantalizingly close, but he couldn’t quite finish. In desperation, in weakness of the moment, he let himself think back to the feeling of Seokjin’s hands on his shoulders, of the way he had looked at Jungkook in his dream, intently and focused, self-assured. Across from him, Seokjin let out another little murmur, unknowingly tipping the younger man over. Jungkook released a whimper, trembling as he came into his palm, his head tilting back to leave his jaw and neck exposed, his eyes squeezed shut as he panted through the oncoming wave. When he finished, his whole body sunk into the mattress with a deep sigh, and he lay there for a moment, unmoving, eyes shut, before deciding to clean himself up with one of the small towels in his dirty laundry bag, crawling back into his blankets and feeling much less tense than he had felt before.

It wasn’t until he was almost asleep that he really realized what he had done, and told himself to never think about it again.

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Jungkook slept in late the next morning, crawling down to find that both Seokjin and Taehyung had already left. The rain was still coming down in torrents, so he pulled his black hoodie tight over his head, yanking the drawstrings until the hood opening was bunched up around his face, before shoving his hands into his pockets and trudging over to the Main Hall. The first thing that greeted him was the scent of wood fire, the crackle of flames, and a quiet atmosphere. When he closed the door, he saw that Seokjin was seated on the far couch, a plate of food balanced on his lap and a book held slotted between his fingers on one hand as his other petted across Taehyung’s back, wide, soothing gestures that had the wolf blinking sleepily. Hoseok and Yoongi were sitting on the closer
couch, somewhere between bickering and cuddling.

“It’s not that big of a deal, it’s just a worm. It’s not like it’s going to scream at you,” Yoongi was saying, a tackle box opened between his feet and a thick, dark fishing pole tilted towards him as he threaded line onto it. “Live bait makes a really big difference.”

“But don’t they bleed everywhere and continuing wriggling on it?” Hoseok shuddered, his legs folded and tucked up to the side as he had his arm wrapped around Yoongi’s shoulders. “And they’re so slimy.”

“Slimy worms are the best at catching that kind of fish,” Yoongi stated, as if the argument was over.

“Who’s the real slimy worm here? Shall we find out?” Hoseok pouted suggestively, leaning in to nuzzle at the space behind Yoongi’s ear, placing his teeth around the skin there but not really biting down. Seokjin, who had obviously been listening, started to giggle into the pages of his book. Yoongi frowned, moving the fishing pole over to lightly thwack at his boyfriend’s forehead.

“Get away from me, you’re grossing me out with that disgusting pick-up line.”

Jungkook took a step over to the kitchen island, where a small arrangement of now-cold bacon and toast had been left. He was starving, but he noted well that there seemed to be just enough food for three people, obviously two set aside for the two wolves not back yet. He decided to just make extra toast.

“Hoseokkie-hyung, where are the plates?” Jungkook queried, opening cupboards in his search for the pile of paper plates they had brought with them.

“Oh, they’re on top of the fridge,” he answered, craning his neck to look Jungkook’s way, even as his hand was tickling at the back of Yoongi’s neck, making the Omega swear under his breath at him. “And if you need me to make more bacon, I can.”

“No, it’s all right.” He pressed the button on the toaster and turned to the fridge.

“Speaking of food, it’s been about thirty minutes,” Seokjin said, “Kiara asked if someone would bring her a hot cup of coffee.”
“Yeah,” Hoseok nodded, “Whose turn is it?”

“It’s yours,” Yoongi poked a finger into Hoseok’s side so that he would remove his hand from Yoongi’s thigh, allowing him more room to detangle the spare line he was working on.

Hoseok whimpered, leaning against Yoongi’s shoulder. “But I don’t wanna leaaave you!”

“Then get going so you can get back sooner,” was Yoongi’s diplomatic answer, shoving his shoulder at the Alpha.

“How rude! Your mate just wants your affection and you have to be this much of a brat!” Hoseok’s lips pinched downward, the bottom lip protruding a little in the middle as his upper lip seemed to vanish, a portrait of discontent. But nonetheless he pushed off the couch. “Fine, but don’t come begging to me later. Oh, wait, you will.”

“Asshole,” Yoongi said, with no malice in his tone at all as Hoseok slipped around Jungkook, his hand brushing across the younger man’s shoulder with a natural physical intimacy as he retrieved a mug. Jungkook was leaning against the sink, his hands tucked into his pockets and his shoulders slumped. His eyes flickered back over to the couch where Taehyung and Seokjin were curled around each other, and the younger wolf let out a sigh. Glancing down, Seokjin reached down to pick up a small chunk of toast and held it out to his brother, who ate it reluctantly then dropped his head to Seokjin’s thigh again. Jungkook felt his jaw clench as he remembered the events of that morning, deciding he probably needed a bit more time away from the two brothers before he could go join them like normal.

“Hyung, I could take the coffee to Kiara,” he offered to Hoseok, “Where is she?”

“Oh? Would you? Thank you, Kookie.” Hoseok smiled, patting Jungkook’s cheek in affection and handing him the steaming plastic cup. “She’s down by the scent marker on the beach. Just in case. We’ve tried to talk her into coming back inside, but she said she’d wait until at least this afternoon.”

“No problem,” he said, shoving half of the still hot toast into his mouth and snapping a matching plastic lid onto the cup before preparing to venture out into the rain again.

“Finish your breakfast first, though,” Hoseok said, a trace of command laced into his light-hearted tone. Jungkook nodded, pouring himself a small glass of milk to help hurry things along so that the
Meanwhile, Hoseok went back to the couch, moving to curl back up against Yoongi. But the Omega had just finished threading his lines, and moved to stand up. Hoseok growled a little, clutching at the back of Yoongi’s eggshell-white aran sweater. “Nooo!” he whined, tugging on the fabric, “Don’t leave me, I just got back!”

“It’s best to fish while it’s raining, and the cove will be really nice right now,” Yoongi tried to reason. But Hoseok just tugged harder. “Oh, come on, it’s not like I’m going far, Hoseok.”

“Stay. Here.” Hoseok insisted, his eyes flashing, even as his voice returned to playful. “I’ll miss you!”

Yoongi sighed, “Fine, just let me put the gear away in the lean-to, then.”

“No, do it later!”

“I won’t be gone for long, sheesh, just hold your horses.” Yoongi tugged his sweater out of Hoseok’s grasp, then took his stuff out to the lean-to attached to the side of the porch. Jungkook could see him messing around in the entrance from his spot at the window, where he was eating his bacon as quickly as possible. When Yoongi came back inside, Jungkook was chugging the last of a glass of milk and Hoseok was curled up on the opposite end of the couch, pouting. When the Omega sat back down, shifting over to lean into Hoseok, the Alpha pushed him away.

“No, I don’t talk to rude people, and I certainly don’t cuddle with rude Omegas.”

“Seriously?” Yoongi sighed in exasperation, having had enough of Hoseok’s finicky behavior. He crawled over into Hoseok’s lap, forcing a cute little sound of surprise from the Alpha before taking his face in his hands and pressing a kiss to his lips. Easily, naturally, Hoseok’s hands slipped around Yoongi in turn, returning the kiss. Jungkook smiled a little to himself at the silliness of his hyungs, accidentally glancing over and making eye contact with Seokjin, who was smirking conspiratorially at the youngest, and rolled his eyes. There was nothing inherently out of place with the gesture, but the eye contact with Seokjin reminded him of the last time he had looked directly at Seokjin’s face and goosebumps rose up along his arms. He threw the last of his toast in his mouth and rushed for the door, heading back out into the rain. The air felt a lot cooler and cleaner than inside the Main Hall, and he sighed in relief.
The beach looked a lot grayer and desolate than it had the day before, but the salty air still stung pleasantly at his nostrils. Kiara was sitting on a small fold-up chair next to the ugly scent-flag, a green umbrella that was decorated like a kiwi held over her head and her knees drawn up to her chest, making her look very small. She had on one of Namjoon’s big, dark green sweaters, the sleeves bulky and loose, and practically covering her hands as it was almost big enough on her to be a sort of dress. Her reddish hair was damp and frizzy from the rain, tiny individual hairs filled with static and reaching up towards the material of the umbrella. Her eyes were sad and locked on the edge of the woods where the path ended.

“Noo-oona,” Jungkook sang out, his hand held over the cup to shield it from the rain and making the steam burn a little against the skin of his palm. She looked up, sending him a soft smile.

“Kookie,” she called out, reaching out a hand to draw him near her, tugging him down into a crouch beside her chair and attempting to cover them both with the umbrella. His shoulders were too broad, though, and his right shoulder became dotted with little rain droplets that clung there desperately. “How did you sleep?”


“Thank you,” she took the coffee and blew on it a little, her lips pursing over the rim of the cup. Jungkook watched her for a moment, then turned to stare at the path. He didn’t want to go back to the Main Hall just yet, and he felt the warmth and softness of Kiara’s Omega aura reaching out to him, offering comfort even as she needed it herself. It wasn’t really a scent, in the strictest sense, it was just a feeling he picked up on from her; it was one of the reasons he had always liked Kiara, from the day Namjoon had first brought her to the pack house.

“How long do you think they’ll be?”

“Who knows? It depends on Jimin’s rut,” she said quietly. Taking a cautious sip of her coffee, she added, “I’d like to take you boys out on another little run, but it’s a bit too risky, since we haven’t heard anything. But we’ll come longer next time, okay?”

Jungkook nodded, and she looked over at him with a smile, wrapping her hand around his neck and rubbing at the tense muscles there.

“You did great for your first hunt.” Her smile was radiant, even though her lips looked pale without their signature bright-red lipstick. She seemed smaller but bigger at the same time, and Jungkook felt as if he was seeing a bit of the strain that being a lead Omega could lead to. “As expected of our Golden Maknae.”
Jungkook did his best to smile for her, at the nickname Namjoon had given him. “Well, it’s technically not my first, I went to the public parks…”

“Yeah, but the public parks are so pathetic and sad, it doesn’t really feel the same, does it? So everyone sees this as your first official hunt.”

He tucked his head into Kiara’s side, lifting one curled hand to cling to the pocket of her jeans like he was her pup. A silence enshrouded them, natural but painful for the waiting period they had been forced into. “He’ll be okay. Namjoon’s the strongest Alpha I know.”

“Yes,” she agreed, sighing as she tucked her fingers under his hoodie, tugging it loose enough that she could run a hand through his hair. Rain was collecting on the right half of him but he didn’t move, knowing the gesture was just as much to comfort herself as him. “He’s been preparing for this for a long time, it’s just… a lot of waiting.”

He nuzzled into her, and she rubbed her hands through his hair for a few more minutes, before patting his shoulder and tugging the hoodie back over his eyes. “Go back into the warmth, and check on Taehyung for me.”

Jungkook hummed in acknowledgement, standing up and heading back to the Main Hall. Seokjin was nudging at Taehyung’s mouth with another piece of toast, the latter stubbornly refusing it. Hoseok and Yoongi had vanished, probably off to their currently-empty cabin. Jungkook wanted to curl up against Taehyung, but he didn’t trust himself to get physically close to Seokjin again yet, so he flopped onto the couch the other two had abandoned, still feeling the warmth lingering to the cushions. To keep himself busy, he pulled out his phone and started to browse the internet. An hour passed, and then two, and he almost forgot about the tension of earlier. Jungkook had settled deep into the recesses of the couch, his hand on his lower stomach as he scrolled through his phone, when suddenly Seokjin let out a long, deep moaning sound that surprised Jungkook so much he dropped his cell phone to his face with a thunk. Looking over, Seokjin had bent his back forward, arms outstretched over his head as he groaned, eyes shut and face scrunched up. Jungkook frowned, wanting to throw his cell phone at the Alpha in frustration. Just at that sound, he already felt his gut tensing.

“Jungkookie, I’m hungry again, let’s make some food.”

“You just ate like an hour ago,” Jungkook said quietly, hunching his shoulders and curling up closer with his phone.

“But I’m bored. I’ve already read this book before,” Seokjin sighed, his tone petulant like a spoiled
child. “Jungkook, play with me.”

Jungkook didn’t answer, and Seokjin stood up, setting the now-empty plate onto the coffee table. Taehyung snorted out of his sleep as he was shifted from Seokjin’s thigh before looking over. Jungkook felt every muscle in his body pull tight in warning as Seokjin caged Jungkook in on the couch, with one arm leaning heavily against the back cushion and the other pressed deeply into the cushion at Jungkook’s side, warm against him. Jungkook swallowed heavily, wriggling his body around until he was facing the back of the couch, away from Seokjin’s smirk. Couldn’t he tell that everyone was tense and worried from their missing members? Couldn’t he just leave Jungkook alone? Could he stop smelling so damn nice?

“Come on, JK, let’s do something fun,” Seokjin cooed. Jungkook side-glanced towards the older man and instantly regretted it when he saw the devilish grin, praying to god Seokjin wouldn’t notice the slight flush he felt rising to his cheeks.

“I said no,” Jungkook grouched, burying his cheek into the corner, smelling dust and the slightly suffocating muskiness of old furniture. The door to the cabin opened, letting in the thunderous sound of rain momentarily before being shut off again with a heavy click.

“What are you guys doing?” Kiara’s voice came, and Jungkook breathed a sigh of relief.

“I was trying to get JK to play with me.” He could practically hear the pout in Seokjin’s voice.

“Well, I’m game if you guys are, we could use some cheering up. Come on, Taehyung. Let’s play something together.”

Jungkook was holding in his breath so as not to smell Seokjin, whose attention was on the other two. He wriggled his way out from under the Alpha’s arm, crawling up and over the edge of the couch to try and escape. But Seokjin noticed, snatching hold of Jungkook’s jeans and tugging him easily back down to bounce against the couch cushions, his arms and legs flailing. “Hey! Where are you going? You’re acting all weird.”

“I am not, now let go,” Jungkook said, pushing at Seokjin’s hands. A mistake, as the slight coolness of the man’s fingers against his own suddenly made his hair stand on end. Seokjin crinkled his eyebrows in confusion, frowning. The disgruntled look only lasted a moment, though, before Seokjin threw his arms around Jungkook, pinning the dark-haired boy’s face in the crook of his elbow before rubbing his fist against the top of Jungkook’s head, making him cry out as Seokjin laughed.
“I’m trying to make sure you weren’t possessed by a body snatcher, wearing your skin,” Seokjin teased, grunting as Jungkook’s wiggling caused an elbow to thrust into his stomach. “Relax, they’re gonna be back soon.”

Jungkook realized that Seokjin was assuming the tenseness between them was only because of Namjoon and Jimin’s absence. He wanted to breathe a sigh of relief at the realization that Seokjin didn’t suspect the real reason.

“Taehyung, do you want something to drink?” Kiara asked, going to the fridge. Taehyung twitched an ear in her direction but otherwise gave no answer. When the female Omega opened the fridge, she let out a little, “Oh!” And pulled out the two six-packs of beer Yoongi had bought at the rest stop. “I guess we’re gonna play King’s Cup!”

Looking a little dubiously at the cans, Jungkook said, “But I can’t drink?” Both of the elders paused for a moment, considering deeply.

“We could let him drink just this once, don’t you think? Since he’s just with us?” Seokjin asked Kiara, who pursed her lips in thought.

“I’m not sure. What if let him drink if he gets the king’s cup, but otherwise we’ll have him drink orange juice?” She pulled out the liter container and set it in front of the boy, and all agreed that seemed fair enough. Jungkook had to admit, a part of him started off wishing he might get the King’s Cup, so he could drink. It wasn’t often the older pack members were this lenient with a rule. He didn’t know the rules of the game but he figured he could keep up.

Kiara set a large goblet-like cup in the middle of the table, then shuffled a deck of cards, laying them out so that they were spread out in a circle around the cup, face down. She gestured to Seokjin, who shook his head and gestured to her instead, saying, “Ladies first.”

Kiara rolled her eyes, flipping over the first card, a 10 of spades. “Categories,” she explained. “Um… animals, I guess?” She turned to Seokjin. “You’re first.”

“Horses,” Jin said quickly.

“Uh, wolves?”
Kiara rolled her eyes but took her turn, “Monkeys.”

“Bears.”

“Iguanas?”

“Rhinoceros.”

The play went around the table for almost ten minutes, until Seokjin accidentally named an animal they had already listed before, and he had to take a drink. Kiara and Jungkook cheered as he took a good-sized swig of the beer, his brows crinkling together at the bitter taste.

“Okay, my turn to pick a card.” He leaned forward and drew a King of hearts. Kiara gave a loud “Oooh!” so Jungkook did similarly, as Seokjin made a face as though he was facing a great challenge, raising his fist in a fighting salute before dumping some of his beer into the main goblet, foam floating at the top as Jungkook reached for a card tentatively. He flipped it over, revealing a jack of hearts. Seokjin moaned, smacking Jungkook on the arm while Kiara laughed.

“Yah, JK, why is this game so mean to me so early, huh? That’s not fair!”

“Wait, what does a jack mean?”

“Jack for jacks,” Kiara giggled, “Meaning all the guys drink. Bottoms up, boys!” Jungkook and Seokjin tipped their glasses back, draining their cups. Seokjin moaned and complained, somehow blaming it all on Jungkook that he had to take the extra drink, and opened himself up another can.

“Okay, my turn again!” The Omega leaned forward and flipped over another card, turning over a 3 of diamonds. “Aww, ‘three for me,’ I have to take three drinks now.”

It was almost time for dinner when Yoongi and Hoseok finally came back to the main cabin, and when they arrived, they found Seokjin and Kiara rolling around on the couch laughing at something hilarious Jungkook apparently said, the youngest sheepishly sipping at the last of his orange juice while Taehyung looked on, looking more interested than he had since the hunt. Both his ears were perked up as Jungkook refilled his glass with milk this time.
“What’s going on?”

“Jungkook is cheating at King’s Cup!” Seokjin screeched, his face and neck red from the strain of laughter, one finger pointing accusatorily at the youngest. “We’ve played four...no, six times, and he hasn’t lost once!” Hoseok shook his head, stepping over to the fire and setting a new log on top of the coals that had been allowed to accumulate there.

“Well, he’s the Golden Maknae, and you’re one of the unluckiest people I know,” Yoongi said, sitting down onto the couch next to Taehyung and drawing the wolf’s head into his lap so he could pet him.

“It’s nice to see everyone a bit more upbeat now, though,” Hoseok commented, sitting back as the fire licked its way across the log it had just been fed, slowly feeling its way across the pine and giving the smell of sap in the air, crackling delightedly.

“Yeah,” Yoongi rubbed underneath Taehyung’s chin, but his smile disappeared when he gave the drinking party a closer look. “Wait, is that my beer?”

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies! KurageCharms here! :D

I hit 100 subscribers already, even before the third chapter, I'm so happy! (^O^) I didn't expect this many people would be on board so soon, so I appreciate your support. :A;

I'm trying to teach myself some restraint and patience with my writing, so after a question from a commenter before, I've decided to try and do weekly updates on Saturdays at midnight (JST) with 'bonus' updates during productive weeks on some Wednesdays. :3

The next couple chapters are not as long as the first two, but quite a lot goes on, so I hope it satisfies until the next update~ I'm quite eager to hear people's reactions in regards to Jungkook's dream ( and the aftermath) so please leave a comment below!

And feel free to follow me on Twitter, even tho I'm just a meme on there tbh.

Later, my lovelies!
"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

— Marie Curie

85 DAYS

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“Jungkook!” came a cry, shaking him violently. He blinked open his eyes, and Taehyung was leaning over him, his bangs falling into his eyes as he beamed broadly, all teeth. “Are you awake? You were making all sorts of weird noises in your sleep.”

“Wha-?” Jungkook blinked heavily, crustiness at the edges of his eyes making it difficult. He half-sat up, making his bed-hair stand on end as he did so. Taehyung bounced on the edge of the bed excitedly, waiting for Jungkook to withdraw himself from the deep caverns of his sleepy mind. He rubbed at one eye, giving a heavy yawn. “You… you transformed back?”

“Yes!” Taehyung leaned in, a playful, eager smile there that had been missing the last two days. In a dramatic stage-whisper he explained, “Jimin’s back!”

“Jimin’s back?” Jungkook instantly brightened, his body shot with a volt of energy.

“Yeah, he’s sleeping in the Main Hall, the others are there now. Seokjin said not to wake you, but…”

“I wanna see him!” Jungkook cried out, shifting forward and moving to throw aside his sleeping bag. Taehyung slipped down from the ladder,
A few minutes later and Jungkook was tugging his jeans and boots on and rushing over to the Main Hall as fast as he could. The rain had stopped, although everything was still wet and the ground squelched beneath his feet. Jungkook grimaced up at the morning sun, inhaling a sweet breath of the October morning air before opening the door, Taehyung pushing eagerly at his back before they tumbled inside.

They were greeted with the smell of soup and the gentle clanking of dishes as Kiara and Yoongi made breakfast. She was smiling softly at something he’d said, dropping the minced onions into the pot as Yoongi sliced cherry tomatoes. Namjoon was sprawled across one of the couches, already bandaged up and snoring, his head resting on Hoseok’s lap as the latter kept a hand on Namjoon’s chest. Hoseok looked up as the boys entered, offering a warm smile.

Taehyung moved to perch on the arm of the other couch, looking like an eager bird waiting for its breakfast. He had put his beanie on, his forehead exposed now that his bangs had been tucked away, and he was leaning into his sleeve-covered hands and watching over Seokjin’s broad back as he tended to Jimin on the couch. Jungkook stepped up timidly, leaning over Seokjin but not touching him as he inspected Jimin’s face. The boy looked paler than usual, with scratches on his soft cheeks and a bruise beneath his eye. His shirt had been removed and Seokjin was dabbing at some pretty large open wounds with a wet cotton swab. Jungkook winced at the scratches running up and down Jimin’s gently sloping stomach, almost all clearly claw marks. The deepest looking marks were the little purple dots from teeth that trailed across the skin of his neck, and Jungkook swallowed as he saw images from his dream return. Seokjin was turned away from him, but it felt suddenly very strange to be in the same vicinity as his real, weighted physical presence. He didn’t remember his dreams from the previous night, but he had a sneaking suspicion he’d had the same one again.

Yet despite it all Jimin looked as if he was sleeping peacefully, his dark pink lips slightly parted and looking very, very young. Jungkook felt compelled to throw himself over the boy and nuzzle into him desperately, unused to and not liking seeing one of his closest hyungs looking weakened and vulnerable.

“How…” Jungkook’s word formed as a sort of creak and he cleared his throat before trying again. “How is he?”

“He’s gonna be just fine,” Seokjin said, and even though Jungkook couldn’t see his face, he knew he was smiling. “All the scratches are shallow and clean, and he’s already gotten some food down.”

“Namjoon was careful with him,” Hoseok whispered fondly, running a hand through the leader’s hair, that smile like a soft mother still on his face. “They came in at around 4am.”

Jungkook moved around Seokjin, giving him a wide berth as he went to sit at Jimin’s head, leaning in with curiosity. He raised his hand to card it through Jimin’s bangs. At the warmth and movement,
Jimin stirred, letting out a little moan as he opened his eyes. When he saw Jungkook there, his lips curved up into a weary but beautiful smile. He lifted one hand to reach for Jungkook, who leaned his cheek against Jimin’s palm.

“Hey,” Jimin whispered.

“Hey,” Jungkook breathed back, suddenly wanting to cry. “Are you okay?”

“Of course I am,” Jimin’s smile broadened, the clear whiteness of his teeth dazzling. “It was my own fault, I let things get out of hand… but Namjoon took care of me.”

Jungkook let his hand rest against Jimin’s, squeezing lightly as his blood ran cold. How did he take care of you, Jimin? He wanted to ask, but he was far too terrified. He knew that new Alphas had to be put into their place in the pecking order of the pack, to keep things from being unruly and chaotic, but he had never been told exactly what that entailed. Had his brain just made up an insane, perverted explanation, or was this a wolf instinct, warning him of what his own future could hold?

“He looked really cool, right?” Jimin rasped, glancing over at the leader, who was sleeping with his mouth agape and still snoring loudly. “Tell me I looked cooler, Jungkook.” They both gave a bit of a giggle, and Jungkook nodded.

“You both looked cool, to be honest. You’ll make a good Alpha.”

“I think so, too,” Seokjin said with a smile, reaching over to dab at a bit of blood that had dotted along the cut on Jimin’s collarbone. His chest brushed up against Jungkook, making the boy shudder involuntarily. Jimin arched an eyebrow at Jungkook in confusion, but if Seokjin noticed, he didn’t say anything. Jungkook warily watched Seokjin’s long fingers tend to Jimin’s wounds with an expert hand, trying not to remember certain images. “Jimin will be a great addition to the Alpha team. He’s very hardworking. But remember, it’s okay to ask for help if you’re not feeling well, all right? Next time don’t be shy about speaking up if you think something’s wrong.”

Jungkook squeezed at Jimin’s hand again, considering. “Jimin? Um.. Can I…?”

After a quiet moment, Jimin looked confused, before seeming to realize what Jungkook was asking. He nodded, his eyes sparkling. “Of course.” And Jungkook timidly lifted onto his knees, leaning in and pressing his nose up against the scent gland in Jimin’s neck. The skin there felt warmer than it had before, and the smell of peppermint was now somehow aged and matured, a stronger scent with
that underlying suggestion of Alpha dominance. Jungkook felt everyone else’s eyes on him, and his face flushed, but he tried to forget about it and instead focus on the way he could feel Jimin’s pulse beating through the veins of his neck, and the familiarity of Jimin’s scent. Although he held still at first, Jimin also nudged his way against Jungkook’s neck, a movement he had done a thousand times before but which now felt different. There was a feeling of distance, of power, and also of increased intimacy, as though the Scenting itself bore more weight and purpose, like naive curiosity blooming into interest. Jungkook knew things were different, now. But he wanted to have a little trace of that sameness, some edge that hinted at the way things had been for years, before this eventful first hunt. Jimin sighed against his skin, and Jungkook slowly pulled away to see the boy’s eyes were shut as if he was utterly relaxed. When he opened his eyes they were smiling up at Jungkook, and he rested back against the pillows.

“You never really liked Scenting me before,” Jimin said. And if the Jimin of three days ago could sound sagely and wise and protective, it was nothing compared to the Jimin of today, who seemed to hold secret knowledge behind his smile as he continued to hold Jungkook’s hand possessively.

“Well, I just-..” Jungkook fumbled for words. They wanted to come out all mingled together like mixed paint. “I missed you.”

“You always smell so nice, Jungkook, like Busan.” Jimin sighed, letting his eyes shut. His brow crinkled a little, and Jungkook’s heart quickened in concern. “Mm. I think I need to sleep for a bit, though, Jungkookie. I’m really… I’m really tired. Okay?”

There was no explanation given for what the ‘okay’ was actually referring to, but Jungkook nodded, letting Jimin’s hand drop while keeping it lightly encased within his own. He sat there for several long minutes, just watching Jimin’s face becoming soothed and lax with sleep.

“You two are so close,” Seokjin said quietly, making Jungkook tense up as he remembered that Seokjin was sitting on the floor behind him. Flashes of memory from his dream shot up again, giving him goosebumps, spurred back to the forefront of his mind now that the two wolves had returned. The image of Seokjin leaning into him from behind, encasing him in those arms with just a little movement and a lot of strength, had Jungkook’s mind reeling.

“Y-yeah, we’re very close.” He stood up, letting Jimin’s hand drop as he stood up and moved away. It was getting harder to breathe, and he felt a bit dizzy, so maybe he needed to eat something.

“Noona, is breakfast ready?”

“Yup, come and eat,” Kiara said cheerily, already dishing it out, the counter littered with eight mismatched bowls and cutlery. She set down two bowls on the coffee table and gestured for Hoseok to let her take his place, gently dropping Namjoon’s head to her lap and leaning in to kiss his cheek. She rubbed her hand through his hair, whispering sweet things to him and nudging him awake long enough to eat. Jungkook knew without asking that she was going to make sure he’d finished eating
before she touched her own.

Jungkook slipped up to the counter, reaching for a bowl as Taehyung came up behind him and pressed harshly to his neck. Jolting in surprise, Jungkook froze with his hand still halfway to his soup.

“Tae?”

In response, Taehyung inhaled deeply at Jungkook’s neck, rubbing his own scent gland there and mingling it with the smell of Jimin until their three scents were almost indistinguishable. Without a word, he grabbed a bowl and stepped away and went back to his perch on the end of the couch, leaving Jungkook standing there looking confused. He looked at Yoongi for an explanation, but the male Omega was staring after Taehyung with a contemplative look on his face, stirring his tea. Jungkook sat at the kitchen island, poking at his soup for a moment with his spoon.

“Where’s Jungkookie?” came Namjoon’s voice quietly, and he looked up with a start.

“Jungkook?” Kiara called. “Aren’t you going to greet Namjoon?”

“Um…yes.” Obediently, Jungkook took his bowl and went to lean over the back of the couch. Namjoon had his head lifted, balanced on Kiara’s hand as she spoonfed him. He smiled when he saw Jungkook.

“Hey, sorry your first real hunt was so crazy,” he chuckled. “You okay?”

“Yeah,” Jungkook swallowed heavily. The atmosphere felt strange. Namjoon was usually the first person Jungkook went to with his questions or problems, the one he naturally drew to the most, but his mind couldn’t let go of the things his dream had put into confusion. What had Namjoon done to bring Jimin back? Was he going to do the same to Jungkook when he presented? What about Taehyung? Then Jungkook saw that he had the right side of his neck bandaged up pretty heavily, and he realized that Jimin probably hadn’t held back as carefully as the lead Alpha had. He saw the gentle, concerned look Namjoon was giving him, even while he was worn out and in pain. He felt a little guilty for not coming over earlier. Namjoon had never given him any reason to doubt his judgement, or his care. “Yeah, of course I’m okay, hyung. You’re the one that’s all beaten up.”

“I’ll be fine, they’re just scratches, really. We’ll come out again around New Years and do another good week’s worth of hunts and make up for lost time, I promise. We’ll even go on a hunt, just you and me.”
Jungkook dropped his chin to the back of the couch, feeling very small. Namjoon grunted a bit with effort but lifted his hand to pat the boy on the head affectionately.

“Just make sure you get better soon,” Jungkook breathed.

It had been a happy, but weird morning.

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“Jungkook?” Yoongi’s voice called out, “Are you awake?”

The boy was curled up on his bunk, the curtain pulled across to shut the outside world out for a few minutes. Not easy to do, with Taehyung bounding through and chattering about Jimin, and Hoseok coming in to ask if he was alright, if he was still hungry. He was supposed to have been packing his stuff together, but it remained tossed in a haphazard lump at the foot of the bed, untouched.

“Yeah,” Jungkook mumbled. The window overlapped past the head of the bunk, and he was turned to look outside. Out on the dew-covered grass Taehyung and Seokjin were playing, wrestling with each other and laughing. Taehyung had his arms wrapped around Seokjin’s waist, trying to tip him over as Seokjin tugged at Taehyung’s leg in an attempt to throw off his balance. He could hear Seokjin whining, shouting that Taehyung was cheating, and really, Jungkook thought, it was a valid accusation, since Taehyung cheated at almost every game he played. He wasn’t sure why he found the two of them playing so fascinating, but he had been watching them for the last several minutes through the fingertip-stained window. Taehyung’s beanie had fallen off, his hair ruffled and standing on end, and Seokjin’s neck was all red and swollen looking, as it always was when he got flustered. With a grunt and a cry, Seokjin decided to just lift Taehyung up completely, tipping him over and landing on top of him. Taehyung started screaming about how heavy Seokjin was, making the Alpha laugh, pinning Taehyung’s wrists down to the grass.

“You gonna tell me what’s up with you?” Yoongi said suddenly, drawing the curtain aside with one movement, accompanied by a rustling noise and making Jungkook jump.

“N-nothing,” Jungkook growled, a little irritated that Yoongi had just burst in when the curtain had been clearly pulled closed. What if he had had another situation like that night? He was the youngest, but he needed privacy, too…
Yoongi crawled up into the bunk, making Jungkook sit up suddenly. “What are you doing?”

“I’m coming up to give you an awkward talk that neither of us wants to have, but that you need,” Yoongi said point-blankly, pushing the boy back down and curling up against Jungkook’s back. “Namjoon is too exhausted right now, and Seokjin and Hoseok are taking care of the others.”

“Mmm…” Jungkook hummed noncommittally, turning to look back out the window at Taehyung and Seokjin. Taehyung had gotten the advantage and was now pushing Seokjin’s face into the dirt and rubbing it around, as Seokjin screeched and whined. At times like this, Jungkook wondered how he had ever thought Seokjin looked cold and distant, when he was really more ridiculous and playful. “Looks like Taehyung’s fine now, though.”

“Yeah, but bouncing back doesn’t mean the low point didn’t suck,” Yoongi said quietly. He moved forward and wrapped his arms around Jungkook’s waist, hooking his chin over the boy’s shoulder. It wasn’t a possessive gesture, the way Jimin held him, but it was gentler, somehow more sweetly protective, and not expecting a return gesture. Without the expectation laced within the embrace, Jungkook relaxed, letting himself enjoy the way his back warmed up against Yoongi’s broad chest, his fingers reaching down to play with Yoongi’s squarish fingertips. Yoongi and him had had their share of ugly fights, both of them a little too honest and a little too passive-aggressive all at the same time, but Jungkook liked to think that Yoongi had a certain something in common with him, an unspoken understanding that meant they just got each other. Like with the hug, Yoongi didn’t require anything from Jungkook, didn’t require him to be anything he wasn’t already.

“Jungkook, talk to me. What’s wrong?”

Jungkook bit his lip, still watching out the window. Taehyung and Seokjin had moved now, until they were almost at an angle where he couldn’t see them. Seokjin was currently stomping Taehyung’s beanie into the dirt and cursing him out playfully, making Taehyung chuckle even as he scrambled to try and save his beanie. “I…I was wondering about ruts and heats. What happened out there? H-how did Namjoon ‘help’ Jimin?”

Yoongi was quiet for a moment. Jungkook hated the silence, because it felt as if Yoongi was measuring out how much information he should share with the boy, and he hated the feeling of being behind, of being that much less experienced than the others, who didn’t seem to be wondering at all. Jungkook wondered if Yoongi picked up on what answers Jungkook was asking for, what help he had been imagining in his mind. He hoped Yoongi understood, so that he wouldn’t have to ask out loud. He was reminded of back when he had been a younger pup in the pack, and Yoongi had gone into a heat. After seeing Jungkook’s panic, Yoongi had insisted that he be the one to sit Jungkook down and explain everything, laid out in detail. Yoongi knew more about some of Jungkook’s questions and knowledge than even Namjoon.
“Well,” Yoongi began with a little sigh, “As lead Alpha, Namjoon has the responsibility of making the rules when it comes to mating within the pack,” Yoongi explained quietly, “It’s got good points and bad points. Like the fact that Namjoon had first choice when it came to picking a mate.”

“And he chose Kiara,” Jungkook said quietly.

“Yes. That also means that he has to approve all the mates in the pack, so there isn’t fighting. As you know, he’s approved of me and Hoseok, but we won’t be officiated until New Years.”

“Yeah, I know…”

Yoongi paused, then added, “And that also means that he has the right to mate with any other pack member he chooses.”

Jungkook was silent, then sat halfway up, whirling on Yoongi and saying, “But Jimin is an Alpha! And…and he loves Kiara! ….Doesn’t he?”

“Of course he does,” Yoongi said, petting at Jungkook’s hair and down his neck, trying to soothe him. “But as lead Alpha, that’s one of the more common ways for him to assert his dominance. It’s also his right, because he carries the responsibility of the whole pack, and because he’ll always go into rut more often than Kiara will go into heat. However,” Yoongi punctuated his sentence with a purposeful look, “You should know that Namjoon did not mate with Jimin.”

The world seemed to tilt a little on its axis, and Jungkook let out a breath he didn’t know he had been holding. “He..he didn’t?”

Yoongi gave a little smile, “No, he didn’t. Namjoon just helped walk Jimin through dealing with his first rut, so he’ll be able to do it on his own in the future. They fought, but they didn’t mate.”

“Why not, if it’s his right?” Jungkook couldn’t believe he was asking, but the image of Namjoon mounting Jimin’s trembling wolf form wouldn’t leave his mind.

“Because every pack leader is a little different,” Yoongi explained, “Namjoon and I decided to form this pack because neither of us liked the strict dominance of the packs we were in at that time. Some packs treat their inferiors like hunks of meat, and sometimes the Alphas get too cocky over their Omegas.” Yoongi’s voice had dropped to a solemn tone, and Jungkook shifted uncomfortably,
reluctantly lying back down and letting Yoongi curl around him again, running his hand up and down Jungkook’s arm as if petting him. “Namjoon could just assume dominance over all of us, and to an extent he has to use that dominance to maintain order and earn respect, of course, but… he’s a bit more of a free-thinker, when it comes to that sort of thing. That’s why I respect him.”

“So when you moved into Hoseok’s room…?”

“We had discussed it with Namjoon, but we didn’t really need his permission. We just wanted his blessing,” Yoongi said, smiling into Jungkook’s neck. “You don’t have to be afraid of presenting, Jungkook. We’re all here to look after you, and Namjoon’s a good leader.”

Jungkook nodded. He knew Yoongi was right, he had already known that Namjoon wouldn’t do anything to hurt him, or the other members. But the last few days had somehow shaken the way he’d always taken that for granted, and he was glad that he now had a more solid explanation from Yoongi.

“You still smell like Jimin and Tae.” Yoongi pressed his nose to Jungkook’s jaw, sucking in a breath.

“Yeah,” Jungkook mumbled, still distracted by his thoughts.

“Was that all you wanted to ask about? Jimin’s presenting?”

Jungkook hummed, entwining his fingers with Yoongi’s again. He had now dealt with the turbulence in his mind over the earlier images of his dream, but there was still the final one that he needed to contend with. “Well…” he swallowed. “I sort of had a dream. And in--”

He cut himself off as the door to the cabin opened, both of them stilling as they listened to footsteps entering. “What are you two doing?” came Hoseok’s voice.

“Cuddling,” Yoongi stated simply. There was a distinctive creak as Hoseok clambered up the ladder, and both of them craned their heads to turn and see the look of distaste on Hoseok’s face. His lips were pinched and his mouth seemed to form a triangle, suggesting he was really irritated. “What?”

“That’s my Omega you’re cuddling with,” Hoseok whined at Jungkook, tugging on the aforementioned’s sleeve. “And he’s supposed to be helping me pack up the dishes.”
“Why do you think I snuck into here?” Yoongi smirked, pulling Jungkook closer and earning a smack from Hoseok.

“No, seriously, get off the boy. There’ve been enough hormones raging around this camp the last few days, and you’re close to your heat.”

“Hey!” Yoongi snapped, sitting up defensively. Jungkook chuckled, throwing his arm over Yoongi’s lap and tugging on his waist.

“He’s mine now,” Jungkook teased. “Yoongles promised to love me forever, remember?”

Yoongi groaned, looking up at the ceiling. They were never going to let him live down the time he’d injured his ear and gotten drugged up on a nasty concoction of pain meds, alcohol and loneliness. He’d ended up snuggled into Jungkook for hours, calling him cute and asking him to call him the nickname.

Hoseok grabbed Yoongi’s other arm, tugging on it petulantly and whining, “No, he’s mine! Let go!”

“Okay, okay,” Jungkook laughed, letting Yoongi go and pushed him a little towards the Alpha. Hoseok and Seokjin were really easy-going Alphas when it came down to it, and were fun to tease, but even Jungkook knew there was a limit. The door clicked open and shut again. “But then who is going to cuddle me? I’m the baby.”

“What about cuddling?” Seokjin poked his head up over the edge of the bunk, and Jungkook jumped away, spooked by his sudden appearance. Seokjin’s eyes curved up, signaling that he was smiling, even though Jungkook could only see the top part of his face. His face was pinkened by the exertion and from the chilliness outside. Hoseok tugged Yoongi out of the door with him, his hand tight around Yoongi’s wrist. “Are you ready to go, JK?”

“Um, I just need a few minutes.” He sat up and shifted to the bottom half of his bed, hiding himself behind the curtain and starting to roll up his clothes and shove them into his backpack.

“I wanted you finished so that you could help pack Jimin’s things for him,” Seokjin said in a bit of a complaint.

“He packed with me,” Taehyung piped up, “We shared a bag, so I’ll just put his things in with mine.
Just let me lay out some new clothes for him first.”

“Wow..” Seokjin made a sound of concern at the back of his throat. “You both pack so light. What if he ran out of clean clothes?”

“We didn’t, though,” Taehyung chirruped. Jungkook could hear him shuffling around on Jimin’s still perfectly made bed. Jungkook shifted his now-packed backpack towards the ladder and stilled, seeing Seokjin kneeling on his bed and rolling up his pillowcase. Half-hidden behind the curtain, he stared at Seokjin, his hand still clutching his backpack as he realized he almost told Yoongi all about the dream. He was relieved he hadn’t, and also wished he had. Maybe Yoongi could have reassured him in his mollifying way that the dream meant nothing and didn’t need to be worried about.

Seokjin looked up, and Jungkook ducked back behind the curtain out of instinct. He heard Seokjin chuckling, and felt his face flush. Why couldn’t he just act normal around Seokjin again?

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“Load up, it’s time to hit the road,” Yoongi slapped his palm against the metal siding of the truck, making it ring like a crude sort of bell as Namjoon locked the door to the Main Hall. Jimin and Namjoon had first dibs on the cab of the truck this time, so Taehyung, Jungkook and Yoongi were shifted to the bed, bundled up and with a sleeping bag tucked in around their knees. Hoseok was looking somewhat anxiously over his shoulder into the bed of the cab, but Namjoon had designated the seating arrangement without much room for negotiation. Yoongi was looking forlornly at the cooler, which he had checked at least five or six times since they had strapped it into the back, despite knowing that it was void of any beer that had been accidentally forgotten and left untouched during the drinking game the night before.

“It’s gonna be a long ride,” he sighed.

“You guys settled in back there?” Seokjin leaned over the side of the truck with a smile. Jungkook nodded but kept his eyes focused on his knees, and Seokjin ruffled his hair a bit roughly. Stubbornly, Jungkook tried to pretend that the spot where Seokjin touched now didn’t tingle a little bit in anticipation, that the smell that wafted down from Seokjin’s wrist wasn’t one he wanted to lean in towards, still starved for his daily Scenting that he had decided to end out of guilt over what he’d done.

“Let me drive,” Yoongi pouted.

“Could your feet even reach the pedals?” Seokjin teased, and Yoongi reached out to smack playfully
at the older, but missed as he stepped away, laughing, and crawled into the driver’s seat. The truck revved up with an animalistic growl of its own, and Jungkook looked out the back of the cab as they pulled away, down the dirt road and away from the dimly-lit little camp in the grove. The trees hovered in close over the damp, puddled earth, and remnants of rain still dripped from the browning trees, making it look and smell like an enchanted grove where despite all the turmoil, he had felt at home. It would be months before they could come back, and the environment would be different, then, turned over into a new life. A wind picked up against the direction of the truck as they bounced and thudded along the bumpy path, and the scent of his packmates mingled with another scent for just a brief moment, making his hair stand on end. He sat up a little straighter, staring off into the trees, but the smell was gone before he even had a chance to identify it, something sickly sweet, like honeysuckle. He wondered if it was an animal, curious and sort of hoping it would be there when they came back. Taehyung leaned against Jungkook’s side, and sighed. Jungkook couldn’t agree more.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here~! ^o^

I know I said this was coming on Wednesday, buuut I already almost have another chapter finished and beta read, and I was getting impatient. So you're getting a bonus Monday. Call it my slightly late Easter gift to you (depending on what time zone you're in) okay? Because it's a soft and fluffy chapter, right?

Thank you for the continued support! I love talking to you cats on Twitter, and many of your questions/comments have actually influenced future chapter content! ;) I've added in some elements to address and explore some of your inquisitive wonderings about this world, so I hope it becomes even more real for you with each proceeding chapter. <3

Please anticipate the future chapters, I'm super excited to reveal the reason behind the day countdown soon-ish! :D

Later, lovelies~<3
“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

2 DAYS

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Taehyung was beyond excited. He was wriggling around in his seat like an impatient child, practically falling out of it. Across the dining room table, Jimin smiled at him, blowing gently on the steam that floated above his cup of hot cocoa.

“Just hold still for five seconds, will you? You’re like a Mexican jumping bean,” Namjoon laughed, seated to Taehyung’s right, with Kiara sitting cradled in his lap. “There’s still like half an hour left.”

“I can’t help it.” Taehyung practically gasped out the words, his eyes locked on the blue-green glow of the clock on the microwave.

11:36.

In approximately 24 minutes, Taehyung would be twenty years old, and officially presented as an adult wolf in the pack. That is, as long as I don’t die of anticipation first.

He groaned, flopping down onto the table. “It’s sooo close!” A moment later, there was a chuckle in his ear, and Yoongi’s arms and earthy scent were encasing him, the Omega’s cheek pressed to his.
“Just be patient. It’s not like anyone’s going to be surprised.” He nuzzled in close to Taehyung, scrunching and squishing their faces up. Taehyung made a little whimper of petulant disapproval that he really didn’t mean. Hoseok glanced over at them, fiddling with his cell phone on the table and pressing his lips together.

“So long as he doesn’t present in the next 23 minutes and about 30 seconds as an Alpha or Omega.” Jimin laughed. But while his eyes sparkled, smiling over at Taehyung, the younger man wondered if Jimin could sense why he was so apprehensive. Jimin just seemed to know things sometimes, able to translate when Taehyung wasn’t able to clearly convey his thoughts, and he hoped that today, right now, was one of those times. He wondered if Jimin could hear the chanting in Taehyung’s mind. Anything but an Alpha. Anything but an Alpha.

“Is that likely?” Jungkook queried, his voice drifting up from beneath the table, where he was sitting cross-legged on one of his pillows, playing the newest Pokemon game. He shifted until his arms were spread across Hoseok’s lap, his chin resting on the Alpha’s firm thigh.

“No, it isn’t,” Hoseok said, reaching under the table and running his hand through Jungkook’s hair, as if seeking comfort. “It does happen, but he’s almost certainly a Beta, at this point. There’ve been no signs of ruts or heats at all.”

“Ahh! why is the clock so slow today!?” Taehyung bemoaned.

“It’s the same speed it always is, Taehyung,” Jimin said through giggles. “That’s kind of how time works.” Taehyung had his elbows on the table now, and he pushed up at the corners of his eyes with the edges of his fingers, squishing his eyes into slits and continuing to complain with deep little noises. He turned to look over at Jimin, who was smiling serenely at him as he drank his cocoa. The young Alpha’s cheeks held a new, warm pink glow ever since his first rut, and in Taehyung’s opinion, he was looking prettier than ever.

“Well, actually, time is just a construct,” Namjoon said quietly, and Kiara slapped him on the arm while the others groaned. “What? It is…”

“11:36 still?!” How can a minute not have passed by?!“ Taehyung’s foot was tapping heavily against the tile of the kitchen table.

Jungkook saw a hole in the thigh of Hoseok’s jeans, poking a finger through it and wriggling it around nonchalantly, making Hoseok yelp a little and jump, pushing at his hand. “But is being a Beta...like, a good thing?” Jungkook asked, “I always felt like they were seen as, I dunno, kind of... odd.”
“Well, they’re definitely a rarity,” Namjoon explained, “And Betas don’t have as many naturally strong instincts as a strong Alpha or strong Omega might. Betas are a bit peculiar, yes, and in a way that can be really useful or problematic, depending.”

“Basically, Betas are an ‘in flux’ sort of type,” he continued gently. “That’s why it’s harder to tell if they’ve presented before their 20th birthday. There’re no obvious signs, and lots of people opt for a blood test to make sure. They’re free from some of the hormones until they choose a mate, but then they kind of make up for missed heats or ruts by always being a little sensitive to their mate.”

“For example, if a Beta chooses to mate with an Alpha, his Omega-type hormones will kick in, and he’ll fill the role of an Omega for his mate. He’ll go into heats, he’ll be more protective the way an Omega is, and he’ll be more submissive. If his mate is an Omega, the same happens, but with Alpha-type hormones. He’ll get more aggressive, and have the protectiveness that Alphas have, and go into ruts. However, that’s a hormonal shift, and his body isn’t biologically an Alpha or an Omega, by scientific standards, so…”

“So it isn’t quite what you’d call permanent .” Kiara finished. “If his first mate dies and his second mate is another type, his hormones will change and he’ll fill the new role.”

“That’s amazing, it’s like having someone who is both types…” Jungkook breathed.

“Yeah, but you’ll learn soon enough that hormones are not to be fucked with. They fuck you ,” Yoongi sighed. “The flexibility may seem nice, but depending on the intimacy of the pack, it can be hellish for the Beta. A strong Alpha or Omega scent interrupting can cause the Beta to shift, mate or not. My mother is a Beta, and although my dad is a pretty strong Alpha, when I presented as Omega it threw her hormones so out of whack she had to take suppressants. They practically turned her into a zombie. It was one of the main reasons I left my blood pack.”

“Not to mention it’s very difficult for a Beta to have pups,” Kiara said quietly, tucking her head underneath Namjoon’s chin, her arms encircling his neck. She frowned at Taehyung, her eyes sad.

“But it’s definitely not impossible,” Namjoon reassured her, patting her arm and sending Taehyung a reassuring smile. “And I’d be proud to have a Beta in our pack. There’s a lot of different things that the presence of a Beta can offer.”

Taehyung was only half listening, though, as he practically jumped halfway out of his chair, eyes still locked on the clock. “11:38?! 11:38! Come on!”

They chuckled at his eagerness, and Yoongi rubbed at the boy’s shoulders, trying to calm him down a little. “Jungkook, would you go tell Seokjin that it’s about time? He missed dinner, so he might...
want to eat something before the time switches over.”

Jungkook gave a noise of acknowledgement, crawling out from under the table and heading to the stairs. Seokjin had complained of a migraine and had gone back to his room for a nap, asking to be woken up about ten minutes before the presenting and apologizing to Taehyung. He had been complaining of headaches more and more in the last couple of weeks, blaming it on a shift in the weather added to the hellish levels of stress he’d had to live through for his final exams. Lately, all of them had taken to tiptoeing through the house whenever they were anywhere near his bedroom door.

Already at the top of the landing, Jungkook suddenly stopped, his heart racing a little from taking the stairs two steps at a time. He hadn’t really been in Seokjin’s room since the hunt, he realized. The awkwardness between them had only thickened, and both of them had been actively pretending they hadn’t noticed it. Jungkook hadn’t Scented him since the hunt, and though Seokjin still clumsily attempted to continue their growing skinship of before, Jungkook had kept a notable distance between them, ignoring the crestfallen looks Seokjin had sent towards his back. It was like the trip had caused them to take ten steps backwards, all the way back to how it had been when Seokjin had first moved in.

Jungkook very lightly rapped his knuckles against the door jamb, before pushing the door open with a gentle hand. It creaked, revealing Seokjin curled up on his mostly-made bed, the overhead light off but the desk lamp on and facing the wall, casting long shadows. For the sake of his nap he had folded the edge of the thick comforter with the blue ivy design on it over to cover his hips and shoulders, the lower half completely hiding his slim waist but his wider shoulders ensuring that only half his chest was covered. One hand was tucked underneath his cheek and the other tucked into the underarm of his sweater for warmth, his expression pulled a little tight, a little strained.

Fearing the mental attack of getting too close, Jungkook stepped cautiously into the room, stopping only halfway in. “Hyung, wake up. It’s time.”

Normally, Seokjin was one of the easiest people to wake up, but he didn’t respond to the call. Unable to abate his curiosity, Jungkook looked around the room. Seokjin was one of the neater residents of the pack house, and his room always smelled notably cleaner than the other Kim brothers, even beyond the usual strong headiness of Alpha scent and detergent. There were a few posters tacked carefully to the soft-blue painted wall, and a collection of video-game themed stuffed animals and figurines on a shelf over the bed. His laptop was shoved under the edge of the bed, along with a bag of chips rolled up neatly with a cute little bag-clip hold it shut. All in all, just as normal and unintimidating as Seokjin’s room had always been. After they had finally started getting close, Jungkook had even ventured up to hide in the eldest Alpha’s room, crawling under the bed frame, mooching off of the Alpha’s snacks and playing on his phone, or joining Yoongi and Seokjin for one of their quiet movie nights. It had been getting comfortable. Maybe too comfortable, he thought. But he couldn’t lie to his own mind very well. Despite how guilty he still felt over the dream( which to his horror and confusion had recurred at least four or five times in the months since), Jungkook missed being in this room. He missed the solace of quiet and Seokjin’s scent. But when Jungkook raised his eyes to look at Seokjin’s soft sleeping face, he remembered what he’d done that night in the cabin and his face flushed with shame, even as he had to admit that Seokjin was still, in
“Hyung, wake up. It’s almost midnight,” he called again, venturing a couple steps closer. Seokjin stirred a little, rolling over until he was almost on his back, but didn’t wake. That was when Jungkook noticed the bit of white peeking out from Seokjin’s pillowcase, halfway fallen out as though it had been tugged free and tucked beneath Seokjin’s soft cheek. He wouldn’t have given it more than a cursory glance, but Seokjin’s rolling off of it caused a slight whiff to shift up towards Jungkook, confusing him with its familiarity before he realized it was his own scent.

He reached out and bent down to sniff at the white fabric, and his nose wrinkled as he caught the smell of seawater, leather, and his own sweat loosely clinging to the material. He realized with a bit of a shock that it was one of his own plain white T-shirts, tucked into Seokjin’s pillowcase like it had been forgotten in there.

Jungkook’s hand was clutching the sleeve of the T-shirt and looking at it with an expression of bewilderment when Seokjin’s face crinkled a bit, his nose twitching in sleep and reminding Jungkook of how Taehyung’s did when he slept in wolf form and dreamt about a hunt. For a moment, the two brothers really did seem to resemble each other, Jungkook realized. Then, Seokjin’s expression relaxed, and he seemed to smile, mumbling something incoherent in his sleep that sounded like a name and turning his face a little toward the pillow to bury his nose in it. Then, his eyes fluttered opened, and he saw Jungkook leaning over the bed. There was a tense moment of stunned silence that felt like they had been suspended in time, and then Seokjin shot back away from the edge of the bed, crying out and clutching at the comforter in surprise.

“What the hell, Jungkook!?! You have to stop that, I swear to--” he stopped mid-sentence, mid-rubbing a hand across his face, because he noticed what Jungkook was holding in his hand. Seokjin’s neck suddenly went the reddest Jungkook had ever seen it, so much so that Jungkook wondered if the Alpha was breathing.

“Why was this in your pillowcase?” Jungkook asked, his voice sounding numb and far away, dumbfounded.

“Um, I don’t know, sometimes socks and things get stuck inside the pillowcases when we wash them,” Seokjin said in a breathless rush, shrugging and slipping off the bed on the side furthest from Jungkook.

That didn’t make any sense to Jungkook, since an XL-sized T-shirt was a lot easier to notice wadded up in a pillowcase than a random sock, but the unwritten rules of his distance with Seokjin, his own self-inflicted punishment for the night in the cabin, did not allow him to pry any further than he already had. He would have to pretend he bought that excuse.
“It’s time for Taehyung’s Presenting,” Jungkook said quietly.

Seokjin inhaled sharply, rubbing a hand over his face and nodding, “Oh! How much time is left?”

“About 15 minutes, Yoongi figured you would want to eat before.”

“Oh, right. Yes.”

When the two of them came back down, if anyone else noticed their flushed faces and the escalated smell of saltwater emanating from Jungkook, no one mentioned it. Jungkook went to grab something to eat and found a half-emptied bag of lollipops that Namjoon still had left, digging through until he found a blueberry one. He turned around, intending to crawl back under the table, but Seokjin had already taken the last empty seat at the table, blocking the most logical entrance back to his spot. Tilting his head to the side in an unsure gesture, he opted instead to hop up and sit on the counter, watching the party from the edges of the room. His back felt a little sore from where he’d been sitting under the table earlier, though, and he had to keep shifting his position.

“Seokjin, Seokjin, there’s only 11 minutes left now!” Taehyung cried, as Seokjin grabbed the cereal box in the middle of the table and filled his bowl.

“I know, I know!” Seokjin laughed out, smiling at his younger brother, reaching out one hand and placing it at the back of Taehyung’s neck and squeezing lightly there. Taehyung’s smile was broad and toothy, unrestrained. “It’s exciting, isn’t it?”

“In a way,” Yoongi commented, cocking his head to the side. “But a Beta presenting seems a lot...calmer, somehow, than when an Alpha or Omega presents.”

At that, Jimin looked down at his lap and flushed a little. “Yeah, it’s nothing like mine, this feels really quiet and calm.”

“Each presenting is different,” Namjoon said consolingly. “You can’t compare one to the other.”

“I know, I’m just... I’m sorry I caused so much trouble back then.” Jimin sighed, his brow crinkling in effort. “I just didn’t want to delay the hunt when everyone was so excited. It didn’t seem as important, since I thought I was just feeling a little sick.”
“Even if it’s just a little sick, or a little problem,” Seokjin cut in, taking a pause from inhaling his cereal to give Jimin a pointed look, a little smile on his face. “It’s okay to tell others if you’re feeling troubled, Jimin. The same goes for all of us.”

“Yeah,” Hoseok smiled, leaning over to lay a hand on Taehyung’s shoulder and squeeze gently. “You have to tell us!”

Taehyung smiled, and Jimin laughed.

“I remember when I Presented,” Namjoon smiled, sitting back a little with that expression of quaint nostalgia. They groaned, but let him go on about the Worst Walk To The Park Ever, until Jimin tapped at the middle of the table to gently get their attention.

“TaeTae,” he said quietly, leaning forward. “1 minute left.”

At that, the boy shot halfway out of his seat, Hoseok’s hand flying away. Taehyung gaped at the microwave light, and Namjoon picked his cell phone up off the table.

“Only 20 seconds, actually!” He laughed, holding it out for everyone to see. Taehyung’s eyes seemed to deepen, the realization that the moment was finally here sending his body into tensity and shock. He clenched and unclenched his fists at his side, licking his lips fervently.

At 10 seconds to midnight, everyone gleefully joined in on a noisy countdown.

“10...9...8...”

For Taehyung, the world seemed to spin a little, and he felt hot and cold at the same time. He looked around at everyone in turn. Namjoon and Kiara’s, smiling proudly. Seokjin, clapping his hands together like a gleeful little child with every number. Jungkook, perched on the counter with the lollipop sticking out of the side of his mouth, smirking so that his nose crinkled. Hoseok, now holding onto Yoongi’s wrists as the Omega had his arms encircling the Alpha’s neck. And finally, Jimin, who was smiling so brightly his eyes looked shut, his expression somehow sparkling. Taehyung could hear the Alpha’s light, musical voice lilting in and out among the others. He smiled. Not an Alpha. Here was his family, the pack he finally belonged in. A household of warmth that hadn’t hesitated to welcome him, the pack he wanted to be a part of forever.
“3...2...1! Congratulations!” Everyone screamed, patting him on the back until it hurt. He beamed at them, his cheeks strained with the effort.

“You’re a Beta now!” Seokjin called out, pulling Taehyung towards him by the neck and bumping their foreheads together. “The first in our family in almost seventy years!” After a second, he caught Taehyung’s eye, their faces now close enough that he was able to gently whisper, “And Taehyung, I think grandma would be proud of you, if she could see you now.”

Feeling a tight constriction in his chest, tears stung at the edges of Taehyung’s eyes, and he could see from the momentary quiver of Seokjin’s lip that he was feeling overwhelmed, too. He smiled at Taehyung, the expression strained as their eyes started to get puffy and red. Seokjin sniffed, lifting up and pulling Taehyung to lean against his broad, dependable chest. He buried his face in his shirt and nodded, even though Seokjin hadn’t asked him anything. Suddenly Namjoon was at their side, patting at their shoulders roughly in a gesture of unspoken understanding.

“Seokjin, why do you always have to go and ruin the mood?!” Yoongi snapped playfully, “This is supposed to be a happy moment and you’re already making him cry.” The dependable chest rumbled against his cheek as Seokjin laughed.

“Just because your eyes are the Sahara Desert, doesn’t mean he can’t have happy tears,” Kiara teased, even as she was wiping at her own eyes.

And then there was the angelic voice of Jimin from next to the fridge, and Taehyung looked up to see Jimin with a candle-lit cake, Jungkook still holding the lighter as they started to sing.

Happy birthday to you
Happy birthday to you

Now Taehyung was really crying, letting out a happy, “Aaaaah!” sound as he wiped at his eyes, chuckling warmly as Jimin brought the cake up to him. It was decorated in beautiful mounds of whipped cream with deep swirls and grooves, topped with red, ripe strawberries and his name written on top of a little white chocolate plaque.

Happy birthday, dear Tae-Tae
Happy birthday to you!

Taehyung blew out the candles in one big huff, and everyone clapped. Before Yoongi even had time to take off the still-hot candles, Taehyung had already picked up the biggest of the strawberries and popped it into his mouth, smiling and squinting his eyes shut in absolute glee. He was officially a
Beta. He was officially a full-grown wolf. And in just two nights he would be officially presented as a full-blooded member of the pack. High off of his new position, Taehyung smirked at Jimin and Jungkook, stepping up onto one of the chairs and raising one hand, the other still holding the stem of his strawberry.

“Everyone!” he said boldly, his chest swelling with anticipation as they smiled up at him with warmth. “Now that I am presented, I have an announcement to make! I want to make a Claim!”

The room froze, and the hands raised and poised to clap were suspended as if held back by invisible cords. The smiles faded from their faces, and Jungkook looked around uncertainly.

In a small voice, the last of the unpresented pups asked, “Um… what’s a Claim?”

“He means Claiming a mate,” Kiara said, sounding surprised herself.

“Yes, and I’d like to announce my Claim, I cho--”

“Taehyung,” Namjoon said warningly, gently lifting Kiara off of his lap and moving to stand up. “This isn’t the way to do things. Claims aren’t made so publicly, at least not at first.”

“Yeah,” Hoseok’s shoulders looked tense, his lips pursed tightly together. “You’re supposed to confer with Namjoon first. That’s how all Claims work. You don’t get to just choose so suddenly. We won’t recognize it.”

Between the short, abrupt declarations, Taehyung’s entire mood deflated like a balloon. “But...what if I want to make the Claim now? What if I don’t want to wait?”

To Taehyung’s surprise, Hoseok was looking increasingly agitated, his posture tight and tall, his jawline more defined than usual due to the way he was tilting his head, as if challenging Taehyung.

“We won’t recognize it,” Hoseok stated firmly. Then came Hoseok’s Alpha scent. Taehyung felt his hair stand a little on end at the dark Alpha undertones to the normally comforting smell of vanilla, overwhelming in a dense cloud that had Taehyung stepping down from the chair, eyes wide.

“Hoseok, sit down, right now. You’re overstepping,” Namjoon snarled, and quickly the vanilla was
sapped away, as if someone had run through the room and sucked it into a bottle for later use, and out spat the smell of woody smoke from Namjoon’s side of the table. Everyone’s eyes turned to lock on Namjoon, who rarely used as much of his Alpha voice as he was in that moment. Hoseok withdrew, physically and emotionally, shrinking down into his seat and dipping his head in submission. Namjoon lifted his eyes to Taehyung then, who started quivering a little on the spot.

“I’m sorry, Namjoon,” Taehyung breathed. “I’ll do it properly.”

“Come with me,” Namjoon stated, turning to the stairs, throwing a gesture over his shoulder to indicate Taehyung after him. Taehyung looked to Seokjin with worry and questions evident in his eyes, and Seokjin frowned, but tilted his head towards the stairs, remaining silent. “The rest of you stay downstairs. We might as well have this conference now.”

When the two Kim brothers had ascended to the upper floor, everyone stood around for a moment, really awkwardly.

“Someone should explain things to Jungkook,” Seokjin said after a while. “He seems confused.”

“Someone should have explained things to Taehyung,” Hoseok said pointedly. “It’s undermining to Namjoon’s authority to make a Claim that way.”

“He just got overexcited,” Seokjin snapped. Jungkook looked between the two Alphas, shrinking against the cupboard at his back. Seokjin’s scent was reaching out and whipping at the lingering edges of Hoseok’s, biting and acrid as though Seokjin’s anger had charred the edges of it. “You know he didn’t mean to offend.”

“Maybe you know, but I don’t,” Hoseok shot back just as quickly. There were lingering snarls that seemed to echo beneath their words, and for a moment Jungkook thought that they were about to jump at each other. Fortunately, Kiara and Yoongi stepped in between, back to back and holding up their hands to the agitated Alphas.

“Calm down, you’re both being ridiculous!” Kiara growled, her eyes a shimmering blue, her teeth subconsciously baring as she stared Seokjin down. “There’s always some tension in pack-member shifts, you both know that. And there’s always a little misinformation, always a little more we can teach the younger ones. That’s our job.”

“And Taehyung is no threat to you,” Yoongi added, his own sky-colored orbs meeting Hoseok’s
red-tinged ones. “There’s no reason to get angry with him. He’s just presented - as a Beta, nonetheless - not twenty minutes ago. And more importantly, he’s one of our pack. So why are you all worked up?”

Hoseok opened his mouth as if to speak, then stopped himself, glancing up towards Seokjin before pinching his lips together and straightening up his back. The expression on his face wasn’t quite guilty, but somewhere in the realms of torn, wounded.

“I overreacted, I’m sorry,” Hoseok said at last, looking down at his feet.

“And I got defensive,” Seokjin admitted, albeit a little reluctantly. He turned, then, as if to walk out of the room, but his eyes flickered over and locked with Jungkook’s, making the younger wolf freeze in his tracks at the uncharacteristically dark look in Seokjin’s eyes. He looked like another person entirely, someone capable of cruelty and bitterness. But as quickly as the darkness had flashed across his face, it washed away. Seokjin seemed to be a little thrown aback by something in the way Jungkook was watching him, his expression suddenly one of surprise and almost vulnerability. Jungkook blinked, slowly removing the lollipop from his mouth with a gentle little pop.

“Someone explain Claims properly to Jungkook,” he said, even as he was still looking straight at Jungkook himself. He then walked out of the room, and following the light jingle of keys, the front door opened and shut.

Jungkook turned to Kiara, his eyes wide. “Aren’t Claims like an engagement?”

“Well, yes. It’s more like a request, or a first-stage betrothal. A pack member - usually an Alpha puts in a request for a mate, and it’s up to Namjoon to approve it or deny it. But honestly, depending on the pack leader, that Claim can be changed or completely ignored at any time. It’s more to stop fights from between pack members in the long run.”

“But other members would respect it usually, right? Hoseok, did you lay a Claim on Yoongi?”

“At the time there weren’t any other Alphas in the pack, so I didn’t see much need to,” Hoseok said sullenly, his arms crossed. “I should have, though. Now that we have Seokjin and Taehyung.”

“And Jimin,” Yoongi added with some venom to his voice. “I don’t think any of them are interested in laying a Claim on me, Hoseok. They know we’re going to be mated.”
“But Taehyung’s a new Beta, and male Betas usually choose an Omega to mate, you know that,” Hoseok snapped, “Why would he choose to be an Omega when he could be an Alpha?!”

Yoongi’s eyes flashed, and immediately Hoseok’s face showed that he knew he had crossed the line. “You say that like being an Omega is a bad thing.” Every syllable dripped like acid from Yoongi’s lips. “Like being an Omega is somehow lesser.”

“No, no, I didn’t mean that,” Hoseok raised his hands in apology, and suddenly tears were at his eyes. “Please, no, Yoongi. I just meant that he might--” He stepped toward Yoongi, who brushed him off with one brusque movement and a snarl.

“I don’t know what scent’s got you hyped up like a pup on Nip, but you need to fucking get your head screwed back on straight, Hoseok. Until then, don’t talk to me.”

“Yoongi! I’m sorry, I--”

The door to the closest empty bedroom - Jungkook’s - slammed, with Yoongi locked behind it, the air crackling in his wake with the scent of musk and earth. From somewhere up above, a door opened and shut, and for a moment they could smell the citrusy Beta scent of Taehyung returning to his room.

Kiara frowned at the remaining party, a stressful wrinkle forming between her brows, and she looked a little breathless. “I think,” she said slowly, “That it’s been a rough day for everyone. Let’s just… let’s all go to bed, and talk things through once we’re a little less tired, okay?”

Jungkook nodded quietly, looking over as Jimin came up to his side, tucking quietly up against Jungkook’s arm and snaking his hand around his elbow. Jimin’s head was downcast, his expression out of Jungkook’s sight as he whimpered a little, laying his cheek against Jungkook’s shoulder.

“Jungkookie,” Jimin said quietly, “I don’t want to go upstairs tonight. Can I… Can I sleep down here with you?”

Again, he gave a nod. And he looked over at Kiara, who was trying to smile despite the obvious worry written in the lines of her face. She ran a hand through Jimin’s hair, then Jungkook’s. “Do you boys want me to stay with you for awhile?”
But even as she said so, the booming sound of Namjoon’s voice echoed down from the landing, calling out to her somberly. “Kiara?”

She looked up, swallowing as Jungkook could see in her eyes the need to go to her mate, and he offered a smile to her. “No, we’ll be okay, thanks.”

“But thank you, Kiara,” Jimin said, reaching out and squeezing her hand for a moment before she left them. Hoseok still stood in the middle of the room, looking lost as he stared at the locked door attached to the kitchen.

“Hoseokie-hyung?” Jungkook asked, stepping forward, awkwardly balancing Jimin on his shoulder by wrapping an arm around him, the Alpha stumbling reluctantly forward. “Are you alright?”

He turned to them, and Jungkook’s heart constricted at the way Hoseok’s face had become all blotchy and red, his face covered in wet as he sniffled thickly. To Jungkook’s surprise, Hoseok still tried to offer him a tear-stained smile. Hoseok had been attached to Yoongi almost as soon as he’d entered the pack, but he had always taken the time to take care of Jimin and Jungkook, who he called ‘his pups.’ He was close to them, protective of them, probably more than a little biased toward them. But while he had felt cared for and trusted in Namjoon and Yoongi, Hoseok was the one who had given Jungkook a taste of what it meant to love someone unconditionally. And it hurt to see him hurting.

“It’s my own fault,” Hoseok managed, his voice thick with phlegm as he sniffled again. “I was just so s-scared of having so many new Alphas...and he’s the only other Omega, so…”

“Hoseokie-hyung,” Jimin said quietly, looking up into the older Alpha’s face with concern. “You know I wouldn’t, right? And Taehyung wouldn’t, either.”

Hoseok tried another smile, letting out a choked sob, but nodding. “Yeah, I know. I know you wouldn’t. And I don’t think Taehyung would, either. I’m sorry.”

The two of them stepped forward, leaning up into him and laying against his chest on either side, pressing into his neck and Scenting him in a gesture of comfort. Hoseok’s body wracked with sobs, but he seemed to warm under their ministrations. They all ended up crawling under Jungkook’s table, squished with their legs sticking out the bottom and with blankets awkwardly bunched up around them. Hoseok lay in the middle, both of the younger boys laying on his arms as he hugged his arms over their shoulders, the two of them curling in against his chest. At some point Jungkook went and flicked the kitchen light out, coming back under the warmth of the covers to find Hoseok had cried himself to sleep, worry still pressed between his eyebrows. But at least he looked a little
more relaxed in sleep, and could dream of something pleasanter for a while. Jungkook saw the shadow of Jimin’s head lift a little in the dimness.

“Jungkookie?” Jimin whispered.

“Yes?” Jungkook whispered back, feeling the sensation of Hoseok’s hot, even breathing against his face as he adjusted into a more comfortable position, his hand rested under his cheek.

“Um, who do you think Taehyung wanted to Claim?”

“Honestly?” Jungkook paused, blinking into the darkness, and thinking about it. “I don’t know.”

“Oh..” Jimin sounded crestfallen, as though that hadn’t been the answer he’d been seeking.

“I mean, it would be weird for him to lay a Claim on me, since I’m not presented yet or anything, right?”

“Well, maybe, but…” Jimin hummed a little, a delicate sound, “But to be fair, he’s a Beta, so it wouldn’t matter much what you presented as, I guess?”

“Maybe.” Jungkook paused, then said, “I don’t think Taehyung cares about being an Alpha or Omega, Jimin. I know Hoseok is worried, but.. I don’t think that sort of thing matters to Taehyung.”

“Yeah, that’s what I think, too.” Jungkook heard Jimin sigh, a little breeze of his breath and the smell of his peppermint Alpha flavor so strong in the air for a brief moment that Jungkook could taste it.

“Jungkook, could I tell you a secret?”

“Yes.” Jungkook said without hesitation. He felt Jimin’s Alpha perking up with hesitant hope in the darkness, reassured by Jungkook’s solid affirmation. “Anything.”

“I...I hope he picks me.”

Jungkook stopped, the silence in the air thick as he considered. In one sentence he could sense all the anxiety Jimin was so determined to hide away, the hopes and dreams he’d been tucking out of sight and turning over in his mind whenever he could. In all honesty, he couldn’t say he was surprised at Jimin’s draw to Taehyung. The Beta was warm and beautiful and earthy, he was smart and hilarious and easy to be with. More importantly, he and Jimin had a sort of playful rapport, a closeness that
had skipped over the initial awkward stages, as if they had always known each other. What surprised Jungkook was that his first thought was wondering where that left him in the pack, and an anxiety he thought he had buried started to bloom in the pit of his stomach as he irrationally feared that once everyone else was mated off, that he wouldn’t matter as much to the pack anymore. What if Taehyung and Jimin left him alone?

“J-Jungkook? Say something.”

In response, Jungkook reached out, fumbling a little blindly for Jimin’s hand as it rested between them, entwining his fingers into Jimin’s. “I think you two might be soulmates. I hope he picks you, too.”

He heard a little sniffle, and he could faintly smell Jimin’s tears as he squeezed Jungkook’s hand. “Thank you, Jungkookie.”

“Are you going to Claim him?”

“I was going to, after he presented, but now that he already has someone in mind, well… I’ve lost my confidence.”

“I’m sure he’ll pick you, Jiminie,” Jungkook whispered into the darkness. “You didn’t see him when you were away in your rut. He was like a different person.”

Jimin seemed to mull over those words for a bit, and his hand squeezed again at Jungkook’s. “Thank you, Jungkookie. I hope you know... that if it wasn’t Taehyung, then--”

“Don’t worry about that,” Jungkook said quietly, sounding more certain than he usually did. “I’m not worried about it at all, so you shouldn’t, either.”

Jimin gave another sniffle, his thumb rubbing the back of Jungkook’s hand. “Liar,” he accused, and Jungkook heard the sad smile in the uttered syllable. “You only sound that confident when you’re lying. I meant it when I told you not to forget - Jiminie loved you first.”

Jungkook smiled. The words carried more weight with them now, and his chest ached horribly, and everyone was fighting and tense and nothing was going right. But in a strange, twisted way, Jungkook felt reassured, curled underneath the kitchen table with two of his Alphas, that everything
was going to be okay, because he was loved.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies~ KurageCharms here~ ♥

Here is the regular Wednesday update, my sweets! I hope you enjoy it! There's quite a bit of drama going on, eh? XD Haha... Poor babies... But now we know that Taehyung is officially a Beta! And also that he has someone he wishes to Claim...???

I hope the explanations of things is clear and not too dull for you guys. I try to work it in as naturally as possible, but of course my brain invents up a rather complicated system and I tend to over-explain...

I wonder how many people were surprised at the day jump? Haha...the answers to your questions should come soon! Chapter six is probably the most fun to write so far. :>

Thank you for the continued support, and thanks for talking to me in the comments and on Twitter, my dears~

Later, lovelies~♥♥
A Turning Point

Chapter Notes

Warning: quite a lot of sexual material in this chap, some moderate graphic descriptions(?).

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Our lives improve only when we take chances ... and the first and most difficult risk we can take is to be honest with ourselves.”

— Walter Anderson

1 DAY

The drive back out to the island was much tenser this time, and colder. They left in the afternoon, and Jungkook would have thought the afternoon sun would have given them more heat, but even with hot packs and sleeping bags piled up around them, Jungkook, Yoongi, and Taehyung were still shivering from the constant wind caused by the movement of the truck. Eventually, Yoongi told them to get into wolf form, curling up around each other inside two sleeping bags zipped together into one large one, their wet noses the only thing peeking out and causing little white puffs from their exhales. Fur brushed up against fur, and soon they were able to get comfortable with the higher internal body temperature.

Taehyung had said nothing to the others the next morning after his announcement, and his birthday thrill had been quickly dampened by the scent of aggressive Alpha bitterness, mixed with defensive Omega smells. He seemed to sniffle next to Jungkook, and the younger pup’s ears flickered back and forth, wondering how to reassure him. When they arrived at the campsite, it still smelled and sounded like home, but Jungkook felt lethargic, almost heavier than normal, his mood weighted under the thickness of the atmosphere. He stood up from the bed of the truck, body drooping, and then saw the snow that now covered every available surface. His tail lifted up a bit in interest, and he leapt down into the powdered snow, whiteness flying up around his paws as he let out a little half-whimper of appreciation. He leapt around for a minute or two, forgetting for a moment in his fixation all the built up stress from last night. He hopped on all fours, slamming his front paws into the snow to see it leap
up again, brushing up against the fur of his belly and chest and yipping. He looked up and saw Seokjin, big puffy black jacket zipped up to his neck and holding an enormous backpack, smiling softly in his direction. Jungkook hopped a few more times comedically, bringing his front paws down as hard as he could, and letting out another squeaking whine, his tongue lolling. Seokjin laughed, and Jungkook felt like he had done something right at last.

“What a pup!” Seokjin chuckled, heading toward the cabins. In retaliation, Jungkook barked at Seokjin’s back, making the Alpha jump nearly a foot in the air and nearly drop his backpack into the snow. Seokjin sent a glare over his shoulder and Jungkook seemed to be laughing in pants, running in a quick circle to show off. Taehyung came up next to Jungkook and sniffed heavily at him, snorting a little and then padding off through the snow as well, dramatically lifting his paws up away from the cold, wet substance.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon called out, taking the keys out of his pocket. “Once you get unpacked, you and I are going out on a run.”

The pup lifted an ear, tilting his jaw to the side and upwards as though uncertain. Then, he turned around on the spot in a tight circle and transformed back, nearly falling into Taehyung as he did so.

“Just me?” he called out, face a little flushed and pink from the quick shift. Taehyung sniffed at Jungkook’s ear curiously, and Jungkook lightly pushed him away. Neither of them saw Jimin standing, waiting at the entrance to the cabin and biting his lip.

“Yeah, I promised you a one-on-one hunt, right?” Namjoon smirked, his lips seeming to stretch across his face in an expression of childish warmth, a rare expression for him. “Let’s make up for lost time and get one hunt in before dinner.”

“Oh, okay.” Jungkook said, still pushing at Taehyung, who was transformed back and now trying to Scent Jungkook. Namjoon walked off to unlock the Main Hall, most of the others following behind him with the rest of the shared supplies.

“Kookie,” Taehyung murmured, “You smell different today. I thought it was just the sleeping bags, but…”

“Huh?”

“And your body feels different, too.” Taehyung whispered, rubbing his nose up against Jungkook’s adam’s apple. It would have been a much more disconcerting gesture if it wasn’t for the way
Taehyung did it, like it was the most natural thing in the world, like it was no big deal. “I don’t think you should go out on a hunt.”

“But, Namjoon specifical--”

“Taehyung? Jungkook?” Jimin called out, still waiting at the cabin entrance, now with his arms wrapped around his backpack and hugging it tightly to his chest. “Are you coming?”

“Tell Namjoon to let you rest for tonight,” Taehyung told him, his eyes flashing gold for a moment, his Scent rising in warning. “If you don’t, I will.”

“Taehyung? What’s wrong?” Jimin’s voice rose again, and he was suddenly at their side, pressing in closely, sniffing at the air. “Why are you…?”

“Jungkook smells different, I don’t want him to go on that hunt with Namjoon,” Taehyung stated, his eyes still dark with worry as he turned towards Jimin. Peppermint rose in the air, and Jungkook identified the aura of jealousy there, growing quickly. Jimin’s eyes started to go red.

“Jimin, Jimin, don’t. He was just worried, that’s all.” Jungkook said, touching a hand to the Alpha’s arm to calm him. At the rare gesture, Jimin turned over towards him and then pressed his lips together.

“He’s right,” Jimin stated finally. “You smell totally different today. You’re not going.”

“What?!” Jungkook gasped, surprised at the straightforward command in Jimin’s voice. He could feel that Jimin had tried to use his Alpha voice on him, and failed, making Jungkook irritable. “I feel fine, I’m just tired! I wanna go on the hunt with Namjoon.”

“Don’t make the same mistake I did, Jungkook,” Jimin said, furrowing his brows in an attempt to look intimidating, but his soft cheeks betrayed him. His words, however, held a sting. “If something’s wrong, you have to say something. You could be getting sick, or… Let’s go talk to Seokjin--”

“I don’t want to talk to Seokjin,” Jungkook said too quickly, the panic in his tone. He had managed to stay more than six feet from him at all times, and when there was that distance, he was fine. But the idea of Seokjin looking deeply into his eyes and throat, using his medical skills to inspect him
closely, had his skin flushing.

“Why not?” came a voice just behind him, and Jungkook jolted, turning around to find Seokjin just behind him, looking at him with an arched eyebrow, frowning.

“B-because I feel fine!” Jungkook snapped. Without giving him time to slip away, Seokjin grabbed Jungkook by the upper arm, his grip surprisingly gruff, and placed the back of his hand against Jungkook’s forehead. Instantly, Jungkook shivered, and he was certain it wasn’t because of the cold wintry air, but the sudden wave of Seokjin’s clean, powder-like Alpha scent that washed over him. He had been deprived of Scenting Seokjin for over two months now, but each time he got even the slightest whiff, it was torture, like he needed it. Today was even worse, possibly because of the addition of the gentle smell of the snow and dead foliage, but it was like he was a man starved and that scent was the most delicious nourishment in the world. Jungkook bit at his lip, trying not to lean into Seokjin’s hand. He didn’t deserve a touch, much less Scenting Seokjin. Not until he had come to terms with the dreams.

“They’re right. You’re a bit feverish. It may have been because of how cold the bed of the truck was. I’m going to make you some tea, so go lie down in the cabin.”

“What?!” Jungkook finally found the strength to pull away from Seokjin’s hand, shaking his hair, his bangs fluttering away from his eyes like a black curtain.

“I’m not sick though,” Jungkook snapped, batting Jin’s hand away. But Jin just frowned, pointing a finger to the cabin.

“I’ll let Namjoon know you can’t hunt right now, so just go lie down.”

“But I’m fine, I can go!” After the stress of the night before, Jungkook wanted nothing more than to run off at full speed into the woods as a wolf, away from the tension and towards his instincts to hunt, and most importantly, away from Seokjin’s tempting scent.

“I’m not asking, Jungkook,” Seokjin started, and Jungkook felt a prickle at his spine to hear that darker, commanding tone from the Alpha. Then, Seokjin seemed to recover himself, a smile coming to his lips as he tilted his head to the side. “I know you’ve been up late playing video games anyways, so you’re probably tired. Pups need their sleep too, you know.”

“Don’t call me pup,” Jungkook mumbled, his fight somehow threatening to instantly deflate at the
nickname. “What will you do if I Present as an Alpha and become stronger than you?”

His words were meant to be a little dramatic, meant to inspire a sort of half-truth tease, but Seokjin’s face suddenly fell, his mask of a smile falling away and leaving him looking almost wounded. Jungkook stared at him, waiting for him to say something, but he didn’t move.

“Seokjin?” Jungkook said.

“Go lie down. Now. You look feverish.” Seokjin said, turning away and going to the Main Hall. Jungkook watched after his receding back, then turned to Jimin and Taehyung. They just sent him a similarly puzzled look, and went into the cabin. Jungkook jerked his jaw to the side in a gesture of uncertainty and confusion, then followed after them. He shrugged off his backpack and tossed it up onto his bunk, clambering up after it. He was halfway up when a hand slapped against his buttocks lightly, stopping him in his tracks. Jungkook craned his head around to see it was Jimin just behind him, the Alpha’s brows crinkled together.

“We’re just worried about you, you know that, right?”

Jungkook nodded, climbing up and turning over onto his side, curling up with his arms crossed.

“Jungkook?” Taehyung called out, concern evident in his voice.

“I’m fine, just let me rest,” Jungkook sighed, burying his head into his pillow. He could hear the two of them talking in hushed whispers below him, the sound carrying up much clearer than either of them realized, and he could make out that they were discussing going out on a quick hunt before dark.

“I hate to leave him alone, but… it’s probably best if he just rests, you know?” Jimin was whispering. “Besides, I think we could all use some stress relief, and a hunt seems the way to do it. I asked Yoongi if he would come, too. He’s probably the best hunter in the pack, although Hoseok is faster. But he won’t come if Hoseokkie comes.”

“What happened last night after I went upstairs? They seem so angry with each other?”

“Well…” Jimin sounded hesitant, but Jungkook noticed he was surprisingly straightforward when he explained, “Hoseokkie was upset, because…he thought you might try to Claim Yoongi…”
“What?!” Taehyung hissed in surprise. “Yoongi?!”

“So he said some things he didn’t mean, and crossed a line. They have this thing about being equals, no matter who the Alpha or the Omega is. Back before Hoseok, Yoongi really wanted a mate, but he kept finding these really mean Alphas who just took advantage of him. So it’s a real sore spot.” Jimin paused. “It was awful to just hear about, so I can’t imagine what it was like for Namjoon, who was friends with him then.”

Jungkook laid quietly on the bed, withholding a sigh. He remembered Yoongi coming home with a broken arm once, scratches all over and a face blotchy and swollen from tears. It had taken Namjoon ages to find out he’d run into one of his exes. Namjoon had asked if he was hurt, and at first Jungkook didn’t understand why Namjoon would ask when it was obvious from the wounds, but when Yoongi shook his head and more tears fell, he realized what Namjoon was suggesting.

“He didn’t get what he wanted,” was all Yoongi said, “But his bark was definitely worse than his bite.”

Jungkook remembered Namjoon’s feral growl, one that shook the room as he squeezed his hands into fists, telling Jungkook to lock the doors and stay in the house with Yoongi until he came back. Jungkook, then timid and unsure, had tried to gently tend to Yoongi’s wounds, letting Yoongi nuzzle into him as much as he needed. He patted his shoulder, whispering reassurances that Namjoon would look out for them, would protect them, like he always had. Namjoon was gone all night, and when he came back he looked exhausted but satisfied.

The day Yoongi had brought Hoseok home, Jungkook had refused to speak to him for over two months, simply glaring at him with uncertainty, until he walked in and caught them on the couch, Yoongi’s head resting in Hoseok’s lap, his neck bare and exposed as Hoseok ran his hands through Yoongi’s hair, humming softly to him. The look of bliss, of trust and relaxation on Yoongi’s face imprinted into Jungkook’s memory for a long time. Even when they were bickering - which was often - Jungkook had known with certainty that Hoseok would never raise a hand to Yoongi, and he never used his Alpha voice. In all honesty, he cried the most out of all of them, was gentler than any Alpha Jungkook had known, softer, more Omega-like, even. It had taken a long time for Yoongi to trust him, and even longer for Namjoon and Jungkook. But he had a long record of years of patience and sweetness on his side, and Jungkook knew that Hoseok had regretted his words the instant they left his mouth.

“That’s so sad,” Taehyung said, forgetting to whisper for a moment. “I knew Yoongi had a thing about Alphas, but I didn’t know what. But still…”

They were quiet for a moment, then a strange scent filled the air. Jungkook sniffed at it curiously, recognizing Taehyung’s citrusy scent.
“Jimin?” Taehyung whispered again, sounding nervous. “I’m sorry.”

“You’ve been saying that to me all day, TaeTae, what are you even sorry for?” Jimin giggled lightly.

“I’m…. I know we only joked about it before, you know, about being soulmates, but… I wanted to Claim you.”

Jungkook froze, and the room was encompassed in silence for a moment. Jungkook had a sneaking suspicion they had forgotten all about him.

“Y-you do?”

“Is...is that okay?”

“Is it okay?!” There was a sniffle, and then Jimin laughed. “I was going to Claim you, but you beat me to it!”

“Well, I do have longer legs, so you’re just gonna have to start running faster to keep up!” Taehyung’s deep, hearty chuckle echoed through the room, and there was a rustle of clothing, a creak of the bed. The smell of citrus and peppermint were mingling together, until Jungkook could barely tell them apart. “Namjoon was really angry last night. He said I should have talked to you first, then him. I tried telling him we were soulmates but he wouldn’t listen…”

“So did he approve of it?”

Taehyung sighed, “No, he told me I had to wait and think it through, that there was too much going on right now. He said he’ll talk to me about it again in the spring. So, I’m sorry… I can’t Claim you yet. But wait for me, Jimin! You have to! I don’t want you to go through another rut without me!”

“Me neither…” Jimin sighed, and it was a happy sound. “I’d feel safe with you there.”

They lay there for a moment in the quiet, and then Taehyung started a gentle hum. Jungkook could almost picture them, as they always were when they had their sleepovers in Jimin’s room. Jimin rocking back and forth with Taehyung curled up against his chest contentedly, pressing his head into Jimin’s jawline and gnawing playfully at the boy’s arm.
“Stop nibbling on me, you’re not a teething pup,” Jimin chuckled, and Jungkook knew he’d been right.

“I’ll nibble on more than your arm, if you let me,” Taehyung teased flippantly. “I like eating peppermint sticks.” Jimin shushed him, a light smacking sound cracking across the room.

“Tae hyung, you can’t just say that! What if Jungkook hears you?!”

“Then let him,” Taehyung said. “I don’t want to hide. It’s harder to hide your feelings, and it’s messy. Seokjin hides his feelings all the time, and I hate it.”

“Mmm,” Jimin hummed. “I’m not very good at hiding my feelings. Hoseokkie says they’re always really clear on my face.”

“I know, I like that.”

“Mmm.”

A few minutes of silence encompassed them, and their breathing evened out until Jungkook wondered if they had fallen asleep. Then Jimin sat up and hissed. “We’d better get going, the others are probably waiting!”

“Oh, right,” Taehyung whispered back. There was the cry of a zipper, and some shuffling, and then the two of them left, and the last pup was alone.

Jungkook frowned into his pillow, disgruntled as he remembered why he was being left behind. As sincerely elated as he was for Taehyung and Jimin, he hated that they had gone on the hunt without him. He didn’t want to make the others worry, but he didn’t want to miss another chance at a full hunt, much less one with Namjoon. Him being sick right now and stressing out the others was the last thing the pack needed. His only consolation was that at least Taehyung and Jimin would be too distracted by each other to worry about him too much. Jungkook sighed, but eventually managed to doze off into fitful rest.

He wasn’t sure how much time had passed before the door opened again and a creak of the ladder whined. There was the faint smell of soap in the air.
“Are you awake?” Seokjin said quietly. “I brought ginger tea.”

“I’ll drink it later,” Jungkook mumbled, not wanting to face Jin just yet.

There was a slap, and Jungkook jolted up abruptly. “What the hell, why is everyone slapping my butt today?!”

“Because you like it,” Seokjin retorted easily, holding out the tea again. “Now drink.”

“I’m not sick.”

“You might be becoming sick, though,” Seokjin argued simply. “Drink.”

Jungkook took the cup reluctantly, his nose wrinkling at the bitter taste. The cloudy sand-colored liquid had a slightly grainy texture with a burning sort of aftertaste, but he had to admit it felt somehow soothing on his throat, filling him with warmth. Seokjin stood quietly on the ladder, patiently waiting for Jungkook to finish the cup.

“Where’s everybody else?” Jungkook queried.

“Kiara and Yoongi are at the Main Hall, the others went out on a hunt together.”

Jungkook handed the emptied cup back to him with a quiet thanks. He was surprised when, instead of just taking the cup back, Seokjin encased Jungkook’s hands with his own; long, crooked fingers with callouses on the ends. Jungkook looked at their joined hands for a moment, his face and neck flushing at the contact that felt much more purposeful and intimate than any Jin had ever initiated before. When he looked up at Seokjin, the Alpha was still staring at their hands, an unreadable expression on his face.

“Seokjin?” Jungkook breathed. His heart was thudding in his chest, his mind reeling with concern. Had something happened with Hoseok, or the others?
Seokjin let out a long, low sigh, his broad shoulders allowed a rare moment to slump in weakness.

“Jungkook, did I do something wrong?”

Jungkook felt like his skin rose in goosebumps even as his stomach sank through the floor, all from a single, simple question. “W-what?”

“Did I… say something? Do something? Because if so, I didn’t mean to. I try to be careful, but…” Seokjin’s thumb lifted, bending back to rub gently along the skin at the back of Jungkook’s hand. Jungkook’s entire body instantly reacted, his stomach flipping as Seokjin’s touch felt like the most amazing thing on the planet. Jungkook wanted to pull away, scared of how powerful the effect was, but he found himself incapable.

“But I’m actually very selfish,” Seokjin finished, the word whispered like a dark, twisted confession.

Jungkook stared for a moment, trying to figure out what Seokjin meant. What was there to be selfish about? He knew that they had been getting closer up until the first hunt, but he couldn’t think of anything especially that--

Suddenly Seokjin was leaning forward, pressing in against Jungkook’s shoulder, inhaling Jungkook’s scent deeply. The skin there tingled in delight, and he felt as though every nerve in his body rose up at attention to meet him, his eyes rolling into the back of his head and his jaw tilting back, shamelessly baring his neck to Seokjin’s continued attack.

‘Attack’ was not quite the right word, but it was the only one Jungkook was able to use to express the way his whole body felt flipped inside out, his mouth open, gasping as his groin started to scream with need. It only got worse when Seokjin’s cheek pressed against the soft skin below Jungkook’s jaw, and he inhaled sharply, his hand coming up against Seokjin’s shoulder, his fingers digging into skin before he could stop himself.

Shit.

Seokjin was pressing in further, until Jungkook was pushed back against his backpack, Seokjin crawling up onto the bed and over Jungkook as though to lie on top of him, his nose still buried deep into Jungkook’s scent mark, almost abusing it the way he rubbed his own scent into Jungkook’s. When his mouth pressed to it, his lips parting and mouthing there, Jungkook keened, a light whimper escaping him as involuntarily his hips jutted upwards, clumsily knocking against Seokjin’s stomach.
“S-Seo...Jin...” Jungkook managed, as Seokjin started to suckle his mark, his tongue brushing up against it delicately and making Jungkook cry out.

But then, for a moment the world stopped spinning, and he remembered himself. He looked down and saw Seokjin, rosy-cheeked and swollen mouth suckling, his brown hair brushing against Jungkook’s skin, one shoulder curving sensually as he bent even lower into Jungkook, pulling aside the collar of his T-shirt to access more skin. Through the beauty he was seeing, the fireworks he was feeling, Jungkook panicked. He remembered the dream and the actions that followed and as much as his head screamed and his body ached to Scent Seokjin back, he found himself gasping.

“S-stop!”

His hands pushed at Seokjin’s chest with a surprising limpness to them. But the moment Jungkook had spoke, the Alpha froze, drawing himself back. They were both panting, Jungkook’s sweat glistening on his skin, his chest heaving up and down. Seokjin’s face was flushed, and Jungkook noticed his eyes were traced in a red he had never seen before, a deep reddish-orange flecked color that was like flames. But it quickly faded, reminding him of the way water turned fire into murky ash, as the Alpha’s eyes filled with tears.

“I’m...I’m...sorry, Jungkook. I shouldn’t have done that. Jungkook, I’m sorry.” Seokjin was choking on his sobs, trying desperately to swallow them down. “I really did come to apologize, I didn’t come to do that, really. Fuck. It’s just that you...you’re so...” Seokjin buried his face in his hands, pressing so hard into his eyelids that it looked painful. He let out a frustrated cry, and in a flash clambered down off the bed, snatching the cup up and abandoning a stunned Jungkook, alternating between swearing under his breath and apologizing profusely.

“Jin, wait, I--”

“No, please,” Seokjin’s voice cracked, and he was already headed to the door. “Shit. Shit. Please, don’t say anything right now. I’m sorry.”

“Seokjin!” he sat up, hand reaching out uselessly, as if he could stop the Alpha with a gesture.

The door slammed, and then a pause, silence starting to drift in with little steps. Suddenly from outside Seokjin let out a scream of frustration so loud, so unbridled it made Jungkook leap nearly a foot in the air, his blood seeming to curdle and every nerve on edge, making the sound painful and cutting into the throbbing of his new headache. Jungkook lay back onto the bed, surprised by how exhausted he suddenly felt. He could barely breathe, and he realized after a moment that he was shaking like a leaf.
Yet the only thing revolving in his mind, the thing he couldn’t stop asking, was:

‘Why did I tell him to stop?’

And to his dismay, he didn’t have any very good answers. Jungkook pulled the curtain over his bed with a clatter, turning out his light and curling up in the blue glow of twilight spilling in through the window.

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0 DAYS

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It was dark when Jungkook woke up again, and he slowly pulled aside the curtain to see Seokjin’s bed was empty and unused. Hoseok was lying in the bed below it, his mouth hanging open and one leg sticking entirely out from under the blanket, despite the chilly bite in the air that the floor heater couldn’t quite take the edge off of. Jungkook sat up, a strange sort of calm encompassing him. Perhaps it was because Seokjin’s scent in the room had faded, or the cool quiet of the snowy night, but Jungkook felt almost numb, removed from himself. He crawled off the bunk as quietly as possible, grabbing clothes and blindly getting bundled up. There was a bit of a snoring sound, and Jungkook turned to see Jimin shifting on the bottom bunk in his sleep, an arm wrapped around a sleeping Taehyung curled against him. Jungkook pulled his jacket on and slipped outside, careful to shut the door quietly behind him.

It was around one in the morning, and snow was lightly drifting downwards in a sluggish sort of aimlessness, the moon reflecting off its surface and giving everything a soft blue-ish glow. The snow that had already fallen crunched beneath his feet, a sound loud and abrasive in the uncanny stillness.

When he got to the Main Hall, he was surprised to see a fire in the hearth still, a thick pile of wood turned black, gray and white all entangled in flames of sunset oranges and yellows. Jungkook went to the cupboard to search for food, spotting an empty bowl on the island with a note tucked beneath, a handwritten scrawl reading Jungkook’s dinner in microwave. He smiled, going to open the microwave just as he heard a groan from somewhere in the room. Jungkook jumped, turning around so fast he hit his fingers against the microwave door, making him hiss at the sting of pain. He looked up and saw a figure was lying on the far couch, a small blanket draped over him, socked feet poking out of the bottom because he was too tall. A large backpack lay at the side of the couch, half
unzipped with a pair of blue-jeans draped across it. Jungkook, even without being able to see his face in the dim light of the fire, knew that it was Seokjin. His presence, now acknowledged, was both a comfort and an uneasiness. Jungkook decided to eat his soup cold, the taste and texture thick in his mouth as he sat on the couch across from Seokjin, his knees drawn up to his chest. Part of him wondered if Seokjin would wake up, and he couldn't help but imagine a scenario where Seokjin would calmly talk everything out with him, and then it would all be back to normal. He heard Taehyung’s voice echoing in his head. ‘Seokjin hides his feelings all the time.’ He didn’t expect a habit like that to change in Seokjin so easily, when he himself still slept under a dining room table half the time.

The only revelation he could currently come to, the only clean fact that had been conveyed (as far as he could figure) was that far from hating him, Seokjin was trying to fight against a desire to get closer to Jungkook. Whatever that desire was built on, Jungkook wasn’t sure. Was it instinct as an Alpha? Was it protectiveness as the eldest member of the pack? Only Seokjin could say for certain. But Jungkook knew now that Seokjin must not hate him. And after the way Seokjin had Scented him earlier, and from what he had found the other day in Seokjin’s room, Jungkook was now of the mind that he hadn’t been the only one that had been missing their Scenting desperately. He sighed, setting his bowl on the coffee table. The headache from earlier that had gotten worse steadily, thrumming painfully in his skull and making even his eyes feel hot. Jungkook raised one hand and placed it gently over his Scent mark, the skin there still feeling swollen and hot to the touch, inflamed from earlier. He now had a sneaking suspicion that his headache would immediately alleviate if he were just to go over and Scent Seokjin back. But could he stop himself there? Would Seokjin come to really hate him if he knew what Jungkook had done? Or would he smile in relief and say, “Ah, is that all?”

He figured this last option was highly unlikely.

Jungkook wasn’t often very sure of himself. He knew the things he knew and the things he didn’t, and he had learned a lot while living in the pack house. But knowing the world around you and knowing yourself were two very different things - not to mention knowing what you wanted. And yet in that moment, the one thing Jungkook wanted was to wake Seokjin up and tell him to Scent him again, and to keep going this time.

Jungkook didn’t think he was ready to tell Seokjin that, though. There was something he wanted to check, just to be sure. Jungkook stood up quietly, sliding over to kneel next to Seokjin’s backpack, and he started digging through it. He needed something strong, like that sweaty T-shirt Seokjin had tucked into his pillowcase. Jungkook had been very sheltered and naive, he knew, but he wasn’t stupid. Seokjin shifted again on the couch, starting to mumble again in his sleep. “Forget mind green stage fall.” The words were quite clear but their meaning severely convoluted. Jungkook paused, his hand deep in Seokjin’s backpack, praying the Alpha wouldn’t wake up and catch him red-handed. Eventually, he pulled out a plastic bag with Seokjin’s dirty laundry wadded up inside of it. He hesitated a moment, debating on taking the lesser of two evils - the socks - instead of the black boxers with the white band. But Jungkook didn’t like to half-ass things. He bunched up the
underwear and shoved it deep into his pockets, getting up to leave. Halfway standing up, he paused, then retrieved one of the less torn-up spare sleeping bags, draping it over the sleeping Alpha.

“Mmmm,” Seokjin murmured, his head lolling to the other side as he curled up into the back of the couch like it was someone warm. “Carpet butter vicious.”

Jungkook smiled, tucking the sleeping bag in a bit so it didn’t slip off too easily, before shrugging his jacket until he was huddled up in it better. He had just placed his hands on the cold metallic surface of the doorknob when Seokjin spoke once again in his sleep, this time almost panting out the phrase like he was a pup again himself, chasing after in play.

“JK! Hey, JK!”

At that, Jungkook looked over his shoulder, his eyes softening. It was something he had called out a hundred times - maybe even thousands - and it made Jungkook chuckle before he stepped out into the snow.

The night was freezing, but Jungkook wasn’t even shivering. His feet felt numb in his boots but the rest of him felt quickly warmed by the heavy jacket that he wore. The eldest wolves had all bickered for hours about the matching jackets, trying to find the best outerwear for their pack to wear for their winter hunt, relentless even though they were shopping online in the middle of August for it. The snow was falling even heavier, until it started to accumulate in Jungkook’s hair and clung to his eyelashes, making him blink a little harder to dislodge the weightless flakes. He had been walking for probably an hour, and slowly. But he felt tired, attributing it to the extra effort it took to walk in the deepening snow. Jungkook sniffed at the air, noting that he could no longer smell the camp, or Namjoon’s scent marker, and his tracks were getting buried deeper by the minute, the boot marks just behind him already softened and rounded by a fresh covering.

Feeling as though he’d gone far enough, Jungkook leaned against a nearby tree, allowing himself to slide down it until he was seated. He sighed, tilting his head back to look up into the naked, dark boughs of the oak tree he was sitting beneath, the sky still eerily aglow from the moonlight. Jungkook tapped the back of his head against the bark of the tree, feeling bits crumbling off and falling down the back of his shirt, making his neck and shoulders itch until he wriggled around again.

He hadn’t been alone in the woods for a long time, not since before he had moved into the pack house, and that was four years ago. It was weird to think that it had been that long, yet it also felt as though this new life he had stumbled across was all still new and challenging. From the very first moment, up until this night, and probably many nights after, he would never understand how Namjoon had just known, what had compelled him to take the small, gangly, wide-eyed wolf stray under his wing. Just a few minutes of talking to him, of looking into his face, and Namjoon had
understood. It wasn’t until almost a month in that Namjoon really started asking any questions, like “How long have you been living in that public park, Jungkookie?”

At that time, Jungkook had been too scared to tell him the truth, so he had simply told him it had been one year. He tried not to make it obvious that the truth was, before that year in that public park it had been other parks, under bridges, in alleyways, curled up under tables at street bars to escape the rain, moving quietly to escape notice and stay out of everyone’s way. He had lived most of that time in wolf form, making it easier for his sensitive nose to pick up on the smell of food and finding it easier to stay on alert as an animal, rather than a scrawny young boy. The only thing that 14 year old Jungkook had known then was that he didn’t want to go back to the pound. That he would rather die. Even a scraggly, barren, scary public park had been much more welcoming, much freer. It had felt like heaven, back then.

It wasn’t until several months later, when gentle Jimin had come with his soft voice and gentle smile, that he had told them about the pound, begging them not to take him back there, to please let him stay.

“Don’t be stupid,” Yoongi said, his tone almost berating but rounded out at the edges, pillowed and swollen from realizations. “You’re in our pack now, you don’t belong there, and you never will again.”

Jungkook sighed, looking down at his hands as they dangled over his knees, feeling stiffer as the cold soaked into them, feeling like a thousand tiny hands grabbing hold of his skin and pressing in until he couldn’t feel his fingertips. He exhaled hot air onto them, then reached into his pocket, pulling out the wadded material of the underwear there. The instant it left his pocket, he could smell the edges of Seokjin’s Alpha scent, pungent and tickling at the edges of his senses in eager anticipation. He could already feel the hand clutching the material start to feel clammy.

He didn’t know what it was like to be born into a pack. He didn’t know what it was like to learn about mating gradually, naturally, alongside your parents and siblings.

He wasn’t sure what the difference was between admiring the way Namjoon looked with his reading glasses fogged up as he drank coffee and read, and the way Seokjin looked as he stood in the front lawn on a warm autumn evening, answering a phone call with one hand plucking at the needles of the pine tree in the front yard. He didn’t know what the difference was between the way Jimin had rubbed his thumb along the side of his hand earlier that day, and the way Seokjin had done the same thing not long after. But he knew they were different. He knew on some emotional level, he loved Seokjin. That, he had worked out somewhere between learning about the Seokjin that could sit quietly for hours and read medical journals, his free hand running absently through Jungkook’s hair without him even realizing it, and the Seokjin that yipped with endearing laughter, the one that screeched at television dramas and danced stupidly, making fun of everything and anything until he could make Jungkook laugh.
He knew that at least in some way, he loved Seokjin.

But in what way, in what inner instinct so ingrained into his psyche that it manifested in physical form, did he want Seokjin?

*Here goes nothing.*

Jungkook sighed, raising the black material to his nose and pressing into it, inhaling as deeply as he dared. He expected himself to cough or his breath to stumble over an overwhelmingly gross dirty-laundry smell, but instead there was only Seokjin’s elegant Alpha scent. It filled up his lungs, and he felt himself trembling, like a muscle spasm but all over. Jungkook leaned his head back, inhaling again as his eyes rolled into the back of his head, his breath shaky all of a sudden. He allowed a low rumble to escape, thrumming deep in his throat before the chilly air swallowed the sound. Jungkook knew out here no one would be able to smell him or hear him. It was only a matter of minutes before he felt his groin warming, began to smell his own arousal drifting up from where he was pulling back the waistband of his sweat pants and slipping his hand inside to grab his erection. After being deprived of the comfort, the smell, the familiarity for months now, he was becoming quickly overwhelmed, surprising himself with the reckless abandon with which he was now pumping at his own cock.

The only sound on the night air was his own pants, the slight squelching sound against his hand, and the deep sniffs he gave to the underwear. He felt lewd, he felt cold and hot at the same time, he felt lost and simultaneously so grounded, so *ready* and hungry. His stomach lurched, and then…

Something snapped. Jungkook gasped, his neck convulsing a bit and making him look upwards, jaw dropped and eyes wide, before he felt the little trickle of wetness. At first, he thought that he had just came, but that wasn’t it. This was... different. It felt scarier, like a first ride on a roller coaster, like a first kiss. Jungkook found his hand going limp against his cock, even as he let out a long, low moan that he hadn’t expected. It echoed around the trees, sounding almost feral in the stillness of the night. His whole body was trembling and twitching violently in slow, deep waves, and he started rocking back and forth as he couldn’t hold still. His head spun, and his mouth felt dry from panting. Every nerve was screaming, pulsing, waving. His heart was thudding in his ears and his senses felt heightened, but only selectively so. He could only focus on the texture of the underwear pressed to his cheek, or the sight of the snow that had started to accumulate on his knees like miniscule flecks of paint, or the throbbing of a place deep inside him, that he hadn’t expected. He was about to slow, to catch his breath, when he accidentally took another inhale, catching Seokjin’s scent again. Like a trigger being pulled, he was shot back to the image of Seokjin from his dream, the domineering, powerful one that had pinned him down and spoke of making it feel good.

There was another wave, like the first one, and this time, instead of a trickle of wetness, there was a
hot, watery release, and Jungkook whimpered. He let go of his cock, slipping his hand past his balls and deeper, further back, and he found a scary amount of sticky wetness there, as though a full cup of whatever-it-was had just been dumped unceremoniously into his pants. It smelled thick and almost yeast-like, and the strong scent stung at his senses, making his breath stop short. He started to shiver, feeling cold and hot at the same time, and he realized he was now covered in a thick layer of sweat. Jungkook removed his hand from his pants, holding the wetness centimeters from his face as he blinked dumbfoundedly at it, gently prying his fingers apart to watch the way the liquid strung across.

“H-holy fuck,” Jungkook breathed.

That was how, alone in the middle of a snowy wood at 2 in the morning on the first day of the new year, Jungkook discovered he was an Omega.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies! KurageCharms here! ♡

A couple of important notes this time:

1: I'm so happy to finally reveal the end of the countdown! Personally, I don't think it was anything complicated or hard to assume, but...life isn't about WHAT, it's about HOW, right?

2: As far as updates. My official updates are Saturday morning at midnight, with secondary chapters on Wednesdays when I have time/creativity. However, my mother is coming to Japan to visit me from next Wednesday, and there are about 4 updates scheduled while she's here. I will do my best to prep beforehand and update on time, but my apologies if they're late, bc we'll be spending time together/traveling around. OTL I won't leave you hanging for too long, I promise!!

3: This story now officially has the most followers of any fanfic I've ever written. I'm fucking BLOWN away.

Why tf are you all here. Wut even. I love you all.

But I told you this was gonna be slowburn af. Hopefully the payoff is worth it, I'm already laying out kinks. (°adder°)

Thank you for so much love on this fic so far! ♥♥♥ I adore reading your comments and hope you enjoyed this as well as the next chapter!

Later, lovelies~
“Seokjin? Seokjin, wake up,” Namjoon shook the eldest, who jolted up with a start. The Main Hall was dark and cold now, the fire dying out while Seokjin had been asleep. The cold grayish blue light in the sky signaling that the sun was preparing to rise shone into the room, illuminating the look of concern drawn tensely across Namjoon’s face. The scent of ashes and smoke was thick in the air.

“What happened?” Seokjin mumbled, his eyes still squeezed shut from sleep and his face feeling puffy and numb, but he was trying to force himself into a state of alert.

“What?!” he snapped, his voice unnaturally loud and crackling.

“Jungkook is missing. We can’t find him.”

Seokjin pulled himself into a sitting position, nearly slamming against the lead Alpha’s head. “What?!” he snapped, his voice unnaturally loud and crackling.

“Hoseok got up to go the bathroom about an hour ago and noticed he wasn’t in his bunk. His jacket and boots are gone, there’s no sign of him. He came and woke us up because he was worried.”
Kiara’s waking up the others now, we need to send out a search party. I’ll leave a couple people here just in case he comes back, but most of us will go out and spread over as much of the woods as we can cover. It’s too cold to wait any longer.”

“I’m going,” Seokjin stated, and it was very obviously not a question. It was a little too direct perhaps, a little too aggressive to say to a lead Alpha, but Namjoon just nodded.

“Of course, that’s what I figured,” Namjoon patted him on the shoulder, rising and tugging his hoodie up over his head. “We leave in five minutes.”

Seokjin reached over hurriedly to his backpack, grabbing his jeans and tugging them on before standing up. He was about to go to the door to retrieve his jacket, when he noticed an empty bowl sitting on the coffee table, the spoon laid next to it and still dotted with bits of leftover soup that had long-since dried. He looked at it for a moment curiously, his brow crinkling. A sick feeling was sinking into the pit of his stomach. Seokjin abandoned the bowl, shaking his head and rushing out the door to follow Namjoon.

It was still snowing quite heavily, and Seokjin pulled his hoodie up onto his head as Namjoon had done, looking around at the white-covered world that was slowly lightening with the oncoming day. How long had he been missing? Why had he gone out and not told anyone? Why hadn’t he come back?

Was it all my fault again?

“Kiara and Hoseok are staying here, I need at least one Alpha and one Omega at the Main Hall in case something happens.” Namjoon was surrounded by the younger wolves already, so Seokjin hurried up to join the circle. Everyone was huddled, expressions worried and the white puffs of their breaths mingling together in the middle. Taehyung was clutching onto Jimin’s sleeve, his eyes looking watery, and Hoseok looked pale and sickly, his face morphing into one nearly unrecognizable to Seokjin.

“Normally, I wouldn’t have us split up like this, but time is of the essence. We’re going to spread out but try to keep a connecting chain. I don’t want you running anywhere that’s too far that you can’t smell one of the other pack members, you hear me? No exceptions. The moment anyone finds him, I want you to send up a call, and stay there with him until at least two other wolves come. If he’s hurt, do what you can.” He paused, his words having come out in a rushed, breathless voice that gave away the Alpha’s bubbling nervousness. “This is serious, guys. Don’t do anything stupid. If there’s no luck we meet back here in two hours. That’s one hour out, one hour back. No excuses. Putting yourself at risk won’t help us find him any easier. Okay?”
He looked at each of them in turn as they nodded, his expression hard and somehow more aged than it had been a few months ago, when Seokjin had arrived in the pack house. When Namjoon looked his way, he hesitated a little longer, his gaze meeting Seokjin’s with purpose.

“Don’t do anything stupid,” Namjoon repeated.

Seokjin pressed his lips together, but nodded, his head hung a little lower as he stared at their boots in the snow. *Please, let’s just go!*

“Jimin, you take the side along the beach. You’ll be able to distinguish more over the salty smell. I’ll go in the woods alongside the beach, then it’ll fan out like…” Namjoon gestured the directions as he assigned everyone a place, so they knew who the closest wolves on either side of them were. Finally he waved his arm, and they set out, shifting as they raced off into the designated areas. Seokjin raced off into the deeper part of the woods, leaping over brush and brook alike, his panting heavy in his ears as he sniffed at the air, trying to catch that smell of salt and leather.

The tearing sensation against his lungs and chest as he continued to run, limbs screaming, was a welcome one. It woke him up and distracted him from the other tightness in his chest, the one that kept telling him that this was because he Scented Jungkook last night. He’d crossed a line. He kept *continuing* to cross lines that he wasn’t supposed to. He had once prided himself on his self-control, his ability to present to others only what he chose. But Jeong Jungkook had thrown all of that out the window.

He had honestly gone last night to find out what it was that had happened to make Jungkook so distant, to make him clam up again like they hadn’t made any progress in their delicate dance of getting to know each other since August. Both of them had an awkward tendency to be quieter, more withdrawn. A sneakier, more manipulative side of him had thought that if Jungkook was coming down with a cold, he could have been more loose-tongued, a little needier and more likely to open up. He hadn’t banked on the fact that half-asleep, soft-faced and slightly flushed Jungkook was very endearing, or that his smell always got stronger when he had been asleep, or on the fact that he had been harboring a migraine all day long and he knew that it was too easy to lean forward and just take what he wanted. Jungkook’s teeth, with their extra outward curve that made his lips part delicately, the cabin light reflected off the droplets of liquid clinging to his lips was distracting. The freckle beneath the impossibly pink mouth had been too tempting. The smell of leather, the slight clamminess of the boy’s skin had been too intoxicating.

Maybe he was just a weaker man than he thought he was.

It was natural for Jungkook to react the way he had, with shock and probably disgust. Especially after finding the T-shirt in his pillowcase the day before, there was no way Jungkook wouldn’t catch on to him now, wouldn’t realize that Seokjin was in love with him, trying his best not to be obsessed
with him.

Seokjin’s chest ached. But that was nothing new.

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Jungkook was burning.

Not literally, of course, but he might as well have been. Covered in a pool of sweat, he was now sitting in mud made from the melted snow beneath him, as well as his own slick. It just wouldn’t stop. He had been aroused for hours, his body gushing out more of the natural lubricant every few minutes with no sign of relief. Nothing helped. He had planned on being back to the cabin, showered and his activities untraceable, before anyone woke up. Now he physically couldn’t even stand, much less make the long trek home through the snow.

Jungkook whimpered, shifting his leg a little as his body quivered, that deep slit inside of him aching and itching, begging to be satisfied. He felt gross and slimy, and he knew his body temperature was actually lower than it felt, due to the snow around him, but he couldn’t bear to keep his jacket on. It lay uselessly on the ground next to him in pitiful abandon as he shivered and whined. He had frantically tried to come for the first hour, hoping the throbbing and aching would let up, but nothing seemed to help. If anything, he only made it worse, because now his body had dispelled so much liquid he felt shriveled up inside, his mouth dry and his throat rough from gasping and moaning helplessly into the night. Why had he snuck out? Why had he gone so far? Why did he get himself into this kind of shit? While his body felt so dragged and worn to exhaustion, his mind had fought on a lot longer, trying to use his anger to fuel some energy into his limbs.

Eventually, though, he had given up. His mind was now numb like the tips of his fingers as he clutched at the mussed snow around him, lifting a handful to his mouth and relieved at the cool wetness as it melted against his tongue. He could taste a bit of bitterness to it, probably from the palm of his hand, and he wanted to gag. He weakly brought his wrist up to wipe at the sweat accumulating on his brow, his vision blurry, his lips chapped. He whimpered. The world was spinning and he wondered if he was finally close to passing out, to slip into sweet relief. Anything sounded better than the ache in his gut.

He moved to bring another handful of snow to his mouth and missed entirely, the powder-like snow crumbling softly against his cheek, slipping into his shirt and soaking the material there afresh with chill. Then, he heard something. It wasn’t the rushing, pounding that had been in his ears since he had first Scented, it was a crunching noise of paw to snow, a low snarl. Jungkook looked up, his
eyes crossed and his eyelids feeling so, so heavy. There was a wolf there, standing a few yards away from him and sniffing the air.

“S...Jin…” Jungkook mewed, one hand reaching out to the blurry image of the wolf, his fingertips aching to touch and be touched, for some comfort and relief. He wondered if this was a hallucination. If it was, why couldn’t he hallucinate less pain in his ass?

The wolf moved closer as Jungkook blinked sleepily, his breath now in weary, ragged gasps. Then, a smell hit him, an Alpha scent. But it wasn’t Seokjin. It was some strange smell, a sort of biting sweet scent, like honeysuckle. A warm smell to accompany high summer. It contrasted strangely with the winter sensations around him, but Jungkook was just way too tired to think about that now. He fell back against his tree again, the skin at the back of his neck now scraped and bleeding a little from the abrasiveness of the bark. The wolf in front of him looked dark-furred, eyes glowing red as it slowly walked towards him. Some part of Jungkook’s brain protested, strong but too distant to be much use, that this wasn’t Seokjin. This wasn’t his Alpha. *That’s not mine.*

There was a snuffling noise, then the figure in front of him changed, a smooth transition that he almost missed with the lazy blink of an eye. The man was suddenly barebacked and crouched in front of him, tilting his chin to the side in curiosity. Jungkook tried to squeeze his eyes shut and open them again with a deliberation meant to clear his vision, and he got his first clear look at the man’s face. He was beautiful, his skin unbelievably pale and a silver earring dangling from his right ear. His eyes were dark and intense, thick eyebrow pressed together and his lips in a frown. The skin of his chest and shoulders were positively covered in black tattoos, scripted markings across his heart and an elaborate sun drawn like the drip of ink on the other side. The man turned slightly, his hand shuffling around Jungkook’s jacket as though looking for something, and Jungkook saw that on his back were tattooed two black shapes that reminded him of wings, a strip of text down the middle of his back like a spine created of words. The muscles of his body were thin, but impressive, rippling with each movement, his upper arms thicker than Jungkook’s thighs, and each movement smooth and powerful.

In all honesty, his beauty and aura reminded him so much of Seokjin, it hurt. He hadn’t even spoken but the intense way that he stared up at Jungkook through loose reddish-brown bangs told him in no uncertain terms that here, right now, was a man who was Seokjin’s equal. Jungkook shuddered, and the man seemed to sniff distastefully.

“Well, you’re in a real pickle, aren’t you, little Omega?” the man whispered. His voice was light but it had a sort of breathy huskiness to it, like the air as it came out from between his lips was measured a little differently than most people. He placed two curled fingers with painted black fingernails underneath Jungkook’s chin and lifted it gently, and Jungkook whimpered loudly, his skin feeling like it was being slowly peeled away and towards his middle. The man laughed, and Jungkook’s heart stopped. His laugh was warm and pleasant, even though Jungkook was slowly starting to feel the danger of the situation sinking in, as the fingertips against his skin started to feel electrified and stimulated, like it was waiting for this.
“Did your pack abandon you out here in the snow? In the middle of your heat?” The man’s voice was taking on a smooth, sultry tone, and he leaned in closer, the fingertips becoming fingers which became an entire palm that cupped his jaw. “That’s awfully cruel of them, you know.”

“Jae? What the--?!” came a voice from behind, and the tattooed man looked over his shoulder. Jungkook raised his eyes to see the additional newcomer, and was surprised to see the man had a very feminine looking face, with long, slightly wavy brown hair that brushed his shoulders, a delicate chin that came to a point and soft, pink lips.

“Sukkie, look what I found?” the tattooed man named Jae smirked, lifting Jungkook’s head a little higher, making him inhale sharply. “He’s all alone.”

“Wow, he smells so strong. What is that, leather?”

“And saltwater. It’s really pretty-smelling, isn’t it? He almost smells like a Noble.” Jae ran a hand through the greasy clumps of Jungkook’s bangs, and Jungkook caught another strong wave of the man’s Alpha scent, the sweetness burning at his nostrils. He was staring into Jungkook’s eyes so intently, as though debating something. Jungkook shifted uncomfortably and Jae’s eyes suddenly flashed red, and the hand in his hair clenched down, grabbing hold of Jungkook’s hair but not pulling it just yet.

“God, you’re just completely soaked in it, aren’t you? What is this, your first heat?” Jae hissed, breathing through his mouth now. He paused, his breath coming a little more labored as he considered. He saw the glazed look on Jungkook’s face, watched the streaks of tears that were quietly trickling down his cheeks. “Wow… it is, isn’t it? A pretty Unmated Omega in the middle of the woods on his first heat. That’s awful…” He smiled softly, “Don’t worry, we can take care of you.”

“Uh, Jae, I don’t think--” the man behind him called out, stepping forward and fiddling with the sleeves of his jacket nervously.

“Sukkie knows I don’t care much for Omegas,” Jae told Jungkook in a whisper intended to be soothing, and for all the world, it was. “But I know how it feels to be frustrated and abandoned, and honestly, you look so pitiable…” He ran his knuckles against Jungkook’s jaw, and the boy let out a little sigh, wishing he could drown in the sound of the man’s voice. It took him a long moment to realize that that was on purpose - Jae was using his Alpha voice to soothe Jungkook, to force his tense muscles to relax. Whether or not that was a good thing, Jungkook’s brain still wasn’t sure. His nerves were too busy to take a vote.
“Jae, Jae listen, doesn’t he smell almost like a Jeon?” Sukkie crept up behind Jae, laying his hand on the man’s shoulder and staring down at the pitiful sweaty pile that was Jungkook.

Jae smiled. “Wow, you’re right, he kind of does. Do you hear that, pup? You may be royalty. If you are a Jeon, it might please you to know you can meet your brother soon.” Over his shoulder, he said to his companion, “Let me Scent him and we’ll get him out of here. The Scenting should calm him down long enough for him to relax for a bit.” Jae leaned forward, ignoring the way Jungkook started shivering, one hand weakly raising as if to push him away. But all he could manage was to limply place his hand against Jae’s chest. The Alpha leaned in, inhaling deeply, and Jungkook tried to mentally prepare himself for the Scenting, as much as it made his skin crawl. But then, Jae hissed, a growl escaping him as he leapt back as though Jungkook were on fire.

“What is it?” Sukkie asked, looking wide-eyed at the Alpha.

Jae’s eyes flashed a deep, glowing crimson. Jungkook could only whimper, not understanding what he’d done wrong, why Jae had stopped, why everything was feeling warm again as he slowly became more and more willing to do anything to make the world stop spinning. Jae’s next words were, ironically, the last words Jungkook expected, and the first ones he had wanted to hear, although not in their current context and tone, spat out like a vile taste.

“Kim Seokjin.”

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“Hoseok?” Kiara said quietly, following behind the Alpha, their arms loaded with wood. The weight in her arms was welcome, in all honesty, as was the smell of the smoke from the fire as they unloaded. She had loved the smell of smoke since childhood, but it was also like Namjoon’s scent, which made it not only familiar but comforting and safe. The sound of the wood thunking against the black metal grate they used as a woodpile was a pleasant one, even though the atmosphere was still tense and ringing with unspoken fears. “Have you and Yoongi…? I mean… Are you two still?”

The man gave a sad smile, shrugging his shoulders. “He’s still angry at me, and to be honest, I can’t even blame him. I deserve this.”

“Hoseok… You didn’t mean it, and I’m sure Yoongi knows that.” Kiara laid a hand on his shoulder, her soft Omega scent reaching out as if to embrace him in a comforting hug.
“Yeah, but I broke his trust. No one knows as much as me how sensitive Yoongi is about Alpha dominance, and I just…. I just spit it out without thinking.”

“Well, to be fair, you had a valid point. You were threatened by a new Beta, and Taehyung did cross a line,” she said. Her voice was gentle and diplomatic, as though reassuring a mourning friend. “But you should know, Taehyung’s not like that. I really don’t think he’s the type to Claim someone he already knows is chosen as a mate. The Kim men are all kind of like that. Loyal to a fault, and the first ones to sacrifice their own happiness for their mate.”

Hoseok nodded, his bottom lip protruding. After a moment, he glanced around, as if double-checking that they were alone, and then he turned back to Kiara and said more quietly, “Did Namjoon tell you who he chose?”

Kiara smiled, her eyes sparkling with amusement as she patted Hoseok’s cheek. “Even if he had, as his mate, I wouldn’t tell you without his permission, Hoseok. I trust Namjoon’s decisions. But I will tell you, you don’t have to worry.”

“I’ll worry anyways,” Hoseok sighed, and they went out for another load of wood, the snow now falling a lot gentler than before. “The only other Unclaimed wolves in our pack are Jimin, Jungkook and Seokjin. One of them is his brother and the other two… the other two are like my pups.”

“They’re like our pups,” Kiara corrected, a slight note of playful possessiveness to her voice.

He held the door for her as she stepped into the lean-to where the wood had been left sheltered from the snow, a dark shed that smelled of moss and wood chips. She loaded up his arms first, his gloved fingertips brushing bits of sawdust.

“Fair enough, our pups. But you know what I mean. I’ve known them longer than Taehyung or Seokjin. I still don’t understand them quite yet, to be honest. But I think Taehyung is a good kid, he’s just… brash.”

Kiara nodded. “Either way, Taehyung is young but he’s not stupid. He doesn’t want Yoongi, so you two should talk and make up. You’re supposed to be officiated tonight, anyways.”

Hoseok let out a dark sort of chuckle, shaking his head. “Even if Yoongi were to forgive me, with all that’s going on right now, I don’t see that happening.”
“Well, let’s focus on the current situation, then deal with that later. I’m sure Namjoon can figure something out.”

They went back into the house, dropping the last load of wood next to the fire. Hoseok brushed the wood chips off his belly and went to stare out at the snow, seeing that the boys’ tracks had already disappeared from just an hour ago. “I really hope they can find him... Why would he have just run off like that?”

“I don’t know,” Kiara sighed, her brow crinkling. “Maybe he panicked after all the stress?”

“No, Jungkook is the type to internalize and pretend like it’s all okay, for our sakes.” Hoseok crossed his arms. “He hates being a bother, so he’s going to feel terrible for adding to the pile right now.” They fell to silence for a few moments, and Hoseok decided that he very much hated waiting periods in life. The uncertainties that had enshrouded their pack, the unspoken worries, the threats looming on the horizon.

Kiara sighed yet again, sitting on the couch and hugging her arms to herself. Hoseok looked over at her, arching an eyebrow.

“I’m surprised Namjoon didn’t send you out with the rest of the search party, actually,” Hoseok said, his tone forcibly light as he tried to lighten the atmosphere. “You’re our best nose, after all.”

At that, Kiara seemed to flush a little, looking down at her knees and smiling. She touched her knuckle to her lips, as if to suppress the giveaway expression, then looked up at him through thick eyelashes. The warm crackling of the fire seemed to make her face seem a little more flushed than usual, a little more girlish. She toyed with the ends of her sleeves, nibbling a bit on the frayed ends. “Actually, he knows I shouldn’t be exerting myself right now. I would probably be fine, but, Namjoon is a worrier.”

“Wait, what? Are you sick?” Hoseok instantly moved in, sitting next to her on the couch and looking her over with more care, looking for signs of fever, or anything. “What’s wrong?”

Kiara giggled, and played with her hair, one arm resting gently across her lap. “Actually, we were going to announce this after your Mating with Yoongi, but... I think in light of the circumstances we could use a little good news, right?”

“What is it?!”

She reached out and took Hoseok’s hands in hers, smiling with that warm, tender smile she gave all the wolves of the pack.
“Hoseok, I’m pregnant.”

Taehyung’s breath ran ragged as he leapt over a pile of brush, bits of the branches whipping out as if trying to catch hold of him. He needed to find Jungkook. The tell-tale seawater scent was so distinctive usually, but it was harder on the little island, where they were surrounded on all sides by the sea, so he would have to try to pinpoint the smell of leather.

He was running for almost an hour, and he sped up, worried that he would have to head back before he could find anything. Something in him just seemed to know that none of the others had found him, a feeling in his gut as well as the fact that he hadn’t heard a howl or a yip in the distance. His ear twitched, checking for the millionth time as he rushed around a particularly thick oak tree. The trees seemed to change as he went deeper into the woods, since the firs closer to the shore had seemed to thin out until he couldn’t smell them anymore over the other scents bombarding him on every side.

His nose twitched suddenly, and Taehyung halted, his paws digging into the dampness of the snow, blinking through the lazily falling whiteness.

The smell of leather.

He sniffed again.

And something else. Some one else.

Taehyung approached slowly, stepping into the edges of a clearing and making sure that he was downwind from whoever it was. The precaution was one he was ingrained with since he was a very young pup, but in this case it was probably unnecessary, since once he got to the edge of the clearing it was difficult to smell anything over the smell of an Omega’s slick. Jungkook was braced against a tree, looking completely wrecked. His hair was stuck to his forehead in thick, black clumps, his mouth parted wide as he gripped at the snow around him. He only wore his T-shirt and sweatpants, and the latter looked completely ruined, and neither left any room for imagination as far as what was going on. Taehyung felt his whole body stiffen, first at the smell and then the realization that Jungkook had Presented. He was an Omega. Oh, thank god.
Then, he noticed the intruders. Two figures were leaning in towards Jungkook, causing the look of fear in his eyes. The Alpha was gripping into Jungkook’s hair now, forcing Jungkook’s head back, baring his neck against his will. The Alpha seemed livid.

“How the fuck do you have Seokjin’s Claim?! You’re an Omega! You’re still a fucking pup!” The man was screaming, his eyes flashing red as the man behind him laid a hand on his shoulder, attempting to calm him with quiet words that were increasingly panicked. “Where the fuck is he?! Is this some kind of a fucking joke?”

Oh no. It’s Jae. The almost rabid ramblings of the Alpha were a terrifying mirror of the last time Taehyung had seen him. Part of Taehyung wanted to run away, his ears dropping in reluctance. But Jungkook needed him. He debated for a moment whether to jump in and use the moment of surprise to put himself between Jae and Jungkook, but opted instead to throw his head back, jaw snapping as he let out a long, powerful howl, catching the immediate attention of the other party and, he knew, his pack mates. He could still faintly detect their scents, and they would now be moving in closer.

While the Alpha was still stunned, Taehyung bolted over, snapping at the Alpha in an attempt to make him back away from Jungkook. More vulnerable in his human form, Jae stepped back, a look of bewilderment on his face until his expression crumpled into one of recognition.

“Taehyung,” Jae spat. “So I guess the whole family’s here, huh? Where’s your asshole of a brother now, huh? Busy boning the rest of the pack to his satisfaction?”

In response, Taehyung growled, baring his teeth at the wolf. This wasn’t the time for old feuds, Jungkook needed help. He needed to get him back to camp, to warmth and safety, but he couldn’t do it alone. He would just have to stall for time until backup arrived.

Taehyung prayed that Jae couldn’t see the way his legs trembled.

“Back the fuck away, pup,” Jae snapped, waving his hand and almost earning a bite from Taehyung just at the gesture, his muscles tense and ready for attack at any moment. “He’s Claimed but that doesn’t mean shit to another pack. This kid’s Unmated, which means he’s free game. Do you really want to leave him like this?” He nodded his head to Jungkook, and in a moment of weakness, Taehyung craned his head around to look at the younger boy. His heart ached, seeing the obvious pain on Jungkook’s face. His eyes were practically crossed and his hand lifted weakly to reach for the Beta.

“Tae…” Jungkook rasped, his voice barely audible. Taehyung knew a beg for help when he saw one.
“Look at him, Taehyung,” Jae added, spitting out his words with the kind of emotion-based reasoning that he knew people were weak to, that he knew could get everyone else to see his way. “Going this long in this condition, and being Unmated...he could die. And even if he lives, what are you going to do to stop me from taking him? What are you going to do, Mate him yourself?”

Taehyung shivered, and not at all from the cold around them. The snow had stopped, and it seemed like the world was holding its breath. He knew Mating Jungkook would buy the Omega time, as well as make it utterly taboo for Jae to touch him. Jae was an idiot and manipulative and broken, but he didn’t break the rules. That aspect of him was probably the only reason he hadn’t already done something about Jungkook.

But Mating Jungkook, even in a desperate attempt to save his life and get him home… Could he do that? As a Beta, it was one of his rights, to be allowed to Mate with an Omega. The boy rasped out Taehyung’s name again, but this time it was more of a moan. Jungkook shuddered, and the fresh scent of slick rose in the air. Even in his misery, Jungkook looked ashamed, looked embarrassed by the state he was in. The usually calm and delicate Jungkook was silently screaming in the depths of the Omega’s eyes.

Taehyung stepped toward Jungkook, nudging his wet nose against Jungkook’s, his eyes locking on the still-swollen Scent gland, irritated with hormones and from being roughly Scented. The smell of Seokjin was buried beneath the aroma of Jungkook’s arousal and sweat, but it was still there, confusing Taehyung for a moment. But there was no time. What if Jungkook was already too weak to make the trip home? What if Jae tried to Mate him right there, right then? He didn’t want to lose a pack member, not for anything. He loved Jungkook, an important, gentle part of their family.

But what about Jimin? Taehyung’s chest felt like it was being ripped in two. He couldn’t imagine having to go home and tell Jimin that he had Mated someone else, that he couldn’t be with his true partner, his soulmate, the other half of his heart. He felt utterly broken just thinking about it. So even though looking into Jungkook’s face made him feel like the scum of the earth, he knew he would regret this moment forever.

*I’m sorry, Jungkook. I’m so fucking sorry. Please forgive me.*

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies! KurageCharms here~♥

As always, thanks for your continued support! I’ve talked to so many of you on Twitter and in the comments, it’s so lovely~ (I also have a CuriousCat, if you’d like to talk and
prefer to stay on anon? I know some of you are shy. All questions are welcome my loves~)

This chapter was quite intense compared to the others, right? I hope so, that's what I was going for. lol I didn't originally intend so many 'bombs' to drop in one chap but things tend to accumulate, as in real life. lmao

The next update is scheduled for Saturday! It may actually be uploaded a bit early or late, depending on how things go. tbh I'd rather do it a bit early before we leave town.

In your opinion, what was the biggest 'bomb' dropped? I'm curious. Haha.

Later, lovelies~
“Thoughts are the shadows of our feelings -- always darker, emptier and simple r.”

— Friedrich Nietzsche

“W-what?! You’re pregnant?!” Hoseok breathed, a smile coming to his face, bright white mouth of teeth gleaming and lighting up his face as he squeezed Kiara’s hands. “Oh my god...You’re gonna have puppies!” Kiara laughed, tumbling over and falling into Hoseok’s warm arms as he hugged her tightly. “Namjoon is gonna have puppies! Our pack is gonna have puppies! This is such great news!”

“Yeah, we’re so excited!” Kiara was wiping at tears now - happy tears, and Hoseok thought she looked even more beautiful than usual. Her green eyes sparkled with what he could now properly call a motherly warmth, and small, upturned nose wrinkled as she laughed.

“When did you find out?!”

“Just before we left for the trip. We had signs after that weird second heat I went into in November, but we didn’t know for sure until recently. I think Namjoon cried more than I did.” Kiara smiled fondly, looking over at the fire and nibbling at the edge of her sleeve again. Hoseok could imagine it, Namjoon’s smile spread wide, the dimples of his cheeks deepening as he stared shyly at the ground, trying to contain his glee. Then eventually being unable to and rushing to Kiara, lifting her up and whooping loudly. That was just Namjoon, in Hoseok’s mind, a side that lately had been shown more and more rarely as the stress and number of members in the pack had increased. Puppies would be good.

Hoseok beamed, sitting back onto the couch with Kiara still curled up against his chest. He sighed, and she lightly swatted at his arm and said, “So you’d better make up with Yoongi soon, do you hear me? I won’t have the uncles stressing the puppies out.”
Uncles. For the first time in days, he laughed. He imagined Yoongi cooing over the pups, spoiling them with treats and then trying to act like he was one of the strict parents, when he really was a sucker for round cheeks and small fingers and toes. Yoongi wanted kids. He hadn’t talked about it to the others, because that wasn’t Yoongi’s way, but Hoseok had known for a long time that he wanted pups.

‘I honestly don’t know if I’d be any good with pups,’ he had said, watching the wall as Hoseok ran his fingers through the Omega’s hair, his head in Hoseok’s lap. ‘But I want them. I want to take care of them and raise them up well, to be stronger and braver than me. I want to leave something behind, a mark. I felt ready for pups before I even Presented, but it’s not smart to have pups without a Mate. And none of the Alphas or Betas I came across before were anything like the person I wanted to raise my pups with.’

‘That sounds reasonable enough,’ Hoseok hummed, leaning down into Yoongi’s hair and burying his nose in it, in the smell of earth. ‘Raising pups is a big responsibility. And I’m sure you’d be wonderful at it.’

‘Yeah...’ Yoongi shifted, wriggling his body until he was on his back, facing up at the Alpha and meeting his eyes. ‘I don’t NEED a Mate, Hoseok. I don’t NEED an Alpha. But I WANT a partner, to share things with, to make the experience worth it.’

Hoseok smiled, pressing his lips to Yoongi’s brow. ‘I understand.’

And he had.

And he did.

“You smell sad again,” Kiara murmured, lifting his face up enough to press in against Hoseok’s neck, elegantly Scenting him. She inhaled the smell of his vanilla sweetness, brushing against him with her own neck to leave her smell of Omega mingled with coffee. The action helped relax him, calming in its familiarity, and he let his shoulders drop.

“Sorry. I was just...thinking about Yoongi.”

“It’ll be okay,” Kiara tried to reassure him, her nose still pressed into the curve of his neck. Hoseok bent his head to the side, leaning down to return the gesture, even though his mind was still
somewhat distracted. It wasn’t often that the two of them Scented, only in quiet moments when the other needed a little wordless reassurance, a trace of something that wasn’t complicated or weighted with meaning or subtext. It wasn’t that being paired with Namjoon and Yoongi was difficult, per se, but it had difficulties, strained moments and stubbornness, layers burying linguistic and psychological subtleties. Basically, as Kiara had put it, ‘They think entirely too much.’

“Thanks,” Hoseok said, patting around her shoulder and letting her remain laid up against his chest, half-hugging her as he stared into the fire. “And congratulations.”

“Thanks,” Kiara yawned. He knew without being able to see into her face that her eyes had flickered closed. All things considered, it was reasonable enough that she was exhausted, and he left her there to doze, glancing up at the clock over the mantelpiece. The boys had been gone almost an hour.

The sound of a truck roaring its way down the uneven path startled them both, and instantly Hoseok was on high alert, rushing to the window and peering out at the bright red Dodge Ram that was parking just at the edge of the camp.

“What the hell…?” Hoseok mumbled. Then to Kiara he gestured with one hand, “Stay inside. Let me check this out.”

Kiara seemed to consider this for a moment, standing up, but then she crossed her arms and nodded, frowning as Hoseok slipped his jacket back on and stepped outside.

Hoseok walked off the porch and into the untarnished stretch of snow toward the trucks, his hands tucked into his pockets as he watched the four men clamber out of the vehicle. The man in the passenger seat slammed his door shut, running a hand through his blonde hair and calling out something to the man on the other side of the truck. His voice was deep and somewhat raspy, as though there was a permanent smoker’s cough sort of edge to it at all times, but it was friendly.

Hoseok stood waiting at the corner of the house, trying to place himself in a place where Kiara could easily peer through the window and see what was going on. It wasn’t that he actually thought the ‘intruders’ meant any harm in the least - quite the contrary - but the visit had an as-yet-unknown purpose, and they couldn’t afford to take risks now.

“Jackson Wang,” Hoseok called out at last, a little smirk playing on the edge of his lips, “What brings you here?”
The blond haired guy looked over and beamed at Hoseok, “Heeey! Long time no see!” He practically bounded over, wrapping Hoseok in a hug. It was more affection than Jackson usually showed the Alpha, but it was a wordless show of friendship to reassure, to prelude the meeting with a little show of goodwill.

“Yeah, I haven’t seen you since the barbeque, I think?”

“Yeah…” Jackson’s smile remained, but it was a little more stressed at the edges, a little more still and less fluid than a true smile seemed. “Um, hey, is Namjoon around?”

“No, he’s not,” Hoseok said, leaving his location purposefully unclarified. “What’s going on?”

“Well, see I just came by to let you guys know that the Cano pack sold their portion of the island just over the summer,” Jackson said, his hands burying into his pockets. “It seems the last of the elder wolves in the pack died off, and the younger ones are joining into different packs in the city, so they can’t afford to keep it up.”

“Wow, that’s sudden…” Hoseok pinched his lips together, considering. This wasn’t going to be good news, in all likelihood. One of the reasons Namjoon had been glad to have this island was that there weren’t many other packs to rival it. Jackson’s pack was on surprisingly friendly terms with them, due to his history with Namjoon, but other packs, especially newcomers, were more likely to challenge the boundaries and power balance of the hunting grounds and the game therein. This would just be one more added stress onto Namjoon’s already full plate, but it was a vital one. “Thanks for letting us know, Jackson. I’ll make sure to talk to Namjoon about it when he’s available.”

“There’s one more thing…” Jackson said quietly, his gaze flickering over to his companions, then towards the Main Hall, then back to Hoseok. “The pack that bought the new land? It’s the Rising Gods clan…”

Hoseok stared, blinking in surprise. He wasn’t sure what Jackson meant by that, but he could tell it wasn’t good. “Oh. Um. Thanks.”

“Namjoon will know what that means,” Jackson offered, trying to be helpful. “Just make sure you tell him it’s the Rising Gods clan, and tell him to take all precautions. I haven’t heard any nice news about them lately, and it’s not going to be pretty.”
Coming up to him with a quiet stride, one of the men placed a reassuring hand on Jackson’s shoulder, shaking his head a little to brush the brown bangs out of his eyes. “Also…?” the man reminded. Hoseok had met him only once at a social Namjoon had taken the whole pack to, but he remembered the man was an Omega named Mark.

Jackson nodded, meeting Hoseok’s gaze in a powerful but subtle display of the Beta’s developed ‘Alpha’ side. Normally, Jackson was one of those loud, cocky, boisterous Betas with only one volume: obnoxious. But right now he was eerily calm and quiet, his voice uncharacteristically low as he said, “And tell Namjoon that if he needs us, to call. If worst comes to worst, we’re on the same team here.”

It wasn’t completely unheard of for packs to join forces at a new incoming pack’s threat, but it wasn’t common by any means. Hoseok nodded gravely, knowing that this suggested that even Jackson’s pack was afraid of the consequences of this new ‘Rising Gods’ group of wolves. Hoseok shook Jackson’s hand, the deal sealed as well as triggering Jackson’s smile back in its normal overwhelming brightness, which Hoseok returned in kind. He dawdled around for a few minutes more, joking about the abundance of seagulls on the island this year, and then excused himself, his arm wrapped around his partner. Hoseok stood and watched them pull out of the camp, his arms crossed and his mind worrying.

They had a pack of mostly Unmated wolves, some of which were still practically pups (one of which was currently missing). They had dissension between most of their more mature wolves, and now they had fresh pups on the way.

If he had been paranoid about Taehyung overstepping bounds with his rights to Mate, that was nothing compared to what a completely unknown, very likely cocky clan of wolves was going to do once they caught whiff of their pups.

Hoseok was worried.

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Jungkook looked up into Taehyung’s golden wolf eyes, seeing the apology and the pain there, and he swallowed heavily. His throat felt like sandpaper, and he wanted to reach out and pull Taehyung to him, to hug his warm, soft fur and bury his face into the whiteness with the flecks of warm brown-gold in it. He wanted comfort, he wanted relief. He wanted to stop feeling on fire and frozen at the same time. Jungkook shuddered, another wave of slick rushing out of him against his will, and he moaned. All three wolves visibly reacted, their bodies tensing from instinct, the call to Jungkook’s Scent. His heat was only getting worse, and the presence of not one, but three wolves so close that could help relieve the pain and aching in his body was pure torture. His world kept spinning, and his eyes refused to focus as he wanted them to.
Was Taehyung really going to Mate him, right here, in this way? Jungkook continued to tremble, unsure if it was from fear or the hormones rushing through his body and setting it alight as though his blood was gasoline. But you have Jimin. If you Mate me, what will happen to Jimin? What will happen to Seokjin? They’ll be alone forever. Jungkook felt tears streaming down his face. He didn’t want Taehyung to Mate him. Maybe his body would have said otherwise if he was a wolf at that moment, but as it was, he knew that Taehyung was not his Mate, was not someone he wanted in that way. He wanted Taehyung to be happy with Jimin, wanted them to whisper sweetly to each other on their bunk for a long, long time. The idea of being Mated to Taehyung in front of these strangers, forced to do so by ‘necessity,’ was terrifying, was harrowing.

But he couldn’t even speak to tell Taehyung that, because his body was too busy burning.

“Well? What will it be? Take your brother’s precious Omega or watch me do it?” Jae hissed.

Taehyung shifted, turning to crouch in front of Jungkook, facing Jae and taking on a defensive stance. Jungkook could almost hear him. Neither. I won’t let either happen. Jungkook’s body wanted to scream in frustration, but the Jungkook trapped inside, watching everything happen with very little strength or awareness, wanted to cry with relief and gratefulness. After a moment, he also wanted to cry in fear, because in the flash of an eye Jae had switched back to wolf form, growling as he leapt at Taehyung’s throat. The Beta being much smaller, he didn’t stand a chance, and whimpered as he was thrown to the side. Jae snarled, coming after him again, and Taehyung forced himself back onto his feet, wobbling but bracing himself. He tried to sidestep from Jae’s second attack, but the two of them ended up colliding heavily instead, biting at anything available. The strong scent of honeysuckle mixing with citrus rose in the air, along with a thick aggressiveness to the atmosphere that was inescapable. After several long seconds of scuffle, they finally parted, panting and circling around each other. Jae leapt forward, his maw closing around Taehyung’s front leg and snapping his head to the side roughly, sharp teeth tearing skin and fur, attempting to break the leg there as well. Taehyung’s whimper rose in the air, but he continued to fight. Jungkook could see through the haze that he always seemed to be placing himself between Jungkook and Jae, whether he was leaping or limping over to block Jae’s path. Jae’s mouth was dripping with Taehyung’s blood now, and he bared his teeth in a low growl, the two of them staring each other down in a lull moment. Jungkook realized with a sinking heart that there was no way Taehyung would win against the older, stronger Alpha. Taehyung was visibly panting hard, limping on his front leg, and his tail hung limp, dragging against the snow and blood at his feet. Jae lunged forward once more, taking advantage of Taehyung’s sluggish movements. The Beta tried to twist, to bury his snarling teeth into Jae’s neck, but he was thrown to the ground first, a whine echoing around the woods. Jae had rammed head-first into Taehyung’s side, biting down into the flesh there and pressing Taehyung into the snow, where he flailed in a panic. Jae just seemed to continue tearing into Taehyung’s side, his head shaking back and forth, his head tilted almost unnaturally to the side. Taehyung’s paws tried to push Jae off, but eventually he twitched and went limp.

Jungkook had tears in his eyes, panting as his gut clenched in fear and pain. Taehyung wasn’t moving, as far as he could tell. But he didn’t quite trust his eyes because they still weren’t focusing. He could barely keep them open. His eyes flickered over to Sukkie, who was standing a ways back,
wringing his hands with a worried look on his face as he watched. Jae turned his head to meet
Jungkook’s eyes, and the Omega felt a shudder run through him. There was no one left to protect
him now.

Jae let out a growl, stepping towards the oak tree, his tail held erect in a show of confidence and
victory. Jungkook gasped, curling up into himself as much as possible, his legs numb and quivering
at this point, but he tried to pull his knees to his chest even though it made his stomach and ass hurt
so badly, and his cock was still pressed up against his belly, hard and throbbing. Jungkook tried to
shield his head with his arms, smelling his own sweat and his Scent as he did so.

He expected Jae’s Scent to swarm in around him, burying him beneath it and consuming him in
seconds. But there came a deep grunt, a sort of half-bark and a familiar howl. Jungkook blinked his
eyes open to see that another wolf had come, grand and white and snarling ferociously. The white
wolf’s face was contorted as he bared his teeth, instantly leaping forward and catching hold of Jae’s
neck and whipping him off to the side. The scent of soap, strangely mixed with the smell of blood
and slick, met Jungkook’s consciousness in a slow, purposeful wave. His eyes widened, his mind
clearing like fogged up glass starting to fade into condensation, allowing him to see what was going
on. The throbbing in his gut was worse, but he felt like he could suddenly breathe a little, his body
wanting to relax through all the tense muscles and silent screams of the last few hours.

He’s here. He came for me.

Jungkook blinked away the tears, lips parted as he tried to sit up, wanting to reach for him, to hug
him to his chest and be buried in him. “S...Jin…” he rasped. But his croaky exhale was left unheard
as the wolves continued to fight.

Seokjin barked in warning, cornering Jae as the darker wolf tried to back up, to give himself some
space for defense. He lowered on his front paws slightly, teeth bared as he snapped.

Seokjin watched him for a moment, unmoving. The wind blew past, sending his Scent towards
Jungkook and lightly brushing the top layer of powdery snow past. Seokjin’s tail stood erect and his
eyes focused on Jae alone. Trying to catch him off guard, Jae shot forward, much as he had done
with Taehyung, attempting to knock Seokjin off his feet with a bold move. Seokjin lifted onto his
hind legs, catching Jae beneath his front paws and pressing him into the ground before Jae could
react. Seokjin bit violently down into Jae’s neck, shaking his head back and forth wildly as Jae
seemed to be leaping, flailing, reaching for any sort of foothold to escape with. Seokjin held him
there as he continued to fight, whimpers and growls blending in alike.

The longer he held Jae pinned there, the more Jae’s deep snarls turned into cries, until he was left
with little hiccupping whimpers, panting helplessly beneath Seokjin’s mouth. Jungkook blinked,
scared to even move as he stared in wonder. Seokjin’s posture changed, his ears going down against
his head as he slowly released his hold on Jae’s neck, allowing the wolf to scramble frantically away.
Jae limped over to Sukkie’s side, looking over his shoulder at Seokjin. The instant Jae looked back his way, the fur at the back of Seokjin’s neck seemed to rise in fear or warning, and he barked loudly at Jae, making both of them jump. Sukkie quickly shifted into wolf form and the two of them ran off into the woods, kicking up snow and unanswered questions behind them.

Seokjin watched after them until they were out of sight, then he turned towards the still unmoving Taehyung. He sniffed at the wolf’s wounds, burying his nose in the Beta’s neck and nudging at him, trying to garner a response. There seemed to be a lot of blood, and Taehyung’s darkish white coat with its little gray marks was stained in vibrant red, especially in his side and injured front leg. Part of the skin of Taehyung’s leg was torn away, exposing a deep triad of gashes that tangled together from where Jae had sunk his teeth. At first, Taehyung didn’t respond, and the world seemed to stop in fear and uncertainty. Then, Jungkook wasn’t sure, but he thought he saw an ear twitch, and Seokjin patted Taehyung roughly with one paw. Taehyung then whimpered, a loud, piercing sort of sound in the back of his throat that seemed to cut into Jungkook’s sensitive ears, and Taehyung’s belly started to rise and fall with deep, pain-stricken breaths. Seokjin started frantically licking Taehyung’s face all over, the force almost lifting Taehyung’s head out of the snow entirely, and making him groan in half-hearted protest. Jungkook sighed in relief, shifting in his spot in the snow, trying to relieve some of the ache in his body now that the ache in his heart was starting to let up and allow him to breathe.

At the slight rustle of movement, Seokjin whipped around and locked eyes with Jungkook, who froze. The Omega let out a little whimpering sound, his eyes locked on the stains of blood that seemed softly blotted all around Seokjin’s mouth and neck and chest. He looked powerful and intimidating, the darker version of Seokjin that he had seen reflected in the man’s eyes the moment they had first met. This was the Seokjin that had bent over him in the bunk, mouth pressed to his neck in reckless, heated abandon. And now Jungkook knew for sure that he would have no fight in him to say no, no strength in him to convince himself he didn’t want it throughout his whole body, to pretend he didn’t need him.

Seokjin let out a sort of snuffling, snorting type sound, then took gentle hold of Taehyung’s good leg, dragging him over closer to where Jungkook lay. Jungkook winced at the little yelps and cries from Taehyung, who wriggled but was too exhausted to rise, but then he saw that Seokjin was protectively trying to get them into one spot. When Taehyung was half-buried in the snow drift next to Jungkook, Seokjin lifted his head and released on long, deep howl that echoed through the trees, reaching out to their companions who were surely already on their way. Then, Seokjin finally turned his full attention on the new Omega. Jungkook blinked, sitting with his back still against the tree and his limbs laying limply against the snow and the mud, and he licked at his chapped lips in wonder, waiting to see what Seokjin would do.

The wolf stepped forward, nudging against Jungkook’s neck, his wet nose feeling soothing and cool against the sweaty, clammy skin there. He seemed to be fearfully checking Jungkook’s neck for a Mating mark, or Jae’s Scent, and upon finding neither, he seemed to relax, almost falling into Jungkook’s lap. The weight of Seokjin’s paws on his legs felt like iron, pinning his already numb thighs to the ground uncomfortably. But the sensation of him being close, of the somehow soothing heat of Seokjin’s underbelly and fur pressed up against him, covering him and shielding him from the falling snow and the pressing cold, made him feel like his body was waking up, shaking off the
His hands reached out and buried into Seokjin’s fur, taking fistfuls of the beautiful whiteness before he dropped his face into it, inhaling the smell of wet fur and soap. His head spun again, but in a pleasant, drugged sort of way. He felt Seokjin’s pulse thrumming wildly against his thighs, could feel the tenseness in the atmosphere as Seokjin started to sniff more and more heavily. The wolf at last gave in, craning his head to burrow into Jungkook’s filthy T-shirt, the tickle of his nose against Jungkook’s side somehow calming to him. His feet seemed to tingle and he knew that his legs were falling completely asleep under the massive weight of Seokjin, the wolf’s stomach across Jungkook’s legs and his large, blood-covered paws resting against Taehyung’s back. And as uncomfortable and painful as it was to bend over and lay against Seokjin’s wide, soft back, Jungkook breathed, finally finding a bit of relief as he mindlessly indulged in the addiction of Seokjin’s Scent. He positively swam in it, felt himself continue to wet with slick, but more calmly now, with less fear. It was exhausting, it was draining, but it wasn’t terrifying.

Presenting alone as he had, he knew had been extremely risky. So much could have gone wrong - so much had gone wrong. But now that Seokjin was here, surrounding him with warmth and possessiveness and protection, Jungkook actually smiled, closing his eyes as he let himself drift off. Seokjin wouldn’t let anyone hurt him, he knew. Seokjin was strong and older and capable, and he was exactly the sort of home Jungkook wanted to fall into right at that moment. He had saved both Jungkook and Taehyung, he had found him when Jungkook had been certain for hours that they wouldn’t. He had let Jungkook touch him, when he needed it so desperately, when he needed it the most. But now Jungkook was so, so tired.

The world tilted once again, and then turned black.
The next update is scheduled for Wednesday, and that's the first one I'm uncertain about uploading time, so please have patience with me. I'll do what I can! <3

Also, my sweets gave me fanart for my story, you guys. :A; I love them so much, omfg.

My Mochi drew me THIS!
And Dan drew me THESE!
❤❤❤❤❤ !!!!!

Later, lovelies~
Heat

Chapter Notes

WARNING: There are some mildly graphic descriptions in this chapter, regarding some of the injuries.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“The feelings that hurt most, the emotions that sting most, are those that are absurd - The longing for impossible things, precisely because they are impossible; nostalgia for what never was; the desire for what could have been; regret over not being someone else; dissatisfaction with the world’s existence. All these half-tones of the soul’s consciousness create in us a painful landscape, an eternal sunset of what we are.”

— Fernando Pessoa

The wind was blowing harder, kicking up wispy clouds of the powder-like snow around them. Seokjin’s muscles remained tense against Jungkook, his body intently focused on self-control as the Omega laid against his back, collapsed forward into unconsciousness. A low whine formed deep in his throat as he felt the slick of Jungkook’s heat soaking against his belly, and he started to pant, attempting to lessen the effects the heat was having on his body. He had to wait for Namjoon and the others to come. He knew that they would be there any minute now. But it was dangerous for him to continue being so close to Jungkook while in wolf form, as much as Jungkook needed the extra warmth he was providing. His Scent was intoxicating, and his touch tingled and swept waves beneath his skin.

He whined, trying not to shift and disturb Jungkook, carefully laying his head down between his paws. He sniffed at Taehyung’s still form to distract himself, and the wolf finally seemed to be waking up, his ears twitching and his legs kicking out in little bursts as he tried to lift his head. The Beta whimpered, looking over at Seokjin, then shuffling awkwardly on the three legs he had available until he was close enough to press his nose against his older brother. Seokjin blinked heavily, letting his eyes flutter closed as he tried to concentrate on not moving, to focus on his breathing. Taehyung let out little whines, licking at Seokjin’s face frantically, causing irritation and gratefulness to swirl awkwardly in his belly. He opened his eyes, seeing the apologetic look on Taehyung’s face, and he nudged his nose underneath the Beta’s chin, playfully pushing his head up and away. The Beta’s tail had been drooping, but it gave the slightest wave back and forth, dragging through the snow as he laid down against Seokjin’s paws. The whimper in Seokjin’s throat grew from a whine to a warning growl, and he shifted a bit on Jungkook’s lap, feeling a slight pull from where Jungkook’s fist clenched around a thick tuft of his fur even in his sleep.

The sound of someone approaching made both Seokjin and Taehyung lift their heads up in alarm,
only to see Namjoon, Jimin and Yoongi gallop over to the oak tree, all of them visibly thrown back
at the scent of Jungkook. Jimin buried his nose into the snow, snuffling in shock and desperation,
trying to tone down the smell. Yoongi was the first to recover, shifting back into human form and
stepping forward.

“Holy shit…” he breathed, running a hand across his face as he stared at the unconscious Jungkook
in disbelief.

Namjoon sniffed at the battleground, pawing at the bloodied snow and trying to identify all the
different scents involved. Jimin was hovering worriedly over Taehyung, letting out little whimpers as
he licked at Taehyung’s face and neck. Taehyung lifted his head and returned the licks in a slower
manner, trying to be reassuring even as he couldn’t move.

Yoongi shifted forward on his knees to reach for Jungkook’s head, to see if he was conscious, and
suddenly Seokjin’s enormous form twisted halfway around, and he snapped his jaws toward
Yoongi’s reaching hands, narrowly missing them. Yoongi jerked backwards on instinct, more
vulnerable to attack while in human form. He blinked at Seokjin with a perplexed expression.

“What the fuck, Seokjin?” he snapped. “We have to move him, he can’t stay here.”

Seokjin just growled in response, teeth bared at the dumbfounded Omega. Namjoon was instantly at
Yoongi’s side, bracing his legs and growling back at Seokjin in warning. A voice echoing in
Seokjin’s mind was telling him to stop, to ‘not do anything stupid,’ as Namjoon had warned him. But
the smell of Jungkook had washed over him heavily, and seeing him so vulnerably at the mercy of
Jae had made him paranoid. The instincts overwhelming his wolf body were making him tremble,
forcing him to give up control. Namjoon was not Namjoon right now, but another Alpha. A threat. A
possible danger to Jungkook, who was in heat and hurting, who needed Seokjin to protect him. The
next thing Seokjin knew there was a flurry of teeth and snarls, and the fleshy, thick skin near
Namjoon’s neck was being torn at by Seokjin’s maw, and Yoongi was yelling, covering Taehyung
up and swearing at them in fear. Jimin leapt in, jumping back and forth with his teeth bared
ferociously, despite the size difference between him and the other two Alphas, and he managed to
slip in between the two of them and snap at Seokjin’s back leg, knocking him over. Jungkook, still
lost to the world, tumbled quietly off Seokjin’s back and into a little crumpled pile in the snow. With
Jimin and Namjoon both snarling at him, teeth clenched carefully around his skin, drool coating his
fur as if in preparation to mingle with the bloodshed, Seokjin finally stopped. The overwhelming
power of their two Alpha Scents made him pause long enough for his eyes to focus again, and he
instantly shifted back, tears in his eyes as within moments multiple hands were reaching around him,
petting him reassuringly. Jimin whimpered, even though he was now in human form, and he leaned
down into Seokjin’s vision, tilting his head in question with the most heartbroken look on his face.
Namjoon knelt, panting in the snow, one hand dropped to Seokjin’s shoulder, tiny droplets of blood
sliding down Namjoon’s neck and down onto his chest from the small puncture wounds Seokjin’s
teeth had left.
“I’m...I’m sorry…” Seokjin sobbed. “I don’t know what came over me.” It was a lie, when it came down to it. He knew exactly what had come over him. He looked over at Jungkook, and even in sleep, his hands were still partially clenched where they had been holding Seokjin’s snowy fur a moment ago, and Seokjin’s chest ached. He turned back to Namjoon. “I’m sorry, I...I promised you and I--”

“We’ll deal with that later, alright?” Namjoon said, his tone gentle but his expression hard and stony. “We’re all here for one reason: to get Jungkook, and now Taehyung, home safe. Okay?” Seokjin stared down, his eyes glassy, and Namjoon nudged his shoulder hard, to make a point, “Okay?"

Seokjin nodded, sniffing a bit as he stood up. Yoongi crawled over to Jungkook again, turning him over and checking his forehead, his breathing. Seokjin felt goosebumps rise on his arms as Yoongi nonchalantly pulled back Jungkook’s sweatpants, peering inside as if inspecting a cupboard’s contents. The Omega then grabbed Jungkook’s jacket from where it had been discarded, placing it onto Jungkook and turning to Namjoon.

“He’s pretty fucking bad, Namjoon, I don’t know if you’re gonna be able to carry him. Your lead Alpha is so dominant, it’ll react to him no matter what you do.”

“I’m Mated, though. It would still be tough, but that helps a little,” Namjoon protested, gently. “And if it gets too hard, you can take a short turn and then--”

“I’ll carry him,” Seokjin said firmly. “Please, let me do it.”

Yoongi pursed his lips together, meeting Namjoon’s eyes in frantic question. It was a bad plan, but Seokjin had been with him this long, hadn’t he? The thought of anyone else carrying him home made his blood start to boil, and made him worry, even when it was just a logical proposal given to get them all home safely. And Namjoon was aware that, as dangerous as it was for Seokjin to stay that close to Jungkook, it would likely be much more dangerous to put another Alpha between the two of them just then.

“I don’t know, Seokjin, you’re not in a great state…” Namjoon was slipping into his diplomatic voice, and Seokjin knew he should just back down and play it demure, but he just couldn’t.

“Please, Namjoon, I swear, I’ll be okay until we get to the camp. But please don’t take him away from me until he’s safe.” He knew his voice was trailing off into desperation, knew the worried look in Namjoon’s eyes and what it meant. He was begging, pleading, because every fiber of his being wanted to stay next to Jungkook until he was sure the boy was going to be okay.
To his relief, and possibly his downfall, Namjoon agreed. With surprising lightness Seokjin stood up, going over to where Yoongi was still knelt at Jungkook’s side and was brushing his hair back from his face.

Behind him, Namjoon was carefully trying to pick up Taehyung, the wolf yelping as the Alpha touched his injured leg.

“Should he transform back? It would probably be more comfortable.” Yoongi suggested.

“Taehyungie?” Jimin pressed in. “Can you transform? Are you strong enough to?”

Taehyung slowly uncurled, shifting into human form. There was a deep wound of torn skin in his side, still bleeding quite profusely, scratches and bite marks along his neck, and his forearm was a ripped, mangled mess that was hard to inspect through all the blood. He was almost finished transforming when he let out a loud cry, clutching his arm bent across his chest. Tears were stinging at his eyes as Yoongi, Namjoon and Jimin shot forward in panic.

“What is it?! What happened!” Jimin practically screeched.

“I think he’s dislocated his elbow,” Yoongi breathed, “I don’t know if it happened before or after he shifted, though. Shit. We should have let him stay in wolf form.”

Jimin looked to Namjoon, who pressed his lips together before turning to Seokjin, who was already rushing over. He carefully lifted Taehyung’s sleeve, ignoring the boy’s protests as he stared at the quickly developing discoloration at the Beta’s elbow.

“It’s definitely dislocated,” Seokjin inhaled. “Jimin, hold his shoulder like this for me.”

“What!? No! Please, no!” Taehyung cried, but Seokjin ignored him, meeting Jimin’s fear-stricken eyes as he expertly placed his hands around Taehyung’s arm, the skin there feeling unnaturally warm from the injury. He felt for the best grip against the bone, pressing in firmly through the bruises. He was trying to avoid the deep gash there, but it still made Taehyung cry out.

Taehyung started to flex his fingers wildly, trying to pull back, “Wait, wait a second, I, I-”
“Shh,” Jimin reassured, brushing his lips against the side of Taehyung’s temple, “Please, just hold still, Tae, it’ll just be a minute. We can’t move you with your elbow like that.” In response, Taehyung just whimpered, his whole body trembling.

“Namjoon,” Seokjin said in a dark warning, and the lead Alpha moved in to help Jimin. “Okay, ready?” There was a popping sound, and Taehyung screamed, then whimpered, weeping as he fell back into Jimin’s chest. Seokjin looked up into his brother’s eyes, touching his cheek, his expression apologetic and pained. “I’m sorry, Taehyung. Does it feel better?”

Taehyung blinked, one eye a little before the other as his gaze was obviously swimming from the pain, but he nodded, clutching his arm to his chest. “I’m gonna go get Jungkook now, okay?” Taehyung nodded again, and Seokjin moved back to where Yoongi had been running a soothing hand through Jungkook’s hair, the boy still dead to the world despite Taehyung’s screams.

Yoongi frowned at Seokjin, but stepped back reluctantly. “Careful,” he snapped. Seokjin was lifting Jungkook up as though he were a delicately folded up paper crane, his metaphorical wings folded in as his head rested up against Seokjin’s chest, his expression surprisingly peaceful. Yoongi fretfully tucked Jungkook’s jacket in against Seokjin, ignoring the way Seokjin watched him unblinkingly.

“There,” Yoongi said, at last satisfied. He turned then to Namjoon, who was bending down and lifting Taehyung up. The boy whimpered, biting at his lip as he let himself be picked up bridal-style. It was lucky that Taehyung was not as heavy as some of the others, being more gangly and all limbs and skinniness. Jimin hovered around Namjoon’s shoulders, a pallor to his cheeks that rivaled the snow around them. He shivered, and Yoongi touched his shoulder reassuringly. “Our job right now is to protect Seokjin and Namjoon while they’re carrying the boys,” Yoongi told him quietly, “So do your best.”

Jimin nodded, straightening his shoulders and lifting his head as his eyes started to scan the woods around them. Yoongi noticed the tears glistening in Jimin’s eyes, but didn’t comment.

The walk back to the camp was thankfully uneventful, but it was agonizingly long. Seokjin felt so guilty for the way that holding Jungkook and walking ahead from the others reassured his inner Alpha, made it believe that relief was coming soon. He breathed in through his mouth, focusing on the lovely feeling of Jungkook’s weight in his arms, the physical contact calming him, and the fact that he was in human form now all aiding in his self-control. It was almost noon by the time they came back, and as soon as they left the last copse of trees, Kiara and Hoseok were running out of the house. Seokjin could see they were already bursting into tears at the sight of Jungkook and Taehyung, curled up like children in their arms. Kiara instantly went to Jungkook, brushing back his shaggy bangs and sighing, kissing his forehead affectionately.
“Thank god he’s alive,” she cried. She started planting little kisses along his cheeks and on his hands, simultaneously inspecting him for any scratches. A low growl was rumbling in Seokjin’s chest in warning, but she ignored it, breathing a sigh of relief when she saw that he was - for the most part - left unscathed. Now there was just the matter of how his skin was so cold it looked discolored, and the dryness to his lips that suggested dehydration.

Hoseok was looking at the arm Taehyung had tucked away, inspecting the bruises and the deep gash there. “God, that’s so… Um, I think we have a splint in the first-aid supplies? Come on, the fire’s going and we already brought everything out. We figured something happened when you weren’t back on time.”

“Shit, he looks so pale,” Kiara breathed, as she and Hoseok switched which boy they were fretting over. Namjoon and Seokjin shared a brief glance of impatience, their arms numb from carrying them through the underbrush.

Hoseok moved forward to touch Jungkook’s arm, then the smell of Jungkook’s heat as it continued dripping from him and down Seokjin’s shivering legs hit the Alpha, and he reeled back, his nose wrinkling as he gave a sharp inhale of surprise.

“Oh my god..” Hoseok breathed. Seokjin fought to keep his face carefully blank, trying to remind himself that Hoseok was no threat when it came to Jungkook’s safety. The weight and warmth of Jungkook in his arms, his nose crumpled slightly up against Seokjin’s chest, helped keep his racing mind busy and allowed him to take a calming breath.

Walking the last 15 feet or so to the Main Hall was the longest stretch of the journey, because all of the wolves were pressed in close, staring at the two injured wolves and wringing their hands in worry, fretting and whispering weakly, as though the strength had left their souls.

Once inside, chaos began, as Kiara and Yoongi started shouting orders, sending people for more towels and blankets. Jimin frantically ran back and forth, securing every available sheet, blanket and pillow and preparing the two couches for the boys as quickly as he could. By the time he was finished it was like they were balanced on top of a precarious stack of blankets. Seokjin washed his hands then went to move back to Jungkook’s side, but Kiara stepped forward and placed a halting hand on his chest.

“You’re needed more with Taehyung,” she said firmly. Seokjin narrowed his eyes at her, his jaw stiffening and his shoulders rising in defensiveness. But she met his eyes evenly, traces of blue encircling her green eyes, making them look like the sea in the middle of a storm. “Jungkook isn’t injured, he’s in a heat. And unless your intention is to Mate him right now, while he’s passed out, how do you expect to help him, hm?”
Seokjin halted, considering her words, and hating how his inner voice weakly admitted that she was right. “But I...is he going to be okay?”

“I don’t know, but trust me, if anyone knows enough to help him through this heat, it’ll be Yoongi and me, understand?” She waited until he nodded in acknowledgement, knowing they made an amusing sight. The tiny, fairy-esque Omega pressing one reprimanding hand into the Alpha’s broad chest, her expression unwavering and self-assured as Seokjin’s shoulders slumped. “Taehyung’s injuries are bad, and the rest of us don’t have the medical know-how for that. Take care of your brother.”

Seokjin nodded again, turning and focusing his attention on Taehyung, who was now awake again and clinging desperately to Jimin’s hand, his injured arm still folded up against him. The elbow all the way halfway up his arm looked purpled and bruised, and it badly needed a splint, or he might injure it worse. Jimin’s other hand was occupied with putting pressure of the damp, soft towel he had pressed to Taehyung’s bleeding arm. Seokjin knelt down, and Taehyung’s dark eyes flashed towards him, and he instantly burst into tears.

“I’m s-s-sorry, Seokjin, I...he said I should Mate him to keep him safe, b-but I just c-c-couldn’t.. I’m s-s-sorry! I’m sorry!”

“Shhh,” Seokjin soothed, reaching out and running a hand through Taehyung’s hair, then grazing it downward to rest behind his neck. “You did well, Taehyung. You did wonderful. Didn’t he, Jimin?”

He turned the praise-giving to the younger Alpha, who was crouched and leaning in close to the Beta’s head. He swallowed, then nodded, squeezing Taehyung’s hand as he met his eyes squarely. When he spoke, his voice sounded a little strangled, like it had to fight to escape, but his words were sure. “I’m so proud of you, Taehyungie. You found Jungkook. You were so brave. And you did exactly what Namjoon said to do.”

Taehyung blinked, his face contorted and Seokjin wasn’t sure if it was in physical pain or emotional relief. He clutched Jimin’s hand to his chest, sniffling for a few moments. “I just c-c-couldn’t, Jimin. I don’t want anyone else. I want you.”

There was quiet in the room, and the older wolves shared looks of surprise. Hoseok and Yoongi’s eyes met for a moment, and the Alpha’s face crumpled. Namjoon had a look of strain on his face as he held out swabs and bandages to Seokjin, but Seokjin could have sworn there was a trace of amusement written ever-so-briefly across the lead Alpha’s face, before it was drawn in worry once more.
“Shh, shh, don’t worry, Tae-tae,” Jimin reassured, touching his forehead to Taehyung’s and brushing the tips of their noses together. “You have me, I promise. You have me, and I have you. We have each other. We’re soulmates, right? Right?” Taehyung nodded, sniffing thickly, and Jimin smiled at him. After a moment, Taehyung smiled back through his tears, and Seokjin felt his chest clenching at the scene. Trying his hardest not to glance over and check on Jungkook, he continued cleaning up Taehyung’s wounds with Namjoon’s assistance, as Jimin continued whispering praises and reassurances to the Beta. The wound on his stomach was better than it looked, once cleaned up it was mostly just loose skin that he had to disinfect carefully, wrapping a large bandage around his middle with Jimin’s assistance. There were bite marks along Taehyung’s neck and color that looked like a meteor shower drawn in red, long, angular marks like apostrophe’s stretching across the skin, the dot of the origin a deeper puncture wound. Jimin patted gently at them until they stopped bleeding, touching his fingertip with a feather-light touch against the darkening bruises that surrounded each other. His arm was definitely the worst of it, eerie purple and almost greenish bruises painting the tan skin. The gash was not only deep and wide, but it wasn’t a clean cut, and Seokjin’s frown grew increasingly by degrees as he rushed to clean the wound and stitch together the skin so that it would heal. Taehyung had passed out again, from a severe combination of exhaustion and pain, but Seokjin warned Jimin that he would need to drink water as soon as he woke up again, and that they had to be careful about blood loss. Eventually, the boy was covered in clean, bright white bandages instead of open wounds. Seokjin sat back and sighed. Jimin was staring down at Taehyung, his face weighted with steady concern, humming lightly as he ran a hand through Taehyung’s bangs in even, slow movements. He had lost quite a lot of blood, but Seokjin felt confident that he would be okay, as long as nothing got infected and his elbow healed properly. Seokjin dropped his hands from his work, watching Jimin for a moment.

“You really love him a lot, don’t you?”

Jimin looked up, his expression a little taken aback. But he set his jaw and nodded.

“How… how long have you known?” Seokjin asked, his voice quiet and gentle.

For a long minute, Jimin didn’t speak, continuing his ministrations on Taehyung as he considered. “Taehyung and me were reading this book together. He was reading it out loud whenever we got bored. I’m not very good at reading, but Taehyung likes it. Sometimes we read poetry, or he reads books to me, or reenacts movies… I like how his voice sounds when he reads.” He trailed off, but Seokjin - and the rest of the pack - all waited patiently, in silence. “Recently we read this book together, and it said something like ‘I fell in love the way you fall asleep: slowly, then all at once.'”

Everyone in the room remained still, surprised by the slight sniffling noises coming from Jimin as he blushed. “That’s how it felt to me, anyways;” he finished, rubbing at his tears as if impatient with them, then returning his attentions to his Beta.
Seokjin took an inhale of breath and stood, as if brushing away the weighty covering of a different world. “Well, he’s going to be all right, I promise. Hoseok is already working on assembling a splint for his arm, and it’ll be a few months before he’s all healed up, but things look good.” He patted Jimin on the shoulder, sending him a tight-lipped smile. “And congratulations.”

Jimin looked up, his eyes wide as a soft, ghost of a smile came to his face.

“How’s he going to be all right?” Yoongi snapped suddenly, calling everyone’s attention as the lead Alpha stepped away from the opposite couch in shock. There was a low sound from Jungkook, deep and innately sexual in nature. “You’re triggering his heat even more.”

“S-sorry, I was just…” Namjoon frowned, his brow furrowing against his forehead. Kiara stood, placing a hand on his arm.

“How about you don’t go help Hoseok with Taehyung’s splint?” she offered. More quietly, she whispered, “You didn’t do anything wrong, just...your Alpha Scent is really strong today, okay? So go try to relax. We’ve got this.”

The Alpha nodded, straightening his shoulders as he went to go help Hoseok. Seokjin stood in between the two couches, feeling lost. He had promised Namjoon he would back off and do as he was told once they got back to camp. But with every tender touch from the two Omegas, dabbing cool cloths at Jungkook’s face and carefully dripping water into his mouth, every time Yoongi rubbed at the boy’s limbs to try and get the warmth and life back into them, Seokjin felt his belly light a little more on fire. And the saddest part, the most painful part of it all… was that Seokjin knew it wasn’t just because of the boy’s heat, but something deeper, maybe more selfish and poisonous than any biological need.

Tentatively, he stepped forward, trying to lean and see over Kiara’s shoulder as she wiped at Jungkook’s face, washing away the grime and sweat of the snow. The cleaner and warmer he got, the more soft and innocent Jungkook looked. His mouth was lightly parted, opened in the middle in a delicate, almost diamond-like shape, with white pearly teeth peeking through as he breathed softly. There was a gentle blush to the apples of the boy’s cheeks now, making him look younger than he was. Yoongi murmured a warning to Kiara, then pulled the soiled sweatpants down and clear away. The smell of Jungkook’s slick hit the air, mingling thickly with the smell of firewood and sweat. Everyone’s breath caught, and Jungkook whimpered, shivering a little and dropping his head to the side, a crinkle in his brow.

Seokjin flushed, the sight of Yoongi slowly wiping a cloth up and down Jungkook’s pale legs with methodical delicacy making the Alpha’s stomach turn. He bit his lip, turning away.
“Um..” Jimin said quietly, standing up and going over to Seokjin’s side. “Seokjin?”

“Yeah? What is it?” he asked distractedly. His eyes had flickered back over and he was now watching as Kiara focused on washing down Jungkook’s chest, his shirt now removed.

“I, uh, found this in the snow, next to Jungkook. I think he brought it with him when he went…”

Seokjin turned, and saw Jimin holding a crumpled piece of clothing, the band pinched between his two fingers as he held it out to Seokjin. The Alpha arched an eyebrow, reaching out and taking it from Jimin, until he realized that they were boxers. And they were his own. He froze.

Why did Jungkook take my underwear with him into the woods? Was that what --?

Seokjin felt something in his belly twist, and his heart seemed to have decided to take a momentary break from beating. He needed to get out of there, and immediately. There was too much temptation, too many hints to make him hope. His body seemed to flush with heat and embarrassment as Jimin looked at him in question.

But then there was a little moan from Jungkook, sleepy and unsure, and the smell of slick rose again. Kiara reached over and slapped the back of Seokjin’s leg, surprising him.

“Stop reeking up the place with your Alpha Scent, what the fuck is wrong with you!?” Kiara snapped. Seokjin looked over in surprise, before he stared at Jungkook again, worry etched across his face and stiffening the muscles between his eyebrows. “Why are you being so…?” She trailed off, distracted by her work so much so that she couldn’t finish the sentence.

Before he could let his brain catch up, he noticed Yoongi staring up at him, and their eyes met for a long moment. After a moment, Yoongi’s mouth dropped, and he gaped at Seokjin in surprise and realization. Flushing once again, Seokjin turned away before Yoongi could settle a more judgmental gaze on him, rushing out of the Main Hall.

Instantly he rushed toward the empty cabin bunk, needing an escape from the close air, from the reminders. He closed the door after himself, before his eyes instantly darted up to Jungkook’s empty bunk, and his breathing seemed to stop completely. Seokjin stood a moment in the doorway, his nerves screaming with the memories, before he darted back outside, slamming the door shut. He panted at the freezing air, his heart pounding heavily in his chest as he sank to the ground, crouched with his hands over his mouth as he choked out a sob. Everything in him was screaming in fear and
regret. Everything that could have gone wrong, had. Jae was back, a haunting on the edges of
Seokjin’s memories, reminding him of his own lack of self-control, of his own dark desires, and it
couldn’t have come at a worse time. He had crossed so many lines, heated in the moment and only
focused on one thing - Jungkook. He had challenged Namjoon’s authority, which he had promised
never to do. He had Scented Jungkook before he was ready, which he had promised never to do.

And now Jungkook was in a horrible, dangerous first heat, and Seokjin was powerless to do
anything.

The snowflakes fell lazily from the sky, drifted farther away by the biting wind.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies! Here is the new chap!
I'm technically posting this on a sort of mobile, so my comments will be brief! lol
I feel bad that this chapter is quite short, but it felt like an appropriate place to stop, so
this is what i can offer until the next update. I hope it satisfies for now! :) 
Jungkook is still in the throes of his heat and Seokjin is feeling pretty damn guilty right
now! And now all the members know about Vmin for sure, so, what does that mean for
Sope....??
As usual, I love hearing your comments and support, my sweets, so thank you!!
Later, lovelies~
An Alpha’s Strength

Chapter Notes

Warning: sexual activity in this chapter, including bondage + scolding/humiliation kinks.

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 Tzu

Seokjin sat with his head in his hands, tempted to ignore the sound of footsteps crunching through the snow as they approached, halting in front of him for a long moment.

“What the fuck, Seokjin?”

He looked up, sniffling a little, and met eyes with Yoongi. Seokjin’s face crumpled, and he looked away, but he could still feel the look of disapproval from the Omega.

“Did you put him up to this? Did you tell him to Scent you?”

“N-no, I didn’t, Yoongi. I wouldn’t, I mean…” Seokjin sniffed again, hugging his knees to his chest as he stared down at the unsettled snow between their feet. “I mean, I don’t think I did.”

Yoongi stared at him for a moment, his voice getting darker. “Hoseok said he saw you two acting suspiciously after Scenting, not long after you arrived. If you’ve been fucking touching him, Seokjin, I swear to god, friends or not, I’ll–”

“I haven’t, Yoongi!” Seokjin yelled, covering his eyes and his voice rising in frustration. Touching him was exactly what he’d been careful to avoid. Until last night, at least.
“Then why the fuck was he out there, with your underwear, Scenting it by himself? Have you been fucking with his head, telling him about your Alpha complex? He’s still just a pup, for fuck’s sakes!”

“He’s not a pup anymore,” Seokjin said quietly, “But no, I haven’t talked to him about any of it. But now he’s Presented and he found Jae of all people and I just… It’s all so complicated right now.”

Hands reached down, grabbing a hold of either side of his face and forcing him to look upwards. The smell of freshly tilled earth seemed to emanate from Yoongi’s hands, even though they were clean, and the tips of his fingertips still carried the softest traces of Jungkook’s Scent. Yoongi was staring hard into Seokjin’s eyes, as though searching for something very specific. Back when Namjoon had first brought Yoongi home for a visit, Yoongi hadn’t liked him one bit, but somewhere between the lines and the infrequent visits and the quiet, trailing talks that went until three in the morning, the two of them had realized they had far more in common than they should have. It was one of the reasons Seokjin had known he could join Namjoon’s pack, a friendship that liked to remained hushed, and faded in and out of their lives as needed. There were things Seokjin could never have admitted aloud, not to Namjoon, his brother. And there were things Yoongi knew the lead Alpha would never really understand.

“Seokjin. Do you love him?”

His lips parted in awe, staring up at Yoongi. The words were in and of themselves so simplistic, so beautiful. His gut, his heart told him to say yes. But his head, now cautious from its previous wounds, was more hesitant.

“I… I think I do. I really, really think I do,” Seokjin’s words sounded thicker as he fought to stay calm, to not choke on a sob. “But after what happened before, I… I dunno. Am I even capable of loving someone? Or will it always come back to my Alpha?”

At that, Yoongi gave Seokjin a deep, disapproving frown. “Speaking from personal experience, you’re never gonna know for sure. You’re always going to wonder if it always comes back to biology, bad habits, just being fucking lonely. You’ll wonder if your mate is really happy, or if they’re just putting up with you. That’s how it is for people like us.”

Seokjin sighed, and Yoongi laid a hand on his shoulder, squeezing, maybe a bit rougher than necessary.

“Why Jungkook?”
A hollow sort of laugh escaped Seokjin, his shoulder slumping, dislodging a few of the snowflakes that had been accumulating there, and shifting Yoongi’s hand. “Everything? It’s the strangest thing. I never would have expected it from someone like him. He’s really nothing like anyone I’ve ever met before. He’s so quiet a lot of the time but he can be so playful, he looks up to you all so much, even if he likes to tease you a little. I… I wanna make him happy. I want to be near him, all the time.” He glanced up at Yoongi, a demure look on his face. “Isn’t it...kind of a good sign, though? I can’t lie, even though I was scared shitless at the time for his safety, a part of me felt so relieved, seeing that he was an Omega.”

Yoongi hummed, considering for a moment before answering. “I dunno if it makes it a good sign or a bad sign, but either way, you’d better figure things out soon. That isn’t a normal heat.” He tilted his head, sniffing at the air experimentally, his eyes narrowing a little. “And you’re sure you haven’t touched him?”

“Well…” Seokjin shuffled a little. “Just the Scenting, but, um…I think I took it too far? Like I--”

Yoongi held up a hand to the Alpha, his nose wrinkling. “Ugh, stop. I don’t think I can handle details when it comes to Jungkook. “But you really didn’t touch him? And he’s this bad?”

“What do you mean ‘this bad’?”

“Seokjin, he’s in there right now, still delirious and in a more intense heat than I’ve ever seen…” Yoongi looked away, his expression hardening. “And...he keeps calling for you.”

The hair on the back of Seokjin’s neck rose, his body awash with warmth and self-consciousness as he let what Yoongi said sink in.

“W-what?”

“Namjoon knows, right? He’s probably going to ask you to help him through the heat. He can’t stay like this much longer, his body just isn’t prepared for it.”

“But, what about suppressants? Why can’t he --? I can’t, I--”

“You’re not supposed to take those on your first heat. It can fuck you up worse than a Beta being affected by a strong packmate’s hormones. But most first heats don’t start in the middle of fucking
winter with him spending hours in the snow like that.” Yoongi sighed. “The thought of you even getting close to him right now makes me want to punch you in the face, to be honest. But I’m just telling you what Namjoon is likely to do.”

“I… I didn’t want it this way. I just…. Part of me is really jealous of everyone.” Seokjin stared at the ground again, looking ashamed and angry at the same time.

“What? Why the fuck..?”

“It just seems like everyone else has got their shit together. Namjoon and Kiara are like, the picture-perfect couple, Taehyung and Jimin are so… I don’t know. “ He threw his hands up in exasperation. “And then there’s you and Hoseok.”

“Me and Hoseok?” Yoongi scoffed, “I think you must have hit your head on a tree or something, because me and Hoseok are not having the most rosy of times.”

“Yeah, but everyone already just knows you two will work things out eventually, once you get your head out of your ass and forgive him.” Seokjin rolled his eyes, leaning his chin in the palm of his hand and looking up at the Omega, who was shifting weight from one foot to the other. “You two are like soulmates. It’s kind of disgusting.”

“Soulmates?” Yoongi seemed to almost choke on the word, as though he had heard it before and it was coming back to haunt him unexpectedly.

“You know he didn’t mean to challenge your worth as an Omega. Hoseok of all people treats others like they’re made of glass. I’ve only seen him angry once. And he’s able to be so gentle with you…like, any idiot can see he loves you more than anything.” Seokjin sighed again. “I admire him a lot, as an Alpha.’

Yoongi stood still for a moment, turning what Seokjin had said over and over in his mind. “I’m gonna go… I have to, uh, go check up on Taehyung. Go talk with Namjoon and see if there’s something you can do.”

“Okay…” Seokjin sounded dejected, like a world-weary hot air balloon, drooping listlessly over a grassy hill with no energy left to fly.
“And I still don’t forgive you for touching him,” Yoongi started to say as Seokjin stood up.

“I told you, I didn’t!” the Alpha snapped defensively. Yoongi pursed his lips together in a bit of a smirk.

“No, but I have a feeling once you get your head out of your ass, you will. And to think the only reason Hoseok was okay with our movie nights was because Jungkook was there as an oblivious chaperone.”

Seokjin started to splutter as Yoongi headed toward the Main Hall, waving nonchalantly over his shoulder while the Alpha frantically called out after him. “I...we...it’s not even like that!”

“You’re the one that said he’s not a pup anymore, and you’re the one falling in love with him. Don’t give me your half-assed bullshit and woo him properly. The kid deserves to be treated right.”

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“Jimin, he’s gonna be just fine,” Hoseok reassured the younger Alpha, patting the back of his head gently. The Beta had been moved to his own bed, and Jimin was sitting at the foot of it, watching him sleep with a worried look on his face. “He just needs to rest.”

“I know, but... he had to go through so much today...” Jimin sighed. “He even fought an Alpha, without even hesitating. It makes me feel bad...”

“Bad? Why would it make you feel bad?” Hoseok’s voice dropped into gentleness, mirroring his physical movements as he dropped down to kneel in front of Jimin, who was pouting at the floorboards. Hoseok ran a hand through Jimin’s bangs, carding them back and watching them flip stubbornly back into place, brushing into his eyes.

“Well, it’s just that... I haven’t been a very good Alpha so far. Or even a good wolf. I’m not very big or as strong as the others, I don’t have a strong nose like Kiara and I’m not a very good hunter like Yoongi...” Jimin looked over at Taehyung’s gently sleeping form. “But the moment Taehyung needed to protect Jungkook, he just did it. The most important thing I’ve done as an Alpha is Present, and that was a disaster... So what if...what if Taehyung is meant to be an Alpha? What if he’d make a better Alpha than me, but he’s giving it up so that we can be together?”
“Oh, Jiminie,” Hoseok let out a gentle little chuckle, leaning in to nuzzle against the boy’s nose. “You’ve only been an Alpha for a little while, you can’t possibly have everything figured out yet, so give yourself some time! And Taehyung did very well with Jungkook, yes, and he did exactly what Namjoon told him to do. It was brave of him, but don’t you think any one of us would have done the same?”

Jimin thought about that for a moment, a soft, cute pinkness to his cheeks as he reluctantly nodded, unable to find any counterarguments to that.

“You need to learn to be more patient with yourself. And trust that Taehyung knows what he wants.” Hoseok leaned back, watching Jimin’s eyes for a long moment, reading into him and enjoying the smell of peppermint mingled with his own vanilla scent, reminding him of Christmas. “Relationships are all about learning how to compromise. That means learning how to give and how to take, it has to always go both ways.”

Jimin nodded again, looking shier this time, and Hoseok chuckled.

“And I’m sorry, for, you know, doubting Taehyung so much. I guess a part of me was still stuck on how most other packs work, not ours. We do things a little differently, and I think—”

They both looked up as the door to the cabin opened, and Yoongi stood in the doorway. He said nothing, but he met Hoseok’s eyes squarely in a way that he hadn’t for a long time, since even months before their fight, and Hoseok’s mouth dropped open a little in surprise. The smell of earth wafted in, calling to him. It’s time.

Hoseok smiled, “And I think it’s really nice.” Hoseok stood, kissing Jimin on the forehead. “You keep an eye out for him, but don’t forget to eat, or Kiara will kick you later, okay?”

“Okay, and thanks, Hoseok.” Jimin sighed, slumping forward with all the dramatic weightiness that came with young love’s struggles, resting his chin in his palm and staring at his Beta.

By the time Hoseok was at the door, Yoongi was already slipping out, leading the way to the empty second cabin without looking back towards the younger. Hoseok widened his steps to catch up, glancing over at the Omega in question.

“Where are Namjoon and Kiara?”
“They’re bickering with Seokjin about what to do with Jungkook.”

“Wait, what does Seokjin have to do with it?”

“I’ll explain later,” Yoongi said, a trace of impatient bossiness to his voice and mannerisms as he opened the cabin door and waited for Hoseok to step inside. “Now isn’t the time.”

The little shiver of nervousness that ran through Hoseok’s body, waking him up to the little insinuations he was now able to read from Yoongi’s subtleties, was something that had always made him feel a little afraid, but simultaneously a little comforted. It was something words didn’t quite have a proper explanation for, but luckily, Yoongi didn’t need an explanation.

Once they were inside, Yoongi shut and locked the door, flicking on the light and moving to close the curtains.

“Yoongi, look, I just wanna say I’m really sorry for what I said, I didn’t mean to suggest that Omegas were anything less than an Alpha…”

The Omega had his back to Hoseok, who was standing in the middle of the floor and watching Yoongi move around him. He bent to lean into the lower bunk, his bottom sticking out just in front of Hoseok. The Alpha looked at it, blinking for a second before licking his lips.

“I was just speaking from the experience of what I’ve seen other Betas do in other packs, you know. Not that it makes it okay, but… that’s why I -- Oh.”

Yoongi turned around, a long, thin coil of hemp rope in his hands, neatly wound. It had been awhile since Hoseok had last seen the ropes, the ones that Yoongi usually hid at the bottom of his pile of ‘necessary’ tools and emergency kits he packed around with him. Hoseok couldn’t deny the way his throat went dry, his heart rate increasing as he stared fixedly at the way Yoongi’s thick, masculine hands curled around the coils, one fingernail prodding into the threads and gently playing with them.

“My mind has already forgiven you, Hoseok. It had as soon as I was away from all those angry hormones and all the bickering. I know you didn’t mean it the way it sounded, but it still hurt, hearing those words from your lips, and it just sent me to back to all the fucktards who thought they could get away with it. So my mind knows better, Hoseok. You don’t need to explain yourself any further than your apology. But words only go so far, and you know it. Convincing my body that it’s over, that we’re back to the balance we had, is another thing entirely.” Yoongi’s fingers gripped
down on the rope, squeezing it roughly, and he pursed his lips with seriousness.”Are you still willing to prove that?”

“Yes,” Hoseok breathed, barely letting Yoongi finish the question.

“You’re sure? This isn’t because you just want to make it all better and make it go away? I never said you had to indulge in my quirks, Hoseok.”

“But I want to,” Hoseok said, and tears were stinging at his eyes as he swallowed heavily, relief at the reconciliation hitting him like a tidal wave. “I really want to. Please, Yoongi, do what you need to do to feel safe. I’ll still be here.”

Yoongi nodded. It was a question he had put to Hoseok a hundred different times. The first time, he had been so overwhelmed and scared, his choked sobs making it almost too difficult for Hoseok to understand what he was saying. But now, his expression was just neutral, passive as he asked, “And the safe word?”

“Pineapple,” Hoseok said. He remembered giggling over the word when they had first discussed it, both embarrassed and unsure. It had made sense at the time as they had argued (well, playfully bickered) over pizza toppings on a rare night alone in the pack house. But now he said it while holding out his wrists to the black-haired male, smiling softly as he asked, “Should I stay dressed?”

“Leave your shirt on, but take off your boxers.” Yoongi said in cool command. It wasn’t the eerie, blood-shifting power of an Alpha voice, but it was still plenty spine-tingling for Hoseok, who peeled his jacket off and quickly tossed it aside, before lifting his leg and pulling off his pants and boxers. His black t-shirt still smelled faintly of the fire from the Main Hall, and it didn’t take long before Yoongi was rushing forward, slipping the ropes down around one arm so he could trail his hands up Hoseok’s t-shirt. The Alpha hissed, wanting to instinctively grab Yoongi’s wrists but keeping them obediently at his sides. He knew this was Yoongi’s turn to take, it was his moment of power, his ritual. Hoseok allowed him to touch as he liked, even as he tucked his head beneath the folds of Hoseok’s shirt and licked and nibbled at the dark, raised nipples, causing Hoseok to hiss, his knees a little less sure. His body wanted him to throw Yoongi back, pin him down. But his mind wanted it deeper, harder, darker. It was a shadowy realm he thought would never be understood by someone else, until he met Yoongi.

The Omega expertly started to twist and roll the rope into an intricate shape, one hand firmly bending Hoseok’s arms until they were stretched down in front of him. Then, Yoongi’s hidden art resurfaced. Yoongi looped the ropes around, down, above, counter-clockwise and in figure eights, tugging it through like an unconventionally complicated shoe lacing. The skin of Hoseok’s arms became pressed inward, looking puffed and swollen around the tightness of the ropes as Yoongi created knots in between that made Hoseok think of flowers. The expanse between his arms, a V shaped
cobweb that was a shield, a canvas for his chest, was beautiful. Yoongi had Hoseok’s thin, bony wrists looped delicately but firmly, a thick-set knot in between that reminded Hoseok of a waterwheel, holding his wrists about three inches apart. Subconsciously he flexed his fingers, twisted his hand around and testing out the tightness of the ropes, feeling their restriction.

The fabric bunched under the tightening ropes, curling almost defensively as Yoongi’s deft hands started to knot back up into the top with a thick, stiff section that almost braided its way up Hoseok’s chest and turned into a collar that wrapped around his neck more times than Hoseok could count. The rope’s embrace was broad, firm, and with very little yield, and Hoseok found he couldn’t lower his chin anymore, the hemp restricting his movement and making every breath, every swallow a show of resistance against the constricting wraps.

As Yoongi tied him, Hoseok chose to watch the Omega’s face. Yoongi’s brows were drawn together, a little bump forming between that Hoseok could only barely catch glimpses of when he moved and his bangs shifted a little to the side. There was a slight jutting out of his thin lower lip, and occasionally his tongue snuck out to trace the top lip from one side to the other in a slow, thought-filled moment. Yoongi’s hands worked expertly - these were ties he had practiced for hours until the pads of his fingers had been covered in calluses, little cuts and abrasive spots dotting his knuckles. The rope he now held was treated for this specific use and was soft, almost impossibly soft considering how iron-clad it held Hoseok’s arms to his chest. Hoseok’s expression relaxed and warmed as he watched Yoongi work, and a little smile played on his lips as Yoongi’s fingertips brushed up against his skin. His chin was tilted up a little as the back of Yoongi’s hand pushed against his jawline, and Hoseok’s eyes fluttered closed. Heavily he swallowed as Yoongi reached around and tucked the last of the rope in, stepping back to admire his work.

“You look beautiful, Hoseok,” he said softly, two broad, squarish fingers reaching out and brushing up against the plumped up skin between the rope ties. “Can you try to shift it for me? Does it pinch anywhere?”

Obediently, Hoseok tried to move his wrists back and forth, up and down, and attempted to shift his arms in a circular motion. He overestimated the give, tugging too hard too suddenly and ended up half-choking himself, since the collar was attached to the center of the knots, and he coughed. Yoongi instantly stepped forward, lifting Hoseok’s arms back into the permissible area and waiting until Hoseok’s coughing had ended. Then, he went and grabbed the pillows and thick blankets from off his bed, laying them out on the narrow floor space. Yoongi always seemed to run colder than Hoseok, and he usually brought at least two blankets if they had room for it. Hoseok remembered that they had used the faded green one last time, too. He wondered if he would still be able to smell the ghostings of their Scents.

“Lay down,” Yoongi ordered, pressing down gently on Hoseok’s shoulder. Carefully, so as to not tumble over, Hoseok went onto his knees, noting with the skip of his heartbeat that his face passed precariously, purposefully in front of Yoongi’s crotch as he lowered himself to the ground. Yoongi took hold of Hoseok’s ropes and leaned him carefully back until he was laying up against a soft pile of pillows and blankets. The chill of the room crept across his barren lower half, and Hoseok bit at
his lip as Yoongi ran his hands up and down Hoseok’s legs, appreciating each curve with the pads of his fingers. Hoseok shivered a little as Yoongi bent and unbent one of his legs, pressing his fingertips in the crease behind Hoseok’s knee as he folded it completely over his hand, then unbent it, repeating the movement several times. Gently, he leaned forward and pressed his lips to the inside of Hoseok’s calf, his left hand supporting Hoseok by the ankle and his right hand slipping up, up, up the thigh and then across Hoseok’s hardening cock, brushing lightly, tantalizingly over the warm, sensitive skin. There was a difference in Yoongi’s posture and gaze, whenever he went into this headspace, this in-between zone where the rules didn’t matter and in between shaking breaths the two of them rewrote a new set of definitions for the words ‘instinct.’ Hoseok liked to see the subtle change, he liked the slight hardness of Yoongi’s jaw, the possessive glare in his eyes, challenging him, daring him with a look. He liked the way Yoongi’s hands became so masculine, every movement deliberate like a dance. He was sure Yoongi didn’t know, but this headspace had a bit of an ironic side effect - Hoseok knew Yoongi was fully in when he could see the telltale blue Omega glow around Yoongi’s irises, gleaming coolly and shimmering with dominance. The best part, though, the part that had Hoseok trembling every time, was the change in Yoongi’s voice. It went impossibly deeper, and seemed to vibrate into Hoseok’s very bones, even when he wasn’t touching the Alpha, and it crackled and hissed in between the long pauses, a touch-and-go pattern that was so uniquely Yoongi that no one could quite recreate it.

“Look how beautiful you are, baby,” Yoongi purred, rubbing the heel of his palm against Hoseok’s reddening erection, making Hoseok gasp in pained surprise. In the next moment, Yoongi twisted his wrist around the bony, tanned ankle, causing it to burn and sting. Hoseok cried out, his head wanting to tilt back, mouth open as he gasped for air, but the ropes around his neck, the elaborate, thick collar, held him back, and he gaped uselessly. “You’re a work of art now, with all these pretty ropes holding you down. You’re so beautiful, it makes me want to make you scream.”

“Y-yoongi…” Hoseok breathed. He was always so quick to melt into pliancy in Yoongi’s rough but gentle hands, but it wasn’t enough. He needed Yoongi to go deeper.

“What’s your safe word?” Yoongi said.

“Pineapple,” Hoseok said quickly, too easily, proving that he needed Yoongi to go further. Yoongi nodded, waiting a moment before he twisted at Hoseok’s ankle again, his fingernails digging in to add a little scrape to the burning edge, and he leaned downward to suckle at the soft, sensitive skin at the inside of Hoseok’s thin thighs. He let his back curl up a little, lifting his torso away from the blankets, his bound hands lifted upwards as if reaching towards Yoongi himself.

“You embarrassed me, out in front of all the pups,” Yoongi said. Only this wasn’t the normal Yoongi, the daily one he teased and bickered playfully with, who was ticklish behind his ears and slept curled into a little endearing ball. This was the Headspace Yoongi, the one who would lie through his teeth to get the reaction he wanted, the one who knew exactly all the things Hoseok had ever felt guilty or ashamed about, and exploited it with elegance and strength. It was a strange sensation, like hearing the voice in his head out loud, hearing his worst fears confirmed. “We’re supposed to be one of the senior couples, but now they’ll think it’s okay to let Omegas be treated like
shit, because of what you said.”

“I didn’t mean to,” Hoseok mumbled, frowning. “I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“But you did,” Yoongi hissed, “You did babe. You can’t take back what you said. I’ll bet you meant every word of it, too. You think Alphas are superior? You think you’ve got some sort of magic dick that gives you power over me?” He ground his palm into Hoseok’s arousal again, making the boy hiss and wriggle his hips back and forth. “Well, look at your ‘magic dick’ now, it’s under my weak little Omega palm. Does it feel weak, Hoseok? What does my Omega hand feel like to you, right now?”

“S-strong,” Hoseok managed, “It feels strong and powerful. I’m sorry.”

“You like being the Alpha when you think my guard is down. You never admit it to me, but you like the feeling. You could have even used your Alpha voice on me, when I wasn’t paying attention. Little things, little ways to get what you want. To take what you want. After all, what is respect when you can possess a little Omega, right?”

“No, I don’t, I respect you…” He swallowed roughly, the rope-collar biting into his adam’s apple. “I respect you, Omega.”

“You act so strong, so carefree for the pups. You make them think you’re so motherly and sweet. Now that they’re growing, does it scare you? Does it make you want to challenge them, before they can challenge you? They’re threats to you, after all, aren’t they?” Yoongi leaned down until he was
on his belly, resting one of Hoseok’s thighs over his shoulder, his face pressed up against the dark, velvety inner thigh curve. His breath was hot up against Hoseok’s balls, and Hoseok started to struggle with his arm bonds, trying to find some way to escape the tingling, the itching sensation. “Baby, your power is so, so limited. And your strength only lasts so long. But look at you now. You’re no all-powerful Alpha. You’re under my power right now. And you like it, don’t you?” Yoongi leaned a little forward, leaving butterfly-touch kisses that had Hoseok wanting to weep, his eyes squeezing shut. “You like playing the weak one sometimes, don’t you?”

“Yes, I do, please, Omega.”

“You challenged my authority, and now you have to be tied up. I can’t let a wild dog do as he wishes,” Yoongi growled. “Open your mouth, Alpha.”

Hoseok did, not daring to open his eyes as three of Yoongi’s fingers slipped between his lips. They tasted salty, bitter, and the scent of earth seemed to drown him from the inside out. He suckled on the fingers as Yoongi laughed at him, mockingly, “You look like a real baby. All needy and whimpering. But you’re a beautiful baby. My baby, for tonight.”

At that, Hoseok wanted to speak, wanted to tell him it didn’t have to be just for tonight. That he wanted to be with Yoongi forever, because Yoongi could make him cry in a way that no one else could, could make him release and let go of his unspoken terrors that no one even thought he possessed behind a sunshine smile and warm embraces. Yoongi knew his dark side, his needy, selfish side - and loved him nonetheless. But Hoseok couldn’t speak, because Yoongi was pressing his fingers even further down Hoseok’s throat, making him gag and splutter a little while Yoongi wrapped his fingers around Hoseok’s member, rubbing the pre-cum up and down the length with care until he had enough to start the up and down movements, squeezing it rather roughly as his fingers tickled at the warm softness of Hoseok’s throat. Hoseok was gagging, choking, tears stinging at the edges of his eyes and the veins of his neck strained and visible over the top edge of the rope-collar.

“Alpha, look at you, crying for me so prettily. Are you really sorry for what you said, or was all of it just a scheme to get us here, right now? Did you really want me to fuck you over that badly?”

Hoseok couldn’t answer, so he just whimpered. Part of him almost believed Yoongi’s lies could be the truth. The pain felt like relief, and he could feel that tense twisting in his gut heating up and intensifying, and his back arched gracefully off the blankets, pressing him up towards Yoongi’s hand, begging for more even as he could barely breathe. Yoongi removed his hands, moving out of the limited view Hoseok’s rope-collar would allow, and then came back. He leaned in against Hoseok’s chest, wriggling over to straddle the Alpha, and he could feel that Yoongi had removed all his clothing, his skin feeling cool and strangely soft.
Push me farther, Yoongi, Hoseok begged in his mind. Punish me so I’ll know you’ve actually forgiven me.

“You’re fucked up,” Yoongi lied, and the sound of the words on the air, for all the world, was the color of truth to Hoseok. “You’re so selfish and twisted, Alpha. How dare you cross the line, how dare you even fucking suggest that Alphas are better, when you, my Alpha, are sitting so happily helpless below me?” Yoongi tugged back Hoseok’s T-shirt, kissing at the collarbone gently, a sharp contrast to the sound of his words. “You like giving me all the power. You don’t want to take responsibility.”

That’s right. Because under your hand, I don’t have to be responsible for anything, or anyone. Oh, thank god. Tears were streaming from Hoseok’s eyes now, trailing down his temples and into his hair. Yoongi leaned down and pressed his mouth to Hoseok’s, teeth clattering against teeth and tongues lashing out almost angrily at one another. Hoseok tried to lean upwards, to taste more deeply into Yoongi’s mouth, but his binds wouldn’t let him, his bound hands still helplessly tied against his stomach, fingertips brushing against the cock Yoongi was still pumping mercilessly. Hoseok twisted his wrists around as much as he could, until his fingers found the edges of Yoongi’s own hot member, dangling just out of reach and thus far left unattended. Yoongi physically jolted a little at the contact, and he blinked at Hoseok, who flushed.

“You sly bastard,” Yoongi chuckled. “I didn’t tell you you could fucking touch me.”

Then punish me properly for it, you cocky asshole.

And the punishment came. A slap resounded into the empty cabin, along with Hoseok’s audible gasp, and his cheek was quickly reddening. He let out a sigh, feeling as though a tension in the room – no, between the two of them as a whole - had finally lifted. His body suddenly went limp underneath Yoongi, his posture only held by the bonds as he blinked slowly up at the Omega. The pain was a relief. The pain had wiped his mind clear, even if just for a brief moment. It was heavenly.

Yoongi didn’t ask him for the safe word, not aloud, but he stared at Hoseok for a moment in such a way that Hoseok knew he was asking. When Hoseok said nothing, the headspace mask folded its way unevenly back across Yoongi’s face, like flames slowly eating across a page and turning it black.

“Now lie still and let me fucking ride you.” He leaned away from Hoseok’s lips, repositioning himself over Hoseok and ripping the condom open with his teeth. The long moments where Hoseok had to patiently, painfully wait for Yoongi to prepare were some of the longest and most beautiful. Then, Yoongi was roughly forcing the straining member into his entrance, crying out a drawn out curse until his ass was rested against Hoseok’s hips like he had always belonged there. He sat still for
a minute, his expression taut, and Hoseok was helpless to do anything but sit still and watch, waiting. He had no control, no ability to comfort or lead the way. It was all up to Yoongi, and he trusted Yoongi to set the pace.

After a moment, Yoongi planted his palms against Hoseok’s shoulders, digging his fingernails into the skin there. He leaned forward onto his knees, lifting his ass up and then slamming it roughly back down without warning. Both of them crumpled at their centers like a synchronized boomerang, half-folding towards each other, pulled by some invisible string that drew them towards each other. Yoongi did it again, and Hoseok was gasping, his head spinning from his inability to properly take deep breaths in the rope-collar. Yoongi himself was sweating heavily, his hips moving faster and faster. As twisted as they were, as needy as they both were, Hoseok couldn’t deny that he loved being inside of Yoongi. He loved that it was on their own terms, not anyone else’s, and he loved that sensation that he had restored the balance between them, tearing down Hoseok’s build up in his mind until it all crumbled like a terribly built rickety tower. Yoongi panted, growling as he grabbed handfuls of Hoseok’s hair and yanked his head painfully forward, crushing him into a sloppy kiss that ended with Yoongi biting down a little too hard on Hoseok’s lip as the Alpha gasped for air. He could feel it bruise, could feel the little lump of pain forming there as Yoongi’s cries lost their huskier, deeper sound and got more frantic, more high pitched as he was reduced to desperate whimpers. Hoseok could only take advantage of the little bit of leverage he had in his hips, trying to thrust up and into Yoongi, pressing in deeper and making the Omega shout, “Fuck!”

Hoseok couldn’t quite see straight, the hands tugging roughly on his hair sending piercing pain into his skull, and Yoongi was half falling forward as he pressed his hot cheek against Hoseok’s, rasping into his ear, “My Alpha.”

The Alpha growled, the sound morphing into a scream of frustration, and Hoseok’s hips were mindlessly jolting upward, almost dislodging Yoongi from his lap as he came, and Yoongi let out a series of little half-pants, half-cries as he fell limply against Hoseok’s chest. He was quivering in short little shuddery bursts, and Hoseok realized that the Omega had come completely untouched. Obviously they had both been more wound up than either of them had expected.

Hoseok felt himself finally spiraling downwards from the eye of the tornado, somehow gently dropped back down onto the makeshift bed as Yoongi started dotting kisses against Hoseok’s jawline. The blue in his eyes was fading, but more importantly, the Headspace Yoongi was being folded neatly away, tucked into a private part of their love until the day it was needed again.

“Hobi, baby, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean any of what I said.”

“I know,” Hoseok breathed, his blinks slow and tired, his hair matted to his forehead in thick, sweat-filled chunks.
“You’re so good to me,” Yoongi whimpered, his hand gently caressing the reddened cheek, then continuing his kissing trail up and down Hoseok’s face, going to place one even against both closed eyelids; his lips soft. “You’re so respectful of me, you’re a wonderful, selfless Alpha. I’m so lucky to have you, you know. My beautiful Hoseok.” As he spoke, Yoongi’s hands fumbled for the edges of the rope, tugging them free and quickly dropping the ties away, making Hoseok sigh and fall limply against the blankets. Dutifully, Yoongi rubbed the feeling back into every limb, running his practiced fingertips over every crease and spot the ropes had pulled, pressing feather-light kisses to his throat. “Beautiful, strong big-hearted Hoseok. I’d do anything for you. Anything.”

“Then love me,” Hoseok breathed, smiling up at Yoongi, his polar opposite, his soulmate. He entwined his fingers into Yoongi’s pale ones, and he sighed, lifting their clasped hands so he could press a kiss to Yoongi’s knuckles. “Just love me unconditionally.”

“I already do, I promise,” Yoongi leaned down, touching his nose to Hoseok’s, their foreheads leaned together, the scent of earth and vanilla mixing. It didn’t sound like a mix that would work, two things that were never deliberately placed together, but it was the most lovely, homely smell in the world to Hoseok. The world’s way of doing things had never suited either of them, anyways. Hoseok wrapped his arms around his Omega, pulling him close and weakly tugging at one of the blankets to cover them both. “I want to be your mate, Hoseok.”

Hoseok smiled up at the ceiling, then closed his eyes, blissed out to the sound, the sureness in the man’s voice. “Of course. I know you wanted to do it on our anniversary, but… I’m really okay with any day, you know. As long as we can finally be official mates.” He nuzzled up against Yoongi’s pale neck, quietly cuddling as well as giving the Omega a gentle Scenting. He practically purred as Yoongi reached up to run his hand through Hoseok’s hair.

“Let’s talk to Namjoon about it tomorrow. Together.” Yoongi said. Hoseok nodded, exhausted and sighing happily against his Omega’s chest.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies~ ♥

I dropped off my mom at the airport this morning, she had a VERY busy but fulfilling 10 days with me. :) Thanks for all the well-wishes and concern! Haha. I wrote over half of this chapter on a hostel bunk hunched over a shitty tablet keyboard.

Sope's sexual kink is inspired/based on Japanese shibari rope art, which is hella graphic and beautiful imho. Usually Yoongi probably does more intricate stuff, but...they WERE in a cabin in the woods, after all. ^_^;;; He makes do with what he has.
I hope the complexities of the Sope dynamic come across in this chapter. I've been trying to lay out the groundwork for it since the beginning, and it's kind of finally coming to full explanation/exposure now? Haha. I love them so much♥

Also I have more fanart of my fic!!! ;A; I'm crying, guys. Shit. [HERE]

Later, lovelies!
For Jungkook, everything was hazy and far away. He felt like he was floating, the world softened at the edges and his body either unable to move or utterly unmotivated to do so; he wasn’t quite sure which. The fuzzy noises of voices were over him, harsh against the dull ache throughout his whole body, sending jolts of pain to his groin and the small of his back, making him whimper again.

“If the fever doesn’t break soon...well...” The smell of wood fire was slamming up against his senses, the strong presence of his lead Alpha in the midst of stress.

“There has to be something !” At the sound of Seokjin’s voice, Jungkook let out a little whimper, shifting in his half-consciousness.

“You know exactly what something has to be done!”

“I can’t, Namjoon, this isn’t how I want to do things.”

“This isn’t about your ego, Jin, this is about Jungkook. It’s your fault things got this bad, so get your head out of your ass and do something.”

Jungkook faded out of awareness again, unaware of how long he was sleeping before he woke up
again to the gentle smell of soap. He smiled, turning his head to sink into the cloud of it more, the welcoming relief. He felt Seokjin’s presence again, a hand pressed to his sweat-covered cheek, and he opened his eyes, but everything looked blurry. He could just make out the shape of Seokjin’s face, his expression one undiscernible blob. But he knew it was him. That hand on his cheek was so familiar.

“Jungkookie?” Seokjin’s voice sounded so lovely, and Jungkook remembered by feeling, rather than a cohesive thought, that Seokjin was the one protecting him. He sighed, letting his eyes shut again happily with that knowledge. Seokjin would let him sleep. Seokjin would take care of him, would protect him until he felt well again, he was sure of it. Meanwhile, he was being asked a question, one that sounded important, but he had no energy to answer it.

*Whatever, Seokjin, I don’t care. Just let me sleep!* 

A warm golden light seemed to press in on his eyelids, making him scrunch up his face slightly.

He felt the cool pressing wetness of a rag against his forehead, pushed down slightly by an unknown hand. Sweat was still forming on his brow, and he still felt gross, but he was warm and whatever he was laying in felt soft and comfortable. Jungkook groaned, not willing to open his eyes yet and face the world. There was a gentle shushing at his side.

Jungkook knew that hours had passed, and he knew that he was still deep into his heat. He whimpered a little as the rag was shifted a little on his brow.

“Seokjin?” he mumbled, his eyes still shut and his hand blindly reaching out, seeking the arm attached to the hand holding the rag. The movement against his forehead stilled, as though surprised, and his clammy hand brushed against someone’s cool one for a brief moment before it was pulled away.

“Yes, Jungkook?” Seokjin said quietly.

Jungkook paused, his lips slightly parted, and he knew a little smile was on his face. He forced his eyelids to open so he could see the Alpha leaning in at Jungkook’s side, wearing a grey turtleneck and looking quite domestic and soft as he frowned at Jungkook in concern. His lips and cheeks looked a little more flushed than they normally did, a little warmer and pinker than Jungkook was used to.
Jungkook realized Seokjin’s hand was laying on the bed next to him, and without thinking, he reached out and gripped the Alpha’s hand in his own, entwining their fingers. Instantly, Jungkook felt as though his body relaxed, feeling cooler and less stressed against the Alpha’s touch. But although it made him feel *better*, it didn’t make him feel *good*, and he wasn’t satisfied yet.

He frowned, letting out a crackled whisper. “Why hasn’t it stopped yet?”

Seokjin bit his bottom lip, looking away from Jungkook and looking ashamed. “I-- We don’t know, Jungkook. This is the worst heat any of us has seen. We… we think it may have been because you were left alone in the snow so long.”

Jungkook frowned, his brow furrowing deeply. That didn’t seem to be quite a good enough explanation to him. A petulant, child-like irritation bubbled up in his belly, and he tugged at Seokjin’s hand. Thinking he wanted him to let go, Seokjin started to disentangle their fingers, only for Jungkook to squeeze tighter.

“Seokjin, fix it.”

The Alpha choked a little, coughing and thudding his fist against his chest to help himself breathe, an obvious redness to his neck and cheeks. “W-what?!”

Jungkook pouted more deeply, letting his voice break and crackle as he attempted to whine pitifully. “I said *fix it*. Make it go away. Isn’t that an Alpha’s job?”

“Well, y-yes, sometimes. But that’s usually only for, you know…?” He stared at Jungkook, a meaningful raise to his eyebrows. Jungkook just glared back, refusing to answer him. “Um, I assumed Hoseok and the others already explained to you about how, um, mating and things work, right?”

“Seokjin,” Jungkook said quietly, “I may not have grown up in a pack but I’m not a pup.”

“You say that like you weren’t technically a pup just a few days ago, you little asshole..” Seokjin shot back automatically. “And you’re still so… I don’t know… innocent.”

Jungkook fell back deeper into the pillows under his head for a moment, staring up into Seokjin’s face and thinking back to the dreams that had been haunting him. “I’m… I’m not so innocent,
Seokjin.

At that, Seokjin raised an eyebrow, and the smell of soap seemed to get thicker in the air, until Jungkook thought he might be almost able to taste it. Seokjin was staring at him, unblinking, and then suddenly he flushed and moved to stand.

“I should go tell Kiara and Namjoon and the others that you’re awake. They’ve all been worried, so-”

“No! Don’t leave me again…” Jungkook whimpered, gripping as tightly as he could to Seokjin’s hand, anchoring him to the bed. Seokjin stared at their tangled fingers as though utterly perplexed. “Stay, please? It feels better when you’re near me.”

Seokjin lifted his eyes to Jungkook’s, the turbulence that had been clouding his eyes clearing away into an almost childlike wonder. “It does? Like…? Wait, how does it feel better?”

“I dunno, when you hold my hand the heat doesn’t feel as bad. Less achy. Even when you found us in the woods, as soon as you got near, it… I couldn’t even talk, before.” Jungkook considered for a moment, blinking in thought. He was now almost coherent, almost normal. He hadn’t slicked up in the last few minutes while talking to Seokjin, despite the headiness of his Alpha scent. He still felt that telltale clammy, feverishness, and he was still aching with that need from his core, but it was - for the moment - tolerable. “Wait, did you do something? Why does it feel so much better now?”

Seokjin flushed deeply, turning his face away from Jungkook. “I just Scented you again, to help calm you down. Your fever was so high it was dangerous, and the Alpha hormones can help... I didn’t do anything weird, I promise.”

“Oh.” Jungkook looked around the cabin, seeing that it was empty. “Where is everyone else?”

Again, the Alpha bit his lip, this time even looking a bit angry. “There was… a bit of a fall-out… Namjoon seems to think I’m the best person to help you through this, but I don’t think—”

“Seokjin,” Jungkook said calmly. “I want you to help me through the heat.” Without further ado, he tugged and wriggled, using his weight until Seokjin finally gave in and crawled into the bed, laying down at Jungkook’s side. Jungkook tugged the blankets loose so that he could shift up against Seokjin’s side, pressing his cheek up against his broad chest and hooking his ankle over the Alpha’s calf. He felt him stiffen, surprised by Jungkook’s forwardness, but Jungkook just took Seokjin’s arm and wrapped it around his shoulders. The weightiness on his body was comforting, and it was as if Seokjin’s skin sapped out the heat from his body, replacing it with coolness, with relaxation. He felt
safe and protected there, underneath Seokjin’s arm, pressed up against him. He decided in that moment that a table-fort just didn’t quite compare. “There,” he sighed, “That’s much better.”

“Are you…” Seokjin licked his lips. “Are you sure you don’t want one of the others? Like Yoongi or Namjoon?”

“No, I only want you.”

The finality in his voice seemed to have a profound effect on Seokjin, who clenched his eyes shut as though pained.

“Seokjin…” Jungkook said quietly, squeezing the Alpha’s hand. “You want to help me too, don’t you?”

“Oh, of course…” Seokjin answered quickly. He turned his head away from Jungkook, taking in a shaky breath before saying lowly, “But I don’t want to stay just because your Omega wants me to, you know? It’s...it’s complicated.”

“Seokjin, you know I went out into the woods to Scent you.” At those words, Seokjin flinched, a redness forming on the back of his neck that crept up from the collar of the gray sweater. “That was me testing my Omega, in a way.” He tugged at Seokjin’s hand, whimpering a little for sympathy. “But I already knew what I wanted. Me, not my Omega.”

“How can you be so sure of that?” Seokjin’s question didn’t sound accusatory, more genuinely curious, and he looked back to meet Jungkook’s eyes again at last.

“I just am,” Jungkook said, staring up into Seokjin’s face evenly. His eyes were dark, eyelashes fluttering up against his thick, long bangs. The traces of blue hovering around the edges of his irises seemed to deepen, pulling Seokjin down into them and rendering him incapable of turning away. “Like right now, you make my heat feel better, yes. But even without my heat, I’d feel better with you right here.” His hand reached up and gripped at the fabric of Seokjin’s sweater, bunching the material up under his palm, his knuckles able to feel the soft firmness of Seokjin’s bare chest underneath. He leaned his head forward, pressing his forehead against Seokjin’s chin, feeling the slight wetness of his mouth against skin as he inhaled Seokjin’s Scent.

“Then...why did you stop Scenting me, Jungkook?” Seokjin whispered, his voice cracking a little bit with emotion. Jungkook had been distracted by his own inner turmoil the last few weeks, but he was
a bit surprised to hear just how deeply Seokjin had seemed to be affected by the absence. “I thought I’d done something to make you mad at me, or distrust me…”

Jungkook thought for a minute, working his bottom lip with his teeth as Seokjin’s hot breath continued across his skin. Eventually, he murmured, “Because I felt guilty.”

“Guilty? About what?”

Swallowing heavily, Jungkook’s voice dropped to an even quieter volume, his words slurring together as he finally admitted out loud what had been on his mind almost daily since the previous October. “The night of Jimin’s Presenting I… I had a dream. Well, more of a nightmare. Jimin and Namjoon were there, but then it was you…and me, and…”

“Oh.” Seokjin didn’t seem to know how to respond, and Jungkook was a little glad he couldn’t see the Alpha’s expression. He was carding a hand through Jungkook’s hair, as if to reassure him. A silence fell between them as Jungkook’s words sank in. “It was just a dream though, so you don--”

“But I liked it,” Jungkook cut him off, leaning back suddenly and wriggling until his head was free, allowing him to look up directly into Seokjin’s eyes. The Alpha looked utterly taken aback, lips parting in surprise as if he wasn’t sure what to say in response. “I liked it, Seokjin. That’s what made me feel so guilty. Here I was, dreaming of you all--” Jungkook’s voice broke, and he had to take a breath to continue, staring at Seokjin’s neck instead of into his face, the words choked as he barely held back a sob. “All the time, and you didn’t even want to Scent me back...it was unfair to you, having those feelings. But then you had my shirt in your room, and I realized maybe it wasn’t quite as simple as I thought. Then you did Scent me back, and everything changed. I realized you didn’t hate me.”

“Hate you? You thought I hated you?”

Jungkook sniffed heavily, rolling his eyes. He wished he wasn’t crying - it made him feel like a dumb little kid, some child who couldn’t control their emotions properly. But it was difficult when he wasn’t used to having all these emotions in the first place. “From the first day you moved in. You looked at me, l-like…”

“Shh…” Seokjin ran a hand through Jungkook’s hair, the movement making him suddenly relax, breathing deeply. He hadn’t realized that his heat was picking up again, making the blanket unbearably hot and itchy. Jungkook wriggled in closer to Seokjin, burying his face into his sweater and inhaling his Scent for a few moments, while Seokjin kept shushing him soothingly. “I never hated you, Jungkook. I promise.”
“After the first day, things changed, you know? You let me hang out with you, and we got close. But you never Scented me back. And all I could keep wondering was why? I know why I don’t Scent Jimin back, but it wasn’t the same. I thought maybe I smelled bad to you? Or you at least didn’t think of me that way.”

“It wasn’t like that,” Seokjin said in a quiet murmur. He ran a hand through Jungkook’s hair again, allowing his hand to pause against the Omega’s forehead a little longer each time. “It wasn’t like that at all, Jungkook.”

Jungkook reached up, cupping his hand along Seokjin’s cheek. He was staring at Seokjin’s mouth, transfixed, then he let his eyes flicker up to the Alpha’s dark brown eyes, the tinges of his irises encircled in a thin red border as he stared back. Something felt electric between them, warmed by the self-assuredness threaded throughout Jungkook’s entire body as he pulled Seokjin’s jaw towards him and gently pressed his lips to Seokjin’s.

The Alpha let out a sigh at the contact, and Jungkook’s lips parted slightly so he could swallow the hot exhale, making goosebumps rise on his arms as Seokjin tilted his head, one hand coming up to rest against the small of Jungkook’s back, pulling him closer. A little moan of relief escaped Jungkook as he indulged in the hot sweetness, the kiss chaste and delicate. He tilted his chin forward, his arms threading around Seokjin’s long neck and clutching into the hair at the back of his head, pulling him forward as a deep thrum started in Seokjin’s throat, almost like a purr. He started to slow down, as though about to pull away, and Jungkook subconsciously let out a little whine that slipped into Seokjin’s mouth, making the elder relinquish a sigh of relief. The hand that had been around Jungkook’s waist tugged him closer one more time, pressing their hips together before he slipped his hand against Jungkook’s jaw, his previous shyness melting away and becoming a butterfly-touch appreciation of every curve, trailing from the jaw down the neck and down to his shoulder, one thumb caressing back and forth appreciatively along the dip of Jungkook’s collarbone. It felt like they had just stepped across a line together, one that went beyond and below a heat and into something that burned lower and deeper, more archaic than something that had a name, and Jungkook couldn’t help but smile sweetly, overwhelmed by the nervous fluttering sensations that had now taken over his entire chest cavity. His eyes were still shut as Seokjin finally pulled away - the slight wet sound of their parting lips and Jungkook’s breath the only sounds in the room - then ran the back of his knuckle along Jungkook’s jawline as though he was petting him, an inquisitive expression on his face.

When Jungkook finally opened his eyes, Seokjin’s lips parted as though to ask something, but nothing was forthcoming, so they just looked at each as another minute or so passed in silence.

“Stop over-thinking it,” Jungkook finally reprimanded in a quiet voice, and for some reason, it made them both smile. Seokjin even chuckled a little, flushing with guilt.
“When did you get so self-assured, Jungkook?”

“I’m not the kind of guy to second-guess myself, is all. It seems like a waste of time.” Jungkook tilted forward, nuzzling his nose into the little soft lump of skin below Seokjin’s chin where it met his neck, feeling the slightest abrasive spot he’d missed while shaving. “I’m ready for you to finish what you started last night.”

He felt, and almost heard, Seokjin’s heavy swallow, his lips pressed to the Alpha’s adam’s apple as Seokjin’s fingertips gripped a little harder at Jungkook’s shoulders. But he made no further moves, so Jungkook wriggled his hand up to take hold of Seokjin’s knobbly fingers and shift their hands awkwardly downward, splaying Seokjin’s fingers and pressing them to his erection. Seokjin let out a little choking sound, his legs shifting nervously towards Jungkook with a bit of a frantic air. Jungkook kissed at Seokjin’s neck, pausing and closing his eyes as he pressed Seokjin more roughly against him, guiding the first clumsy movements.

“Please, Seokjin… it’s been hurting for hours…”

“But Jungkook, there’s something I have to tell you.” Seokjin licked his lips nervously, his gaze glancing away as if in apology. “Don’t you thi--”

“I promise, we can talk after,” Jungkook mumbled through gritted teeth. “We’ve already established that 100% of me wants this, so please. I’ve been trying to be patient and good but goddamn it hurts.” As if to punctuate his statement, his hips bucked forward into Seokjin’s wide palm, and the Alpha’s fingers curled inward instinctively, creating an instant moan that bubbled from Jungkook like a sigh. “Ah... please.”

“Shit…” Seokjin gasped, the word surprisingly soft for its intended meaning. “You’re so... so seductive… and I feel like you’re barely even even trying.”

“And at last, although it felt like forever, Seokjin’s fingers tickled their way up to the waistband of Jungkook’s sweatpants, cool knuckles brushing up against his hot belly and making him shudder, a tight winding at his center that had him already breathing heavily. Seokjin’s chilly fingertips curved, making the climb over the waistband and down, into the wet and warmth hiding away there, winding around Jungkook’s trembling cock and making him moan just from the temperature difference. When the blind grip tightened, Jungkook could feel the light calluses on Seokjin’s fingertips, could feel the roughness of the unique bumps between each knuckle, the softness of the palm. Seokjin
dipped his fingertips to the swollen tip, using the slippery pre-cum to lubricate. Jungkook didn’t realize his hand was clutching desperately at Seokjin’s sleeve, his eyes shut and his mouth opened as he gasped with need. If he had opened his eyes, he would have seen the steady, cool stare of his Alpha as he drank in every muscle, every change in Jungkook’s expression as he started to writhe happily beneath his hand.

“S...Jin…” Jungkook moaned, his voice rising up in pitch as Seokjin started to gently move his hand up and down, twisted his hand back and forth to memorize each feature and imperfection. “F-fuck!” Jungkook’s shoulders were tense, his grip on Seokjin’s sleeve tightening as the muscles in his neck visibly tensed, his ankles entangling and disentangling from Seokjin’s, itching and straining for relief as his nerves were being overwhelmed. Seokjin craned his neck forward, pressing a feather-light kiss to Jungkook’s sweat-dotted cheek as the Omega bit at his lip in frustration.

“You look beautiful,” Seokjin whispered, so lightly as if it was some sort of secret, a taboo truth he wasn’t allowed to say or the moment, the illusion, would shatter completely. Jungkook panted, forcing his eyes to open as he met Seokjin’s gaze. His movements remained slow and steady for a few moments, letting Jungkook adjust and catch his breath. When the hunger returned, flickering blue around his irises, Seokjin sped his hand up, making Jungkook moan loudly, lifting his fist that was full of Seokjin’s sweater and then slamming it back roughly down against the Alpha’s shoulder.

“Fuck! Oh, god! Jin!”

“I know,” Seokjin said, the calm tone starting to give way to a deeper, throaty sound in the back of his throat, his self control quivering a little in its foundation. Lowly, he growled, “Does it feel good, Jungkook?”

Jungkook just whimpered, tugging then pushing at the fistful of sweater sleeve, bucking his hips forward in desperation.

“Jungkook, I asked you a question,” Seokjin said, his voice lower now, and the sound alone would have been enough to raise Jungkook’s member to attention even if he hadn’t been tending to him so lovingly by hand. “Does it feel good?”

“Yes!” Jungkook cried. “Please, don’t stop!”

Seokjin chuckled, rolling his eyes a little. “Like I’d stop now.” Jungkook blearily forced his eyes back open, staring open-mouthed at Seokjin’s toothy smile for a moment. Then, he used his grip on Seokjin’s shoulder to propel them back towards each other, crushing his lips back against Seokjin’s, his mouth open and begging for free-falling heat as his hips started to rock back and forth steadily into Seokjin’s hand. The world was spinning, heady and heated and thick. He felt like he was about to pass out from the vertigo, from how tired he was, from the overload his nerves had taken in the
last 24 hours, but he didn’t want the moment to end. To his dismay, his mouth remained pitifully empty of Seokjin’s trespassing, but he didn’t have long to think about that before the coil at his belly finally got wound up enough, and he felt himself nearing his edge.

“Jin! Jin!” He cried, each repetition getting higher and more worked up until he was practically wheezing, brokenly gasping as he clutched at Seokjin while he came. Shudders overcame his body, but for all the world it felt like the greatest, most satisfying deflation, lowering him gently back to earth as he fell limp against the mattress, boneless. His eyes shut as aftershocks rolled through him, waves and an undertow that kept his movement choppy and messy as Seokjin kissed his forehead, letting his plush lips linger there for several seconds until Jungkook finally stilled.

The Omega was gasping, his member finally flaccid for the first time since he had gone into the woods, finally releasing the tension in his body so that he could curl up into Seokjin’s embrace properly, feeling suddenly small and in need of comfort. Seokjin slipped his hand out of Jungkook’s sweatpants, quietly leaning away from Jungkook long enough to reach for the box of tissues that had been left surreptitiously at the edge of the bed behind him, wiping himself and Jungkook clean. The instant Seokjin’s chest shifted away from his cheek, Jungkook let out a whimpering complaint, cuddling up closer until Seokjin wrapped his arms around him once again, resting his chin on the top of his head. With each passing moment it felt like his heart rate was gradually slowing down, calmed by the rhythm of Seokjin’s heartbeat thudding against his cheek, and his body temperature was cooling, the sweat on his skin drying into a cool clamminess.

“It’s cold,” he complained, and Seokjin wordlessly tugged the blanket higher up around Jungkook, tucking it over his shoulder and wriggling until he was under the blanket with him, pressing more of his warmth to the Omega.

“Thank you,” Jungkook whispered. He sounded sincere, but then he followed it up with a cheekily whispered, “I’ve only been waiting for that since October.”

Seokjin chuckled a little, and Jungkook could feel Seokjin untucking his other arm and running his fingers through Jungkook’s hair soothing him as he pushed the bangs away from his forehead.

His eyes were shut but he was still able to feel Seokjin watching him, that same soft expression on his face as Jungkook slept soundly at last. His mouth drooped open, crooked teeth peeking through as his breathing evened out, each inhale sweetly heavy. Seokjin ran his hand through Jungkook’s bangs again, smiling softly to himself.

“Well, I’ve only been waiting since August,” he chided at the sleeping Omega. He considered for a moment, staring at the way Jungkook’s eyelashes rested against his cheek. “Maybe even longer, to be honest.”
He adjusted the pillow beneath his head, preparing himself for hours and probably a crick in his neck from the way he was pressed up against the headboard. Once settled in, he was caught by the vision of the Omega sleeping, staring at him breathlessly for a few long, chest-aching moments. He leaned forward, pressing his lips to the boy’s forehead, smiling as he heard the little murmur the boy released. And with a sigh he curled up against Jungkook, closing his eyes and sinking into the rising, thick scent of soap mixed with saltwater and leather.

Chapter End Notes

♥
When Jungkook woke up again, he felt clean. It was a sensation he didn’t know would stand out to him before, and wasn’t sure why it did now. But he loved it, wanted to wriggle happily into the clean warmth surrounding him and the lack of itchiness in his legs and arms and the feeling of not being soaked and clammy.

Words were being spoken gently somewhere around him, but he couldn’t make them out, much less form them into coherent thoughts, so he tried to sink into unconsciousness again, wanting to escape from the heavy bodily weariness around him. This was made difficult, however, when he realized that what had woken him up was the feeling of something heavy weighing down his chest, making it hard for him to breathe. He tried to shift the heavy thing off, to no avail - it just clung to him more tightly. Jungkook forced his eyes to open, finding a black hoodie-wearing lump that was recognizable as Taehyung mostly from the heavy scent of fresh oranges wafting from his sleeping form. He was sprawled face-down and spread-eagled across the tiny bed (and therefore across the Omega) his good arm tucked up and across Jungkook’s neck, phone clutched loosely in hand. Jungkook smiled softly, shifting a little so that Taehyung wasn’t quite suffocating him, and looked sadly at the arm brace that held his injured elbow to his side, bent at a 90 degree angle to protect it.
There was a little tickling sensation at his foot, and Jungkook mumbled, trying to tug his foot away from whatever warm wetness was pressed up against it. There was a chuckle, and a hand grasped his ankle with a gentle firmness, continuing to wipe down his foot with the wet washrag. He was in fresh clothes, and they didn’t even feel stifling or abrasive this time.

“He’s been here since like 5 o’clock in the morning,” laughed a voice quietly, and Jungkook craned his head upwards to see Jimin seated at the foot of the bed, carefully wiping Jungkook down to clear him of the last gross stickiness from his heat. “As soon as we heard your heat broke we insisted on coming to see you.”

“He saved my life,” Jungkook said quietly, staring fondly down at the Beta, sleeping soundly on him, soft and sweet. “He was really great, Jimin.”

“I know.” Jimin smiled, a warmth and pride glowing in his eyes. He crawled up the bed until he was at Jungkook’s side, opposite where Taehyung’s bottom hung off the new Omega. He leaned forward until his nose touched against Jungkook’s, a grateful smile fluttering across his face as the Omega reciprocated with a little reassuring nudge of his own. “I’m glad you’re okay. We were so worried.”

“I’m sorry,” Jungkook said quietly. “I really didn’t mean--”

“And Jungkook didn’t have the heart to tell Jimin that it was definitely something he had had to do on his own, that it wasn’t something Namjoon or Yoongi or Jimin could have fixed for him. It was something utterly within himself, but connected to Seokjin irrevocably, like a lighthouse beacon searching.

Jungkook looked toward the cabin doorway, and Seokjin was standing there, watching them.

He was leaned up against the wall just next to the doorjamb, his arms crossed in an almost uncomfortable looking gesture. Jungkook’s eyes widened as he took in the fact that Seokjin was wearing his outdoor jacket and a black baseball cap, and he looked strained, almost preoccupied. Jungkook’s stomach dropped to the floor in dread. “Seokjin? Why are you all the way over there? Come here.”
Seokjin bit his bottom lip a little. The Alpha had underestimated how powerfully the sight of the innocent-looking morning face the Omega always seemed to bear could affect him, but he had needed to wait for Jungkook to wake. He deserved that much. But looking at Jungkook’s parted lips and smelling his Scent from even across the room, soft and comforting, was making him lose stamina and willpower fast. He didn’t have much time.

He swallowed roughly, arms crossed tightly over his chest and his hands tightly clenched at his forearms in an attempt to distract himself from the now painful heat in his groin. This wasn’t going to be easy. He parted his lips to speak, but Taehyung woke first.

“Jungkookie, you’re awake!” the Beta cried out sleepily, attempting to jump forward to deepen the hug but not getting very far with one arm, wriggling like a playful pup. “I’m so glad! We missed you!”

“Tae-Tae,” Jungkook breathed - or attempted to, pinned as he was. “Thank you, for saving me, and for… you know. Everything.”

“Of course,” Taehyung said quietly, and he laid his forehead against Jungkook’s, nuzzling in. Seokjin’s gut clenched with a plethora of emotions, the most prominent and painful being self-doubt, and bit his lip, saying nothing. He knew better than that. Something in his silence seemed to draw Jungkook’s attention again, and this time the boy looked as though he wouldn’t be deterred.

“Seokjin? Why are you all the way over there?” His eyes seemed to be measuring the distance between Seokjin and the edge of the bed with a pointed glance. Jungkook’s tone rose in an almost accusatory tone - *almost*. The kid knew him a little too well now, in the worst ways.

“I’m glad your heat broke,” Seokjin managed, surprised by how thick and strained his voice already was.

“Why are you so far away?” Jungkook pressed. “Why aren’t you the one taking care of me? Jin, what happened!?”

“Jungkook, calm down,” Jimin murmured, pressing the freshened cloth to his cheek, but Jungkook brushed it away with the tips of his fingers so he could meet Seokjin’s eyes, already seeing the resolve written in the older Alpha’s eyes - and that was what had him panicking.

“Jin...J-Jin come over here,” Jungkook’s voice softened, worried and needy, and... *shit*. Seokjin
really wanted to indulge him, to comfort him. But he knew that once he was in that bed with him, his oncoming rut would take control.

“Jungkook, listen. Last night, you were really in a vulnerable place, you know? Heats and hormones, they can fuck with your head, trust me, I know. So if you feel differently after today, I wouldn’t blame you at all.”

“Don’t fucking m-mess with me, Seokjin,” Jungkook said, tears starting to form in his eyes, his lips trembling so delicately. Every instinct in the Alpha’s body was screaming for him to go to his side, to embrace him and tell him it was all going to be simple from here on out. But Jungkook, exhausted from his post-heat, hadn’t woken up when Seokjin had been jolted out of his sleep at 3am by an overwhelming lust-inducing rut that was the worst Seokjin had ever experienced. Jungkook didn’t know the disgust Seokjin had felt towards himself with the realization of how easy it would have been to demand from Jungkook at his most pliable point. And Seokjin knew that he would never be able to stop or be satisfied with a handjob under the blankets. He knew himself too well by now.

“Jungkook,” he said quietly, taking in a long, shallow breath to steady himself. “I have to leave for a little while. I’m sorry.”

“But why? Why now?!"

“I broke my promise to Namjoon. Already I’ve crossed more lines than I can count. I disobeyed his orders when we needed to work as one pack the most, and I challenged his authority. I even attacked them…” Seokjin said quietly. He knew that a lot of that had been his Alpha hyper-reacting to all the Omega heat hormones he had directly exposed himself to, but still. Seokjin didn’t see that as an excuse. Hormones weren’t a place to hide behind anymore. He didn’t intend to tell Jungkook that Namjoon had already forgiven him, because it didn’t matter.

“That’s bullshit,” Jungkook whispered, and Jimin looked up at the Omega in surprise at how forward he was being. “That’s not why you’re leaving. You’re running away again.”

Seokjin inhaled sharply. Jungkook’s words weren’t even loudly or harshly spoken, but they cut through the air like a knife. He wasn’t going to make this any easier for either of them, because he didn’t understand anything. “Jungkook, I already feel bad for pressing you forward before you’re ready. I...I know what it’s like to get wrapped up in hormones and think something is what you want.”

Jungkook’s eyes flashed, and two twin tears fell down his cheeks in silent, frustrated fury. “Fucking hell, I already told you --”
“Okay, okay,” he gestured for the Omega to calm down, as he had started to sit up roughly from the bed, almost dislodging Taehyung unceremoniously. Protectively, Jimin nudged Taehyung into a sitting position over on his side, his hand resting on the Beta’s forearm, demurely trying to shield his elbow. “Let’s just assume for a moment that you are ready. That you are sure. Even so, I need to leave. I need to figure out something from the past before I can move forward 100% with you. It’s just not fair to you if we do this now. Okay?”

“But why can’t you just tell me and we can deal with it together? Why won’t you let me help?”

Seokjin gave a grimace, trying to even imagine Jungkook having to face the Alpha’s demons, of having to deal with a side of him that was anything but gentle and protective. He imagined the looks of disgust and disbelief that would inevitably follow, the denial. No, he couldn’t do that to Jungkook. His baggage was his own, and forcing that onto Jungkook would just pull him, the one piece of hope he had to cling to, into that spiral.

“Even if you think you’re ready, Jungkook, I don’t think I am. I’m sorry.”

“That isn’t fair!” Jungkook cried petulantly. Seokjin just helplessly shrugged, turning to open the door. Jungkook roughly tossed the sheets aside, scrambling to his feet despite Taehyung and Jimin trying to cling to his arms and hold him back, telling him he shouldn’t be out of bed yet.

Seokjin inhaled, and it was a mistake. Jungkook’s anger seeped thick, defensive Omega Scent filling the room, and the once-comforting salt and leather was now a torment. Like a punch to the groin, he felt the heavy, mindless arousal, making him want to double over, but the only outward sign he showed was the nervous biting of his lip and the tenseness in his shoulders, which Jungkook took as a silent challenge, or a possible opening.

“Why won’t you trust me!? I’m not a baby you have to protect, I’m a full-grown wolf, too!” Jungkook planted his feet in front of the Alpha, his eyes flashing blue as he frowned, seemingly unaware of his own aura. “Look at me! Why won’t you look at me!?”

He reached out and roughly grabbed Seokjin’s collar, meaning to pull him down a little so that their eyes would meet, but Seokjin let out a shout, pushing him away with a snarl that was aimed more at himself than at the Omega. Wide-eyed, Jungkook got tipped off balance, making him stumble backwards into the ladder of the other bunk bed. He stared at Seokjin in surprise, questions in his eyes.
“Seokjin, why do you…? You smell….” Jungkook’s mouth dropped open a little, and Seokjin’s neck flushed with heat as he knew the ruse was up. “You’re in a rut. My heat pushed you into your rut, didn’t it?”

Seokjin swallowed heavily, shifting his weight from foot to foot in an attempt to alleviate the aching in his crotch. It wasn’t easy when a solution - the solution - was right in front of him, flushed from sleep and deeply inhaling his Scent with a dizzying expression. Jungkook leaned forward and shoved roughly at Seokjin’s chest, making his shoulders thud against the cabin wall.

“So you're in a rut? Is that why you ran away?!” Fresh tears were cascading down his cheeks, his face now crumpled in despair and flushing with shame. Seokjin was painfully aware of Taehyung and Jimin, quietly watching from the bottom bunk. “I asked you to help me, but you’re just running away again. If it’s not me, then who is it? Who is gonna help you through your rut, Seokjin?! Is that where you’re going?!”

“Jungkook, just--just SHUT UP, okay!?” Seokjin exploded, clenching his hands around his ears as each tremulous quivering of Jungkook’s voice, each fearful, accusatory exhale was setting him on fire from the inside out. Every defensive movement Jungkook made just made his Alpha demand to reach out to him, to protect him from whatever was causing his panic and stress, but it was Seokjin himself doing the damage. He opened his eyes after a moment, panting heavily through the intoxicating Scent of Jungkook, and frowned at the way Jungkook had stilled. He had sucked in his lips until they almost disappeared, as though to bite back any further accusations, but his eyes still gleamed and burned with equal parts melancholy and bitterness. He looked small and he looked hurt. Seokjin’s head tilted to the side, blinking heavily as he felt his own eyes starting to sting. But somehow he had to be the strong one here. He ran his teeth across his bottom lip, collecting himself before he finally looked back at Jungkook, meeting his eyes squarely even though it made even his bone marrow seem to ache.

“Look, Jungkook. I understand. I do. But you have to let me do this. When I come back, I’ll do my best to explain everything, okay?”

When Jungkook released his lips from their prison they instantly started to quiver violently again, against his will. “You will come back, right? I mean..” He narrowed his eyes, and he sounded heartbroken as he fearfully asked, “You do know, right, Jin?”

*You know that it’s gotta be you, right?*

*You know that I love you, right?*
Seokjin gave a sad little smile. He decided to risk stepping over to close the gap a little between them. It was his turn to take the risk at moving a little closer anyways, right? And he cupped Jungkook’s cheek in his wide palm. “Yes, I know.”

“And you believe me, right?”

A sigh escaped him, and his thumb wiped away at some of the tears on Jungkook’s cheek, making the Omega bite at his lip again. “That’s exactly why I’m going, Jungkook. Because I really, truly want to believe you.”

Jungkook blinked up at him for a moment, sniffing noisily as he straightened his shoulders. “But why can’t you just stay here and let us figure it out together?”

Seokjin grimaced again, shaking his head.

“Jin…” Jungkook whimpered, watching him as he went towards the door. “Jin!”

“I’ll be back when I can, I promise,” Seokjin said, refusing to look over his shoulder again this time. Even still, he heard Jungkook’s feet shuffling on the floor, starting slowly after him. He was halfway out the door when Jungkook let out the most pitiful whine, like a pup that had just been kicked. It felt like a stab right into his chest, and it was already hard enough to breathe.

“I’m gonna wait for you to come back, Jin! I already chose you! Do you hear me?!”

Seokjin closed the door with a soft click, and he heard the low murmur of Taehyung and Jimin moving in to comfort.

But just when he thought he was safe, standing outside the cabin, he heard Jungkook scream out, “JIN! I’m waiting, so hurry back, goddamn it!”

He blinked away the tears, wiping roughly at his face with his sleeve and letting them fall rampant, now that he didn’t have to hold back. When he let out a sigh and finally lifted his head to walk away, his backpack already waiting next to the door, and he saw Yoongi standing ankle-deep in the snow, staring at him. He didn’t say a word, just watching the Alpha with his narrow, fox-like eyes boring into him like daggers. Without speaking, Seokjin could already feel the oppressive weightiness of his disapproval.
“You’re bailing on him now,” Yoongi murmured, “When you should be trying to communicate.”

If Seokjin hadn’t been as observant as he was, he would have written off the ambiguous tone as meaning that Yoongi was almost asking a question. But he knew better. He shouldered his backpack, frowning as he stepped forward. “I have to deal with my past before I can even think of a future right now,” Seokjin mumbled, “To be honest, it wasn’t that long ago I didn’t even think a future was possible, so I just have to--”

Yoongi hand drew back, a strained grimace on his face as he sent his fist heavily forward to make contact with Seokjin’s jaw, nearly bowling him over in surprise. His hand flew to the tingling skin, goosebumps of alarm rising all over his body as he gaped at the Omega in surprise.

“I told you not to fucking half-ass things, Kim Seokjin,” Yoongi snarled. “You better get your shit together fast or I swear I’ll make good on that threat to string you up by your balls from a tree. That’s your future mate in there but that’s our pup. Don’t fucking forget it.”

Seokjin let out a shuddering breath, keeping his hand held against his cheek as he strode past Yoongi, ducking his head against the wind that was blowing flakes up out of the deepening snow drifts. He was determined. As soon as he could, he would come back. He would come back whole and healthy and ready to do Jungkook’s sincerity justice.

But at the moment, that felt a long, long way off.

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“Are we ready?” Namjoon called out for the nth time, pressing his thick-rimmed glasses a little higher up on the bridge of his nose. His breath rose in front of him in a thick, white puff as he smiled over at the youngest three pups, where they were adjusting the fake flowers tied to the white wooden arbor they had set up in the middle of the camp. It was a pretty little arch, several inches taller than Namjoon but just wide enough for two people to stand comfortable in, width-wise, and the lattice had been woven with plastic green vines dotted with yellow flowers they had brought at a home décor department store, but it looked pretty against the snow.

“Just about!” Jimin chirruped, straightening up and almost bumping into Taehyung’s chest with his head, as the Beta had been reaching over Jimin to adjust a flower arranged higher up on the latticework. It hadn’t worked well, trying to do it with one hand, but he had managed. “I’m glad it’s a bit warmer today, at least.”
“Yeah,” Taehyung grumbled. “It’s still freezing though. How long will the ceremony take, again?”

“We’re doing it pretty traditional, so we’ll be out here about 20 minutes, is all? Then Hoseok and Yoongi will go on their hunt, and we are free to do whatever, while they take care of the rest.”

“The rest,” Taehyung said, a bit of teasing to his tone as he rolled his eyes back and smirked, the expression suggestive enough to make Jimin smack lightly at his good shoulder. But that only made him release a deep, throaty chuckle.

“Really, TaeTae?” Jimin rolled his eyes. “Come on, let’s go get the others and help them finish making up all that food that Hoseok and Yoongi won’t even enjoy.”

They started to head off, but Jimin paused when he noticed that Jungkook wasn’t moving to follow, his solemn attention still on the yellow flowers he was adjusting above his head. He saw Namjoon wave the other two to go on ahead, and he frowned, not looking forward to another lecture about how he was ‘young’ and ‘had options’ or ‘just needed to have patience.’

“Jungkook?” Namjoon said lowly, standing at his side with his hands tucked into his pockets. “Are you doing okay?”

Jungkook frowned more deeply, not wanting to grace the dumb question with an answer. But this was Namjoon, his lead Alpha. He shook his head, hating the way his throat already felt thick and weighed down, tensing up with emotion. Namjoon’s soft hand dropped onto Jungkook’s shoulder, squeezing a little in reassurance. Silence enveloped them, and Jungkook knew that Namjoon was debating how much to say or not say. Honestly, he was in a bad mood so he felt like telling the leader to just give up and not put in the effort, because it wouldn’t do much good to lift his spirits just then. He was unbelievably happy for Yoongi and Hoseok’s special day, of course. But that didn’t exactly erase the way his lungs felt as if they had been in a vice for the two days Seokjin had been gone. When he had finally been allowed to go back out on a hunt, a part of him had secretly hoped that Seokjin would be out there, the white wolf sitting at the edge of one of the clearings, watching solemnly and waiting for Jungkook to come to him at last.

“He’s not on the island anymore, you know,” Namjoon said quietly, as if reading Jungkook’s thoughts. “But he knows we’ll be heading back to the house in a few days.”

“Did he tell you he’d meet us there?!” Jungkook perked up instantly, his tone demanding and desperate, and Namjoon frowned at the sound in disapproval. Jungkook’s momentary lift wilted just as quickly as it had blossomed.
“Jungkook,” Namjoon said after a long moment. “I think there’s something you should know. Now, to be honest, Seokjin made me promise not to tell you, but… considering the circumstances, I don’t think it’s right to keep it from you any longer.”

The Omega looked up, eyes wide, wondering if this was it, this was the thing that was keeping him and Seokjin apart with no decent explanation.

“You understand about Claiming now, right?”

Jungkook tilted his head to the side, a little confused. “Um, I guess? It’s a verbal contract with a pack leader, like a pre-betrothal. But it can be broken, and other packs don’t have to honor it, because it’s not a Mating.” His brow furrowed, and he glared at the ground as though the face he saw in his mind was now in front of him. “Jae said Seokjin had Claimed me, but even if he had, he wasn’t going to let it stop him.” Jungkook frowned deeper, a thought that had been turning in his head like an over-flipped pancake came to the forefront of his mind, and he lifted his eyes to Namjoon. “But if Claims are just verbal agreements, then how could Jae smell that on me? He was wrong, of course, but why did he think that?”

Namjoon gave a little smile, patting Jungkook’s hair and ruffling it a little as his lips seemed to stretch proudly across his face. “You’re the Golden Maknae after all. The reason he thought that, to be frank, is because of the way Seokjin Scented you.”

Jungkook’s body flushed with an embarrassed heat as he realized everyone in the pack must have known by now that Seokjin had Scented him, must have had at least some idea of what had gone down in the cabin that night, and based on the way it had been phrased, it wasn’t a normal Scenting.

“There’s different levels of Scenting,” Namjoon said quietly, his teaching voice smoothly sliding in. “You know there’s a difference between the way I would Scent you and the way Jimin Scents you. The smell goes deeper in certain Scentings, lingers longer, has a different aura or flavor. There’s Scenting you do with your mother and Scenting you do with your pack, or your friends…and then there’s the Scenting you only do with a mate.”

Jungkook’s eyebrows arched. Namjoon pinched his lips together as if to punctuate the sentence with a ‘Well…?’ kind of unspoken suggestion.

“But Seokjin’s not my mate. He hasn’t Claimed me. Is that why he felt guilty? For Scenting me like that?”
Namjoon’s lips pressed more tightly, and Jungkook felt like he wasn’t getting it, and it frustrated him. “What?”

“That’s... part of it, Jungkook. It’s not typical to go that far without having Scented more casually before. In addition...” Namjoon paused, meeting Jungkook’s eyes squarely, “In addition, Jungkook. Jae might have been jumping to conclusions, but he wasn’t wrong.”

“Wrong about what?”

Namjoon let out a little sigh, rubbing his hand over his eyes and then matching their gazes again. “Jungkook, Seokjin has Claimed you.”

Jungkook’s jaw dropped slack, his lips parting in surprise. “W-what?! Since when?”

The lead Alpha gave a sharp inhale, working his thick lips for a moment before responding. “Since about two days after he moved into the pack house. He came to me and asked if he could Claim you, because otherwise he wasn’t going to be able to sleep, he was getting so paranoid of another pack member moving in before he was ready to make his move.”

Jungkook’s eyes fluttered in surprise, and he finally got himself to blink properly and take in air. “W-wait, how can he Claim me without my knowing? And how could he have done it so soon? Why didn’t anyone tell me?!”

Namjoon raised his hands to quiet the Omega, shushing him gently. “Listen, no one else knew. Not even Kiara knew, until last night. Yoongi realized it while we were tending to your heat. Seokjin begged me not to tell anyone unless absolutely necessary. And that’s why I decided to tell you, Jungkook. I may be the lead Alpha, but Seokjin is also my older brother, and one of my best friends. It’s not my place to tell you everything I know, but...but this, I think you should know.”

A moment of tense silence passed between them, and Jungkook squared his shoulders, preparing himself. Namjoon was essentially offering a little explanation, which could mean turmoil or some peace of mind. Jungkook wasn’t sure which, but he was willing to take the risks, at this point. “Okay, shoot.”

“He knew you weren’t Presented yet, he knew there was an age gap that you may have had a problem with, that’s the simple stuff,” Namjoon began slowly. “But the main reason he didn’t want
you to know is because Seokjin has been through a lot when it comes to ‘Alpha roles’ and ‘Omega roles’ and the way people let those unwritten rules control their lives.” Namjoon took in a slow breath, a sad little smile coming to his lips. “The reason he didn’t want to tell you, Jungkook, is because my brother is a deadass romantic at heart. He didn’t want you to accept his Claim because he’s an Alpha, he wanted you to fall in love with him, Kim Seokjin as himself, not Seokjin the Alpha.”

Jungkook stared down at the snow, his eyes wide and his world seeming to tilt a little to the side, giving him vertigo. When he said nothing, Namjoon continued, “That’s the only reason I allowed him to have a Claim - even though it was a tentative one - without telling you, until he was ready to talk to you about it. We agreed that the Claim would be considered broken if you tried to Claim anyone else. It’s still in place now, as far as I’m concerned. But if you say the word I’ll consider it broken, and you can move on from it with no hard feelings.” He paused, seeing the way Jungkook’s jaw tensed even at the mere suggestion. “But based on what I hear, that’s the last thing you want, right? In all honesty, Seokjin and I thought you had another two years before we even had to deal with any of this. But either you sped it up with your little underwear stunt—” Jungkook winced. “—Or...there’s something else going on here, which I don’t quite understand yet. I have a few theories, but...I don’t think that’s the main point right now. My whole point is...” He clapped his hand back on Jungkook’s shoulder, thudding it down roughly and squeezing the Omega’s shoulder, staring in his eyes with a hard, meaningful look. “My brother loves you, Jungkook. He may have his head up his ass right now, which is something he’s good at, and I’ll never really understand him, but that’s one thing I don’t doubt. You should have seen how messed up he was, the day he came to see me, begging me to let him Claim you... I’ve never seen him that upset, that emotional.”

It was hard to picture in his head when he tried to imagine it, an overly emotional Seokjin. Seokjin was the one who was always calm or quiet, playful or withdrawn. Silly or studious. He didn’t seem the type to get overwhelmed by much of anything. It was something that, in a weird way, Jungkook really wanted to see. He wanted to see Seokjin completely unwound and unrestrained. He wanted past the walls and hesitation. And at this point, he was about two pregnant pauses away from just taking a jackhammer to the damn wall and calling it a day.

“You okay?” Namjoon queried, leaning down into Jungkook’s view. Jungkook nodded, sniffling heavily and wiping at his eyes.

“Yeah, yes. I’m okay. Thank you, Namjoon.”

“Just do your best, alright? Things will work out, one way or another. I don’t know where it will end up, but I know that much, at least.” He patted Jungkook’s shoulder one last time. “I’m going to go inside and get the others to come out, it’s well past the scheduled time. But you come to me if you have any questions, okay?”

Jungkook nodded, sniffling a little more as he watched the Alpha trudge off into the snow toward the
Main Hall, where faint ghosts of laughter and voices could be heard from inside. Jungkook turned and stared up at the arbor, at its pretty (but fake) flowers, misplaced in the wrong season but still looking realistic enough to work for what they needed for today. He thought they made a lovely contrast, and he wished Seokjin was there. He would probably pluck one off and tuck it behind his ear, posing dramatically to be funny but still looking unfairly fresh and handsome as he laughed with Jungkook, shoving one of the plastic buds in the younger’s face.

With a slow swallow, Jungkook pulled his cell phone out of his pocket. For once, he actually had a bar of signal on the island, so he decided it must have been a sign. He opened the front face camera, angling it so that his upturned face showed, surrounded by the yellow flowers and the snow in the background. It was a colorful mix of his pink cheeks, brown eyes, yellow petals and white flakes. He threw up a solemn peace sign, curving the corners of his lips up in a bit of a melancholic smile as he took the picture. He added the caption and sent it before he could hesitate and regret it.

The ceremony is going to be really pretty - wish you were here with us. Please hurry home.

He glanced back up at the photo in their private chat. In all honesty he thought he looked pretty nice in the photo, so he hoped it made Seokjin happy. He scrolled up a little and saw that their last messages had been when Seokjin had gone to the store to get bread, and asked Jungkook if he wanted some ‘special surprise bread’ as a private treat for the two of them. He smiled a little, and pocketed his phone just as the Main Hall door opened, and the rest of the pack tumbled out in a noisy gaggle. Most of them were in their matching thermal pack jackets, but Yoongi was dressed in a suit that was all black from head to toe, a cross necklace dangling from his neck and a nervous pinch to his lips as his eyes seemed to dance. Hoseok followed close behind, wearing a bishop-sleeved white button-up with a silky black vest over top, an eggshell white scarf tied elegantly at his neck. They both looked amazing but they were already shivering violently by the time they went to their positions, standing facing each other about three feet in front of the arbor, smiling shyly at each other and glancing down at their feet in the pressed snow. Namjoon stood just through the arbor, and Kiara stood waiting at a small folding table they had set up, upon which stood two matching wine glasses.

The others stood numbly in front of Hoseok and Yoongi, shifting in the snow and making soft crunching noises. Jungkook glanced over at Jimin and murmured, “Is this like some old tradition from the wolf ancestry side or something?”

Jimin shook his head, smirking at Jungkook in such a lovingly condescending way that Jungkook wanted to shove him in the shoulder. “No, this isn’t a wolf ceremony. This is purely for the human side. Wolves don’t hold ceremonies.”

Jungkook just nodded, confused why any of it was necessary at all. But the couple of the day looked happy enough, even as their teeth had started to chatter, so he wasn’t going to argue.
Namjoon started in on an elaborate and elegant speech about the beauty of winter and the fittingness of having the ceremony on a day so close to the anniversary of the day they’d met. He even made a few halfway decent jokes about Hoseok’s wilder college days, which were interesting enough, but Jungkook was starting to notice Yoongi’s lips turning a little purple from the cold. Kiara gave Namjoon a warning glance, and he wrapped it up after a few more minutes.

“And that’s the power of communication, showing that despite how different we may be from each other, that has no bearing on whether or not we can make things work, which is an inspiring and hopeful sign to us all. But without further ado, I, as leader of Bangtan pack, would like to begin the proceedings. The wine..?” Kiara stepped forward, handing each of them a glass of the red wine. Hoseok and Yoongi had barely broken eye contact the entire time, and even now, they held their glasses delicately and their gazes hard, barely seeming to breathe. It felt like almost too intimate a moment for them all to be standing there, watching.

“Jung Hoseok, Min Yoongi, may your blood always run together, your battles be side-by-side, your paths continue as parallels and your dreams align with your realities. With all the blessings in my heart, I now pronounce you Mates.”

As Namjoon said these last few words, Hoseok and Yoongi moved forward a little, linking their arms around each other and slowly tipping their wine glasses back, still not breaking that intimate-feeling eye contact as they drank. When they finished the glasses, Hoseok licked his lips a little, and Yoongi suddenly bolted forward, catching Hoseok’s mouth with his own. Their arms still awkwardly entangled, he pressed the Alpha backwards, making him giggle and his bright, wide teeth flickering into view between them as Yoongi continued pushing forward, tilting his head and catching Hoseok into a kiss that was not what one would call chaste, but was nonetheless just as moving. Everyone clapped, and then started to disperse.

They were almost back to the Main Hall and Jungkook glanced over his shoulder, seeing that they were still entangled. Jimin chuckled, grabbing Jungkook’s arm and tugging him along.

“It’s interesting,” Jimin was saying to Taehyung as they walked along together. “Yoongi must have asked Namjoon to drop the line where he says ‘Allowing your true Alpha to take you as his.’”

“Well, to be honest, I don’t see much need to say that, anyways. It doesn’t really match how things work nowadays, it’s kind of old-fashioned, don’t you think?” Taehyung said with a shrug.

“I mean, I guess. I never really thought about it that much,” Jimin murmured thoughtfully. “Does that mean you would want him to cut it out, too?”

Taehyung smirked, “Are you already talking about our Mating Day, cute little Jiminie?”
“Don’t call me cute like that!” Jimin laughed, but he flushed as though he was pleased as he jutted his hip playfully against the gangly Beta. “Just answer the question.”

“Mm… sure, I don’t see any reason to keep it in. So that works for me, as long as you don’t mind.”

“I’ll have to think about it,” Jimin said in a tease. Jungkook was still glancing over his shoulder, where Hoseok and Yoongi had shifted, Scenting deeply into each other’s fur in a way he’d never seen before. He was so enthralled by the sight that he didn’t even notice the brief peck Taehyung tilted his head down to plant on Jimin’s mouth, nor did he hear the ensuing giggle. As he watched, Hoseok gave a spine-chilling howl and led the way off into the woods, Yoongi following at his side. Powdery snow kicking up behind them like a dust cloud, there was the elegant stretching of grey limbs over the dip of the little hill, and then they vanished into the depths of the silent woods. It would be their first hunt as official Mates, and most likely none of the pack would see them for the next couple of days. Traditionally, he had been told a new Mating involved staying on a two to three day hunt, where they would consummate the Mating alone after their first kills.

“However,” Yoongi had explained, “We’re not barbarians anymore, and while I have my quirks and kinks, getting buck naked in the snow is not among them, so we’ll probably do our hunt proper, and then use the hyung cabin for the next couple of days. That’s why Namjoon and Kiara’s beds are moved to the Main Hall for now.”

“Jungkook, are you coming?” Jimin called from the doorway to the Main Hall, where a celebratory feast was waiting.

“Yeah, I’ll be right in,” Jungkook said quietly, waving Jimin on. The Alpha gave him a skeptical look, but followed Taehyung inside nonetheless, where the Beta was already whooping and in the same breath bemoaning that he only had one hand to shove food into his mouth with. On the front porch, Jungkook pulled his cell phone back out, seeing that it had no signal. He lifted it in a vague gesture of hope for a momentary signal, and to his surprise, he got it (well, after almost ten minutes and trying several different positions on the porch, to be fair).

He opened his chat with Seokjin, and saw that the message had been read. He sent another one, at least comforted to know he was able to read them.

The ceremony just ended. They’re off on their hunt now, so we’re going to eat. Are you hungry?

He sent the message, one arm craned awkwardly over towards the abandoned bird’s nest tucked
under the cabin awning, and a little trace of a smile lit up his face when it was marked as read, too. Where ever he was in that moment, Seokjin was at least still taking the time to check for word from him. It was a silly thing, probably, but it was still comforting to know they had a little connection, a little lifeline, still.

“My whole point is, my brother loves you, Jungkook.”

He smiled at his phone, closing his eyes and sending up a little prayer of thanks, then went inside to join the others.

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The cabin was dark, save for the little glow of the space heater that was warm and red and - okay, not quite as romantic as a fireplace, but they were taking what they could get. Hoseok had his arms planted on either side of Yoongi, both of their chests covered in sweat. There were countless marks riddled up their bodies like a music staff dotted with notes, a strange pink and purple melody that twisted as they breathed.

“Yoongi,” Hoseok gasped, bending down to press his lips to Yoongi’s cheek, then nibbling at his jaw with his powerful and memorable teeth - they had marked Yoongi up more times that night than he could count. “Are you ready?”

“Yes,” Yoongi said quietly. His head was spinning wildly like a top, and he couldn’t really see straight because Hoseok had ensured that Yoongi had come three times already that night. But he knew it was the right time.

“May I?”

“Yes,” Yoongi breathed, tilting his jaw back and willingly exposing his neck to his mate. They had talked about this night in detail before, but of course some things hadn’t been exactly as planned. But one thing Yoongi had agreed to was to let Hoseok mark him first. It was part of their attempt at power balance, their way of maintaining their identities in some fashion as Alpha and Omega beyond the unconventionality, and Yoongi had been the one to offer the idea first.

‘There are lots of Alpha things you’ll never quite be able to do because of being with me,’ Yoongi had said, ‘I should at least let you be the one to start Mating us.’
‘I’m not missing out on anything, if that’s what you’re worried about,’ Hoseok had beamed, all smile and warmth as he nuzzled in close. ‘But I would be honored to Mate you first.’

Hoseok leaned down, pressing his nose to the scent gland on Yoongi’s neck, the little patch of skin rising and falling quickly with his uneven breaths. He inhaled deeply, making Yoongi wriggle beneath him and relinquish a little moan. Hoseok took his time, pressing delicate kisses to his neck, his jaw, his shoulder, until Yoongi reached up and gripped roughly at his forearm in impatient warning. Hoseok smiled into Yoongi’s pale skin, his own Scent now dotted across Yoongi’s body in hazy little clouds. With a little moan of anticipation, Hoseok opened his mouth, biting down directly onto Yoongi’s scent gland, breaking the skin there as Yoongi cried out, his body worked into a frenzy to the very edges of his frayed, happy nerves. He screamed, the sound strangled into a moan of pleasure as Hoseok’s Alpha meshed with Yoongi’s Omega, harsh and opposing, then sweet and addicting. Their Scents changed for a moment, into a sensory experience that went beyond explanation. Once he could breathe again, Yoongi grabbed rough hold of Hoseok’s neck, yanking him downward and catching him in a rough bite that wasted no time in penetrating him deeper, making Hoseok actually weep as he trembled into Yoongi’s arms.

Easily, Hoseok jutted his hips down against the Omega, and they came in a slow, quiet rhythm that lasted so long and deep within their bones that Yoongi thought he had actually stopped breathing for a minute. He sighed, his eyes rolled back into his head as his back lifted into a graceful arc, taking in Hoseok on so many different levels that the world, for a moment, was one large, chaotic, beautiful metaphor until their trembling started to still.

“I love you,” Yoongi gasped, pressing rough, fumbling, teeth-lined kisses to the apples of Hoseok’s cheeks. Somewhere in between his blissful sobs, Hoseok said the same, curling up against Yoongi’s broad shoulder.

As the little trickles of blood dried down their necks, the scent of earth and vanilla remained steady, like a distant drumbeat. It would never fully segregate again.

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Seokjin stared at the black wrought iron gate, considering it for a moment. A few years back, there had definitely been more green and less fence in this, his favorite park near his family home, but things were always in flux, weren’t they? Everything liked to change on him, and life was just about keeping up. With a little shrug, Seokjin went over to the neglected and dying plum tree that hung over the fence, using the residual climbing skills from his childhood to make it onto the other side, dropping into the soft grass amidst the darkness. He’d come out all this way for a midnight walk in a nostalgic place, and by god, he was gonna do it. Seokjin took his cellphone out of his pocket, moving to turn the flashlight app on to light his way. About twenty yards in there was a desolate and bug-infested streetlight that buzzed even more than the insects around it and flickered threateningly, but it would do. Seokjin sat in the little painted bench at the edge of the pond and stared down into its
murky waters. Green algae floated at the top, and weeds of some sort grew at the edges. He heard a very loud and stubborn frog somewhere nearby, but he couldn’t quite place the sound. Seokjin leaned back against the park bench with a sigh, looking up at the night sky for a few moments. He had been wearing the same thick black jacket for the last week, with the same gray sweater he’d worn the day he left the camp...and Jungkook. Seokjin rubbed at his eyes, able to feel the velvety softness of the skin underneath where bags had been forming. To call it insomnia was to oversimplify it. Some days he could barely walk from the throbbing pain, and nothing was bringing him relief. He had even gone to a specialist to get suppressants, hoping that they would alleviate some of the ache that not having Jungkook near was causing, but they had made him vomit and then lost their effectiveness. He was nearing his wit’s end, and he was no closer to any answers, despite his self-inflicted punishment.

Jolting him out of the quiet, Seokjin’s phone suddenly went off with a notification, and he turned on the lockscreen to see another message from Jungkook himself. He opened it with a hungry fervor, eager to see what he was up to, now that it was this late in the evening. Earlier that day he had gone to see a movie with Namjoon, since ‘Kiara is at home preparing for pups and the other couples are out doing couple-y things.’ and he had whined more about the amount of syrup used in the soda fountain than he had detailed anything actually important - like the name of the movie. Seokjin had actually smiled at his eagerness, reading and re-reading the messages a thousand times each, as each character and every gentle emoticon watered the blooming hope buried in his chest.

This time, instead of just a text message, Jungkook had sent another selca. It was obviously in his little fort under the table, and he was lying on his pillow staring up at the camera, wearing a gray jersey and with a soft, sleepy pout on his face.

*I'm sleepy. My exam is in the morning but I barely studied. Lol*

*Come home soon.*

Seokjin felt that usual painful stab into his chest every time he read the oft-repeated phrase. The fact that Jungkook called it home was so simplistic, but he felt sure down to his very bones that it was not said flippantly or without purpose. He was so tempted to message back, to tease him for going to a movie when he hadn’t studied properly. To tell him to sleep well. To promise he’d come as soon as he could. His groin clenched painfully, now so tender as to feel like a punch, and he doubled forward, his breath catching a little. He considered using the sent selca to help relieve himself a little, since that worked better than nothing, but he always felt a little guilty afterwards, even though he now knew that Jungkook had done similar… Seokjin sighed, leaning back as the pain started to throb instead of stab, and then nearly jumped out of his skin as he heard a branch breaking somewhere near by.

A figure was standing directly underneath the flickering street lamp, and Seokjin squinted, trying to calm the break-neck speed at which his heart was pounding in his chest. The figure remained as it was, just watching. Then, the wind shifted, and the scent of honeysuckle washed over him like a warm, familiar memory. Seokjin’s blood ran cold.
“Jae, what are you doing here?” he said quietly. The figure stepped towards him, the man wearing a thick leather jacket as he came to stand in front of Seokjin.

“You reek of rut so badly I caught it outside the entrance,” Jae said simply. “You should be more careful. You know as well as I do that Omegas aren’t the only ones that can get attacked in desolate areas in the middle of the night.”

“You’ve always been a little paranoid,” Seokjin said, then hissed as he had to shift his position on the bench a little. Jae stared down at him, muscles tensing as if wanting to move forward. Then, he decided to stand facing the pond, a few feet away and upwind.

“Where’s your little Omega kid, isn’t he supposed to be helping you out with that?” Jae spat out, the bitterness evident. “I figured he wouldn’t be enough, but it doesn’t even smell like he tried.”

“It’s not your business,” Seokjin snapped back, still clutching his lower abdomen and trying to will away the ache. Jae’s presence was certainly not helping any. “Not anymore, at least.”

Jae turned around on the spot, and the deep intensity of his eyes, heightened by the orange glow of the streetlamp, took Seokjin’s breath away for a moment, reminding him of why he had been so caught up before.

“It didn’t end being ‘my business’ because of me, Seokjin. You were the one that walked away and left me. Yunho has been trying for the last year and a half to find me a mate, but nothing works. Not after you.”

Seokjin pressed his lips together, feeling an all-too familiar tightness in his chest. “It was toxic from the beginning, Jae. We were eating each other alive. It wasn’t real.”

“Are you fucking kidding me??” Jae snapped, the gentleness of the past few minutes melting away at the words Seokjin had thrown at him before. “It was fucking real, Seokjin. They just wanted us to think it was fake, because the idea of an Alpha and an Alpha together was something beyond what they knew and were comfortable with. It was real. I loved you. I still love you. If you would just say yes, we could go back, we could do it over and do it right. After all that’s happened, I could convince Yunho that it’ll be okay. Leave the Omega behind, let me fix it for you…” Jae finally, with the aura of a man underwater fumbling for an oxygen tank, fell in front of Seokjin, on his knees on the cold grass as he took Seokjin’s hands in his own. He ran his own long fingers in between Seokjin’s knobbly, crooked ones, pressing kisses to each knuckle, going slower and more sensual.
each time he did it until he was holding Seokjin’s hand to his mouth, just breathing in the edges of his rut Scent, eyes shut in bliss.

“I would help you through the rut,” Jae breathed, clutching the cold, now kiss-peppered hand to his sharp cheekbone, smiling up hopefully at Seokjin. “That’s why you came here and waited, right? You came to see me again, hoping I’d come find you, right? Please, Seokjin. I miss you. It just hurts so much, and I know you’ve been hurting, too. Please, just come back to me.”

Seokjin stared down at Jae, his first lover, once his best friend and packmate. He swallowed heavily, staring through the bangs that Seokjin knew without touching were light and soft to the touch, the jawline that was prominent and drawn as if with a knife, the shadows stretched dramatically across his face as he watched Seokjin so intently.

“Jin,” Jae exhaled, slipping his hand around Seokjin’s neck and tugging him closer with a firm touch. He pressed a kiss to Seokjin’s cheek, his lips warm and his breath hot. It was harder than Seokjin had anticipated, facing the temptation of the strong and the familiar. Of the indulgent and sweet, sweet Scent of honeysuckle. As Jae leaned in to Scent him, the heady, dizzying sensation reminded Seokjin of the last time he had let himself be held, of the last time he had allowed himself the greediness of a touch heavy with subtext. Another kiss was laid to his skin that didn’t just touch, but tasted, worshipped. He hissed in a breath as Jae suckled at the skin under his jaw, hand tugging roughly at Jin’s hair and rendering him incapable of speaking for several minutes, just wrapped up in the pleasure.

“J-Jae,” Seokjin breathed at last, while the Alpha’s hands groped across his skin, starting to peel away the heavy jacket and leaving Seokjin exposed to the freezing night air. “Jae, we can’t do this again. We can’t.”

“We’ve both said that so many times.” Jae exhaled, his mouth brushing up against the edge of Seokjin’s lips. “Does it even mean anything at this point?”

Seokjin stared at the Alpha before him, offering relief, offering reassurance, offering the known. He was dark and beautiful, and at one word, Jae would willingly become all his once again, both of them on equal ground with the perversion of their souls.

“Well, what do you say, my Alpha?” Jae murmured against his skin. Seokjin trembled.
Hello, my lovelies~ (ʃƪ Ծ ʃƪ)/*: · ° ✧
I feel like with this fic I've just run out of things to say. Haha. I hope the chapter speaks for itself! Finally I can reveal this element of Seokjin's past!

I'm making myself soft with JK's text messages tbh. T_T And Sope's scene was brief BUT I hope it sufficed to show you all a slice of their life and to provide a nice, purposeful contrast to other events. I had a lot of fun writing this, but I've been going on like, 2-3 hours sleep, and sometimes only 1/2 hour nap increments, so I'm going to go sleep for like a hundred years~! :D

Thanks to my lovely beta as always, she helped with quite a bit of feedback and construction of plot elements these last few chaps!

Later, lovelies~!♥♥
The sound of laughter surrounded them, young wolves whooping around the campfire, downing cupfuls of cheap alcohol. Seokjin laughed as two of the younger pups tumbled about in the dirt, yipping as they nibbled into each other’s fur. One of them had just Presented last week as an Omega, so he whined about his back still being sore and being tired, much to the teasing of his best friends. Seokjin shook his head, his face flushing from a mixture of the alcohol and laughter as he lingered on the edges of the main circle.

Suddenly, a cool hand was covering his eyes, and a familiar warm voice puffed gleefully in his ear. “Guess who?”

“Jae!” Seokjin laughed, instinctively raising a hand up to lay over Jae’s, his stomach doing a lovely little flip from the touch. Jae had been his best friend since the moment he had joined the Rising Gods pack, and they were together almost constantly. They shared a room in the pack house, they cooked together, cleaned together, played pranks together. It was as if he had found a soulmate. And since Jae was six years older, he had been the most patient and understanding when Seokjin had gone into his first Alpha rut several months before. Being from a Noble family, Seokjin had known exactly what to expect - but experiencing it first hand had been something entirely different, and late nights lying in their bunks talking had felt much more soothing and calming than any hormone suppressant ever could.

“Look! Try it!” Jae was grinning ear to ear, holding out a steaming bowl of some sort of dark liquid that he couldn’t quite identify in the dim light of the campfire. The elder Alpha ran a hand through his blond locks, brushing his bangs back away from his forehead as he pressed the bowl closer to Seokjin.
“What is it?” He wrinkled his nose, peering into the unidentified liquid. It smelled strongly of kimchi, but he didn’t know if he could trust that.

“Just try it!” he laughed, the sound breathless and breath-taking as he almost fell forward with amusement at Seokjin’s twisted expression of skepticism. “Oh, come on, Jinnie! I made it especially for you! You don’t trust your best friend?” He pouted prettily at Seokjin, tanned skin glowing in the firelight, his jawline and collar barren in his loose black tank top.

“You expect me to just eat something in the dark when I can’t even see it? You think I’m that gullible?!” Seokjin snapped back playfully, widening his eyes as though appalled at the suggestion.

“It’s kimchi jjigae, I swear! I made it for you in the main cabin! You trust my cooking, right? It’s the recipe from my mother that you like.”

Seokjin paused, wrinkling his nose again, but this time it was a sign of his internal debate. “You’re giving me kimchi jjigae you made while super drunk?”

“Seok jiiiiinnie ~” Jae drew out the word in a pitiful, childish whine, leaning his head against Seokjin’s broad shoulder and tilting his head back to look up at the stars above them, so much clearer and easier to see out here than in Seoul. Seokjin held his hands out, cupped underneath because of the nerve-wracking way the jjigae sloshed around in the bowl as Jae moved haphazardly around, afraid the hot liquid would spill into his lap. Jae always got so touchy and needy while drunk, and it was, in all honesty, very cute. His cool looks and appearance hid a playful and fun-loving nature that had made him easy to get close to, and had helped Seokjin warm up to the pack sooner. “You know I could make kimchi jjigae in my sleep! Remember that time I made it when I had that flu? My nose all clogged up and unable to breathe properly?”

“Yeah, and you gave every single person the flu, you idiot.”

Jae pouted up at him, tilting his head to meet Seokjin’s eyes, then hesitated. Seokjin could have sworn his gaze had trailed downward, locking in on Seokjin’s lips and refusing to look away. A little shiver of happiness at the attention rolled up Seokjin’s spine, and he purposefully turned to look at the campfire. Jae, however, craned his head over and against Seokjin until he had wriggled his face back into Seokjin’s view.

“Yeah, but that was my bad for believing that old myth that idiots never get sick,” he teased, making Seokjin nudge him roughly with his shoulder, thereby spilling the kimchi jjigae on them both. With a shout and a laugh, they stood up and tried to brush the worst of it off their pants, to no avail. Oh, well. It was almost time to shower and sleep anyways, especially judging by how drunk Jae was. Seokjin could have sworn the man drank like a fish, going through several bottles of soju on his own.
He had warned the older man about ruining his liver, but that only caused him to nag Seokjin to match him shot for shot the next time, so he had opted out of teasing him much about it lately.

“Seokji~~” Jae whined, pulling his attention back to the present. He was pouting again. “Why won’t you try my jjigae? I made it especially for you. Take it, you’re always hungry. Why don’t you just let me take care of you without being so reluctant for once? Stop being so stubborn about everything.”

“Fine, fine, I’ll eat what’s left of your kimchi jjigae,” Seokjin finally relented with a roll of his eyes, taking the bowl and slipping the silver spoon into the dark soup. Jae watched with a smile on his face as Seokjin blew carefully on the hot liquid, then took a bite. It made him a little nervous, how closely Jae sat and how eagerly he watched every movement Seokjin made, but that had been their way, especially the last few months. They had gotten closer and closer, until they had a level of skinship that surpassed most of the other pack members combined. They couldn’t help it - they were both kind of needy.

“How is it?” Jae asked, starting to smirk in a way that normally would have made Seokjin concerned, but he was still quite buzzed himself.

“Mm, it’s delicious!” Seokjin said, more chipper than he intended, because he knew Jae actually really liked to be praised. Then, the tantalizing, warm sensation of the kimchi soup altered, and Seokjin froze, spoon midway to his mouth. Jae started to laugh as the strong, acidic burn of something spicier than he’d ever eaten before suddenly sprung to life, coating his entire mouth and throat with liquid fire. “OH SHIT. WHAT THE FUCK!” Seokjin fanned frantically at his mouth, as Jae’s breath was utterly taken away in laughter, watching Seokjin’s face turn colors. After Seokjin starting to loudly whine, Jae took him by the hand, abandoning the jjigae with its ghost pepper snuck into it on the bench for some other poor naive soul, and led him back to their cabin. Once there, Jae laughingly helped Seokjin get several glasses of water, even tenderly dabbing at his sweating forehead with a little washrag as Seokjin sucked on a piece of bread, attempting to soak up the burn.

“You’re an asshole,” Seokjin whined childishly, pouting up at the elder from where he sat on his bunk. And there it was again, that little crackle of something in the air that Seokjin could only stubbornly attribute to the alcohol’s effect. Jae was staring at his mouth again, this time clearly visible in the bright overhead light of the cabin that was empty and silent, save for the two of them. Jae was staring at him, the smile on his face loosened with inattentiveness as he seemed captivated by something he saw in the younger’s face. “W-what is it?” Seokjin tried to play it off, taking another sip of his water before setting the empty glass on one of the ladder rungs.
Jae seemed to blink back to life, chuckling a little as he pointed at Seokjin’s face. “Your lips are all swollen and red now.”

“That’s your fault,” Seokjin mumbled, pouting. As he did so, Jae seemed overwhelmed with laughter again, and at some point his hand had cupped beneath Seokjin’s chin, tilting his face up so Jae could see the allegedly swollen lips more easily. Then, their eyes met, and Seokjin inhaled a little sharp breath, and the little crackle he had felt between them before seemed to burst open with whatever it had been containing, the gap widening more the longer they stared at each other. Jae’s eyes were angular, all his features sharp and masculine in places where Seokjin’s were softer, something he could only attribute to his still lingering youthfulness. Sometimes, he felt so small and weak with the rest of the pack, and he would have thought he’d feel the same way with the older, handsome, self-assured Alpha. But for some reason, when their gazes met, he saw only fascination there, a curiosity that had been burning for some time, and had been hidden under any available excuse. A thick, intoxicating Scent rose through the cabin, and with a start Seokjin realized it was the smell of honeysuckle and soap, clashing as though fighting for a foothold in dominating the enclosed space.

“Seokjin…?” Jae breathed. And Seokjin then realized that his hand was still cupping the younger’s face, and suddenly a soft thumb was reaching out and grazing across his bottom lip, the full mouth parting slightly in surprise.

“Jae..? I--”

Before he knew it, Jae was bending low onto the bed, pressing his lips roughly onto Seokjin’s. The tingling still lingered on his lips from the spiciness of the pepper, and something in his gut flipped so hard he became dizzy as he felt Jae’s tongue slip out and hungrily run along the length of his lips, eagerly taking in the burning, spice-filled taste of the younger Alpha. Seokjin felt himself being pushed backwards, until he was being laid down across the bed, their feet dangling off the edge and tangling together as Jae tilted his head, his tongue penetrating more deeply into Seokjin’s mouth. An inescapable heat was growing between them, and Seokjin’s hands trembled with nervousness as he gripped his hands into Jae’s hair, uncertainty flowing through up until suddenly Jae pressed his tongue so far into Seokjin’s mouth that he almost choked. He gagged a little in surprise, finding himself shocked to have enjoyed the sensation, and his hands instinctively tugged at Jae’s hair. Instantly, the blond Alpha reacted, moaning loudly into Seokjin’s mouth so much that Seokjin felt it in his bones, tasted it throughout his body, and it became a lovely scent that made his head spin with need. Seokjin tugged harder at Jae’s hair experimentally, thrilled to find the Alpha not pulling away in surprise but instead biting at Seokjin’s lip in retaliation. Seokjin chuckled, his eyes shut as he soaked in the moment of spine-tingling pleasure. Jae grabbed hold of Seokjin’s jaw on either side, pressing his hands in and forcing his head to tilt to the side as he bent low, pressing his nose to Seokjin’s Scent gland and inhaling heavily, Scenting him in a way they had never done before. This wasn’t a playful Scenting when Seokjin wandered past on his way to brush his teeth. This wasn’t a casual Scenting as they sat on the couch talking. This was innately sexual, deep and thrilling in a way he’d never before experienced. Seokjin gasped, his body naturally awash with arousal, and he bucked his hips up into Jae unexpectedly, almost dislodging the Alpha from where he straddled Seokjin to the mattress. When Jae tilted his hips downward, using his weight to pin Seokjin’s slim
waist to the bed, Seokjin felt the hot, hardness of his arousal pinning him down, too, and he opened his eyes to see Jae staring down at him, leaning back to watch the man on bottom, his own swollen lips parted as he panted.

“I...I can’t...we can’t do this...” Jae exhaled heavily. “But I can’t explain it. I want you.”

Seokjin stared up at the broken confusion on his best friend’s face. In that moment, he wasn’t really sure what he wanted. It was something he had never allowed himself the full possibility of exploring, of considering. He liked Jae a lot. He trusted him. He looked up to him. Did he want him? His body seemed to think so, especially when the mere hot exhale of Jae’s breath on his cheek as his hand curled to wrap around the back of Seokjin’s neck had him moaning, bucking his hips upwards again. He pulled on the blond, soft locks between his fingers, forcing Jae’s head back down with a cry from the elder as he pressed their lips back together. He felt himself shuffling his legs until his knees had leverage enough to start shifting himself up and down on the mattress, pressed painfully up against Jae as the bed began to creak. Jae leaned back down to continue Scenting Seokjin, abandoning the action after a moment in favor of biting at the milky skin above Seokjin’s collarbone, making him whimper.

A part of him knew that they would regret it in the morning. A part of him also knew that now that they had crossed that threshold, now that they had broken the seal upon on the unsaid, that things would never be the same.

“Oh god, Jae!”

~~~~

Seokjin panted, the world a dizzying, spinning top as though he were in one of those psychedelic paintings Taehyung had liked to collect as a teenager. He didn’t know when he had ended up straddling Jae’s hips, the Alpha on his back lying in the cold, damp grass.

Jae’s dark eyes flashed up at him, a little ring of red encircling his irises as he fought for air, Seokjin’s thumbs pressing more and more roughly into the sensitive skin of the man’s beautiful, graceful neck. He wanted to mark it up. He wanted to bite, to make it bleed, to dot it with beautiful colors of purple and green and blue. He wanted to taste everything, to make him whimper and wriggle beneath him in a way Seokjin knew he could, had done countless times.

“You always...play so dirty when...you’re rutting,” Jae panted, smirking as his hands fought half-heartedly at Seokjin’s curved fingers, laughing. The vibration played against the skin of his knuckles, making his aching, sore member scream just a little louder. But he saw the look of drugged-out bliss on Jae’s face. And as he froze in place, he remembered all the fights. How Jae’s personality had changed, the longer they had been together, until the smiles had turned into grimaces, the warm, carefree laughter into cackles of self-hatred. He remembered the way the whole pack had turned on
them, overturned by their fear of this unknown phenomenon. It hadn’t stayed a secret for long; no amount of playful tumbling and impish nips could explain the coquettish looks they were sharing, or the bruises and cuts that were harder and harder to hide. The most revealing, the most suspicious factor, was the way Seokjin never seemed to be completely free of the lingering trace of Jae’s Scent on him, no matter what he did. He wanted to wear it with pride, he wanted to hold Jae’s hand and reassure him it would all be okay.

But neither of them were the same Alphas they had once been. And in the end, Seokjin had had to be the one to walk away, his ultimatum left unchallenged, and his heart broken.

Seokjin smelled his tears before he felt them, trailing down his cheeks and falling onto Jae’s bare chest, where at some point Seokjin had roughly removed his shirt and thrown it aside. Jae stared up at Seokjin, puzzled and shivering in the cold night air, whimpering as he reached up for Seokjin’s cheeks, brushing away at the tears.

“Jinnie...Seokjinnie, no…” Jae whispered, a gentle huskiness to his voice that sounded like the Jae he had once been, even if Seokjin knew it wasn’t. This was the poisoned Jae, the one that had been called a monster by his own family, protected only by their leader’s pity, which Jae had misunderstood in the way that Jae misunderstood everything now, only seeing and tasting what his Alpha hunger wished for, craved. “Please, don’t leave me. Stay with me, I need you.” Jae tilted his hips up, forcing his body up heavily against Seokjin’s and making the younger fall forward with a loud cry, his body inflamed with sensitivity. “Jinnie, look at you, you’re so beautiful...I want you, please…I need you…”

Seokjin started to gasp, overwhelmed with his rut, telling him to go, to take, to force himself to sink below this whirlpool again. It always felt so good at the time. It was so easy, and familiar. The one thing that had helped him walk away was the realization that Jae’s laugh was gone. That in the process of taking what he wanted, what Jae thought he wanted, he had stolen away the thing that had initially kept his heart warm and safe. No cliff had been steep enough, no bite deep enough, no edge sharp enough, the further they went with each other. Two Alphas, fighting for dominance and intoxicated by the struggle, the fact that there was never much of a clear winner, had poisoned them both until every moment was an exercise in power play, to see who was needier, who was hungrier.

“I..I can’t…” Seokjin wept, forcing himself to sit up, tilting his head back so he didn’t have to look at the sweating, beautiful, enticing Jae. The stars twinkled dimly above him in the blackness. This wasn’t love, what they had here. It had never been love, not from the first moment. They had loved each other, they had been best friends. But it was never a true love, built on real trust and respect. They had torn down the walls of convention, clawing at everything in a desperate desire to take all, to live the moment, and in the end there had been no time to lay a foundation for anything but addiction and lust. “Jae, I’m sorry… What the fuck...What am I even doing!?” Seokjin continued to sob, pushing himself up off of Jae and throwing himself onto the grass. A brief, whisper of a breeze blew around them, reminding Seokjin that it was below freezing out here, in the darkness of the park. But his rut was so strong, so heavy and burst full now, that he couldn’t even feel the lowered temperature, even as he saw his body shiver. He clutched his stomach, fallen forward sitting on his
heels, his fist clenched into the grass as he felt like his very skin was screaming bloody murder at him. Demanding, addicted, poisoned. He didn’t want to take any more, not when it involved stealing pieces of Jae and grinding them up until they were both unrecognizable, both angry and manipulative towards each other.

“Why?!” Jae snapped, sitting up as he wiped at his own tears, biting at his lip as it trembled. Jae was the older Alpha, physically built more sturdy, and yet… sometimes he had felt so small in Seokjin’s arms, so weakened and exposed. “Why is it so easy for you to just abandon me, Jin?! You can just walk away from everything we had?”

“Because someone had to,” Seokjin moaned, hiccupping into the smell of the earth. He wanted the Scent of honeysuckle. He wanted Jae’s hair in his hands, not the cold, grossness of the grass. “You wouldn’t come with me.”

“How could I leave my pack?!” Jae cried out. And Seokjin sighed. They had cycled back into an argument they had had so many times, aloud and in their heads. “You really think just leaving them, after all they’ve done for me, is going to somehow prove my love to you?! I have to give up everything I’ve ever had, while you have the security blanket of your family to turn to when things go foul? That’s not fair, Jin. They are my family. Not all of us are firstborns into Noble families, with an inheritance promised to us.”

Seokjin stared into the ground. He didn’t have the heart to clarify, to tell Jae that that right had been revoked, and by Seokjin himself. He didn’t have the right to lead, to control anyone else, when he had no control over himself. When he had explained things as well as he could, his father hadn’t even argued, hadn’t even hesitated. He had revoked Seokjin’s birthright without an argument, and the whole affair had been swept under the carpet, until his brothers had come to him. Seokjin gripped at the grass, hearing it crunch ever so quietly under the pressure. “Then go back to them, Jae. Go back and get healthy. Go back and be protected and have a family.”

Jae stared at him in silence, not understanding the unexpected response. Seokjin lifted his eyes, puffy and unfocused from weeping, and glared at the elder, a circle of red around Seokjin’s brown irises.

“I said GO! Get the fuck out of here!”

“I… I can’t!” Jae screamed, a snarl filtered in and a whimper punctuating the end as he seemed to crumple and shrink, hugging his arms around himself because Seokjin refused to do it. “I c-can’t do any of it without you. I tried.”

“You’ve got to keep trying,” Seokjin insisted, his tone more gentle now. “We both have to.”
A chuckle escaped Jae, then, and it was dark, bitter and tasted foul in the air. It wasn’t a laugh from the Jae that Seokjin thought he once could have loved, but a twisted Jae, who could never face the truth evenly. “Is that what you’re doing with the Omega brat? Finding someone who is easy prey to fulfill you, that you can train up to be as you want?”

At the mention of Jungkook, a deep growl resonated in Seokjin’s throat, and he snapped a look of rebuke and warning at the older Alpha, his Scent suddenly weighing heavy in the air in challenge.

“And…?” Jae said, his brows furrowing deeply into creased lines, his chin tilted so as to leave his face mostly in shadow. “Just tell me. When did I stop being enough for you? Do you really think he will be enough? A soft little Omega that never challenges you? Do you really think that this is your big happy ending, that we can forget everything, and I’m just the mistake you threw away?”

The words stung, because Seokjin himself wasn’t sure he could honestly deny them. He was terrified at the idea of tainting Jungkook, so eager to please and still so starry-eyed when watching his hyung. He looked at Jungkook and saw what he and Jae had once been, before dominating as an Alpha had taken priority over respect, trust, comfort and happiness.

He could have tried reassuring Jae, as he always had. Telling him he was enough, that he was worthwhile, that the hissed lies he had been told were untrue, that he could rise above the stigmas placed on him because of birth and choice of partner, because they had both been born as Alphas. But Seokjin had spent so long in that cycle of reassuring Jae, that he knew it was the last, desperate straw Jae used to try and keep Seokjin from leaving, from sticking to his resolve.

“I don’t know,” Seokjin breathed at last, blinking slowly and clearing his eyes of the tears, his jaw set. “But I think he’s my chance - maybe my only chance - so I have to try to be healthy. For myself first, and then for him.”

Jae scoffed, and again, Seokjin could hear that the sound didn’t come from the Jae he had once enjoyed so many hours with, had curled up against, fingers entangled against the bedsheets as they watched the sun rise, whispering secrets into the stillness.

“Well, good luck with that.” Jae’s voice was mocking, disbelieving, broken.

But as Seokjin continued to steadily meet the man’s gaze, he saw his expression crumble. For a moment, a golden, heart-ripping moment, he saw the old Jae in his face. The Alpha leaned his head back, letting out a long cry into the night sky as if begging the heaven’s for a different end, a different conclusion. Then, he twisted over onto his hands and knees, shifting into the dark wolf that Seokjin remembered so well, and he raced off towards the streetlamp, and the entrance.
When he was almost out of sight, he stopped, turning to look back and see that Seokjin was still watching him go. He sat back on his hind legs, lifting his face to the moonlight and letting out a low, deep, breathy howl of mourning. The sound vibrated through Seokjin’s very skeletal core, his breath catching as he shivered from head to toe, as his first love had to die all over again in front of his eyes. He sobbed, falling face first into the grass as his body mourned the loss of another chance at relief, the possible release having been so close, and being thwarted yet again by Seokjin’s ridiculous, naive wish of just being loved, with no strings attached.

It was ages before he was able to pick himself up off the grass again. He couldn’t afford to stay there much longer, based on the way the sky was starting to go gray, and he really didn’t want to be caught in such a state. The cold had, luckily, frozen and dried most of the traces of his tears, and he huddled into his jacket even as his body continued to throb distractingly with need. He picked up his cell phone from where it had been forgotten on the bench, shoving it into his pocket without a glance as he went to weakly clamber back up over the fence, much more weakly and sluggishly this time.

The sleazy hotel he had been staying in reeked of smoke, always carrying the thin bite of vomit and Omega slick, but they asked no questions as Seokjin stumbled past the front desk, the Scent of his arousal not even earning a curious glance. He flopped down onto the bed where he had been hiding out most of the last week and a half, and sighed. He rubbed at his eyes, feeling hopeless. Even beyond the emotional draining he had just gone through a few hours earlier, Seokjin was about to go crazy from his rut. He knew he probably wouldn’t be able to sleep again, staring up at the ceiling and willing his body not to grind up uselessly into the blankets, unfulfilled and with no hope of satisfaction as hours and hours ticked by in silence.

He moved to plug his cell phone in, and that was when he noticed the light blinking on it, telling him he had a notification. Though before running into Jae, he had eagerly jumped to his phone for any word with Jungkook, he now hesitated before clicking to open the app, feeling nausea sinking into the pit of his stomach. Was Jae right? Was he just ‘training’ and preparing Jungkook to be the mate - or the sex partner, more like - that he wanted? He had been the younger party once, he knew the appeal of an older, more experienced Alpha. He knew the pull of hormones, the way it confused and tore at the body until all he could do was ache. Jungkook had reassured him that it wasn’t his heat that induced his feelings, but how could he have been so sure? Would his feelings eventually just be revealed as lust, shallow and weakened easily by the absence of a satisfactory Alpha? You can’t keep running, Seokjin. You have to put the hard questions to yourself without hesitating all the time, goddamn it.

Seokjin took in a deep breath, then opened the application, surprised to see a rather long series of messages from the Omega, instead of his brief daily summaries.

11:58 Seokjin, where are you tonight? I went outside to take out the trash and noticed the sky is really clear, you can even see the stars! They don’t show up on my camera, though. Yoongi said that you need a special lens or something to capture the night sky. I’ll ask him about it sometime. Did
12:22 I have to go to bed soon. Also, I think Namjoon and Taehyung miss you, too. Namjoon smells like stress lately, although he hasn’t said anything to me, I think he’s worried about the pups or something. Taehyung seems sad, too. He said that you had never been away for this long, except when you were in your first pack. He’s eaten all your cereal because he said it served you right for leaving him. I think he just missed you and didn’t know what else to do about it.

12:25 Seokjin…are you okay? I’m trying to be patient, but it’s hard. The house isn’t the same without you, you know?

12:25 Come home, soon. You’re missing things, and it hurts. Not just for me, but for the pack.

1:03 Seokjin. I went to go to sleep but there’s one more thing I want to say. Don’t make fun of me for it, okay? Haha.

1:07 I want you to know that you’re not just my ALPHA. You’re one of the most amazing wolves I’ve ever met. As a person, I admire you a lot, since you always look out for others, and you always make me laugh. I feel safe with you. Braver. Please don’t doubt me and come home so I can prove it to you. I may not be very good at it but I want to try. Goodnight.

Seokjin stared at the messages for ages, his mouth parted as he mouthed each word, his chest and neck throbbing with the strain of all the jumbled up emotions he was trying to keep captive there. He turned his face into the pillow and sobbed, feeling as though his soul had received the gentlest little gift of reassurance, of hope.

He was still crying uncontrollably as he typed back his first message to any of the pack since he had left.

Thank you.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies! KurageCharms here~♥
It's an hour late from my usual update due to computer/electricity problems, but at least it's up! DX

I was really excited about this chapter, since it really explains and pulls together a lot of things that I've been mentioning throughout the whole fic. :) Especially with regards to some of Seokjin's peculiar behaviors or way of thinking. I hope now that Jae and Seokjin's past make a little more sense to you, my sweet readers.
The Waiting Period Part 2

Chapter Summary

WARNING: This chapter has...um...? Dry humping?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Patience is not the ability to wait. Patience is to be calm no matter what happens, constantly take action to turn it to positive growth opportunities, and have faith to believe that it will all work out in the end while you are waiting.”

— Roy T. Bennett

“Chiim-Chiiim~” Taehyung moaned from where he stood in the doorway, light spilling in and casting his face in shadow. Jimin let out a little groan as he half-awoke, rolling over and away from the Beta and his stupid lovely citrus smell and his consciousness that was not sleeping, and attempted to go back to dreamland. He was seriously behind on sleep and it was his one day off during the week, and therefore his only chance to sleep in. There was the soft pad of Taehyung’s bare feet on the polished wooden floors, and Jimin could feel his sleep being stolen from him with the man’s mere presence. “Chiminie, I need your help…”

Jimin groaned again, but he heard that tell-tale whine in Taehyung’s voice. He craned his head to look over his shoulder, squinting one eye open to see a very flushed and tired-looking Taehyung standing over him, rubbing at one eye with the heel of his palm and pouting down at him. Jimin frowned. It wasn’t fair for him to be that cute and smell so good that early in the...was it even morning?! Jimin reached over to click to his phone lockscreen, and the clock said 4:12.

“Tae-tae, it’s 4 o’clock in the morning, what the hell could you want at this hour?”

In response, Taehyung just pouted, reaching over and tugging on Jimin’s sheets. “Help meee…”

“Help you what ?!” Jimin hissed, not wanting to wake the others, since he noticed the door to their room was open and the hallway light was on.
“I... need a bath…”

“What!?”

“Please?” Taehyung whimpered, tugging harder on the sheets. Jimin felt tense with irritation, and he took in a sharp inhale through his teeth, carding a hand through his bangs and trying to calm himself down. It wasn’t like Taehyung to be this obstinate about something, and he actually couldn’t bathe himself very well with one arm bandaged up. Jimin had been one of the main people he had asked to help him, but he was usually pretty considerate about when.

“Okay, fine. But why now?!” Jimin grumbled, curling up and rolling off the bed in a half-tumble suddenly, and nearly bumping into Taehyung. And that was when he smelled it. Sure, it was just the smell of citrus mostly, Taehyung’s own unique Scent. But whereas usually it wafted through the air quite neutrally, like a Taehyung-brand air freshener, right now….he smelled like he’d soaked in it for hours. Jimin hissed, then, catching an undertone of something else. Something thick that bit at his senses and put him on high alert.

“Oh my god…” he breathed, caught in a moment of numb surprise. “Now?”

Taehyung whimpered. “Will you just come help me?! Your sleepy-angry voice is just…ugh.” Taehyung snarled, turning on his heel and stomping out of the room. Jimin gaped after him. It had been three months since Jungkook’s Presenting, and in all honesty, Namjoon and Yoongi had warned them that it would probably be a long time before Taehyung showed any signs of increased Omega hormones, especially since 1) Namjoon refused to let them Mate until at least the summer and 2) Taehyung had been so exposed to Jungkook’s heat, there was more of a danger of Taehyung’s Beta hormones shifting to an Alpha side, particularly since he’d had to physically defend the very hormone-heavy Omega. So they hadn’t expected this. Well, in all honesty, the two of them had been hoping for it, but without much of a chance. Had sharing a room really had that much of an effect on Taehyung?

Jimin shuffled quickly off the bed after his boyfriend, finding him already in the bathroom and turning the hot water on as best as he could with one hand. He bent over to plug the bottom of the tub, letting out a little cry and almost falling over and clutching at his lower belly. Jimin shot forward, scooping him up into his embrace so that he wouldn’t fall in the tiny bathroom, and Taehyung let out a little yelp that echoed loudly.

“Shhhh… I’ve got you,” Jimin said quietly into his ear, pushing the bathroom door closed with his foot without looking over his shoulder. Hopefully, they hadn’t woken anyone up.
“Jiminie...I feel gross ...” Taehyung whined noisily, still holding onto the side of the tub with one hand. In the light of the bathroom, Jimin could see that the crotch of his pants was clinging to his form, wet with slick. He felt goosebumps rush up his spine, and tried to breathe through his mouth as he turned the bathroom fan on. “And I feel so achy.”

“Um… how about we use some of Yoongi’s bath salts? They might be soothing.” Jimin glanced up at Yoongi’s shelf, usually an off-limits area to the younger wolves, but surely he wouldn’t mind, just this once? He had at least six different kinds, after all, surely he wouldn’t miss if they used just a bit.

“Jimin…” Taehyung said quietly, “I...I think you should let go of me, I think I’m gonna be sick?”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Jimin slipped his arm out from around Taehyung, straightening up and moving to step away towards the bathroom shelf when Taehyung stiffened, still holding onto the tub as the hot steam from the bath started making the air in the room thicker. In all honesty, Jimin was a bit confused. Had he gotten the flu in combination with his heat? Or was this just the backlash of a Beta’s hormones switching?

“Shit...it’s worse when you let go…”

“What?”

“Nothing,” Taehyung waved him off, wriggling out of his pajama pants awkwardly, yanking the waistband with his good arm. Jimin dug through Yoongi’s bath salts, finding a small black box and peering inside, seeing that it was barely used. He moved to the tub and dumped a good amount into the running water, and Taehyung waited for him to help him get his shirt off. The smell of salt and some kind of plant filled the air, and the mirror was already starting to fog up.

“Careful, you can take it slow,” Jimin soothed, gently untangling the shirt off Taehyung, careful that he didn’t get any limbs caught in the large holes he had cut into it - his own habit ‘for the sake of fashion’. Taehyung’s movements were sluggish as he stepped into the bathwater, hissing at the heat while Jimin turned off the tap. His face was flushed, expression strained as he situated himself in the water, cautious about holding his injured arm on the outer edges of the tub. The now foggy-white looking water only came up to about halfway up his torso, and Jimin tried not to stare at the way Taehyung’s thin, tanned chest moved with his rapid breathing as he adjusted to the water, his dark nipples catching the Alpha’s eye as he awkwardly shuffled around for a washrag.

“Is it too hot?” Jimin asked, his voice thicker than he intended it to be.
“No, I’m just feverish,” Taehyung bemoaned, still pretty while pouting. He leaned back against the wall, looking up at the ceiling and closing his eyes. He looked so tired already, that it was quickly waking Jimin up to full alert. It would be dangerous if he passed out in the tub or fell, so he was glad Tae had asked for help.

“At least now we know you’ll go into an Omega heat, right?” Jimin offered, not only to offer Taehyung some reassurance but also to distract himself from the way Taehyung’s skin looked in the water, his head tilting back leaving his long, dark neck exposed in a way he was sure Taehyung wasn’t self-aware of. This was the blessing and the curse of being in love with Kim Taehyung - he was beautiful, yes. He was also extremely down-to-earth and sweet. But the downside was that he really wasn’t aware of his own effect, of the way his aura could change a room - or Jimin’s state of mind. As someone who was always hyper-aware of his own physicality and concerned with maintaining an atmosphere, Jimin got thrown by Taehyung’s easygoing nature. It was like he only saw himself in a certain light, and remained oblivious to his own model-looks and erotic appeal. Jimin was sure his death was going to be Kim Taehyung, and he couldn’t really say he minded. He was secretly really happy that Taehyung had asked him to take care of him, though. As an Alpha, he hadn’t exactly been able to do much for the Beta since they had become ‘official,’ and it made him feel useful to have the chance to tend to the younger male.

Slowly, Jimin dipped the washrag into the water, the bath salts now carrying an almost sickly-sweet smell as he wrung out the excess water and placed the rag against Taehyung’s shoulder with a slight splatting noise. He massaged back and forth, swallowing heavily and staring at Taehyung’s face for a reaction. Taehyung’s dark eyebrows peeked out from under his sweat-clumped bangs, allowing Jimin to see the way they furrowed deeply, and Taehyung’s mouth parted slightly as he gave a little moan. Jimin’s hand paused for a moment, until he realized he had stopped with his fingertips hovering over Taehyung’s nipple, and he quickly ducked his head and continued.

“I didn’t know your first heat would be this…? Strong, I guess?” Jimin murmured quietly, wanting to fill the silence.

“It’s probably not even a full heat. The first ones usually aren’t,” Taehyung explained flippantly, shifting in the water a little and creating a sloshing sound. “Jungkook’s was a weird exception.”

“O-Oh…” Jimin breathed, returning to wiping Taehyung down. Then why did Taehyung smell so strongly?

“It means this should only last a couple days, though--Ah!” Taehyung gasped, wrinkles forming on his brow as Jimin moved over the spot just above his belly button.
“I’m s-sorry, was that too much?” Jimin whispered, as Taehyung reached out with his good hand and caught hold of Jimin’s wrist.

“N-no, it just felt really good, is all,” Taehyung muttered, his eyes still shut. Jimin stared at the boy, mouth slightly agape. How could he say things like that aloud so flippantly? Didn’t he know that Jimin could be affected, too? Jimin dipped the rag in the water again, his fingers tingling a little from the heat of the water as he placed the rag up around Taehyung’s neck, massaging through the rag. The boy instantly keened, tilting his head further back and his chest caving forward. “Shit... that’s too much. I’m more sensitive than I thought I’d be...”

“Oh...should I...leave?” Jimin hesitated, uncertainty blooming in his chest at the way Taehyung’s body suddenly seemed so tense. “Maybe it would be better if Yoongi or Kiara helped you? Or maybe Jungkook can leave his shift a little early...?” Having an Omega around was the norm for Unmated wolves in heat, because having Alphas around usually just spiked up their hormones and arousal - an Omega usually was not affected by another Omega during heat times. But in Taehyung’s case, according to Yoongi, there was a chance of an intruding Omega’s hormones counteractively affecting a Beta’s heat so badly that it would aggravate Taehyung’s dormant Alpha hormones instead, staunching his heat but possibly sending him into a rut, if powerful enough. So in this case, Jimin felt lost and uncertain, stuck on what to do.

“No, please don’t wake them,” Taehyung mumbled sleepily, lolling his head to the side and finally opening his eyes. His eyes didn’t quite seem to focus with the kind of needle-point directness that Taehyung was famous for, more glassy and distant and with a ring of tell-tale Beta gold around his irises as he took Jimin’s hand in his. “I feel bad enough already, but...I want you.”

Jemin felt his chest constrict in a lovely way, working at his lip to try and calm down the smile that was blossoming there. “Well, let’s just hurry and clean you up, then maybe we can try to get some sleep?”

“Sounds good.” Taehyung murmured. Then, to Jimin’s surprise, he took Jimin’s hand and pressed it to his lips in a gentle kiss. Jimin had to remind himself to breathe for the rest of the bath, and was relieved when Taehyung was finally clean and dry in new pajamas with a protective pad for any future slick, still smelling heavily like citrus and the bath salts. He leaned heavily against Jimin as they went back to their bed, looking as though he was about to collapse at any moment. Whether it was from sleepiness or being overwhelmed, Jimin couldn’t quite figure out.

“D-did you get anything on the bed?” Jimin whispered, his arm wrapped around Taehyung’s waist.

“No, it was all on my sheet.” Taehyung seemed to flush, “I already got rid of it.”
“Okay, that’s good,” Jimin reassured him, laying him on the bed. He was going to get a second sheet from the linen closet, but when he moved to stand Taehyung gripped hard at his shirt.

“No, don’t leave,” Taehyung mumbled, pouting like a child told he couldn’t have any dessert after supper. “It feels better when you stay close.”

“Um, okay. But I have to get a fresh sheet for you first, just in case...you know. I’ll only be a minute, okay?”

Taehyung frowned, but let go of Jimin’s shirt, albeit reluctantly. Jimin was a little confused at just how clingy Taehyung had become, but he supposed he shouldn’t be. After all, the two of them had seen how emotional a heat had made Jungkook when Seokjin had left, even after the fever broke. He hurried to clean the bathroom up, replacing the bath salts and shutting the light off before grabbing a couple of sheets from the linen closet and returning to find Taehyung wriggling restlessly on the bed. As soon as he saw Jimin, he seemed to relax a little, reaching out for him. Jimin crawled up next to him, letting Taehyung wrap his body around his torso as best as he could with his injury, one leg hooked around Jimin’s waist and pulling him close. Jimin could smell the dampness already collecting in the dark warmth between Taehyung’s parted legs, the core of the heat pressed up against the skin of his hip. In all honesty, Taehyung smelled and felt wonderfully warm and comfortable, in a way that was different than usual. Jimin’s head spun a little as he snuggled in close, happy to be close to Tae but now quite wide awake.

A few hours later, he woke up to the sensation of Taehyung moving around. He jolted awake as he realized that Taehyung was nibbling at his neck, the skin there feeling raw and rubbed, while Taehyung was slowly squeezing his lower half against Jimin’s hip in his sleep. The Alpha stared up at the ceiling in shock for a few moments, not sure what he was supposed to do. Taehyung was letting out little whimpers in his sleep, his hip rolling against him in smooth, needy motions. After a moment, Jimin reached over and tentatively shook at Taehyung’s shoulder.

“Tae-tae...Um...Tae-tae, wake up.”

“Mm?” Taehyung murmured, his movements slowing but his eyes shut.

“Tae-tae, you’re...um...Your heat is getting stronger. Is there anything I can...? Um. I mean, I know you—...uh.” He hated feeling so uncertain, but Taehyung’s strange behavior wasn’t making things any easier. They had discussed what they might do if Taehyung’s heats began, and whether from the high of their almost public confession or his inner romanticist, Taehyung had said he wanted their first time to be their Mating night, that everything should start there, and properly. Jimin had warned him at the time that he might regret it, checking again and again in the following weeks to see if he was still sure. Now they were here, and it was Taehyung who was humping his leg in the night, and Jimin wasn’t sure how to handle a situation like this. Taehyung panted into his ear, his arousal
unquenched as he continued to rock his hips, whimpering at his lack of release.

“You smell so nice, Jimin,” Taehyung cooed, still half-asleep, his breath blowing hot against Jimin’s cheek. Jimin looked over at his clock. It wasn’t even 7:30 yet. He sighed, trying to coax Taehyung to release his hold on the Alpha’s hip, but to no avail. It was going to be a long couple of days.

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“Jeon, you’re taking the path near the library again. There’s an Omega freshmen who has already called in needing an escort around 1am.” His supervisor, Lee, took down a note on his clipboard, not even glancing up at the boy as he scanned his list of names. There were about eight or nine other students on duty tonight for the campus patrol, all also criminal justice majors in need of some experience hours. Before, he had gotten along with the other patrollers pretty well, considering he barely spoke. But things had changed a bit since the new year began.

“I can’t believe we’re sending an Omega to escort an Omega,” came a poorly hushed whisper behind him, and Jungkook gripped the edge of the table a little more tightly, but managed to look otherwise unaffected. Some days it was awkward, being the only Omega on his team, or even in his department. There was one Beta, but he worked day shift and their paths never crossed. Not that he’d expect the guy to stand up for him on his behalf or anything. Most of the people who presented as Omega dropped their position on the campus police immediately, sometimes in the same day. In just the eight months he’d been working here, he’d seen four new Omegas leave, and really, he didn’t blame them. It was Alphas that had the image of intimidation, of having the ability to be aggressive and to protect, not Omegas. But whether it was from the voice of Yoongi in the back of his head or his determination to break unchallenged ground, or just a genuine enjoyment of the job, Jungkook had decided to stay.

Once assignments were given out, most of the officers stood up to the grinding screams of metal chair legs on the industrial-grade flooring, and everyone filtered out of the building. Jungkook readjusted his radio on his hip, and glanced up to see Lee standing in front of him. He was a super senior student, about to graduate in the spring, and Jungkook liked him well enough. He was one of those people that, if he hadn’t been in a position of authority, would be fairly easy to forget. A broad, squarish forehead and tan skin, with burly arms that seemed out of proportion with the rest of his body, hanging looped at his sides as though he was physically incapable of hanging them down straight.

“Jeon, do you want some back-up with you…?” Lee questioned, his voice low and attempting to sound unassuming. Jungkook felt his jaw clench at the underhanded skepticism.

“Why would I need backup for a normal patrol?” Jungkook asked breezily, trying to smile as though unbothered. It was kind of insulting, really. He could have understood it if Lee was trying to be
considerate about a health concern or something, but when he wasn’t in the throes of a heat, how was he different from an Alpha, really? He didn’t see the point in being treated so delicately.

“I’m just offering, you know. To play on the safe side,” Lee said quietly.

“If I need backup, I won’t hesitate to call for it,” Jungkook reassured him. “Until then, I’ll pull my own weight, I promise.”

Lee pressed his thin lips together, as though considering further comment, but he decided against it. Jungkook shook his head once the supervisor had left, letting out a little sigh as he went out on his patrol.

Jungkook had specifically picked being one of the night patrol officers. He liked the hours, deep into the graveyard shift and in the quieter moments on campus, with less people. He liked the uniform, the way it made him feel self-assured and confident, like he was powerful and unquestioned when people glanced his way. His walk was different, the way he carried himself worlds away from the boy who still felt most comfortable under the table. He liked the duality, the segregation like he had two lives he was living. Things were more complicated after becoming an Omega, yes. But he liked a challenge.

He walked up to the now-darkened biology building, a young woman standing underneath the main archway with her arms crossed, a heavy-looking backpack on and looking sleepy. Jungkook walked up to her slowly, offering a smile when she glanced up.

“Good evening. Are you…?” he pulled out his assignment sheet, scanning for the most recent name. “Kim Jimin?”

“Yes,” she said quietly, pushing off of the wall. Jungkook tried not to think about how her posture reminded him of another Kim who was frustratingly AWOL from his pack right now.

“I’m Jeon Jungkook, I’m part of the campus police. You requested an escort back to your dorm?”

“I...yes...Thank you?” She sounded awkward, and adjusted her backpack before stepping forward, away from the well-lit entrance to the biology building. Jungkook glanced up, spotting the security camera she had been sitting underneath. She was a smart girl.
“One of my roommates’ name is Jimin,” Jungkook said with a smirk, sensing her nervousness in the air and knowing it was part of his job to make her feel more relaxed. “But he’s a boy.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, I like to tease him about it sometimes.” He smiled, leading the way and asking which of the dorms she was living in. It turned out she had had some fruit flies she was using for her main report this semester, and they needed to be tended to at very specific times, leaving her the last one in her lab most days.

“I was walking by myself before, but my roommate insisted I use the free escort service on campus,” she explained quietly, as they passed a poorly lit student parking lot. “She says there’ve been more reports of attacks on Omegas late at night.”

“That’s true,” Jungkook agreed, and although he wanted to argue with the point more, he refrained. “And the service is free, and I’m on duty all night either way, so don’t hesitate to call.”

She nodded, giving him a little side glance before saying, “Um, if you don’t mind my asking… You’re an Omega too, aren’t you?”

Jungkook’s work-smile stiffened a little, but he nodded clearly.

“I didn’t know Omegas could be part of the campus police?”

“We can, but most don’t want to.” Jungkook tried to make his voice sound light-hearted and flippant, but in all honesty, he was getting a little tired of this conversation. “I’m the only Omega on my team.” He shrugged, and let Yoongi’s oft-repeated words fall from his lips, “There’s no reason an Omega can’t do anything an Alpha can do, really.”

“I suppose not,” she smiled. “I mean, don’t get me wrong, I think it’s very cool of you. And I think I understand how you feel. I mean…I’m the only girl in any of my biology classes. You would think we’d be beyond that kind of thing now, but…”

Jungkook nodded, his eyes glancing over at a couple of figures walking together down towards where the stadium was. “If not us, then who, right?”
“Right, that’s how I see it, too.” She flushed a little, smiling down at her feet shyly. “To be honest, that’s kind of why I picked biology? I mean, the things we’re learning about how hormones in the different types work, how suppressants actually affect the body, things like that… I think it’s fascinating. And in all honesty, it makes me feel a bit like I can regain a little control back, as an Omega? People just see us as slaves to our hormones sometimes, you know?”

He almost stopped walking, then. This was the most talkative any of the students he had had to escort had been, and of course it was all about how he was an Omega, that label of status that he was confused and simultaneously wanted to be proud of. It was complicated, but he could see that reflected in Kim Jimin’s eyes.

“Actually…” Jungkook began slowly, “That’s also why I stayed on. I’ve already experienced what it’s like, having to be protected as an Omega. It didn’t seem fair to rely on others so much. I can’t change how my body reacts to things like that, but…I want to do everything I can to protect others, instead of being protected all the time. It only seems fair that I do whatever I can, right?”

Jimin smiled, nodding in agreement. “I feel the exact same way. And with the recent advancements they’re trying to make with hormone studies, it’s very possible that in the future, no one will care whether someone is an Alpha or an Omega anymore. We may be even able to stop heats from happening altogether, and safely. Wouldn’t that be lovely?”

Jungkook thought for a moment, “And ruts too, maybe?”

She seemed to consider that, looking more than a little surprised, but she still smiled softly. “Maybe.”

“Well,” Jungkook sighed, feeling his chest constrict the way it always did when his mind wandered in this direction, back towards a familiar smiling Alpha and his shining eyes. He gestured up to the doorway of the girl’s dorm.”Here we are, safe and sound. Your roommate can rest assured.”

“Thank you so much,” she said.

“Not at all, it’s my job.”

“But even so…” she readjusted her backpack one more time. “And good luck to you.”
The walk back to his patrol area felt suddenly much quieter than before he had escorted the girl, and Jungkook was having a hard time getting back into the headspace of his work. The moon shone brightly in the sky, abnormally large and almost perfectly round, as he crossed the little bridge that led to the library, a mostly dried up creek gurgling below him in the dimness. Jungkook paused on the bridge, watching the moon for a few moments. He knew he was given the patrol near the library because it was one of the smallest and least active, therefore less likely to have unexpected trouble. But he really didn’t mind that so much, because it was one of his favorite parts of campus, anyways. He watched the moon, his sensitive hearing still alert to any rustling or noises around him, and wondered if Seokjin was asleep by now, if he was doing well. He wanted to ask Seokjin what he thought about new studies on controlling or even eradicating ruts and heats. If it wasn’t for their hormones getting in the way, would Seokjin have had fewer doubts about Jungkook’s feelings? If it wasn’t for going into his rut, and wanting to deal with his personal problems on his own, would he have been able to stay? Jungkook still didn’t have any answers.

The rest of his shift went rather quickly, and it was almost 11 in the morning by the time he headed home, feeling tired but accomplished. His shifts had been longer, mostly because he was actively trying to prove himself, as well as to keep himself occupied.

He pulled out his phone and flipped through some of his most recent photos, until he found the one he had taken that morning. Around sunrise, he had managed to be back on the bridge in time to catch a rather vibrant shot of the bright morning sun shining through the bridge and the trees, with just the right balance of blue sky to hold the eye’s attention. He sent it to Seokjin, now that he was off-duty, with the caption:

*The sunrise was beautiful this morning. Come home soon.*

He smiled, pocketing his cell phone and letting out a sigh. It was already March, and everything was warming up slowly, thawing with a frustrating stillness. He knew that at some point after Seokjin had sent him that ‘Thank you’ message that the Alpha had contacted Namjoon at least, and let him know he was alright. Jungkook hadn’t asked Namjoon directly, but he just knew from the way the lead Alpha had seemed to relax and stop going pale whenever his elder brother was mentioned. He also sensed that Yoongi knew, but neither of them were telling Jungkook anything, probably worried that he would run off to go find Seokjin and insist that he come home right away. But Jungkook had no such intentions. Seokjin was most likely back to attending his classes, since as far as Jungkook understood, life as a med student was hell and without much elbow room for absences, even for ruts or pack issues. If Jungkook had really wanted to seek him out, he could have always hounded the science buildings or found out which courses he had had to take that semester. But Jungkook had said he was going to do his best to be patient and give Seokjin the time he needed, and that was exactly what he was doing. He would have thought that the longer he had to wait, the more nervous he would have gotten, but it was almost as if the contrary were true - with each passing day, he grew more and more sure of the fact that Seokjin was going to come home to him. It was like the feeling of eating a healthy, filling meal after a long time of eating junk food. There was no real reason to feel
uplifted and more self-assured - he just did.

Jungkook passed a small throng of backpack toting students, nearly bumping into them as he crossed the bridge home. He was about to pull out his phone again to see if Seokjin had seen his messages, even though it had been less than a minute since he had sent them, when suddenly a Scent hovered in the air, catching his immediate attention despite its fleeting nature. Jungkook halted immediately mid-step on the bridge, eyes wide and nose slightly lifted as he turned to lean over the railing, watched another group of about eight students walking along the path on the other side of the bridge. In the midst of them, although toward the back and moving listlessly, was a figure he knew well. A figure he could pick out of any crowd, even if the comforting smell of soap hadn’t been enough of an indication.

He wore an extremely oversized tan sweater, with a loose hood and wide body to it that seemed to be eating him whole, even though Seokjin was known for his broad build. The sleeves fell down over his hands, making him look quite small. His jeans and shoes looked torn, and as though they had seen better days, and Seokjin himself looked utterly exhausted, a strange pinkness to the apples of his cheeks and to his lips, and his eyes nearly shut as his puffy face was tilted toward his feet. He looked beautiful, soft, ethereal. My Alpha. Jungkook’s face lit up with glee, and he rushed to the edge of the railing, placing his hands on the stone and staring out in disbelief at the man.

“Seokjin!” Jungkook called out, and a couple of the students looked up automatically at his voice. “Seokjin! Seokjin!”

He watched as the Alpha lifted his head a little, still looking forward and therefore away from where Jungkook was waving to him from the bridge. It seemed he hadn’t heard or seen him, due to the distance between. Jungkook rushed forward to run to him, suddenly stopped by a series of half a dozen bikers who were chatting back and forth casually. Frustrated, he tried to sidestep his way around them and nearly made one of them crash into him. By the time he had jogged to the end of the bridge, the hooded figure had vanished. Jungkook searched around hopelessly, his eyes wide and his heart pounding excitedly even as he felt disappointed at having missed him. Perhaps their timing had been a little off, but every fiber of his being was screaming that this was a sign. He practically ran all the way home.

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“Jimin! Jimin!” Jungkook called out gleefully, rushing into the house and tossing his bags haphazardly under the kitchen table. The Alpha turned around from where he had been shuffling things around in the freezer, an eyebrow arched in curiosity, and his face looking soft with sleepiness. “I saw him! I saw him by the bridge near the library!”

“Who?”
“Seokjin!” Jungkook gasped out, still breathless from the run-in. He was beaming from ear to ear, his eyes sparkling as he gripped the counter top. The end-of-shift exhaustion was practically forgotten, and his chest felt like it was expanded enough to fill the entire house. “It’s a sign, Jimin! He’s going to come home soon, I just know it!”

“Are you sure it was him?” Jimin asked, a little skeptical as he removed ice from an ice tray and put them into a plastic bag, refilling the tray with water before returning it.

“Yes, I’m positive! He looked so sleepy…” Jungkook’s excitement bubbled down for a minute as he considered, “I wonder if he’s getting enough rest… He is a med student, after all.”

“Then he’s definitely not sleeping,” Jimin said, yawning long and hard as if to emphasize his point. Jungkook stopped, cocking his head to the side and taking in Jimin’s bedhead and generally disheveled look.

“What happened to you?” Jungkook queried, looking him up and down. Jimin flushed a little.

“Um…Taehyung started his heat. At like 4 this morning.”

Jungkook’s mouth dropped open in surprise and realization. “Oh wow… Does he…does he need anything? Should I run to the store or something?”

Jimin looked around the kitchen, as if double-checking that they were the only ones around, then said quietly to Jungkook, “To be honest, it’s hit him rather hard. He said he wanted to wait and he can’t exactly use suppressants, since it’s his first heat, but… I’m a little worried? I don’t think it’s supposed to be this strong.”

“Well, my first heat was pretty strong, too…” Jungkook mumbled. “Is it because there are so many of us?”

“Mm…” Jimin hummed, contemplating, “I don’t think so. I’m just… I’m worried. He’s a Beta. What if…what if I messed up his hormones somehow, and didn’t realize it? It’s my fault he even has to have heats, really…”
Jungkook frowned, his voice going quieter, more hesitant. “Jimin… I don’t think Taehyung sees it that way at all…”

“I know, I know,” Jimin sighed. “But I’m his Alpha, after all. I’m partially responsible. I just want to make this as easy as possible for him.”

“In that case…” Jungkook mumbled, staring at the floor, “I suggest you just stay with him.”

Jimin inhaled sharply, his hands clutching tightly at the makeshift ice pack in his hands as he frowned sympathetically at the Omega. “Jungkook…”

Jungkook’s lips quirked up into a smile, but it didn’t reach his eyes as he looked up and met Jimin’s gaze. “I mean it. Just having you near means a lot, I’m sure. That’s what he wants the most, heat or not, you can know that for sure. And...let me know if you guys need anything? Like medicine or laundry or whatever… I can’t do much, and I won’t stay too long because I don’t want to accidentally make his hormones shift again, but…”

Jimin smiled, leaning in to nudge his nose fondly against Jungkook’s jaw, lifting his chin up in a jerking, playful movement. “Thanks. I appreciate that.” Jungkook nodded, moving to crawl back underneath the table when Jimin called his name again. He paused, looking up at the Alpha said quietly, “And even though I’m still kind of angry at Seokjin for leaving you like that, and I’m not sure what to think of him… I want you to know I’m wishing you all the best. You know that, right?”

Jungkook smiled, broadly and with warmth as he nodded. “Thanks, Jimin.”

The Alpha moved upstairs with his ice pack, and Jungkook shifted his blankets underneath the table around. He had spent the first week or so when they came back from the island sleeping in Seokjin’s room, much to the others’ chagrin, but eventually, Jungkook had found it too depressing. The room smelld like Seokjin but it was very painfully and obviously void of Seokjin himself, and eventually Jungkook had ended up back in his old favorite sleeping spot underneath the table.

He had noticed, though, that since his first heat, many subtle things had changed. His senses were heightened, and pickier. Sometimes he stole the box of detergent from the laundry room and slept with it under his table, hiding it so the others didn’t see, because the powdery clean smell was almost like Seokjin’s. He also noticed that Hoseok and Namjoon were less physically affectionate with him, the former of which hadn’t really gotten as physically close since he had Presented, as though struggling with the adjustment that Jungkook was an Omega. Finally, Jungkook had noticed that although he was under his table as usual, the arrangement of his things underneath had changed. Instead of laying things out neatly and as compactly as possible, he had almost built a little fortress
out of blankets, rolling them up high along the perimeters under the table and padding the bottom with all the extra blankets he could find. It was getting easier, the warmer the weather got, to find neglected and unneeded ones. Sometimes when he was curled up in it, reading or playing on his phone, the others would make a teasing comment about “Jungkook’s nest” and chuckle softly before going about their business. He wasn’t sure why this had changed, but it felt significant enough so that even the light-hearted, well-meaning comments made him feel defensive enough that at times, he wanted to tack up sheets to the bottom of the table and make it into pseudo curtains, blocking out the teasing eyes out of the outside world and leaving him in the peace and quiet therein, while he waited patiently for Seokjin.

He opened his phone, seeing that Seokjin had seen his sunrise photo. With a smile, he added another message:

I saw you this morning from the bridge, Seokjin! I called out to you, but I don’t think you heard me. You looked so tired. Please rest well! I just finished my night-watch, so I’m going to sleep now, too. I was so happy to see you! Come home soon!!

He curled up happily inside his ‘nest,’ preparing to doze off with the contented assurance that his Alpha was finally going to be back where he belonged - with him, so that they could finally begin. Then, there was the shuffle of footsteps and the creak of the stairs again, and Jimin was back in the kitchen.

“Um, Jungkook? Are you asleep?”

“No? What’s up?” He poked his head out from under the table curiously. Jimin was wringing his hands.

“I, uh, went upstairs and...well...would you mind helping me change the sheets? We used a pad but, um...Taehyung leaked.” Jimin spoke quietly, almost as though embarrassed on Taehyung’s behalf. “I tried doing it myself but as soon as I’m in the room he gets really clingy, and it’s hard to change sheets when you’re holding a koala.” Jungkook just nodded, moving to follow Jimin upstairs, grabbing fresh sheets on their way. Jimin put his hand on the doorknob, hesitating a moment.

“Jimin?”

“Sorry, I just...” Jimin flushed, hunching his shoulders. “I just suddenly got this feeling that I didn’t want anyone to go in there? Even though you’re an Omega, and I know you’re not a...a threat or anything. It’s weird.”
“Alpha instincts, I guess?” Jungkook shrugged. With a painful stab to his chest, he realized he wouldn’t know. It wasn’t as if he had seen his own Alpha around others much during his heat, since he had been so out of it. He liked to think that Seokjin would have been possessive or protective of him, though, with the same flush to his cheeks that Jimin displayed as he opened the door to the room he and Taehyung shared.

The overwhelming smell of oranges hit him like a ton of bricks, surprising Jungkook as he stepped into the darkness of the bedroom. The rest of the house had been full of sunlight, but Jimin had pulled over the curtain, casting the room in near blackness. In the light from the hall, Jungkook could see Taehyung curled up on the bed. Usually, Taehyung simply emanated energy as though he was a nuclear reactor at his core, but right now, he whimpered, looking sluggish and almost lifeless. The only sign of life was the almost manic way he was tapping his foot in rapid succession against the edge of the bed, his arms hugging around a pillow that was wearing one of Jimin’s shirts like some sort of creepy doll. Jungkook had decided downstairs that he was going to be respectful of Taehyung’s heat and treat the situation as delicately as possible, but at seeing this, he couldn’t help but send Jimin a questioning quirk of his eyebrow.

“He won’t let me leave him unless he can still smell me,” Jimin whispered his explanation, leaning down to tug the t-shirt clad pillow out of Taehyung’s arms. The Beta let out a high-pitched little cry, like a dog that had been kicked on the underside of its belly by a firm boot, and in a moment he was suddenly leaping up and into Jimin’s arms, nearly bowling the Alpha over. Jungkook caught hold of Jimin’s shoulders, steadying him as he sighed and readjusted Taehyung in his arms.

“God, you’re so heavy,” Jimin complained in a grunt, leaning Taehyung’s bottom against the dresser so it was easier on his arms, as Jungkook quickly peeled the sheets off the bed, laying some towels down directly onto the mattress before putting the clean sheets on.

“Chim-Chim,” Taehyung moaned, nuzzling his whole face needily into Jimin’s Scent gland, making Jimin sharply inhale. “God, you smell amazing. Fuck….”

“Tae,” Jimin hissed into a whisper, trying to be demure, “Jungkook’s here.”

Taehyung didn’t seem to care, suddenly mouthing around Jimin’s jawline. Jungkook could hear the wet sounds of Taehyung’s lips against skin, and he felt his whole body heat up in embarrassment. His hands on the sheets fumbled awkwardly.

“Tae, stop it, please,” Jimin begged, and there was a rustle of clothing over his shoulder that Jungkook hoped was just Jimin changing Taehyung into clean pants. “Wo-o-oah there!”
“Okay, there you go,” he said when he finished, standing up and stepping back as Jimin dropped Taehyung heavily onto the mattress, the Beta bouncing with a little squeak and flailing for Jimin, who shoved the pillow back at him. Jimin let out a sigh as the Beta, pouting petulantly through his sweaty bangs over at his Alpha, whimpered as Jimin slipped the bag of ice up against the back of Taehyung’s T-shirt, where it was already becoming soaked with sweat again. As he locked eyes with Jimin, who was carding his hand through his hair, Taehyung wrapped his legs around the pillow and started to squeeze into the fabric with his knees, his hips beginning to wriggle. Jimin suddenly grabbed Jungkook’s shoulder and turned him toward the doorway with a jerking movement.

“Thanks for the help,” Jimin mumbled to Jungkook, “I think tomorrow it should be easier.”

Together they stepped into the clean air of the hallway, and Jimin pulled the door mostly shut behind him, nearly but not quite blocking out the little sounds of Taehyung’s increased panting inside.

“W-was I that bad?” Jungkook whispered fearfully, his eyes wide and his face flushing with embarrassment.

“Um…” Jimin worked his lip, not meeting Jungkook’s eyes. “You were…um.. different.” Jimin coughed as if to clear his throat. “But, uh, after the first hour or so, Kiara and Yoongi didn’t let the rest of us anywhere near you, just in case.”

“Oh…” Jungkook breathed, biting his lips. “You mean…except Seokjin.”

“Except Seokjin.” Jimin fiddled with the edge of his shirt.

“Did...uh...did you and Tae ever talk about how you would...help him?” Jungkook whispered, his voice gentle as though they were discussing something taboo, instead of something that happened so commonly.

“He, uh...he said some things that were off-limits. We hadn’t gotten the details worked out quite yet. We thought it would be a long time before his hormones were shifted enough.”

“Right,” Jungkook breathed, biting his bottom lip harder. “You...may want to try exploring your options that weren’t off-limits, though.”
Jimin stood in awkward silence. “D-did it...help?”

It was Jungkook’s turn to sigh, looking down the hall and noticing the bathroom door at the far edge of the hall was closed, a sign that someone awake. Whenever Jungkook thought back, feeling the warm wave of memory washing over him, just at the thought of the way he had felt underneath Seokjin’s slow, careful but confident hand, he felt a shiver run through him, and he worried that others could smell his own involuntary reaction to it. “I-it helped a lot. Actually, it was enough to break my heat, even after just once.”

“O-oh…” With a start, Jungkook realized that one of the reasons this felt so strange was that he, for once, was the more knowledgeable one, a phenomenon that he couldn’t remember ever happening with Jimin and him.

“I did some reading, and usually it’s not enough to break a heat on its own, so I’m not sure w-why it worked, but it did. But it’ll still help him relax, and maybe he’ll be able to rest?”

“Oh okay…”

The bathroom door flew open like a shot, making both of them jump, and suddenly a very wide-eyed Yoongi was rushing towards them, holding a strange, unfamiliar looking black box.

“Who the fuck used my bath salts?!” Yoongi snapped, looking between the two of them and giving the box a purposeful shake. Jungkook blinked, giving a surprised shrug at the older Omega’s anger.

“U-um, I’m sorry, I used a bit of it for Taehyung’s bath,” Jimin said quietly. “H-he’s just started his heat, so I thought it would help him relax...I only used a bit, but I can buy you a new box.”

“Oh my god…” Yoongi rubbed at his face and moaned loudly. “You didn’t.”

“What’s wrong?” Jungkook asked, looking down at the box.

“Jimin, you idiot …” Yoongi pushed past the two of them, opening the bedroom door and peering in. Jungkook saw Jimin stiffen, his expression flickering between worry and anger and back again before Yoongi came back out, closing the bedroom door with a quiet little click. “You idiot.”
“W-what did I do wrong?!” Jimin sounded as though he was going to absolutely lose it.

Yoongi held up the box, tilting it so they could see the instructions and warning label on the bottom. “This is a box of hormone-infused bath salts, you dumbass. It’s an aphrodisiac for Omegas.”

The two younger boys stared at Yoongi, mouths agape. Jungkook spoke first. “Well, shit.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello there~♥ KurageCharms here~

My sincerest apologies for this chapter being late, my sweets. I’ve been struggling with health issues and stress the last couple of weeks, and last night I came home, edits ready but my heart feeling like I had really half-assed the chapter. I decided to rest and then re-vamp the chapter and my lovely Beta was available for a quick second read, so here we are! I pretty much doubled the first draft, and I feel much better about it! I hope it made you smile! (The original didn't include things like ANY of the JK at work scene, or 90% of the stuff after JK gets home. :> )

Poor Jimin and Tae...I love these two cuties but I can't help but pick on them in this chapter...lol!

Okay, so because I've been doing a hella schedule of about 10k words of writing a week to do the Weds-Sat updates, and school is now back in session, I'm having a harder time every week keeping up with the updates. So for the sake of me and my Beta, as well as for maintaining the quality I desire for this work, I've decided to just update on Saturdays from here on out. :) I hope you'll all understand. The updates will probably be a bit longer, in all honesty, but just once a week, which is still a lot in comparison to what most authors on AO3 do. <_<

Between last update and this one, LINP has reached a couple of major milestones! I hit 12,000 views, for one thing! I also reached DOUBLE my 'dream' number of subscribers! D: I can't even COMPREHEND how many of you are waiting for updates, guys. I'm mindblown. (Kinda like how Tae is mindblown on those bath salts. Hurhurhur~)

I love you all, and I can't wait to hear your comments! Feel free to say hello to me on Twitter or send me cute anonymous things on CuriousCat! ♥

Later, my lovelies!
“Happiness doesn’t lie in conspicuous consumption and the relentless amassing of useless crap. Happiness lies in the person sitting beside you and your ability to talk to them. Happiness is clear-headed human interaction and empathy. Happiness is home. And home is not a house—home is a mythological conceit. It is a state of mind. A place of communion and unconditional love. It is where, when you cross its threshold, you finally feel at peace.”

— Dennis Lehane

It had been yet another sleepless night. The sky through the crummy, scratchy brown material of the curtain was a soft grayish-blue color, seeming to glow rather than to illuminate. Seokjin had gotten very used to seeing his hotel room gradually get lighter each morning. He sat cross-legged in front of the window, wearing just a white T-shirt and resting his wrists gently against his knees as he watched the morning begin. He smiled softly, letting out a little sigh of contentment. It was the first morning the medicine had worked. He felt like he could breathe again. The sensation of not having the constant ache, the constant pain in his gut, the feverish and Scent-heavy layer of sweat, was remarkable. There was a sort of strange, happy emptiness that came when a long-term pain was finally abated, as though the body could forget what life was like before the pain, and he relished in this sensation.

It was time to go home.

When the sky had finally turned a solid early-morning blue, the sun risen high into the sky, Seokjin clambered up and across the room, flopping onto his stomach on the bed and reaching his arms across to grab the cell phone off the charger, his bare ass feeling the chill of the air conditioner that had finally started to feel like it was working, starting from yesterday afternoon. He unlocked the phone, Jungkook’s photo of the sunrise his lock screen background, and went immediately to the Kakaotalk chat the two of them shared together.

Good morning, Jungkook. I’m finally coming home today. I’ve missed you!

He smiled so broadly, just writing the words, that he felt his jaw begin to ache. He covered his mouth with his hand, wanting to cry from feeling so overwhelmed. It was over three months, but it felt as if it had been a year. Seokjin laid his cheek down against the comforter, smiling at his phone and waiting to see the moment when Jungkook checked the message. He wanted to hear what Jungkook
would say, wanted to feel his excitement and commit each character typed to memory. When fifteen minutes passed by, Seokjin felt himself starting to doze off from pure exhaustion, and he shook himself roughly, pushing off the bed and collecting his things for one last shower before leaving the cursed, gross hotel.

He was more than a little surprised when he came out from his shower and Jungkook still hadn’t checked the message. He frowned, wondering if Jungkook had taken the day off patrol and was home asleep instead. No matter, it was still pretty early. He messaged Namjoon, saying that he was going to the pack house in about an hour, and within a few minutes got a hearty reply with so much relief between each exclamation point that Seokjin laughed. Namjoon was still on duty at his bellhop job, where he worked a nightshift similar to Jungkook’s hours, and he wouldn’t be home until after Seokjin arrived.

*I’ll be relieved to have you home!! We’ve missed you!!*

Seokjin felt his chest constrict with emotion. He put the few things he had accumulated during his stay into his backpack, zipping it up with a cheerful - if tired - finality, and took one last look before shutting the door.

When the cab dropped him off in front of the pack house, he found it looked somehow different. He wasn’t sure how, but the size and angle of it seemed to have somehow shifted, as though through the extended absence his memory had contorted his own vision of the two story building with its endearing, lovely-smelling pine in the front yard. He stepped out of the cab and inhaled deeply, feeling the first deep pangs of real worry striking into his gut. Sure, Namjoon and Taehyung would be glad he was back, and he felt pretty certain Jungkook would be, too. But as for Kiara, Hoseok and Yoongi, it would be hard to say. That was an inevitable risk, one which he had decided was worth taking. Perhaps they wouldn’t forgive him for running off as he had. Perhaps they would understand. That wasn’t his choice or under his control - all he could do was hope for the best. Biting at his lip, he slipped his key into the door and jiggled the handle until it relinquished the lock, clicking heartily before allowing him entrance.

The living room was quiet, empty in the stillness of a Tuesday morning. Seokjin instantly was hit by the plethora of different smells, all mingling together in a lovely cacophony that equaled the pack - his pack. At least he hoped it was, still. He inhaled deeply, shoving his hands into the pockets of his oversized tan hoodie as he picked up the trace of Jungkook’s Scent hovering in the air, strong and distinct, but gentle and familiar like a loving whisper.

He smiled, setting his backpack down in the entrance, about to head into the kitchen to check for Jungkook when the boy himself tumbled down the steps two at a time, a black beanie pulled tight onto his head and his eyes wide as he thudded into the kitchen. Seokjin stood in the doorway, a little dumbfounded at having been missed.
“Jungkookie, I think we’ll need the other ice pack, too!” Yoongi called down the stairs, sounding tired.

“Okay!” Jungkook called back up. Seokjin heard the freezer door open and shut, and the telltale shuffling of Jungkook’s socks on the linoleum. He stood watching from the front entrance, quietly kicking his shoes off when Jungkook started back up the stairs. Suddenly, the boy halted, one foot already on the bottom step, and Seokjin could visibly see the way his whole body tensed up on alert. Seokjin stepped up into the living room, his shoes now discarded, and awkwardly tugged at the sleeves of his sweater. Jungkook turned around, wide eyes locking in on Seokjin, mouth parted in surprise. Seokjin smiled a little, looking nervously down at the floor between them.

“Um...hi,” Seokjin mumbled, his voice a lot softer than he had intended it. He looked up, and Jungkook was swallowing heavily, licking at his lips.

“Y-you’re back...?” Jungkook breathed, as though he was afraid Seokjin was about to vanish into thin air.

Seokjin smiled, his cheeks tight as he nodded. “I’m home.”

In the next moment, the Omega had vaulted himself across the room and up into Seokjin’s arms, nearly bowling both of them back and into the front door. Seokjin grunted, reaching up and scooping his hands around Jungkook’s waist as the Omega wrapped his legs around Seokjin’s torso, his face buried in the Alpha’s neck as he nuzzled in with excitement.

“You’re home! You’re home!” Jungkook squeaked breathily, laying at least a few dozen kisses and nuzzles all along Seokjin’s neck and jawline, then working his way up to Seokjin’s cheek, his arms still encircling the older male’s shoulders. Seokjin laughed loudly, his smile having blossomed into a tear-filled grin as he squeezed Jungkook to him. Words failed, so Seokjin chuckled.

Jungkook continued sprinkling kisses, and when Seokjin moved as if to set him down, he whimpered and just clung on more tightly. With a chuckle, Seokjin carried him over to the couch, flopping them both down into the overstuffed cushions as Jungkook continued to nuzzle into him, now roughly tugging at Seokjin’s soft sweater.

“Kiss me you asshole,” he snapped, mouthing headily at Seokjin’s adam’s apple, giving a pointed shove of his fist at his shoulder. “I’ve earned it.”
Seokjin laughed again, his shoulders lifting with the action as he brushed Jungkook’s bangs out of his eyes. They had grown longer since he’d last seen him, and his hair looked lighter in color now, and his skin tanner. The legs that wrapped around him were heavier and more filled out than they had been in January. Seokjin touched his hand underneath the angular jaw, still chuckling a little.

“Yeah, you have.” He gave the lightest of tugs with his fingertips, bringing Jungkook down toward him as he caught the boy’s already moistened lips with his own, tilting his head to the side and sighing into the feeling of touching him again, of having him in his arms and surrounding him with his Scent and his soothing presence.

“I missed you,” Jungkook whimpered, pressing a fourth, a fifth, then a sixth kiss to Seokjin’s lips with a desperation that was as innocent as much as it wasn’t. A high-pitched sound like a protest escaped the Omega, and he finally pulled back a little to frown at Seokjin. “Why do you smell so different? What’s that crappy smell covering up your Scent?”

Seokjin nibbled a little at his bottom lip, rubbing at the back of his neck with one hand and glancing off to the side. He didn’t want to lie to Jungkook - especially now that there was a little ray of hope that he had slowly, splinter by splinter, pieced back together out of the coffin he’d already placed his heart into. But right now, during a reunion that finally let him feel like he could breathe like normal, Seokjin didn’t want to ruin Jungkook’s happy moment.

“Maybe it’s the hotel I was in?” He shrugged. “It was a pretty nasty place.”

“I hope it goes away soon,” Jungkook complained, leaning back in and unabashedly rubbing his Scent into Seokjin’s neck, making the Alpha gasp a little as the waves of tickling sensation rushed through his body at the contact. “It smells horrible.”

“A-agreed…” Seokjin exhaled, slowly resting his arms around Jungkook’s back, rubbing at his shoulders. He knew Jungkook well enough by now to know that he rarely initiated physical contact with the other wolves, much less how openly, awkwardly clingy he had suddenly become. He had slipped into his arms so naturally, a side effect of all the times they had slowly edged towards each other over the months, all the moments Seokjin had deliberately teased the younger wolves until they would playfully hit him back. The easygoing way they had ended up rough-housing in a pile on the ground into the evenings, the quiet moments with Jungkook pushed up shoulder-to-shoulder between him and Yoongi when they were having movie nights. When had their skinship become so natural that it had progressed to this point, where they were slowly moving in closer to each other, more intimately and naturally than a bee laid its touch on a flower?

“Jungkook?” came a voice, and Seokjin looked up over Jungkook’s head to see Yoongi stepping
into the living room, doing a double take at the sight of Jungkook straddling Seokjin’s lap with his head buried in Seokjin’s shoulder as he Scented him almost fiercely. Seokjin quirked his lips to the side a little in lieu of a shrug, not wanting to dislodge the boy, and Yoongi pursed his lips a little together before bending to pick up the ice pack that Jungkook had abandoned at the bottom of the stairs, quietly leaving the two of them alone.

Seokjin breathed a sigh, rubbing Jungkook’s back in little circles again and dropping his nose to Jungkook’s hair, his eyes fluttering shut at the smell of Jungkook’s shampoo mingled with his Scent. “I missed you,” he breathed. He wanted to tell Jungkook just how much he had missed him, how his cute little texts and almost daily photos had kept his spirits up, wanted to tell him that he was ready to move forward with the Omega now. But it was a little hard to do that with the huge, emotional lump sitting in his throat, so he sufficed with just holding him a little longer, pressing a gentle kiss to the top of his head that had Jungkook pressing in closer, asking silently for more. He supposed a part of him had expected Jungkook to say it back, to be as affectionate as he had been in text-form, but after a moment he realized the fact that he hadn’t said it back was kind of a relief, in itself. He had worried Jungkook would feel obligated or pressured to keep up a certain level of affirmation, or to reciprocate the same way all the time. With Jae, he remembered always feeling like he had to fight to reassure, to explain every need or emotion. But there was something about the way Jungkook remained silent that didn’t leave him questioning whether or not the Omega had missed him at all - he just felt shy, quiet, comfortable. Instead of being a battle of who could miss each other more with more verbal sincerity and reasons, Jungkook just seemed to curl up inside Seokjin’s sentence and enjoy the truth of it, with no other strings attached.

It was almost half an hour before either of them moved again, and Seokjin had started to wonder if Jungkook had fallen asleep against his chest, thighs planted on either side of his hips and knees pressed into the couch cushions as he laid his head against Seokjin’s collarbone. He was tempted to doze off himself, although he was sure he wouldn’t be able to, even as exhausted as he was. Just as he was considering shifting on the couch to a more accommodating position, Jungkook spoke.

“Taehyung started his heat a couple days ago,” he started quietly, his breath tickling slightly against Seokjin’s neck. “Jimin’s been with him constantly.”

“Oh,” Seokjin’s eyebrows shot up. “Oh, wow. That was so quick, wasn’t it? He’ll be really happy about that, though. And it should be a pretty easy first heat.”

“Yeah, but..” Jungkook chuckled a little. “Jimin accidentally gave him a bath in some of Yoongi’s hormone bath salts.”

Seokjin froze, letting Jungkook’s words sink in. “Oh, no.”

“Yeah… so Taehyung’s been a total mess, and Jimin feels really bad. Hoseok tried to tell him it was
just a mistake, that it happens, but...” Jungkook’s voice lowered, “He won’t listen to Taehyung and help him out a little. He says it’s just his heat talking and won’t touch him. I tried to explain th-that...there’s a difference, you know? But...”

Seokjin sighed, reaching over to give Jungkook’s supple thigh a hearty pat. “Okay, let me up, then. I should go check on things.”

With visible reluctance, Jungkook removed himself from Seokjin’s lap, hovering closely behind as Seokjin made his way upstairs.

“Here,” Jungkook pointed out the room Taehyung and Jimin now shared, and Seokjin gave the door a quiet little knock.

Jimin opened it after a moment, looking tired but also relieved to see Seokjin, with Jungkook standing just behind him with his chin hooked over the Alpha’s shoulder. He even gave a little smile, albeit a very tired one. “Oh, you’re back!”

“Yeah,” Seokjin exhaled. He had expected Jimin to be sort of angry with him, in a way, but perhaps he was just too preoccupied to feel bitter at the time. “Is it okay if I see Taehyung for a bit? I heard he’s in his first heat.”

Jimin nibbled at his lip for a moment, looking over his shoulder into the darkness of the room, then nodded, stepping aside so the two wolves could enter. “Luckily he just got another bath, so... he’s trying to rest right now.”

Seokjin walked over to the bed, where Taehyung was curled up facing the wall, hugging a large pillow with a dirty T-shirt on it and pouting at the chipped plaster on the wall, looking glassy-eyed and petulant. He was a little surprised to note that Yoongi was no longer there, but he didn’t bother to question it too much. The smell of oranges and Omega arousal was so heavy in the air, Seokjin would have normally been choking on it. Luckily enough, the high-end suppressants were doing their job well, and he just felt a thickness to his senses like smelling pollen in the air in the throes of spring. He sat down on the edge of the bed, laying his hand gently on Taehyung’s bare arm. The boy didn’t react for a moment, and then it was as though his ears perked up and he turned, seeing Seokjin there.

“Seokjinnie!” Taehyung gasped, eyes widening. “You’re home!”
The Alpha smiled. “Hey, Tae, I heard you got your heat. Congrats.”

At the mention of the heat, Taehyung gave the endearing little frown Seokjin could remember from their childhood. The Beta’s dark, gold-rimmed eyes flashed accusingly over at Jimin, who waited in the doorway, hugging his chest as he watched the brothers. “Yeah, but Jimin won’t even hug me anymore, he’s being so mean.”

Seokjin reached over and patted Taehyung on the arm, rubbing up and down near the boy’s elbow. Taehyung pouted deeper, sighing at his brother’s touch. “Do you want me to talk to him for you? Is that okay, if I tell him some of the things we talked about?”

Taehyung considered for a moment, craning his neck so he could see Jimin in the doorway again, looking strained and stressed. He looked to Seokjin, nodding and hugging the pillow more tightly to his chest. “Yes…tell him everything if it’ll just make him listen to me, Seokjinnie. I’m so tired and I want this to be over already. It’s horrible to be in heat before we can properly--”

“Okay, okay,” Seokjin laughed, cutting him off just in case the hormones loosened his brother’s tongue. He patted Taehyung again and moved to stand. “I’ll talk to him for you, okay? Now try to relax.”

“All right…” Taehyung whimpered, like a child told to sit quietly and wait for his parents in suffering silence. He turned back to staring at his wall and lowly mumbled a, “Thanks, Seokjin…”

Seokjin smiled, leading Jimin out and into Seokjin’s own room, shutting the door behind them. He shouldn’t have been surprised when Jungkook slipped in after them, instantly tucking his face in to Scent Seokjin again as he stood facing the smaller Alpha, but Seokjin was still a little thrown by his presence.

“So…” Seokjin started. Jimin stared at the floor, shifting awkwardly from foot to foot. “I heard Taehyung got an Omega hormone-infused bath because of you.”

Jimin flushed. “I didn’t mean to! Honest, I thought it was just regular bath salts, and I thought maybe they’d make him feel better, and I only--”

“Jemin, calm down!” Seokjin chuckled, waving down the Alpha with a gesture. “I know you were just trying to help. Besides, if you knew some of the things we did to each other when we were little that was on purpose, you’d know this isn’t the worst thing that’s happened to Taehyung. He’ll be
fine.” He leaned in, as if to put himself into Jimin’s lowered gaze. “I’m more concerned with the fact that you won’t go near him. Taehyung is clingy and touchy even on a regular day, much less right now.”

The Alpha swallowed heavily, looking redder by the minute. Seokjin smiled at him softly - Jimin sometimes got this very natural blush to the apples of his cheeks that was quite endearing, although he didn’t say so aloud. An Alpha had his pride, after all, and Jimin was certainly a man of pride.

“I…” Jimin mumbled.

“Jimin,” Seokjin prodded gently. “What are you worried about? You can tell me, Alpha to Alpha.”

After a few moments of shifting, Jimin mumbled, “I keep messing up. I’m the worst Alpha ever, and I’m afraid I’m gonna mess up again.”

Seokjin arched an eyebrow, but kept his face carefully void of any amusement. He knew if he laughed even a little, Jimin would probably become embarrassed and clam up. “Jimin, you’re not ‘messing up.’ You’re a great Alpha for Taehyung.”

“But I can’t even protect him, like an Alpha should! I made my first rut the worst possible scenario and left him for days! He asked me for help with his heat and I made it worse! He had to change to be an Omega for me, and what if Hoseok is right? What if Taehyung wanted to be an Alpha? He’s so strong and beautiful, he’d be better at it than me!” Jimin’s words tumbled from his mouth in an emotional, choked sound, a little slur to his words and a familiar accent slipping between his lips as Jimin rambled with abandon, looking up into Seokjin’s eyes with a deep sadness in his own.

Seokjin reached out, slowly cupping a hand under Jimin’s chin and tilting his face upwards. With a reassuring smile, he said, “Jimin. Jimin. Taehyung was so happy to become your Omega, you don’t even know. He and I talked a lot after coming here, and he’s known practically since we moved in here that it had to be you, no matter what. He was so excited. Taehyung is the last person to think Omegas, Alphas and Betas are any different. He sees everyone equally, and he’s helped me see things that way, too.” Seokjin paused, feeling a lump forming in his throat at the memory, but swallowing it down. This wasn’t about him, right now. “You think he’d regret becoming your Omega? Jimin, he wants to have your pups someday. He’s rambled to me about it for hours.”

Jimin’s eyes widened, mouth falling slightly agape as a beautiful red blush flared up across his cheeks. “P-p-pups?! We hadn’t even t-talked about that…”
Seokjin chuckled. “Jimin, Taehyung has always wanted pups. He adores them.”

“I...I know that,” Jimin retorted back, a little defensively. Seokjin felt Jungkook slowly, smoothly slide his arms around Seokjin’s waist from behind, burying his nose into Seokjin’s back, but saying nothing. “I know he likes pups but I didn’t know he...he wanted to have them.”

“Since he’s a Beta, he knows it’ll be really difficult. Maybe even impossible. But he doesn’t just want any pups; he wants your pups.” Seokjin tilted his head to the side, “Jimin, he already has names picked out. My brother has never been more sure about anything in his life as much as he’s sure he wants you as his Mate.”

Jimin bit his lip, trying to hold back a happy, shy smile. The knowledge obviously had come as a total surprise, and he looked extremely pleased as he let the words sink in. Then, he looked back up at Seokjin, the slightest trace of red encircling his irises indicative of his inwardly bubbling excitement.

“Jiminie,” Seokjin reassured, his voice quiet. “You should go help him through his heat. He wants you, heat or not. You can be sure of that.”

“B-but what if I mess it up?” Jimin’s question came almost as a breath, a fear-ridden exhale. This was the thing that obviously had been plaguing his mind the most, the unspoken expectations, the standards he had written in his head but never brought to the light for fear of scrutiny. “What if I...what if I don’t know what to do?”

“You will mess it up,” Seokjin said matter-of-factly. Jimin looked up at him, stunned. After a pause, Seokjin finished, “But that’s okay. Taehyung will mess up, too. That’s just part of how it all works. No one - least of all Taehyung - expects you to be perfect, Jimin. You’re both really young wolves still, you’re both figuring things out. I’m sure he just wants to figure it out together with you. If there are things you’re unsure of, you should just ask him plainly, and he’ll tell you. He trusts you to talk to him about things, to believe in him and to tell him what’s on your mind. If he says he wants to be your Omega, believe him. If he says he’s uncomfortable with something, believe him. Just...just trust in him, okay? And you’ll be okay.”

Jimin opened his mouth again as if to protest, but having found nothing to counteract with, he shut it once again, and shuffled his feet. Jungkook’s arms around Seokjin’s waist tightened, and he heard the quivering sound of Jungkook taking in a sharp inhale, letting it out slowly.

“It’s okay to be afraid, Jimin,” Seokjin hummed softly. “But being a ‘great’ Alpha...being a ‘great’ Omega or even a Beta...it’s not about being perfect. It’s about doing your best. Respecting each
other’s wishes and communicating what you need. I’m sure you two can do that. So I think Taehyung is very lucky to have found a great Alpha like you, Jimin.”

The younger Alpha flushed again, his lip protruding and his eyes starting to crinkle a little at the corners, as though he was on the verge of starting to cry. He nodded, sighing with a bit of a gentle shakiness. “Th-thanks, Seokjin. Hoseok and Namjoon tried to make me feel better, but… I don’t think they understood it.” It was a vague sentence, really, but Seokjin nodded in understanding. Namjoon wasn’t one to question his worth as an Alpha. And Hoseok…well, as far as Seokjin was concerned, Hoseok was ahead of the game, a beautiful and balanced Alpha, and Seokjin figured that that made his perception a bit different from Jimin’s. “I’ll…I’ll do my best.”

Seokjin nodded, patting Jimin’s shoulder. “That would be perfect. Now go.” He nudged a thumb over his shoulder, sharing a smile with the Alpha before the door shut behind him. He chuckled once it was just him and Jungkook. If only Jimin had any idea of how adoringly Taehyung had rambled to Seokjin about the Alpha since they had joined Bangtan pack. How hard Taehyung’s open-minded perspective of wolves had ostracized him from other noble wolves his age. How much he really, really loved Park Jimin, a gentle and loving Alpha who he knew he could trust.

“Even his smell is so nice,” Taehyung had said, folding the laundry and sighing in contentment. Seokjin shook his head, rolling his eyes and chuckling.

“Figures you would fall for someone who smells like candy,” Seokjin teased.

“I didn’t fall down, I fell up,” Taehyung stated. Before Seokjin could pause to translate the phrase’s meaning, he continued, “And he’s so kind. He’s patient. He listens to everything I say,” Taehyung rambled on, actually folding with a notable increase in elegance and skill the more deeply he got distracted by thoughts of the Alpha. “He’s like a prince. He’s way more prince-like than most of the Nobles I’ve met. Even the way he walks is like a prince.”

“Mm,” Seokjin hummed. “I agree with you, there.”

“He’s my soulmate,” Taehyung beamed, his grin all teeth as he looked over a pair of underwear at his older brother. “So after I Present, I’m going to Claim him.”

Seokjin looked up at the boy in surprise. “Wh-what?”

“Yup. And then maybe after I Claim Jiminie, you’ll admit you like Jungkookie. Then the pack will be
“all paired off.”

The Alpha set aside the pair of folded jeans on the edge of the couch with a groan. “Taehyung…”

“I know, I know,” Taehyung rolled his eyes and sighed. “I won’t tell. But how is it not obvious to everyone else?”

Seokjin didn’t answer. He carefully folded a pile of plain white T-shirts that smelled of saltwater with a hint of leather mingled into the cotton, despite having just been washed, and stacked them carefully in his lap, laying his hand on top of them for a moment. He didn’t have an answer because he didn’t know.

“Seokjin,” Jungkook said from behind him, his voice muffled as he called the Alpha’s name and pulled him out of his reverie. His hands were still clasped around Seokjin’s waist, and he lifted his chin to hook it back over the Alpha’s shoulder, pressing his nose in to Seokjin’s Scent gland.

The Alpha stiffened, unconsciously reaching up and laying his hand over Jungkook’s where it rested on his stomach. “Jungkook…”

“You just said trust was important, right?” Jungkook’s voice was quiet but his words firm, accusing, even. He paused, and inhaled into Seokjin’s skin, making his spine tingle delightfully even as he felt fear settling into his bones. “Tell me the real reason why your Scent is different. It’s not going away.”

“What?”

In a whisper, lowly murmured against his neck, Jungkook said, “If you went to someone else, I’d rather you just tell me honestly, Seokjin.”

“W-went to someone else?!” Seokjin tried to laugh, but the sound was empty, and he frantically tried to pry Jungkook’s hands off of his waist, knowing that if the Omega stayed touching him that much, remained that close, that he would be able to sense everything that was left unsaid.

“Stop playing stupid!” The Omega snapped, gripping Seokjin more tightly. Seokjin was surprised by how strong his grip had become. He seemed more muscular than before, more straightforward and less timid. But there was still injury riddled in his voice as anger started to bubble beneath the surface. “You left me, you said you needed time, and I gave it to you. I’ve done my best to be
patient, and I trusted you to come back, Seokjin. But now you’re here and something just…it just feels so wrong! You don’t smell like you usually do, and your rut is over, and… just… Who is it? Why are you lying to me?” The hands on his waist clenched tighter, and Jungkook’s voice thickened.

“Jungkook…” Seokjin felt the guilt creeping throughout his body, making him feel heavy and strained, like his body was taffy being pulled across the room, vexing and exposed. “Jungkook, listen to me. I– God, let me go for a second so I can look at you.”

Reluctantly, Jungkook’s hands loosened their vice-like grip, and Seokjin turned around in place to see the Omega glaring up at him. His next words came out soft, broken almost, and thick. It was the sort of voice that was fearful of already knowing the answer.

“Did he kiss you?”

Seokjin’s mouth dropped open, prepared with a protest, but he ended up with nothing, not a single sound escaping his lips. His mind flashed with memories of Jae pressed up against him, tenderly kissing every knuckle before touching his lips to the edges of Seokjin’s mouth, smirking in the orange glow of the streetlamp.

“I…I…” At Seokjin’s fumbling, Jungkook’s face crumpled like paper, and Seokjin could see his eyes already starting to water even as he shoved roughly at Seokjin’s shoulders, storming out of the room. “Jungkook, wait! Jungkook, let me explain!”

He saw the edge of Jungkook’s shoulder vanishing around the corner at the bottom of the stairs, already gone before Seokjin was even fully down the hall. By the time he made it to the kitchen, Jungkook had already tucked himself underneath the biggest comforter beneath the table, now just a shapeless burgundy-colored lump.

“Jungkook, just listen to me!” Seokjin begged, ignoring the figure leaning up against the kitchen counter and opting instead to rush under the table after the Omega, trying to tug the comforter out of Jungkook’s hands and away from his face, to no avail.

“Leave me alone!” Jungkook cried out, “Go away!”

“Jungkook!”
“Go and fuck your stupid mate who smells like ass!” Jungkook snapped.

“Stop that!” Seokjin barked back, his own temper rising at Jungkook’s stubbornness. They wrestled back and forth with the blanket, little grunts the only sounds between them for a few moments. There was an awkward cough somewhere from above them, but neither of them paid it any heed, distracted as soon Seokjin had Jungkook’s wrists pinned with one hand, yanking the comforter off the boy’s face with the other. Jungkook’s face was flushed from having his head under the blanket, his hair sufficiently mussed and a dark glare on his face as he shot daggers up at Seokjin. At the moment their eyes met, Seokjin realized how forcefully he was holding Jungkook down, and he felt his mouth going dry as he froze. He released the boy’s wrists in an instant, but then neither moved for a long moment. Jungkook was the first to speak.

“I’m not a pup,” Jungkook stated firmly.

“I know you’re not,” Seokjin swallowed. “I never...I never really saw you that way, anyways.”

“Then why?” Jungkook’s fists clenched, and Seokjin could have sworn he wore an expression that reminded him so much of Yoongi and Namjoon all at once, that kind of stubborn Omega air that took no flak, the Alpha-like sagely self-consciousness that belied his years.

The Alpha let out a low, long sigh. He laid a hand on Jungkook’s shoulder, gripping him lightly there in a way that he initially thought was to reassure the younger, but once he felt the warmth of the Omega’s skin beneath his touch, he realized it was mostly for himself. “Jungkook, there...there was someone else, before I came to the pack. I told you I would explain it all when I came home, and I meant that. But it’s not easy for me. There was a lot…” Seokjin found himself starting to choke on his words, and he had to take a breath before continuing, letting his eyes flicker away from the Omega’s cool, steady gaze. “And I did see him again. And I’ll even admit that...well, it would have been easy to go down that road again, even after all that’s happened.” Jungkook shifted, and even in the corner of his eye he could see the intense blue circle around the boy’s eyes, could feel the heat of jealousy and fury that was bubbling up in the Omega’s chest. He held up a hand to stop him, “But… But it didn’t happen. That’s the truth. I didn’t go to anyone to help me with my rut, I promise you, Jungkook. I swear to god.”

“Then what the fuck is that smell?!” Jungkook counterattacked, wrinkling his nose at the scent in the air. “Why won’t it go away?”

Seokjin flushed a little. “I...um. Well, usually a rut would go away after a couple of weeks, unless an Alpha has an Omega to help counteract the hormones. I’m used to dealing with it without an Omega, so I thought it would be fine after a week or two, but...” At his pause, Jungkook arched an eyebrow. Seokjin’s lips curved downward in an expression of exasperated and reluctant acceptance. “It only...got worse .”
“Worse? How?”

“Jungkook, I…” Seokjin tugged at the collar of his sweater because suddenly, it felt much warmer in the room than it had a minute ago. “I couldn’t finish the rut. The longer I was away, the worse it got. For awhile, I couldn’t leave my room because...I didn’t know what I would do to find relief.”

Jungkook blinked, and Seokjin’s suspicions were confirmed. Jungkook had never really seen what a rut could do to an Alpha at its highest point. With Jae, neither of them could find relief in each other during that time, but that certainly hadn’t stopped them from trying. Seokjin flushed to think of some of the measures they had tried to take.

“Jungkook, it…it got worse whenever I thought about you…” he mumbled quietly, unsure. True, he was pretty sure of Jungkook’s feelings for him, but that didn’t necessarily mean he knew how Jungkook would react to being thought of in that sense.

To his surprise, Jungkook just blinked at him. “Oh.”

“Oh?”

The Omega paused, considering, then more confidently confirmed. “Oh.”

Seokjin felt heat rising to his neck. “I couldn’t afford to skip any more classes, so I went to a couple of hormone specialists and got put on suppressants. We tried at least half a dozen different kinds, before they finally put me on this high-grade one that they use for people with severe imbalances. It’s the only thing that’s worked to control the rut, and it has a lot of side effects, but at least it worked enough for me to focus on the things I needed to focus on, so I could come home.”

“Wait, wait a minute. Does that mean you’re still in a rut? Like, right now?” Jungkook shifted back a little against his mound of pillows and blankets, looking Seokjin up and down.

“Technically, yes?” Seokjin scratched the back of his neck awkwardly. “And that’s why I smell differently. It’s kind of…crushing those hormones.”

“But isn’t that unhealthy?” Jungkook queried, eyes widening. “Isn’t living on suppressants really bad
One edge of Seokjin’s lips quirked up. “Well…to be honest, yes.”

“Then get off of them!” Jungkook shouted. “I hate the smell, and you don’t have to deal with your rut alone, you have me! So let me help!”

“But Jungkook, I…” Seokjin sighed.

“Just explain it,” Jungkook’s voice dropped deep, his hands clenching and unclenching nervously. When several tense moments passed and Seokjin was still staring away in silence, he continued, “Seokjin, what happened to ‘it’s okay to be afraid’ and ‘it’s about respecting wishes and communicating what you need’?”

Seokjin visibly winced. He wanted to applaud and slap Jungkook at the same time, using his own words against him. Jungkook leaned forward, wrapping his arms around Seokjin and touching their foreheads together.

“Well…” Seokjin took in a deep breath and prepared himself. “When I was a freshly Presented Alpha, I was approached by a few different packs. It happens a lot in Noble families, and the Kims in particular are pretty well known. There was a powerful pack at that time called The Rising Gods, and they asked me to join, and I accepted. It was an elite pack, with only Nobles who had particularly powerful abilities in hunting or…creating families. I joined because I never felt much of an inclination to be a leader anyways, and it was pretty prestigious, so my parents were very happy about it. In that pack, there was an older wolf there that I really looked up to. We became friends, and then we became closer than anyone. I…well, we…we were going to be Mates.”

The Omega blinked up at him, a look of confusion crossing his face as he met Seokjin’s gaze.

“But he and I… despite how we felt about each other, we…were both Alphas.”

Jungkook inhaled sharply. “It was Jae.”

Seokjin’s face crumpled in shock, his body flushed with emotional heat from head to toe just at hearing Jungkook say his name. “H-how did you know?”
In lieu of a response, Jungkook just looked up at Seokjin with wide, surprised eyes and shook his head. Seokjin braced himself to explain the rest.

“Yes, it was Jae. And I thought that, you know... as long as I had him, it would all be okay. I didn’t see it at the time for what it was - it was unhealthy, it was an addiction. I didn’t belong with him, and he didn’t belong with me. We were just... possessing each other, dominating. We got addicted to it because it was thrilling, it made us feel powerful.”

“We went to Yunho, our pack’s lead Alpha. He had known Jae since they were very young, and he could see it wasn’t a good thing. He also had the reputation of his pack to think about. He rejected our Claim and tried to separate us in the pack. I don’t think he meant any harm, but... after that, things got really difficult for the two of us. The other pack members were very cruel, especially to Jae. He still wanted to continue the relationship, but in secret. I didn’t want to live that way, I didn’t want to have to hide, so... I gave him an ultimatum. I asked him if he would leave the Rising Gods and start a new pack with me.”

Jungkook looked more than a little shell shocked, his expression showing that he was piecing everything together. “You were going to use our island for your pack, because it was your inheritance anyways.”

Seokjin nodded. “My father still had it set aside for me, since sometimes lead Alphas in packs shift, especially where Nobles are involved. He was sort of hoping I would lead the Rising Gods, I think. But it didn’t work out that way.” Seokjin gave a weary sigh. “As hard as things were for him, as toxic as it was, Jae didn’t want to leave. Rising Gods were his family. He was technically born a Noble, just like everyone else, but... Jae’s mother had him out of wedlock. He was adopted by another Noble family when he was just a baby, but it was still a point of contention - Nobles care a lot about your roots. He was only accepted into The Rising Gods because of his friendship with Yunho, and they were like family to him.”

Jungkook shook his head in disbelief.

“He wouldn’t leave with me, and he couldn’t be with me, but he wanted it all anyways. The longer I stayed, the more dangerous we became to each other. Things stopped being thrilling and started to get scary, since we were both so afraid all the time. It got to a point where...” Seokjin felt his throat constrict on him, betraying him just when he needed it, and he had to stop and halt himself from crying. Jungkook looked up into Seokjin’s face in question, but the Alpha took a calming breath, determined to continue. “Jungkook, at more than one point we hospitalized each other, it was that bad. That was the sort of... intimacy that I was used to, and it only got more intense the less open we could be with each other. At some point, I just snapped. I couldn’t take it anymore. We were slowly killing each other, and I didn’t even recognize myself. I left Rising Gods and asked my father to take away my inheritance to the island. I didn’t want to be a lead Alpha, or an Alpha of any kind, if all I could do was hurt my mate.”
“But…” Jungkook’s brow wrinkled. Seokjin knew it was a lot of information to take in. He wouldn’t have been surprised if Jungkook said that it was all a bit too complicated, too heavy, too deep an ocean for him to wade into. But his first question was actually, “Do you still…? Like that sort of thing?”

Seokjin’s eyes widened, and he felt a tickling rush slide up his spine with the knowing, self-aware way Jungkook seemed to be watching him. It wasn’t a question he had been mentally prepared for. “No! I mean, well. To be honest, I don’t know….” He shook himself, trying to throw off the intrinsic desires, the darker thoughts he wasn’t going to allow himself to have about Jeon Jungkook. “Well, its… I’ve decided that’s in the past. I’m not going to bring it to the table when it comes to you. That’s why I wanted to wait. I wanted to be sure.”

He looked over and saw Jungkook with an expression of deep thought on his face, studying Seokjin’s expression as if he was in search of an answer there to some unspoken question.

“But you really didn’t do anything with him?” Jungkook whispered, “For your rut? Or…or anything?”

Seokjin stared down at Jungkook, at the way he looked so small and soft in his jealousy, his sadness. A little melancholic smile slipped its way across Seokjin’s lips, tears stinging at his eyes as he shook his head. “How could I, when you were home waiting for me? I told him no.”

Jungkook’s arms shot up to wrap around Seokjin’s neck, pulling him down until his chest was pressed against the Omega, his chin tucked over Jungkook’s shoulder, and his face uncomfortably buried in one of the pillows there. “Good, because otherwise I was gonna have to kill him. Or you. I hadn’t decided which.”

Seokjin chuckled, his chest simultaneously feeling released from a tremendous pressure he hadn’t known was forming there, and strained and swollen from how little he felt he deserved someone like Jeong Jungkook. He tilted his face against Jungkook’s Scent gland, inhaling deeply at the smell of salt. Jungkook only grabbed him tighter, like a child petulantly throwing a tantrum while gripping the leg of an adult for dear life, like someone afraid to let go of their grounding, their most precious foothold on the earth.

“It’s over now, right?” Jungkook’s hand curved around the back of Seokjin’s neck, and the Alpha shut his eyes, letting out a little hum of happiness at the warmth bubbling underneath the Omega’s hand at the movement. After seeing - or hearing, rather - Seokjin’s reaction, Jungkook’s other hand slipped up to entangle in the hair at the back of Seokjin’s neck, massaging at the tense muscles there with firm fingertips. “You faced those demons. You’ve told me about them. So please… get off the
suppressants and let me help you.”

Seokjin lifted himself up, Jungkook’s hands still entangled in his hair, and tilted his head to the side in puzzlement. “How are you so sure about us? About this? After all I’ve told you, don’t you even want to think about it for a bit?”

“How are you not sure about us?” Jungkook shot back, one corner of his mouth quirking up into a teasing smile. “I already said, I only want you.”

“I…well, I’m sure I want you, but that’s not the only part of this whole Mating thing, dumbass,” Seokjin mumbled, leaning his forehead down to touch against Jungkook’s. “I know how I feel about you, but I’m not sure what it is.”

“I have a theory,” came a familiar voice just above them, and Seokjin’s whole body shot up nearly a foot, his head banging up against the underside of the table in shock. Despite the heaviness of their conversation a moment ago - or maybe because of it - Jungkook found himself laughing openly at the Alpha as he rubbed at his bruised head, sending a glare at Namjoon as the lead Alpha crouched at the edge of the table with a smirk.

“You asshole,” Seokjin pouted.

“I missed you, too,” Namjoon laughed.

“Namjoon, tell him to get off the suppressants,” Jungkook whined, his voice sounded younger, high pitched as he frowned at the Alpha. “He stinks and it makes him more stupid than usual.”

“I will,” Namjoon promised, “But first, I wanna talk to you both; about why I think Seokjin’s rut was - well, is - so bad. I have a feeling that if I’m right, Seokjin will agree with my suggestion.”

“I doubt that,” Seokjin pouted again, but sat back and made himself comfortable as Namjoon arranged himself just outside of the confines of the tabletop, Jungkook keeping one hand clutching onto Seokjin’s shirt. The Alpha looked down at the sleeve Jungkook held in a deathgrip, arching an eyebrow but saying nothing.

“So, we all agreed that Jungkook’s Presenting was surprisingly early, as well as much heavier and more dangerous than any of us could have anticipated. He shouldn’t have Presented for another year
at least, really. It struck me as odd that what triggered it was Seokjin’s Scent. True, an Alpha Scent can be pretty powerful, especially to an Omega about to go into heat anyways, but… I’ve never heard of a case where an Omega got that triggered by just Scenting an article of clothing.

“I started to suspect something was off about it, especially when Jungkook kept calling for Seokjin, even when he wasn’t one of the Alphas in the room. Considering how bad Jungkook’s heat was, normally an Omega doesn’t care much which Alpha is nearby.”

Seokjin felt his face flush, glancing over at Jungkook, whose face was surprisingly blank and contemplative. He had known that Jungkook had called for him by name, but what else had he requested in his heat-induced delirium? Just the concept alone had his body tensing up.

“The final nail in the coffin was when Jungkook came home a few days ago,” Namjoon continued, his fingertips picking at a tear at the side seam on his pants absentmindedly. “The day that he saw Seokjin while crossing the bridge. He came home and his Scent was super strong, like he was signaling to you or something. And then I realized what he said when he came home.”

“W-what did he say?” Seokjin blinked hard, not sure what to expect.

“He said you were coming home soon. He said ‘It’s a sign, and that he just knew that you were coming back soon.’ Namjoon stared directly into Seokjin’s face. ‘You messaged me that night that your suppressants were starting to finally work, and that you wanted to come home as soon as possible. Now, I have to ask - did you or did you not see Jungkook that day, on the bridge?”

“N-no…” Seokjin began, then shook himself. “I mean, well. Yes, in a way. I heard him call for me but to be honest, I’d kept hearing his voice randomly anyways, with the rut, so… I didn’t think it was really him until after he’d texted me.”

Namjoon nodded, and Seokjin felt Jungkook’s eyes watching him curiously.

“The way he said it, it made me think that perhaps there was more than just some heavy Scenting
connecting you two, with the confidence Jungkook had, it was like he could feel it as if you had told him directly.”

“But Namjoon,” Jungkook stepped in, “ Wouldn’t all of that be affected by the fact that Seokjin Claimed me?” Seokjin did a double take, his body visibly jolting in surprise as he gaped over at Jungkook. When had he found out? What had been his reaction? Why had Namjoon told him?

“You might think so, but like I’ve said before, a Claim is just a verbal contract. To be honest, I think my theory is part of what caused Seokjin to want to Claim you so quickly in the first place.”

“And what theory is that?” Jungkook asked.

Namjoon looked between the two of them for a moment, his expression somber. “To be quite frank, I suspect that you two are Bonded.”

Seokjin took in a sharp inhale of breath, his head spinning. “ Bonding?! Your theory is Bonding? But most people don’t even think Bonding exists!”

“I know that. But there are lots of things in this world we don’t understand yet. Some people still suspect the Soulmate theory is a real thing, that it just died out over the generations. There’s even some scientific evidence that-”

“ Namjoon .”

The lead Alpha sighed, but continued, turning to Jungkook. “Basically, there’s this thing called the Bonding Theory, right? Most wolves, they Mate for life, that’s pretty standard. But usually wolves don’t know who they want to Mate for months, years - it’s different for everybody. Then there’s the Bonding Theory. It’s when two wolves, who are extremely compatible, meet, and not only their bodies but...something in their very souls …” Namjoon gestured with his hands as though he was straining to scoop into some imaginary depth, taking hold of the invisible stuff of stars he referred to as the soul. “ Just connects . They feel goosebumps all over, usually in the first moments they see each other, and they just... Bond . Usually people say they feel it the instant they see their future Mate.”

Jungkook tilted his chin to the side, as though unsure, or dislodging an old memory, then he halfway sat up, staring at Seokjin with wide eyes.
“I...I think I did feel something, when I first saw you!” Jungkook’s mouth hung open. “When I saw you and Taehyung pulling into the driveway! I thought I was just nervous, but…”

“It probably was just nerves,” Seokjin mumbled, turning back to Namjoon. But Jungkook was tugging on his sleeve for his attention, like he was ringing a bell, and when the Alpha looked back down at him, Jungkook frowned.

“Are you saying you didn’t feel anything odd when you first saw me? Why else would you Claim me so early?”

Seokjin pursed his lips together, reluctant to answer. He didn’t want to admit the rush, the way his head had momentarily spun all the way around in a lovely sense of vertigo when he had first seen Jungkook, curled up underneath the table and looking so cute, so shy. Soft and waiting. For a brief moment, every fiber of his body had wanted to crawl underneath the table with him, shove Taehyung out of the way and refuse to come out until he felt he had gotten close to the boy. But the fear of that rush of excitement, that strange, lovely sense of knowing, actually being just a repetition of what he had had with Jae utterly terrified him, and he had deliberately pulled back, burying the sensation as deeply as he could.

Jungkook tugged harder, his brow furrowing, “You did feel something, didn’t you!”

Looking between the two of them, Namjoon was doing a terrible job at suppressing his smirk. “No one quite knows the rules that go with Bonding, because it’s never been a proven thing. But those that claim to have experienced it say that they can sense their Mate’s feelings, even when they’re not together. Their heats and ruts are more intense, their hormones are more extreme, and so on.” He gave a little shrug. “I could be wrong. But there have been a lot of odd coincidences. Seokjin, to be honest, I think you should get off the suppressants, and just hang tight to Jungkook for awhile. I have a sneaking suspicion that things would end up working out, if you did.”

Jungkook grinned broadly, laying back against his pillows and wriggling in to get more comfortable. Seokjin arched a confused eyebrow at him, then turned to Namjoon, “I’ll think about it. Thanks.”

“No problem,” Namjoon smirked, his expression like he knew a secret. “And I’m glad you’re back. You two have fun.” He pushed up off the kitchen floor and left the room, taking his drink with him upstairs.

Before Seokjin could call after him and ask what he meant by that, Jungkook had snaked his arms and legs around the Alpha’s waist like a koala, pulling him back until he was laying in the little nest-like tangle of bedding next to the smiling Omega. “What?” Seokjin laughed, “Why are you smiling
“Like you just stole something?”

“Be cause,” Jungkook beamed, his teeth gleaming and his nose scrunching up so tightly his eyes almost disappeared in a deep pattern of wrinkles, sparkling with a trace of blue. “You’re going to get off the suppressants, and once that horrible smell goes away, I’m going to make your rut go away for good.”

“Oh?” Seokjin said, skepticism evidence in his voice as he shuffled into a more comfortable position, Jungkook still clinging to him. “And how do you propose we do that?”

Jungkook rubbed his face up against the pillowcase for a moment, chuckling to himself before shooting Seokjin a look of utter bliss. “By returning the favor you paid me during my heat.”

Seokjin’s face fell, and he felt the blush going across his cheeks. “Jungkook, I don’t know if—”

“Shh…” Jungkook placed a finger against Seokjin’s lips to quiet him, “Shut the fuck up. Now…” Jungkook moved in to curl up against Seokjin’s broad chest, but quickly wrinkled his sensitive nose in disgust at the suppressant Scent he found there, so he turned around until his back was facing Seokjin, petulantly grabbing the Alpha’s hand and wrapping it around his waist so that they were spooning together. “There.” Jungkook sighed in contentment, and as they laid there, Seokjin could feel the muscles in the Omega’s body gradually relax, one by one.

Seokjin stared at the back of Jungkook’s head for a long time, utterly puzzled by the Omega. He was so needy in a way that was completely unlike what Seokjin was used to, like a perverse yet still very transparent child, like someone completely comfortable and self-assured.

At last letting his body relax, Seokjin laid his head against the pillow behind Jungkook. He sighed a little as he sunk into the fabric, his thumb tracing along Jungkook’s hand, into the curve of his palm, between each finger and across every knuckle.

He was exhausted, but he knew that even if he fell asleep, it wouldn’t be for very long - the most troublesome side effect of the suppressants was the insomnia he’d been suffering from. But perhaps, if it was with Jungkook, he could get at least a little rest.

Seokjin was asleep before he had even finished the thought.

Chapter End Notes
I got so emotional writing the part with JK running into Jin's arms T B H *weeps*
Taehyung whimpered, clutching the pillow more tightly. The smell of Jimin’s peppermint had been slowly fading from the pillowcase (mostly because Taehyung had been insistently rubbing himself all over it) and now it was almost entirely gone. The achiness in his body, the throbbing in his crotch, they were all edging back into the forefront of his consciousness, and trying to push it off was futile and maddening. He had removed his shirt, leaving him in just boxers, but even that felt itchy, hot and uncomfortable. He wanted Jimin back, wanted to be surrounded by his lovely sweet Scent and his soft aura.

“Jimin…” Taehyung whined, then more loudly, “Jiminnieee!”

The door creaked open, and the Scent of peppermint wafted in like a greeting. Taehyung smiled, lifting his flushed face from the mattress, blinking heavily at the sight of Jimin in the doorway. He took one hand away from the pillow he was clutching, reaching towards the Alpha’s form and wriggling his fingers in a grabbing gesture. “Jiminnieeee…” he let out the complaint more loudly than before, and watched Jimin close the door before he moved over to the rolling chair at the desk. To Taehyung’s dismay, Jimin crawled into the chair instead of the bed, hugging his knees to his chest and looking rather small and worried. He bit his lip, staring at the floor.

“Taehyungie…” Jimin began. “I just talked to Seokjin. He told me about how, um…how you want to have pups someday.”
“Jiminnie…” Taehyung moaned, “Come closer, your Scent is gone.”

Jimin stared for a moment, before leaning forward and grabbing the edge of the mattress, scooching the rolling chair over until it was pushed up against the bed. Taehyung moved to the edge, taking hold of Jimin’s hand and splaying it across his face, making Jimin bite back a giggle as Taehyung’s hot breath tickled at his palm. The instant Taehyung had the smell of Jimin back, he breathed a sigh of relief, like air was being brought back into his lungs.

“Of course I want pups,” Taehyung said at last, “But right now I just want you to take care of me.”

It was precisely the sort of answer Jimin should have expected from Taehyung, and he smiled, tilting his head a little to the side as he licked at his lips a little. “I will. I’m sorry.”

Taehyung perked up at those words, his lips parting as he looked up at his Alpha. “Really?” So maybe he sounded a little over-eager, but could he really be blamed? It had been less than an hour and he could already feel that the slick in his boxers was leaking through the pad, and the bed felt unnaturally uncomfortable. Each thread of the fabric seemed to be rough and abrasive, like his whole body was on hyper-alert. The sound of Jimin’s voice, as soft and quiet as it was, thundered through his skull with every syllable, surrounding him. He was ready.

“Really,” Jimin said, smiling a little. “But...I’m not quite sure where to start, and I’ll probably mess it up…”

In moments, Taehyung had chucked the T-shirt covered pillow off to the side, and was frantically and clumsily grabbing at the band of his boxers, trying to push them down and off. Jimin leapt up suddenly, holding out a hand and placing it on Taehyung’s to stop him. Just that little bit of contact from an Alpha had Taehyung sighing, relieved at the coolness spreading through his body.

“Chim-chim ,” he complained. Jimin was biting at his lip, and they now looked so plush and pink that Taehyung wanted to scream.

“Just...just slow down, okay? Let me lead for once. You always rush through things.”

Taehyung pouted, but he didn’t really have the energy to complain. “Whatever, just do something.”
Jimin halted, staring at Taehyung for a long second as though he had said or done something. It took him some time to realize that he was once again leaking slick into his boxers, his hips slowly twisting back and forth on the bed as though Jimin was already there to brace against.

“Don’t worry,” Jimin said lowly, “I’ll do plenty for you.”

Taehyung let out another whimper, holding out both hands to his Alpha. Jimin finally crawled up into the bed, the Scent of peppermint dropping around him and making him drown beneath it, his breath gasping and uneven as Jimin started leaving gentle, chaste kisses all across his skin. He moaned when Jimin started to suck at the skin of his collarbone, and his eyes shot back open as he let out a surprised gasp, feeling the hot wetness of Jimin’s tongue as it trailed along the bone there.

“You taste sweet and salty,” Jimin murmured, the accent from his hometown filtering in and making his words sound rougher, deeper. Taehyung’s eyebrows knitted together. Jimin leaned up, taking hold of Taehyung’s chin in both hands and tilting his head, pressing in for a deep, lingering kiss. Taehyung could feel a fluttering at his very core when Jimin’s inescapable tongue pushed roughly into his mouth, thick and hot and needy, flickering and making it hard for him to breathe. He could feel Jimin shifting up onto the bed, felt the shift of the mattress beneath his knees as he straddled Taehyung’s leg. Instantly, Taehyung tightened, pulling his knees together and squeezing around the thickness of Jimin’s thigh, moaning loudly just at that sensation alone. Without hesitation, spurred on by the headiness of his heat and the thickness of Jimin’s aroused Scent, he started pulling himself up and down against Jimin’s thigh, shuddering whenever he felt Jimin’s muscles contract.

“Jimin,” Taehyung gasped, needy as he gripped at Jimin’s shoulders, insisting on another kiss as the coil deep in him starting to tense and heat up. Jimin coaxed him on, petting his hair and kissing at his tanned skin.

“Take what you need, beautiful,” Jimin whispered, and Taehyung let out a little broken whimper, flushing at the compliment. “You’re so beautiful, Tae-Tae, you don’t even know. You’re like a work of art.”

Taehyung squirmed, his erect and overly sensitive member throbbing against Jimin. The Alpha shifted, leaning down to press his entire weight onto the Beta, and Taehyung yelped when the hot hardness of Jimin’s own erect cock pressed against him.

“Take it off,” Taehyung practically begged, practically demanded. He looked up in time to see Jimin’s eyes flashing red as he glared at the needy younger man.

“Hmmm. No,” Jimin hummed, a dark and playful air to his words. “I think you have to wait. I told
Taehyung whined, then felt an explosion of sensation as Jimin tugged away his boxers, instantly grabbing his throbbing member in his small but unbelievably firm hand, twisting at it painfully in the way he knew drove Taehyung crazy.

“Oh God,” Taehyung said, wriggling helplessly on the mattress as his cock screamed with the pleasure of white heat and the abrasive sting of Jimin’s nails brushing up against the reddened skin, every nerve raw and on edge. “Hurry, Jimin, more,” he begged, panting. Jimin increased the pace, Taehyung gasping as he gripped at the sheets. He was nearing that lovely spiral at his center, his panting and whimpering rising in pitch and frequency, when suddenly Jimin released him. Feeling pathetically unsatisfied, Taehyung pouted and slapped at the mattress in impatience. With a childish sound of churlishness, he reached up with both hands and yanked down Jimin’s sweatpants, ignoring the deep, musical sound of Jimin’s laughter as the Beta wrapped his long, tanned fingers around both their members. Jimin leaned his hips downward, his hands now planted on either side of Taehyung’s head. Taehyung knew Jimin wouldn’t give him what his body really wanted right now, but he wanted to feel Jimin with him just the same, and he heavily pressed the short but endearingly thick member up against his own. Jimin’s dick was so similar to Jimin, it made Taehyung laugh the first time he had seen it. Short and thick, easily flushed and pretty in a way Jimin would probably hate if Taehyung ever admitted it aloud. Jimin’s own small hands didn’t quite cover the whole length, but Taehyung’s long, elegant fingers did, and with one hand he was able to wrap around both of them, rubbing them together as Jimin let out sharp, uneven exhales against his neck.

“Wow, you’re so amazing,” Jimin gasped, kissing at Taehyung’s cheek and then letting out a groan, his cock twitching against Taehyung’s. “God, Tae, your hands.”

Taehyung tilted his chin so he could lick across Jimin’s jaw, nibbling at the Alpha’s earlobe and letting out little pants to show he wanted more attention - needed - more attention. He curled his fingertips around them, squeezing slightly as precum messily dribbled and squelched noisily, the sound as erotic as the way Jimin’s mouth parted, his thick tongue playing with the edge of his lips as his face crumpled with the tension and the pleasure.

“Jimin,” Taehyung gasped against him, “I’m gonna cum.”

“Shit, me too, stop.” Jimin reached down and pried their members apart, pulling Taehyung’s hand, still wet and sticky with pre-cum, away. Taehyung just let out a loud groan of impatience. Why was Jimin making him wait more? This was so infuriating, especially when he was so close.

Jimin wriggled himself lower on Taehyung’s body, and automatically Taehyung’s hands came up to rest against Jimin’s shoulders, holding him there and maintaining the direct skin contact that helped him breathe and sent shivers through his body all the same. Jimin took gentle hold of Taehyung’s
knees, spreading them apart to the telltale sound of all the slick that had built up around Taehyung’s entrance. The cool air hitting that taboo heat made Taehyung shudder, and he glanced down to see Jimin actually licking at his lips as though he were preparing for a full meal. He caught Taehyung staring when he glanced up, and sent him a smile.

“Look how wet you’ve become, pup,” Jimin said lowly. The nickname, which Jimin had only used once before, instantly sent goosebumps up and down Taehyung’s spine. “You know your Scent has been killing me these last couple of days, right? I wanted to touch you, and make you feel good.”

Taehyung felt like he should say something back, should try to give Jimin the shivering sensations he was giving Taehyung, but he couldn’t think of anything, so he just whimpered, a high-pitched noise that came not from his throat but from some deeper sense of being.

Jimin looked down at Taehyung’s spread legs again, hooking one of Taehyung’s legs over his shoulder before taking the newly freed hand and pressing one thick, soft finger to the twitching entrance, circling his finger around gently and stimulating the nerves that had been at the center of everything for the last few days. Taehyung yelped, his knees jerking back a little and running the heel of his foot up Jimin’s back as his body tried to curl on itself. He panted, his hands flying to fist into the sheets as he tried to prepare himself for the next part. He could feel himself fluttering against Jimin’s touch, his body naturally softened and hot and wet from neediness, from impatience. A shudder ran through him and more slick spilled out against Jimin’s hands, and he looked down in flushed embarrassment, the moan in his throat choking him, only to find Jimin gaping open-mouthed at his now dripping palm. He lifted his gaze to Taehyung, licking his lips again, and whispered, “I d-don’t know if I can do it right, Tae, but...I wanna try…?”

In response, another bout of slick escaped him, wordlessly begging him to just go already. Jimin shifted again, lowering his head down and out of Taehyung’s sight. He only had a half a second to wonder at it before he felt a sudden wetness at his entrance that was not of his own.

“Oh fuck!” Taehyung yipped, his expression crumpling as he realized it was Jimin’s lovely, talented, perverted tongue which had decided to penetrate him first, slipping past the taut and as-yet-unready-to-yield muscles there. Thick and persistent, Jimin lapped greedily amidst the slick, damp sucking sounds, the only noises in the room aside from Taehyung’s cries. He couldn’t help it - he got ridiculously noisy, moaning without restraint and drawing out Jimin’s name like powerful prayer to a God he’d never met. His hands fistet at the sheets as each nerve exploded one by one, his body happily sinking into what would become a familiarity, a fulfillment of what his body was meant to do. It wasn’t the first time he had been exposed to the ministrations and blessings of the long reach of Jimin’s tongue, but it was easy to let time and distance make him forget just how deeply that particularly blessed muscle could reach, feeling the warm flickering sensation deep inside of him in an inescapable wash of pleasure.

He came hard, practically screaming in a deep, broken voice after Jimin had abandoned holding his
knees and started using both hands to knead at and part his cheeks, dipping his face in as deeply as possible as he flicked and teased. It hurt - god, it burned - but Taehyung loved it, shuddering roughly and grateful for the way Jimin didn’t stop until he was spiraling back down to earth, swearing under his breath.

It was a long moment with the world spinning like a top before Taehyung looked down to see Jimin lift his face up again, one wrist wiping carelessly at his mouth as he panted. When their eyes met, Jimin’s red-rimmed eyes meeting Taehyung’s golden ones, he smirked victoriously. There was cum splattered somehow in the edges of Jimin’s hair, but Taehyung didn’t have the energy to either tell him or brush it away, his whole body boneless with satisfaction. He couldn’t even speak.

“Wow, my puppy came so beautifully,” Jimin cooed, reaching up to run his thumb across Taehyung’s cheek. He stared down at Taehyung gasping for breath for a long moment, looking content and proud of himself. “I’m so lucky to have you.”

“Jiminnie,” Taehyung finally managed. He wanted to have the energy to make an offer in return, but he couldn’t remember what the words were, quite at that moment. Luckily, Jimin always seemed to know.

“Just lie still, puppy,” Jimin kissed his mouth delicately, the salty taste of his own slick in Jimin’s mouth setting Taehyung’s nerves on edge again. “Lie still and let me do the work, okay?”

Taehyung nodded, grateful that he wouldn’t have to do anything, since he still didn’t have any strength in his body. He wriggled himself a little deeper into the mattress, adjusting a pillow beneath his head as Jimin fully removed his boxers at last, his cock hot and complaining. Jimin pinched Taehyung’s ankles between his fingers, pushing forward until he could press them against Taehyung’s hands, wordlessly telling him to pin his knees up between his shoulders, his ass exposed to the cool air again and his thighs pressed together over his stomach. Jimin crawled up until he was able to position himself against Taehyung, walking over on his knees and guiding his member between the taut, tanned skin of Taehyung’s thighs. Instinctively, Taehyung pinched his knees together, squeezing around Jimin, happy to hear the sharp inhale as Jimin felt it.

“Are you ready, beautiful?” Jimin whispered, his voice thick with need, and for the first time, Taehyung could hear Jimin’s impatience, too. He nodded, swallowing heavily as Jimin started to thrust his hips in, the heat and roughness of his cock rubbing up between the sensitive skin there and making Taehyung shiver, even though he had just came a few minutes ago. He hadn’t realized just how aroused Jimin really was, as he started to let out little whimpering gasps of his own, lips parted and wet, eyes shut and brow furrowed as he lost himself in the feeling of Taehyung’s legs wrapped tightly around his member. Perhaps it was the strength of Jimin’s arousal, tangible in the way they touched and obvious in the heady Scent of peppermint in the air, or maybe it was the overwhelming warmth and sensuality of having Jimin’s cock pinned between his legs, but Taehyung was gasping from overstimulation, his body feeling raw as he sunk beneath the lovely, dizzying sensation.
“Jiminnie,” Taehyung said quietly, after a few minutes. He meant to compliment him, tell him how happy Jimin was making him, with the way he seemed to quietly worship every part of the Beta. But all it took was one word, Taehyung’s hand leaving one bent knee to reach up, about to run a hand through Jimin’s hair, and Jimin was already coming, some of the white creaminess splattering into Taehyung’s opened mouth, to his surprise. He paused, blinking as cum landed on his face and chest, his hand still half-raised to his future Mate. Jimin groaned, falling forward and leaning against Taehyung’s now red-thighs. But Taehyung didn’t have the body strength to hold him up, and Jimin ended up clumsily slipping forward between Taehyung’s legs, landing on his cum-splattered chest with a little slapping sound and a groan. Taehyung blinked sleepily, his arms wrapping around Jimin’s shoulders and his feet blindly entangling around Jimin’s legs, effectively binding the boy to him with his own body.

They lay in silence for what felt like hours, and with a surprise, Taehyung opened his eyes again to the sound of Jimin crawling back into the bed with him, and he realized that he must have fallen asleep, because Jimin’s hair was damp from a shower and he seemed refreshed, nuzzling up against the Beta.

“Jimin…” Taehyung breathed.

Jimin tilted his head up, looking a little taken aback by the fact that Taehyung was awake again. “Tae-Tae. Are you feeling better?”

Taehyung paused, considering for a moment, then gave a little nod. “Much better.”

“Well, good, because Namjoon came by earlier and said the whole house could hear us,” Jimin sighed in exasperation. Taehyung could see the hot, red flush around Jimin’s ears as he pulled a clean sheet over the both of them, snaking an arm underneath Taehyung to cradle him against his chest. “It took me ages and help from Seokjin and Jungkook to reassure him that we didn’t Mate, and that I didn’t almost kill you.” He sighed. “We’re never gonna live this down, you know.”

“Namjoon’s too vanilla,” Taehyung found himself saying, still half-drunk on the delirium and nuzzling into Jimin’s Scent. “And I don’t mind. Now they won’t question that you’re my Alpha.”

Jimin stiffened for a moment in shock, his thumb rubbing at Taehyung’s skin and making the Beta hum. “Your Alpha…” Jimin breathed, as though testing out the words in the air.

“Of course,” Taehyung mumbled in understanding, eyes shutting once again. “My Alpha.”
When Jungkook woke up the next morning, it was to the familiar, welcoming scent of soap surrounding him. He smiled, tucking his face into the smell, the warmth of skin against his nose making his heart rate speed up. He was home. It was real. He reached out and wrapped his arms around Seokjin, happy to note that after Seokjin ended up not taking his suppressants for the rest of the day before, he was already smelling more like himself. Stronger than usual, even. Jungkook inhaled as much as he could, wriggling his whole body a little closer across Seokjin’s mattress. They had slept most of yesterday once Seokjin had come home, but they were still able to sleep the whole night. Mostly because Seokjin had apparently been exhausted, but also because Jungkook couldn’t bring himself to move away from the Alpha for more than a few minutes at a time. It was like he had to make up for the lost time where they had physically been apart.

There was a little groan from Seokjin, and Jungkook finally opened his eyes to see that the Alpha’s head had slipped off the pillow, tilted back at an angle with his neck outstretched. Jungkook blinked twice, staring at the length of the Alpha’s skin exposed in his sleep, before timidly craning forward and pressing his lips to Seokjin’s neck. Even in his sleep, Seokjin gave a sharp inhale, a half-snoring sound escaping him as he shuffled a little on the bed, his lips pouting. Jungkook smirked, pushing himself up on his hands until he was hovering over Seokjin’s chest, leaning down and turning his light pecks into explorative kisses that lingered. He felt Seokjin moving beneath him, sensing that he was already half awake. Jungkook had noticed he was a light sleeper before, and today was no exception, despite his exhaustion for the last few weeks.

Before Seokjin could fully wake up, though, Jungkook lifted his hips up off the mattress, scooching over until he was able to lay down on top of the Alpha, their chests pressed together and Jungkook’s thighs dangling off at either side of Seokjin’s. The Alpha’s eyes flickered open, and his lips parted in surprise as Jungkook leaned back down to resume his tender appreciation of Seokjin’s neck, mouthing openly at the pale skin and tilting his head to catch each bump and crease around the prominent adam’s apple. When they had kissed during Jungkook’s heat, he had tried to get Seokjin to open his mouth for him, to deepen their kisses, but to no avail. In a way, he was trying to suggest the need now, suckling and touching his tongue to the sensitive neck. He felt a little warm rush of pleasure as he felt Seokjin react, stiffening up.

“If you’re that hungry, we should go make breakfast,” Seokjin teased, chuckling a little as his hands came up to gently take hold of both of Jungkook’s arms.

Jungkook lifted his head, meeting Seokjin’s eyes steadily and wondering if he should make the perverted joke that had just sprung to his mind. Opting against it, he instead breathed. “Is this okay?”
Seokjin’s lips curved up a little, and a hand carded through Jungkook’s hair gently. “Yeah.”

With that as confirmation, Jungkook slowly but steadily lowered his hips down onto Seokjin, pressing his crotch heavily against the undeniable hardness of Seokjin’s arousal, the surest sign that the suppressants were no longer effective, even if the lack of the disgusting smell hadn’t also been clear enough. The Alpha let out a little gasp of concern, fumbling as if to wriggle out and away from Jungkook, but the Omega held him steadily there by the shoulders.

“Don’t run away again,” Jungkook whispered, aware of how sorrowful he sounded, how the lilting pain in his voice inevitably made Seokjin pause. “Just let me help you. Please .”

“Sorry, it’s just…” Seokjin licked his lips, his gaze flickering away from Jungkook as though he had just seen something he shouldn’t have. “I’m not used to it this way, and… I don’t want this to be something you’re obligated to do.”

Jungkook sat up a little, frowning at the mere suggestion. Didn’t Seokjin realize that Jungkook wanted him? Wanted to make him feel good, to make him happy? “It’s not like that,” he mumbled, not sure how to express the complicated elation in his chest.

“Jin,” he started lowly, “When you saw me during my heat… what did you think of?”

Seokjin blinked up at him, his face reddening with an almost comical quickness. “W-well, I--”

“Me, too,” Jungkook stated firmly.

There was a tense moment of silence, and Seokjin licked his lips. “Okay, Jungkook, but… we should clarify a couple things first.”

Jungkook let out a sigh, quirking his lips and jutting his tongue into the soft inside of his cheek, forming an expression of exasperation and impatience. “Okay, what?”

“First, don’t expect too much, okay? I’m sure the suppressants are still in my system, so… I don’t honestly know if it’ll do any good.”
At that, Jungkook glanced back over and met Seokjin’s eyes. He had no intention of letting his efforts not work, and now he felt he had been challenged. “And?”

“And you’re really not required to do this. You say the word and we stop. At any time.”

Jungkook was fairly certain that Seokjin did not quite accept the fact that he’d been dreaming about this moment - quite literally dreaming about this exact scenario - for months. But he agreed with a nod. “Anything else?”

Seokjin worked at his bottom lip with his teeth, the movement distracting Jungkook for a moment, and he was just barely able to direct his attention back to Seokjin’s words in time to catch him say, “I also don’t know what I’ll do, so…if I say or do anything that makes you uncomfortable, you have to tell me. And at least for today…I’m not going to do anything.”

With a tilt of his head, Jungkook blinked at the Alpha, still lying prone on the bed. “Not do anything? What do you mean?”

“I mean, this is my rut, and you want to help me, so…help me.” Seokjin swallowed, his adam’s apple bobbing up and down his long throat. “But I’m not…I’m not going to touch you.”

“Why not?”

“Because, it’s my rut, Jungkook,” Seokjin snapped, sounding a little irritated, now. Jungkook could see the slight thread-like trace of red around his eyes, like a subtle warning. His voice dipped low, his jaw clenched and he frowned as he added with a heaviness of purpose, “If I start, I won’t be able to stop, Jungkook. Trust me on this at least, okay?”

Jungkook couldn’t deny that he felt a shiver of anticipation roll up and down his spine at the way Seokjin had said that. Why did that prospect sound so thrilling? The mental image of Seokjin, wild with a lack of control, unable to stop...wasn’t it supposed to be scary? But Jungkook felt that twinge of competitiveness streak through him, a petulance that wanted to push Seokjin. He shoved the feeling down - today he would be good, he would do what Seokjin said, and not make Seokjin’s rut any more difficult to deal with than it had to be.

“Okay, I understand,” he added, although he couldn’t keep all traces of the reluctance out of his voice. Seokjin arched an eyebrow, pouting his lips a little as he wriggled his hips, shifting his body up higher onto the pillows. The Alpha let out a low, long sigh, closing his eyes as though bracing himself.
“Alright,” was all he said. Jungkook finally leaned forward, tugging at the loose sweatpants the Alpha had worn to sleep. The black boxers were a tantalizing sight, and Jungkook felt himself pausing, just taking a moment to stare. Something had gripped into his core that he hadn’t expected, a rush, maybe one could call it, or a hunger. It definitely felt different.

At long last, Seokjin shifted a little, obviously nervous. “What are you staring at?” The self-consciousness in his voice was evident, and Jungkook looked up at him, eyes wide and a little smile still on his lips.

“I don’t know, I just...I think I know what Namjoon was talking about, when he said we were Bonded. But that feels like just part of it, if that makes sense? I’m...I think I’m nervous.”

In response, Seokjin just frowned, his ears, cheeks and neck going redder with each passing second that Jungkook sat on his calves and stared at the still clothed crotch.

“J-just get on with it, goddamn it,” Seokjin mumbled, smacking at his arm. “It’s a dick, not a statue in a museum.”

“I’ve been to museums, they have plenty of dicks on display,” Jungkook chuckled as he reached over and slowly, confidently tugged Seokjin’s black boxers down, his member slipping free. Jungkook hadn’t meant to, he would have slapped himself before consciously doing so, but he gasped.

“What!? Seokjin questioned, pushing himself up on his elbows, his brow crinkling in concern. “What is it?”

It’s beautiful, fuck my life. Jungkook wanted to shoot himself in the foot at that moment; his confidence of a few minutes ago having just up and leapt out the window. Seokjin himself was already handsome, strong, talented and kind. His dick didn’t have to be a work of art as well. It just wasn’t fair. He felt heat rise to his cheeks when he thought about how Seokjin had already made himself acquainted with Jungkook’s own member, and the comparison made him want to scream. He had been so ready a moment ago, but now, literally face-to-face with one of the main things that had kept Seokjin deliberately away from him, he was suddenly unsure of himself.

“Jungkook?”

“It’s better,” Jungkook snapped, sounding angry even. He frowned at the pink swoleness of the
cock next to his hand. “It’s better than the museum ones.”

“Oh my god, will you please shut up,” Seokjin groaned, laying back against the pillows and looking strained. He pressed his long, soft fingers across his face and let out a frustrated noise. “God, why is this so awkward?”

“Sorry,” Jungkook mumbled, shifting himself into a better position. Seokjin remained with his hands over his face, and in a way, that definitely made things easier. Rather than being distracted by Seokjin’s gaze, he could focus on one body part at a time. With nervousness that was already making his palms sweat, he reached out and tentatively wrapped his hands around the heated cock, his fingers curling gently. Instantly, he heard Seokjin give a heavy gasp, muffled by his hands. The Alpha’s entire body was pulled tight and unforgiving, like a wind-up toy wound up all the way.

Jungkook took a deep breath, slowly and gently pulling his hand down the length. Seokjin’s shoulders seemed to ripple upwards in the center, like the gravity in his body had shifted, and Jungkook started to move his hand up and down steadily. The warmth and stiffness of Seokjin in his hand, finally there with him, not running away or keeping his distance, had him hungry to do his utmost and his best. He wanted to make Seokjin as crazy as he had been, in the cabin. He felt a little wetness against the webbing of his hand, and he looked down to see the glisten of precum slipping from the tip of the pink head. Fascinated, Jungkook wiped his thumb across it, spreading it around and effectively slicking up the palm of his hand after a few repeats. Seokjin’s breathing was suddenly very, very uneven. Jungkook looked up at his face, seeing it still half-covered by one hand draped across. Seokjin’s fingers kept curling and uncurling, each knuckle tense and quivering every so often. Jungkook’s lips parted, and he continued to stare up at Seokjin’s face steadily. It wasn’t exactly confidence or self-assurance that suddenly had his hand moving more confidently, squeezing hard and twisting around the tip, his thumb continually flicking around to find the spot that would get the strongest reaction; it was more like determination. His eyes locked on Seokjin’s with a hard, steady gaze as he quickly became fascinated with every quiver and whimper that escaped the Alpha. The tip of his tongue flickered over his bottom lip, his own crotch warming with arousal as he watched Seokjin’s face grow ever pinker, watched him suck in a breath through his teeth with less and less restraint.

There was a tingling sensation beneath his hand that had been building with each movement, each twist. Seokjin’s hand flopped down at his side, the other one still thrown across his eyes. Jungkook reached out with his free hand and entwined his fingers with Seokjin’s, letting out a contented sigh. His fingers squeezed at the Alpha’s, and suddenly it was like an explosion beneath their skin, and Jungkook shuddered from the overwhelming force of it. Seokjin let out a cry that broke off into pieces, his face turning colors as he started to writhe on the bed messily.

“Oh holy fuck,” Seokjin whimpered, “Fuck-fuck-fuck!!” His whole body seemed to be twisting on the bed, his eyes surprised as he breathed, “What the fuck!?”
Jungkook, still tickled through to his bones in a way that had him smiling, only managed one word. “Bonding?”

When Seokjin shifted his foot on the bed, as though an itch were rising through his body, Jungkook was struck with an idea. Seokjin’s rules had only really focused on what Seokjin was not allowed to do - he hadn’t really set any limits on what Jungkook wasn’t allowed to do. His eyes widened, and he could practically feel the blue surrounding his eyes, could smell his own rising arousal as he gave Seokjin’s now slick and slippery cock another long look, before he leaned down. His hand slowed its movement, and Seokjin seemed to relax for a moment, forcing himself to breathe more evenly. Jungkook lifted his eyes to watch Seokjin’s face, then parted his lips again, gingerly giving the tip of the cock the gentlest kitten lick. Seokjin let out a gasp of surprise, freezing in place. Not satisfied with the guarded reaction, he got bolder. Jungkook opened his mouth, slackened his jaw and broadened his tongue as he licked heavily all across the head, curling his neck around to taste every angle before slipping Seokjin’s cock into his mouth.

Seokjin positively keened.

“Oh fuck …!” His back arched up off the bed, and then he was scrambling for purchase, half-sitting up and staring wide-eyed as Jungkook continued to suck quite unskillfully at his member. “Jungkook, what are you doing?”

Jungkook just smirked, raising one hand in a thumbs up gesture. The thick circle of red in Seokjin’s eyes, the way he visibly had a layer of sweat already across his brow, the pinkness of his lips from being aroused, that was enough to spur on Jungkook even more. The precum in his mouth tasted bitter and strange, the texture against his tongue was foreign and unlike anything he could properly compare it to. But he liked the feeling of gripping at Seokjin’s thighs, fingers squeezing at the skin there as he heartily ignored Seokjin calling for him to stop, telling him he didn’t have to do this. Just shut up and let me take care of you.

He wanted to one-up himself, so Jungkook took in a deep breath and lowered his face even more, pressing Seokjin’s cock deeper into his mouth until he was suddenly gagging on it, and despite his attempts, it only lasted a few moments before Jungkook was pulling away, coughing as Seokjin sighed.

“You’re unbelievable,” Seokjin said.

Jungkook pouted, tilting his head to glare at Seokjin, and the Alpha’s eyes seemed to widen, as though in surprise. “I wanna learn to do it,” Jungkook declared, his voice still strangely rough and affected from his first try at taking Seokjin deeply into his mouth. “I’m gonna learn to do it.”
“Holy fuck,” Seokjin breathed, so quietly he almost didn’t hear him. “Jungkook, that feels so good, you don’t even know.”

In response, Jungkook sucked with more fervor, tucking the tip of his tongue under the head of Seokjin’s member and tickling at it, his thumb twisting across the veiny middle as suddenly Seokjin was starting to tremble, gasping out a breathless, “Wait, wait, wait!” that wasn’t really directed at Jungkook himself. Seokjin tilted his head back, letting out a long, noisy moan, and Jungkook pulled back in time to watch Seokjin cum, splattering all over his bare stomach like paint. With the same star-struck fascination, he continued to stroke at the beautiful erect member until he had milked it dry, feeling Seokjin’s hand in his hair grip roughly to signal he was being overstimulated. Once finished, Jungkook couldn’t resist his curiosity - he leaned slowly forward, giving Seokjin’s cock one last kitten lick and lapping up a little of the dribbling cum. He was surprised to note that it wasn’t as bitter as he had imagined, and he wondered if that had to do with the fact that it was Seokjin’s rut or that it was Seokjin himself that altered that.

The hand in his hair gave a pat, and Seokjin was blinking dazedly. “Go-good...good job,
Jungkookie,” Seokjin managed between gasps. Jungkook sat up a little straighter, and he knew that if he had been in wolf form, his tail would have begun to wag at the praise. He smiled a little in lieu of a proper bashfulness. Seokjin patted his hair, his fingertips lingering a little. “You did so well, and it was your first time, too. I’m sorry, I grabbed your hair… I’m sorry.”

He praised me. Even though I didn’t really know what I was doing, he came and he praised me.

Jungkook bit his bottom lip, feeling his stomach flip delightedly.

“S-Seokjin, can I…?” he gave a little gesture toward the mess they had left spilled all over Seokjin’s front, and the Alpha arched a confused eyebrow.

“What?”

Without further ado, Jungkook leaned down, licking up all the remaining cum, lovingly giving Seokjin’s thighs an extra squeeze occasionally as Seokjin whimpered above him.

“Are you fucking serious right now?” Seokjin breathed, as Jungkook lapped up the last of it, swallowing it down and smirking up at Seokjin. “Did you really eat it all?”

In response, Jungkook opened his mouth, displaying his tongue proudly so Seokjin could see that it was clear.

“Oh my god…” Seokjin rolled his eyes. “If I wasn’t super tired right now, I’d slap you.”

“Lucky for me, then,” Jungkook murmured, leaning down to suckle at the now damp skin of Seokjin’s soft white thighs, biting down a little at the flesh and making Seokjin’s muscles quiver.

“God, fuck you…” Seokjin breathed, his head dropping back to the pillow and half-burying his face into it. “I feel like I’ve just run a hundred miles.”

“Then sleep,” Jungkook said candidly, brushing back his bangs and kissing his forehead. “When you wake up, I’ll bring you food.”

The only response he got was a soft hum from Seokjin, his eyes fluttering closed as he sighed.
Jungkook lifted up the sheet to cover the Alpha, giving one last glance at Seokjin’s now flaccid member. He raised his thumb to his mouth, biting at the nail there and considering for a moment, before reaching over for his cell phone. Okay, just one photo couldn’t hurt. He held up the phone, angling it so he could get as much of Seokjin in the frame as possible, and the shutter clicked. Jungkook ran a hand through his hair, looking at the photo on his reel. He glanced over the top of the phone case, at the still sleeping Seokjin. The Alpha shifted a little in his sleep, letting out a cute little sigh. The Omega groaned, then knelt down until he was at the foot of the bed, lifting his phone up again and clicking through at least four more pictures. I’m such a pervert… He finally draped the bedsheets over the sleeping man, making sure he was totally covered before Jungkook left him, stopping to wash his hands and brush his teeth before going downstairs.

Yoongi was cooking, his back turned to the doorway as he skillfully whipped eggs into a bowl. Jungkook shuffled into the kitchen, offering Yoongi a smile when the elder looked up.

“Morning, Kookie,” Yoongi greeted softly. “You hungry?”

“Yeah,” he pulled out a chair at the dining room table, sitting down and slowly dropping his head down to rest in his arms, letting out a sigh.

“Sleep well?”

“Mm,” Jungkook assented. “Like a baby. But somehow I’m already tired again.”

“Well,” Yoongi seemed about to add something onto that, but in the end a gentle silence enveloped the room. The smell of cooked ham, cheese and eggs wafted through the air, and Jungkook half-dozed on the table until there was the clatter of a plate being slid in front of him. Mumbling his thanks, he took the fork and dug into an omelet that was almost too pretty to eat. He was eating for several minutes in silence, when he happened to glance over at Yoongi. The older Omega was scrolling through his phone, chewing contemplatively and not even glancing at his plate. Jungkook rested his chin in his hand, tilting his head to the side curiously as he watched him. Yoongi had always been the one he was most comfortable going to about ‘adult stuff’ over the years, this was true. But after this morning, and after the things Seokjin had told him last night, Jungkook wasn’t sure how his next questions were going to go down.

“Yoongi, can I ask you something?” Jungkook queried, scraping his fork a little across the top of the omelet, drawing lines there in the slight moistness left from the oil.

“Of course,” Yoongi didn’t even blink.
“I wanna talk to you about...consent.”

“Consent: noun: p ermission for something to happen or agreement to do something.” Yoongi rattled off automatically. “Verb: to give permission for something to happen.” Jungkook blinked, then rolled his eyes.

“You sound like a word-of-the-day generator,” Jungkook teased.

“I’ve been playing a lot of Scrabble with Jimin and Taehyung. Jimin claims I cheat, so I have to be ready to defend myself.” He took another bite of omelet, and from the slight quirk of his lips and based on past experiences, Jungkook thought it safe to assume that both Taehyung and Yoongi were probably cheating at Scrabble.

“What I mean is...consent in the bedroom .” Jungkook finally managed, his voice quiet. He could almost feel Yoongi’s double take, his head whipping up suddenly.

He was already halfway up out of his chair, eyes flashing wildly in a way Jungkook had only seen happen a handful of times in all the years they’d known each other. “Seokjin hasn’t been making yo--?!”

“No, no, no!” Jungkook waved his hands, reaching out and tugging hold of Yoongi’s arm, tugging him gently back down to his chair. “I promise . In fact, it’s kind of the opposite problem?”

Yoongi blinked, his voice dropping deep. “The... opposite…”

Jungkook pursed his lips together, his smile halfway between shy and smirking. “Well, I was just thinking, well...about how you and Hoseok have such a great... bond , you know?”

Several moments passed between them, and Yoongi didn’t move, didn’t seem to blink, didn’t seem inclined to respond. Jungkook quirked his mouth to the side.

“You both want to make each other happy, right? So sometimes you have to make compromises, you learn what each other likes and doesn’t like, you trust each other…” Jungkook looked hopefully over at the Omega, hoping Yoongi would start catching on. “You trust him . To know what you like. But h-how did you tell him? How did he start to know?”
Yoongi tilted his head to the side, his bangs falling into his eyes as he stared at Jungkook. “We talked about it. It’s not some big secret, after all.”

“But lots of couples talk, and it doesn’t help,” Jungkook countered, leaning in. He didn’t want to just end up bickering with Seokjin, fighting back and forth and getting nowhere.

“Because they weren’t really listening,” Yoongi shrugged. “Jungkook, what are you actually asking about?”

Jungkook poked at his omelet, which was now getting cold, then he lifted his eyes back to Yoongi’s and solidly said, “I want to ask Seokjin about BDSM.”

A long, silent moment passed. Yoongi was frozen, biting the inside of his cheek, staring at Jungkook as if he had said he wanted to grow a second head next summer. Jungkook could see that he was weighing his next words carefully, and he felt the heat rising up on his neck of shame and embarrassment - sure, they had talked pretty openly about certain things before, but nothing like this, nothing directly involving something so intimate and private, and he had never had the courage to be so direct.

Yoongi chewed the inside of his cheek for another moment, before looking down at his empty plate and scraping at the bits and remnants. “What makes you think to ask me about that?”

At that, Jungkook flushed, looking up at Yoongi’s ugly clock where it hung up on the wall. “Um… I know about you and...um...Hoseok.” The deliberate lack of eye contact was now so pointed, Jungkook could feel the tension in the air. He decided to continue, albeit quietly. “I walked in on you two once.”

He had never told a soul about it. It had been an afternoon when all the others had been out, and he had come home earlier than expected to hear Hoseok’s cries upstairs. When he had glanced into the bedroom, finding Yoongi biting roughly at Hoseok’s skin as he tugged at the ropes that kept the Alpha spread eagled on the bed, it had felt like his heart had risen up in his throat. The mental image had stamped itself onto his memory. It had taken him months to admit to himself that it had looked beautiful...romantic, even, the way the two of them had been weeping together, the Omega silently and the Alpha without restraint.

“T-to be honest, I got curious, so…” Jungkook wriggled in his seat a little, taking a small bite of his omelet and chewing it slowly.
Yoongi leaned across the dining room table, his voice a rough hiss and his ears a bright pink, one hand splayed out heavily on the tabletop. “Jungkook, I want you to tell me honestly, did Seokjin put you up to this?”

Jungkook blinked, confused for a moment. “N-no, he didn’t. I saw you two before Seokjin even moved in.” He scraped at his plate with his fork, the abrasive sound making him cringe a little. “That’s what I mean by ‘it’s the opposite problem’… It’s not something Seokjin asked for, actually, but I…”

A pause, while Yoongi let the words sink in. He sat back in his chair, slowly letting out a breath that seemed to release all the tension from his body. “Oh.”

It was a single word, but it made Jungkook blush more than anything else that had been said throughout the whole conversation.

“It’s not bad, though, is it?” Jungkook whispered. When Seokjin had first brought up the way he had used to be, Jungkook was ashamed to have started to get excited. It seemed like one more thing for him and Seokjin to have in common, and he had wanted to broach the subject, confidence growing in the fact that the Alpha wouldn’t judge him for his curiosity. But the way Seokjin seemed ashamed of his past, and the way he worried about Jungkook so much as to promise not to touch him while Jungkook helped him during his rut… it wasn’t the kind of rapport he wanted to have with his Mate. And the longer it lingered beneath the surface, the stronger and more pervasive he knew it was going to become.

“No, Jungkook,” Yoongi said at last, reaching out and laying a hand on the younger’s shoulder, finally a little smile coming to his face. “It’s not bad at all, but it can be unhealthy. You have to remember it’s not the way of trusting someone, but a way of expressing trust that you’ve already established.” Yoongi leaned forward, his chin resting in both palms as a sad expression crossed his face. “Seokjin and I have certainly seen our share of the unhealthy side of it.”

Jungkook shuffled in his seat, finishing off his breakfast before he glanced over at Yoongi and swallowed heavily. “He’s afraid of hurting me. I want him to know that it doesn’t have to be like it was before.”

Yoongi nodded, then stood up, letting out a little groan as he stretched. “Put the dishes in the dishwasher and meet me in your room,” he said simply, walking out of the kitchen. Jungkook’s eyes widened, a burning curiosity flaring in his chest as he rushed to do as instructed, stepping into the doorway to his mostly unused bedroom, to find Yoongi sitting in the middle of the carpet, emptying out a cardboard shoe box. He slowly took out a book and a length of rope that was several
feet long, placing them out onto the floor and looking up at Jungkook, who remained standing in the doorway.

“I’ll teach you the basics, but it’s still your job to talk to Seokjin. I won’t be getting involved in any of that mess any more than I already am.”

Jungkook smiled, leaping over and embracing Yoongi for a long moment, nuzzling his nose into the Omega’s Scent gland with gratefulness before pulling back. “Thanks, Yoongi, I really appreciate it.”

“Of course,” Yoongi smiled, reaching over to ruffle Jungkook’s hair. “Okay, now take these two ends in your hands, like this….”

Jungkook held the ropes in his hands, letting the older Omega patiently move his hands around to form the basic knots. He was almost getting it, when he heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs. No one usually came into his room, so he thought nothing of it, until he heard someone calling for him in the kitchen.

“Jungkookie~” Hoseok sang, “Where are you?”

There was half a second of reassuring himself Hoseok would give up the search after a few minutes, before Jungkook remembered, to his horror, that Hoseok seemed to have a very uncanny ability to smell out Jungkook whenever he was hiding around the house. And today he was sure his Scent was a little stronger, due to what he and Seokjin had been up to earlier that morning.

“Put it away,” Yoongi hissed, shoving the remainder of the ropes at the younger. Jungkook shuffled, frantically try to tug the knots and loops off of his wrists where he had been testing out the cat’s paw tie. It had been tied just a little too tightly. Oh shit.

“Why does the house smell?” Hoseok asked, just as he threw open the door to Jungkook’s bedroom. The two Omegas flinched, looking up at the doorway to see the look of horror and shock growing across Hoseok’s face as he took in the way that Jungkook knelt in the middle of the floor, arms half-entangled in ropes.

“W-what the fuck are you two doing?!”

Chapter End Notes
Hello my lovelies~ KurageCharms here!
Thanks for continuing to give LINP so much love! I can't believe I've reached all my
goal milestones for this story! :O And now it's reached 15k hits?!?! Wowza...I'm
amazed.

Special thanks to my Beta for helping with this chapter even though she's been very
sick. <3 Feel better soon, my dear!

I hope you all enjoyed the sin in this chapter. lmao

Later, lovelies!
“We recognize a soulmate by the supreme level of comfort and security we feel with that person. That doesn’t mean that there aren’t issues that remain to be ironed out. Rather, it means we know intuitively that we can resolve issues with our soulmate without losing his or her love and respect.”

— Linda Brady

“Hoseok,” Yoongi said, sounding surprisingly calm, “I’m showing Jungkook the ropes.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes. Of all the times for Yoongi’s latent affinity for playing on words to arise, it had to be now, when Hoseok was staring at the youngest pack member entangled in bondage ropes. Yoongi’s expression remained passive as he said, “Don’t freak out.”

“Don’t freak out?! Jungkook is practically still a pup!” Hoseok leaned in, lowering his voice as if Jungkook couldn’t still hear him clear as day, “And you’re showing this kind of thing to him?!”

“Yoongi wasn’t doing anything wrong,” Jungkook spoke up, actually feeling a little irritated at the assumption. “I...I asked him about it, because I’m interested.”

Hoseok gaped at Jungkook for a moment, lips parted in an expression of mindblown speechlessness. “Jungkook, what are you trying to prove? Seokjin didn’t pressure you to d--?”

“Why does everyone assume that?!” Jungkook snapped, ripping the ropes off his wrists at last and tossing them to the floor before standing up, his stance defensive. “When have I ever done anything that I didn’t want to do?” He frowned. It wasn’t as if he was the type of person who just blindly did things people told him to - he had always been an obedient pup because he wanted to make the older wolves happy, had wanted to do things for them. “Why is it no big deal if it’s you and Yoongi, but I’m still treated like a pup that has to be protected?”

Hoseok gaped for a moment, like a stunned fish. “Because you are still a pup, Jungkook.”

“But he’s not,” Yoongi cut in, “He came to me on his own, asking about how to do things right. I dunno about you, but I think that shows how serious he is.”

“He presented just a couple months ago!” Hoseok protested.
“Yes, and Jimin, too! And even before that, you always babied Jungkook!” Yoongi retorted, frowning at the Alpha. “You need to just learn to let go. He’s smart and he knows what he wants.”

“I know he’s smart, I’m just not sure encouraging this kind of thing is what’s best for him.”

“It’s not encouraging, it’s supporting. There’s a difference. Like there’s a difference between affection and coddling.”

“I don’t think it’s considered ‘coddling’ to not teach a freshly presented wolf about bondage,” Hoseok pressed his lips together in a tight line, his eyes stony. But Jungkook could see the slight flush on his cheeks, and he knew Hoseok’s weak spots.

“Hoseok,” Jungkook said quietly, stepping forward and into Hoseok’s space. The Alpha’s lips pressed even more tightly and he flinched, as if to step back. “This isn’t about the ropes. You haven’t been able to accept me as a fully grown wolf in the pack. You avoid me like you don’t want to be close to me anymore.”

Hoseok visibly reddened, looking down at the ground as though ashamed. ‘It’s just...you’re an Omega now. Things are different.”

“But why? Why this way? Jimin’s an Alpha, and we’re still close.”

“It’s different..”

“But why ?!”

“Because you’re like my pup!” Hoseok snapped. “And Namjoon feels the same way. It’s strange to think of you as an Omega, much less apparently already with a Mate.”

Jungkook looked over at Yoongi, whose face remained impassive and blank. “But… whether you like it or not, Hoseok, I am grown. I’m an Omega, and yeah, that means some things have changed, but not everything has to.”
Hoseok frowned, crossing his arms and glaring at the carpet for a moment. It looked as though he had something else to say, so Jungkook and Yoongi waited, and it took multiple sighs before Hoseok begrudgingly was able to mumble, “You still smell like him.”

Jungkook started a little at that. He had figured as much, but he didn’t know Hoseok was going to admit it so forthrightly. “Yeah...and I want to be with him.”

Hoseok let out another tight-sounding sigh. “I like him, I really do. But you have to understand..” His voice rounded out, becoming more gentle now, more like the way Hoseok used to speak to him. “We knew you would Present early, but not this early. And...we don’t know him that well. You’ve only known him for a few months.”

“Almost a year,” Jungkook corrected. “And all we want is what you two have.”

Apparently, that wasn’t the answer Hoseok had been expecting. His arms dropped, lips parted as he looked over at Yoongi in question, who just shrugged and smiled a little. “W-what we have? What do you mean?”

Jungkook smirked, looking down at their feet, his bangs trailing into his eyes. “I mean he trusts me, you know? He trusts me and I can trust him. I think the only thing that’s taken us this long is trusting ourselves, mostly. And I want to show him what that trust means for us. And I want to do it this way,” Jungkook didn’t even need to gesture to the box of beginner bondage that Yoongi had brought for him. “And I wanna do it safely, and I wanna do it correctly. It’s not like the internet is going to give me dependably accurate information, you know. So who better to learn from than Yoongi, right? He’ll be straightforward with me about the parts I have to be careful on, he’s got experience, and he knows me. Knows us. He knows what it’s like to want to show the ultimate trust to his partner.”

Yoongi leaned in a little towards the Alpha, his voice gentle but self-assured as he added, “You and I know better than anyone that BDSM can get dangerous and misused, Hoseok. You know the experiences I’ve had, and why we even introduced it. He genuinely as an interest but wants to avoid making the sort of mistakes my own partners made before, for his own sake as well as for Jin’s. Shouldn’t we help them do that?”

Letting the words sink in, Hoseok shifted his weight from foot to foot, and they all ignored the pile of treated rope coiled on the floor between them, signifying just how Jungkook was going to express that trust to his future Mate. At long last, Hoseok said, “Okay. To be honest, I still don’t like it. I don’t know if I ever will, because to me you still look like the timid pup you were when I first came into the pack. But if this is really what you want, then, I’ll try to support you.”
At those words, Jungkook rushed forward, wrapping his arms around Hoseok’s waist and burying his face into the Alpha’s shoulder, breathing a sigh of relief as the elder slowly wrapped his arms around Jungkook, squeezing him tightly and letting out a sigh that seemed to release all the tension in his body. They stayed like that for several long minutes, and Jungkook relaxed as he breathed in the smell of Hoseok’s Scent, and the smell of him finally relaxing a little around the youngest. He could feel how much Hoseok cared for him, how much he worried about him, in every molecule of the Alpha’s body.

“Thank you,” Jungkook said, muffled into Hoseok’s shoulder.

Kiara sat on the edge of the bed she shared with Namjoon, gently folding the freshly laundered clothes into neat little piles. A black sock slipped off the edge of the mattress and onto the floor, left unseen until she was almost done. She held up the singular sock left in the basket with a frown, leaning forward and spotting its neighbor poking out from just underneath the comforter. She moved to crouch and retrieve it, but a hand came up to stop her, softly pushing her back onto the bed.

“No, I’ll get it,” Namjoon said gently, bending to pick up the sock and holding it out to her. Kiara quietly rubbed a hand across her swollen, pregnant belly and took it with a smile, reaching up to cup Namjoon’s round face, dipping the edge of her fingertip into the deep dimple that formed as he smirked down at her, pressing his lips to her forehead.

“Joonie, did you talk to Seokjin yet about the stuff with Yunho?”

“Not yet,” Joonie sighed, moving from kissing her forehead to pressing his lips gently against her cheek. The white sheer material serving as their canopy brushed up against their shoulders as he leaned over her, running a hand through her short red hair. “He’s just gotten back and he spent pretty much the whole day with Jungkook.”

“Mm…” Kiara giggled. “I don’t blame him.”

“You don’t seem worried about it at all,” Namjoon commented, seeing the way her smile didn’t falter.

“Jungkook and Seokjin are going to be fine,” Kiara hummed. “Call it an Omega’s intuition. We can smell the happiness in the house now. Jungkook’s never been happier, and he’s a good kid, so I’m
sure they’ll figure things out.” She snuggled up against him as best as she could with her plump belly. “And besides, he’s your brother, after all, and he’s come back to do things right, as best as he can. I think we can trust him in that. He’s kind of like the prodigal son in a lot of ways, you know? And I always liked that story.”

“Hmm…” Namjoon hummed.

“But don’t think I’m not watching him like a hawk,” Kiara said in a cheerful tone, “Jungkook is like the pack’s baby, after all. We were there for his first real birthday party, his high school graduation, we watched him get more outgoing and self-confident. We all kind of raised him, so we all want him to be happy. Seokjin has to be the brave one, here.”

Namjoon nodded. “We’re all going to have to be a little brave, though. Especially with a rival pack threatening our staked land on the island.”

Kiara frowned, pulling Namjoon a little closer. "Has Jungkook said anything about meeting his alleged brother?"

“I talked to him about it. He definitely wants to meet him, but…” Namjoon chuckled, “When I told him what we talked about, how if he really wanted to join another pack, we would support him. He cut me off and said, ‘No, I’ll stay with Bangtan.’ Not even a hesitation.”

“Sounds like someone else I know,” Kiara smirked, “He takes a lot after his pack leader in that way. He’s here in the pack because of you. Imagine if you’d let your family’s reputation as Nobles become more important than what was best for the pack.”

“I’d never forgive myself,” Namjoon sighed. “But in all honesty, it’s getting harder and harder to see what exactly the ‘best’ thing for Bangtan pack is. I’m glad Seokjin is back, to put it simply. I know I’m the lead Alpha and all, but Seokjin has been one of those people I can always go to for a different perspective on things. Not to mention he knows how the Rising God clan works, and we could use whatever knowledge he has right now…” He sighed, shaking his head. “I still can’t believe they tried to insist that he could only meet with his brother if he agreed to join them, though. Something more complicated must be going on under the surface here. I wasn’t surprised when they tried to demand Seokjin’s location, but them coming after Jungkook seems strange, in the way they’re doing it, like they’re trying to cover up something or tie up a loose end.”

“It makes me worry about what sort of situation his brother must be in, how they must be treating him in the clan.”
“Well, you know I’d take him in in a heartbeat, but I haven’t even met him and we don’t know what sort of a wolf he is. He may end up being the last thing Jungkook needs influencing him right now.”

“Well, let’s talk to Seokjin about what he knows. He may even remember Jungkook’s brother, if he thinks back. It’s been a few years, but still...you never know.” She reached up and ran a hand through Namjoon’s hair, watching the way his eyes glazed over as he fell into contemplation. Her voice soft, she said, “You smell different now, that he’s back.”

“I do?”

“Yeah, and it’s not just Jungkook either -you can smell it through the house. I can smell the way we’ve all relaxed a little, since Seokjin’s back, especially you. I’m guessing it’s not just because he’s your older brother, but also the fact that now the pack is all home and together again. The threats from Rising Gods, the stuff with Jungkook’s brother, the pressure from your father... We’ll figure it out as a family, okay?”

Namjoon leaned in, pressing a kiss to the soft skin just below her eye as she traced her fingertips along his arm. “I wish we had less stressful circumstances for our first pup to come into the world to, though. I’m still hoping it’s all resolved before it’s time.”

She reached up and took hold of Namjoon’s wrists, leading them to her belly in time for Namjoon to feel the slightest flutter of a kick. She loved the way she could see Namjoon’s eyes light up whenever it came to their growing pup, and she watched his beaming smile stretch across his face for a few minutes. “They’re a healthy pup,” she said, “I can just tell. All lively and bored and wanting to meet their daddy.”

With a little happy sigh, Namjoon dropped to his knees in front of Kiara, his arms wrapping around her waist in a way that made her feel - although just for a moment - that she was slender and trim again, instead of bloated and heavy. He pressed a little kiss to her still-fluttering belly, letting his mouth linger there a little bit as Kiara ran her hands through his bangs, brushing them back away from his face. He closed his eyes, taking a moment to breathe before he looked down at her rotund belly and whispered, "Hello, baby girl. Or boy. To be honest, I don't care. Can you hear me in there?" Kiara giggled at the fascinated tone in Namjoon's voice, and his eyes flickered up at her in amusement. "Your mommy and I can't wait to meet you, baby. We're gonna have so much fun together, I promise. You're going to be spoiled by all your uncles, and be one of the most rotten pups anyone's ever heard of."

Kiara laughed, throwing her head back a little. After a long, quiet, contented moment, Kiara whispered, “I think you’re going to spoil the pup enough on your own. You’re such a softie.”
“Don’t tell the others that, I have to at least try to maintain a lead Alpha image,” he chuckled. He withdrew one hand from around her waist and trailed his thick thumb along her belly, pausing when the pup felt him there and kicked back petulantly, making Kiara’s heartbeat quicken with happiness. “It’s going to be a girl,” he said at long last.

Kiara arched an eyebrow. “Oh? And how do you know that?”

Namjoon smirked. “Call it an Alpha’s intuition.”

She laughed, “Okay, then. If your Alpha intuition says so, I’m not going to doubt it. But we’d better keep this secret intuition on the down-low, or in the unlikely case that you’re wrong, it’ll be awkward to explain to the others.”

Still brimming with confidence, Namjoon smiled up at her so softly it made her chest hurt. He dropped his cheek to her knee, studying her face with a gentle gleam to his eyes. “It’s going to be a girl, and I’ll have my princess and my queen.”

“All spoiled in our castle, Bangtan pack house,” she supplied.

“Wednesdays will be date night with princess, Fridays for the queen.”

“Let’s hope that since the queen has some seniority that her date nights last a little longer.”

“Oh, of course.”

Silence enveloped them of the most comfortable and contented kind, and she felt, rather than heard, Namjoon sigh in her lap. He stood up at long last, pressing another kiss to her forehead. “I’ve got to go to meet Jackson and the others about some of the contract forms for the island, he’s got a friend who does legal work. When I get back, you’re going to be resting, right?”

“Of course,” Kiara changed her voice for a dramatic quote, “The same thing I do every day, Pinky: try and take over the world!” She laughed, “Or just the usual resting and nesting.” He smiled and kissed her cheek again. She gave a fake, dramatic pout of her painted red lips, shoving at him a little in playfulness. “But don’t take too long, I’ll miss you.”
Namjoon tilted his head to the side, looking endearing for someone she had seen at his fiercest, at his most aggressive. “Are you bothered by the fact that I have been meeting with Jackson lately? You haven’t said anything, but I wanted to make sure.”

“Well…” Kiara rolled her eyes, “I’m not happy that you’re hanging out with your ex, in all honesty. But I trust you. Besides, have you seen the way he looks at his Beta? Mark is his name, right? They seem suited for each other. Now go, so you can get back sooner.”

Namjoon touched his hand briefly to her swollen belly, smiling as he kissed her goodbye, leaving her to finish the laundry with one last little wave. Kiara laughed, rolling up the last pair of black socks and setting them down on the bed, letting her hand linger awhile on top of the folded piles, breathing in the thick, reassuring Scent of Namjoon’s smoky Alpha smell and her own Omega one filling the room, uninterrupted by the other pack members out of respect for her instinctive nesting needs. The room was now a safe haven away from the others, keeping her calm in the midst of the stress of the oncoming birth. Namjoon, however, had little refuge from the oncoming storm. In the time that Seokjin had been gone, the weight on Namjoon’s shoulders had been almost tangibly visible to Kiara. Their father was pressing in harshly with questions Namjoon didn’t have the answer to, shouldn’t have had to answer to, but Kiara was helpless to convince him not to concern himself about it - that was just how Namjoon was, quite self-assured but still so sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of those he valued, always seeking improvement and therefore opening himself up to a plethora of criticism from all directions that he often took too much to heart, in her opinion. The gentlest lion of a man she had ever had the privilege to know.

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Jungkook carried the little tray up the stairs like he was carrying glass, the bowl of pasta still steaming when he slipped back into Seokjin’s room. He halted in the doorway, staring in surprise at the bed as he found the Alpha was no longer anywhere to be seen. He couldn’t help the way his heart leapt up in his throat, until he heard the sound of the shower and felt his whole body relax. He set the tray down on the edge of the bed, going over to the bathroom door and silently opening it, peering in to see a heavily steamed up mirror and hear the quiet sounds of Seokjin humming. He paused in the doorway, thinking back to how he had finally gotten to see Seokjin fully exposed that morning. It would be a lie to say he didn’t want to see it again, and he had the feeling that Seokjin wouldn’t ever directly invite him, but wasn’t leaving the door unlocked invitation enough for one’s Omega?

Smirking devilishly, Jungkook slipped into the bathroom, locking the door after himself. At the tiny click of the lock, he heard Seokjin’s humming suddenly stop, could smell his attention perk up. After
a moment, Seokjin’s face peered around the corner, water dripping into his eyes and his hair stuck flatly to the sides of his face. He looked confused to see Jungkook there, much less with his shirt halfway off.

“Jungkook?”

In response, the Omega dropped his sweatpants to the floor, wadding up his clothing and setting it next to the sink, stepping up to the shower. Seokjin stepped back, surprised and looking almost concerned. *Yup, it’s just as beautiful as it was this morning, goddamn it.* Jungkook deliberately kept his expression blank, as though the fact that they were naked together again for the second time ever wasn’t a big deal. He didn’t *want* it to be a big deal anymore.

“W-what are you doing?” he hissed.

“I have to go to class in a couple hours,” Jungkook explained breezily, stepping between Seokjin and the shower head and effectively blocking the flow of water so he could wet himself down. “I wanna go smelling of you.”

“I figure you already do, after this morning,” Seokjin rolled his eyes. “So I guess this means you don’t care if the other pack members notice you’re in here?”

“Why would I?” Jungkook shrugged, washing his hair. “You’re gonna be my Mate, after all.”

At that, Seokjin’s grip on the body wash tightened, and he looked a little tense. Jungkook arched an eyebrow, tilting his head to the side before turning around and rinsing his hair. There was a quiet moment, but when he moved out of the water stream, he was immediately enveloped in an embrace from a warm, slippery body from behind. Jungkook froze, taking in for a moment the fact that suddenly, Seokjin was embracing him, his head tucked against the back of Jungkook’s neck.

“Thank you…” Seokjin said quietly, so quietly in fact, that he could barely hear it over the rushing sound of water. “For waiting. For this morning. For...for choosing me.”

After a moment, Jungkook let out a little chuckle, grinning broadly and looking over his shoulder at the Alpha. There was, of course, a heavy smell of fresh, clean water and cherry blossom shampoo in the air, but it was nothing compared to the intimate, heady smell of Seokjin’s Alpha Scent. “It’s nice to see you being a little needy and open for once,” Jungkook teased. “If you had kept being stubborn, I might have gone to find someone else, after all.”
“Oh?” Seokjin squeezed Jungkook’s waist in response, as if staking a silent little claim, pulling Jungkook’s presence a little closer. Jungkook’s heart rate escalated as he felt Seokjin’s bare chest pressed up against his shoulder. It was strange and wonderful to be near him, intimately but not sexually; at least for the moment, anyways.

“Yeah, I get a lot of offers, and I always got the feeling you’d be the jealous type.”

“Mm, I dunno, I’m pretty easy-going, actually,” Seokjin mused. To that, Jungkook let out a loud laugh, one that he was sure anyone outside the bathroom door could have heard.

“As if. You’re very jealous when it comes to me. You may not be noisy about it like Hoseok is, but it’s still there.”

“Oh? How so?” Seokjin tucked his chin over Jungkook’s shoulder, and Jungkook was pretty sure his skin felt hotter than the warm water that cascaded over them.

“For starters, you Claimed me , like two days after we met,” Jungkook pointed out, smirking as he craned his neck, delighted to see the way Seokjin stiffened and paled.

Seokjin mumbled and fussed, letting go of Jungkook and moving across the small space of the shower in search of his face wash. “Okay, so maybe you have a point there. But that was me thinking a lot about the long term, you know? I didn’t know how you were gonna feel about me - if anything at all - and the Bonding felt really powerful at the time. I at least wanted a little bit of a chance. Maybe one could claim temporary insanity on my behalf?"

“Bonding doesn’t make decisions for us, though,” Jungkook poked Seokjin in the side, “And I bet I could make you jealous over me now. It would be easy: because you’re the jealous type.”

“Oh, really?” Seokjin chuckled. “I guess we’ll see, then. But I think you’re the jealous one, here. With your cute little hyung complex and your need to please.”

“We’ll address that later,” Jungkook smirked, taking advantage of the moment to stare at Seokjin openly as the Alpha stepped out of the shower and reached for his towel. “When we have time to discuss things at length.”
“Well, based on this morning, I feel like I should stay on my toes,” Seokjin rolled his eyes.

“That was a tutorial round,” Jungkook promised, “I’m gonna get better at it.” Seokjin was half-dried off, but Jungkook came up behind him just as he was pulling his T-shirt on and hugged him as he had just done, leaning his nose in to Scent the Alpha. Seokjin gave a sharp inhale of surprise.

“Sorry, I’m...I’m not used to that,” Seokjin chuckled, turning around and looking at the Omega. He seemed caught by something in Jungkook’s face, his expression cautious and uncertain.

“You can Scent me back,” Jungkook whispered, “I want you to.”

Slowly, Seokjin leaned in, giving a gentle Scenting that almost tickled in its softness. Jungkook giggled, tugging roughly at Seokjin T-shirt until the Alpha Scented him again, this time with more self-assurance, a little more self-indulgence. The way he rubbed his own Scent into Jungkook always made his chest constrict, his stomach fill with butterflies, and he let his eyes roll back with the lovely feeling, eager to make it a commonplace occurrence that would still drive his body wild even years from now.

“Much better,” Jungkook hummed, his breath catching when Seokjin leaned in, mouthing at the Scent and suckling at the skin around it, while his knee simultaneously brushed up against Jungkook’s exposed front.

“Much better,” Seokjin echoed. They moved there for a moment, enjoying the sensation, before Seokjin pulled away and tossed Jungkook’s clothes at him. Jungkook started pulling on his pants, feeling the distant throb of need starting to thicken in his groin. *Tonight, okay? Just wait until tonight.*

“I brought you food. Pasta. Starchy foods are supposed to help boost your energy levels.”

Seokjin laughed, “Since when did you become a nutritionist?”

“Since I decided that I wanted to be your Omega, so you’re gonna have to stay in top physical condition to take care of me properly,” Jungkook said with a casual air, wanting to laugh aloud at the way Seokjin stared at him, dumbfounded. “You going to drive me to class today?”

“Uh, yeah, sure...” Seokjin followed Jungkook into the bedroom.
“So, if I’m right, can I choose what we try next?” Jungkook challenged, smiling as Seokjin sat on the edge of the bed, cradling the now-cooled pasta.

“Right about what?”

“That you’ll get jealous of me before I get jealous of you.”

Seokjin rolled his eyes, “You’re really not going to let this go, are you?”

_Not if it means I get to lay the BDSM on the table, and soon._

“ Nope,” was all he said, reaching in and pinching one of the noodles between his fingers, eating it before Seokjin could protest. “Is it a deal?”

Laughingly, Seokjin shook his head, “Sure I guess. I see no reason why not.” He was probably imagining that Jungkook, still innocent in everyone’s eyes, would just request a different position or for Seokjin to let him suck him off again like that morning. Jungkook was banking on that wrongly assumed naivety, because he was looking forward to surprising Seokjin with how similar their own interests were.

“Great! I leave for class in an hour and a half.” He curled up against Seokjin’s shoulder, inhaling the smell of soap and cherry blossoms, and sighed in contentment. He couldn’t wait for tonight - history class never looked so boring, bleak and irksome as it did in that very moment.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies!~ KurageCharms here~

This chapter is kind of an in-betweener, in all honesty, right? But it has some softer moments and developing plotlines that are still swirling toward the surface. To be blunt, I'm a little angry and a little proud of myself for ALL the different plotlines here - how will I ever get to them all without this story becoming like 50 chapters long?! .. • √ (° > < )natal God, what have I done?!

The element of BDSM has finally been introduced with Jungkook, and it's important to me that some fics present BDSM elements more maturely. Like, I know most ABO would just use the heats to blur the lines of consent and all, but idk, to me, the sexiest kinks are consensual, and I think a lot of confusing information is out there about BDSM/kinks, and there aren't a lot of safe spaces to discuss it anymore, so I've always
wanted to address this in my stories that have heavier kinks - the awkwardness of broaching your wants/needs with your partner, the development of trust and knowing each other, figuring things out as a couple, this sort of thing makes it much sexier to me somehow~ haha. But will JK be successful in communicating this to Jin? Orrrr will they fumble again? Jin does have a lot of baggage still carried around. And how is JK planning to make Jin jealous...?

I haven't forgotten about preggers Kiara! And Jungkook's brother! And Jae! D: All in good time, my sweets~ (Also, I know that 3-4 months is a liittle early for Kiara to have so much kicking from the baby, but in my AU, since they're part Wolf, I'm adjusting the pregnancy timeline. The wolf gestation period is 2-3 months, so I'm going to put it between wolf and human timeline to about 6-7 months. :> I hope that makes sense)

Thank you so much for continuing to support this fic! (■ ... ■) I'm blown away every week, watching the numbers rise. You guys make me want to work harder and make the story much, much better each time, even if I'm tired or stressed from my week. Please feel free to follow me on Twitter or message me~

Later, lovelies~♥
“I love you not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you. I love you not only for what you have made of yourself, but for what you are making of me. I love you for the part of me that you bring out.”

— Roy Croft.

Jungkook sat underneath the dining room table, shoving his homework into his backpack now that there was only a few minutes left to go before they had to leave for class. To Jungkook’s delight, Seokjin didn’t have any classes that day, due to one of his professors attending a conference about some new disease, sending him out of town. That meant that he didn’t have to feel bad when he suggested the two of them spend the whole day on campus together - especially since it would save on gas, since Seokjin had to drive him there anyways, right?

Laughter erupted from upstairs, and Jungkook glanced up just as Seokjin and Jimin entered the kitchen, Jimin caught in a fit of giggles so hard that he was leaning heavily against the elder Alpha, gripping his arm in a familiar way that made Jungkook pause.

It wasn’t as if he suspected Seokjin was suddenly going to turn around and start seeing Jimin the way he saw Jungkook, the Omega knew that - and he had overheard Jimin and Taehyung’s confession with his own ears. But something about the way they stood so close, the easy way they stood next to each other, as if Jimin hadn’t had so many misgivings and worries about the new Alpha, caused Jungkook to remember that Seokjin had once had an ‘Almost Mate’ before. Another Alpha, too. And Jimin was an Alpha, while Jungkook was not. What if’s shot through his mind as his body felt heated, wanting to speak up and finding his voice was gone. As if able to sense his thoughts, Seokjin glanced over and met eyes with Jungkook, his expression confused as though he had heard something strange. Jungkook instinctively looked away, focusing on his backpack.

“I understand, it’s not as simple as it sounds, right?” Seokjin said, and Jungkook could hear the smile in his voice. “But of course I’ll go with you. Maybe tonight, after dinner?”
Jungkook blinked in surprise, suddenly poking his head out from under the table. “Wait, go where tonight?”

Seokjin smirked, snaking an arm around Jimin’s shoulders. “Jiminnie and I are gonna go do some shopping together. Just a little Alpha to Alpha friendship building time, that’s all.” He tilted his head to the side, simply oozing with amusement. “Why?”

“I have plans with you tonight already,” Jungkook mumbled, unable to bite back the disappointment laced throughout his words. He knew it was a sign of endearment, of course, but hearing Seokjin call him Jiminnie was too cute. It made him kind of irritated. He wanted a cute nickname, too. And he was going to tell Seokjin about the ropes that night after dinner.

He couldn’t skip out on it, after Jungkook had gotten so worked up for it!

“Aw, Jungkook, are you jealous?” Seokjin teased.

Shit, no. Don’t be jealous. You’ll lose the game. On a normal day, Jungkook didn’t like to lose anything. From the last piece of bread to Super Smash Bros to game on a hunt, it didn’t matter, he wanted to fight to the end. But the added element of what he was going to ‘win’ this time made things much, much more compelling. He had to convince Seokjin he wasn’t jealous, and fast.

“No,” Jungkook frowned, as though insulted. “But I still have plans, and I made them first. So...why don’t you bring Jimin with us when we go to class? You have to wait an hour for my history class to finish anyways, you two can go shopping then, and then it won’t disrupt our plans.”

He had had to fight not to put special emphasis on the our part of those plans. He was not going to be jealous, not this easily. Not when he knew that once he got to campus, Seokjin was not going to be expecting the volley of threats. He just had to make it until then.

Seokjin - and Jimin as well - looked clearly surprised at the suggestion, and Jimin even shot Seokjin a questioning look, as though he was afraid he’d overstepped some boundary.

“Um, sure. That sounds like a good idea, actually.”

“I’ll go get ready, then...?” Jimin said slowly, seeming skeptical. He went upstairs, and Seokjin continued watching Jungkook as the Omega zipped up his backpack and crawled out from under the table.
“What?” Jungkook asked defensively, seeing the way Seokjin looked at him, arms crossed over his chest.

“Oh, nothing.” Seokjin supplied breezily, moving to grab the keys. “You’re just acting kind of strange, that’s all.”

When they got to the car, Jungkook crawled into the back of the truck, knowing that they would both expect him to sit in the front, closer to Seokjin. Jimin halted outside the passenger door, looking like a man caught between a rock and a hard place, his dark baseball cap making him look younger and smaller than he actually was. Jungkook rolled the window down a little, barely looking at Jimin as he explained, “You’re older, you have seniority to sit in the front.”

Jimin worked his jaw a little, looking over at Seokjin, who was already in the driver’s seat arching an eyebrow at Jungkook in the rearview mirror. He offered Jimin a shrug, and the Alpha finally clambered in.

_I’m not going to be jealous, I’m not going to be jealous._ Jungkook repeated the mantra as he stared out the window, his chin resting in his palm, elbow propped up against the door. He watched the neighborhood flicker past, the warm sound of Jimin and Seokjin’s quiet discussion filling the silence. They were talking mostly about Taehyung, but also about menial things like chore duties around the house, how Jimin’s job as a cubicle guy in a call center was going, and how the weather seemed to be changing. Jungkook chanced a quick glance over at Jimin, and found him turned to look at Seokjin, mid-sentence with his eyes sparkling in amusement. Jungkook stared at the angular jawline, Jimin’s soft hair and gentle expression that seemed to never fail at calming those near him. The veins in his neck shifted as he got into the short story he was telling Seokjin, reaching a climax and gesticulating wildly for emphasis.

Jimin was just too pretty an Alpha. Hadn’t Jae been a pretty Alpha, too? He was much manlier than Jimin, in build and in aura, but maybe Seokjin’s type had changed.

_Stop it. Don’t be jealous, you little shit,_ he berated himself, looking back out the window. The breakfast from that morning wasn’t settling well in his stomach.

Jungkook slipped out of the truck the moment they pulled up in front of the building for general education courses, and had to force himself not to rush off to class right away, without looking back at the other two. Seokjin hadn’t gotten out of the truck, one arm dangling out the window as he smiled at the Omega.
“I’ll be back before your class lets out, okay? Then maybe we can go find somewhere to hang out?”

“Okay,” Jungkook tried to sound cheery, smiling as he waved at Seokjin, deliberately waving at Jimin a little longer than strictly necessary, before he turned to go to his history class. The truck revved up and pulled away, and Jungkook sighed. It was going to be a long class.

Jungkook had never been especially interested in history anyways, but after being in this class, he felt significantly less motivated. For one thing, he had always been a bit of a quiet, odd-man-out, and most of the students in the class seemed to already know each other and had formed their sub-units. They hadn’t treated him rudely, but they had treated him weird at times, and Jungkook had been at a loss to understand it.

He sat down at his desk, dropping his backpack to the ground and plugging his earbuds in, since there was still about five or ten minutes before class. Usually, he turned his music on immediately, keeping the volume up as he doodled drawings into his notebook, but today he got a little distracted, since once he unlocked his phone he found his photo album still open, the thumbnails of the pictures he had taken of Seokjin that morning while he was sleeping were glaring up at him like a magnificent crime.

“Look, he’s here already, just go talk to him!” came a female voice. There was a hiss as someone tried to shush her, and in an obnoxious sort of voice she retorted, “You know he can’t hear us anyways, he’s probably blasting some melancholic music that you both like.”

“Rach… just stop trying to force it. I already told you, Jungkook is probably already dating someone by now…”

Suddenly Jungkook perked up to attention, forcing himself to continue doodling the lines on the edges of his paper even as he was tempted to look up and see who was talking. The two moved to sit somewhere just behind him, though, and he couldn’t turn around without them realizing he could hear them.

“But Jared this whole damn class is rooting for you two to get together. Ever since you mentioned having a crush on him, even the Alphas are rooting for you.”

Jungkook was confused. Jared was the pretty-boy of the class, a Beta with dark, slightly wavy hair and broad lips. He had one of those faces that looked like he was modeling everything he wore - and he always came into class looking like he had had a personal assistant pick out his outfit. He remembered Jared offering to share notes with him once or twice, with a small gaggle in tow, and Jungkook had politely said he was fine. That was about all the interaction he could remember them
having. But hearing the whole class knew about a crush he had on Jungkook? That would explain the gaggle. Jungkook had just assumed Jared was that popular.

He was confused, not because he had an admirer, really - ever since he’d Presented as Omega, a lot of people suddenly claimed to be an admirer - but because Jared hadn’t said anything, at least not to his knowledge, to even hint at feelings.

“He barely notices me,” Jared said quietly.

Rachael, however, was already sighing dramatically, “Imagine the pups you two would make,” she let out a squeal. “Two beautiful people together, it seems so perfect.”

It seemed like Jared didn’t have anything to add to that, probably uncomfortable with the conversation in general. More people filed into the room, and throughout the entirety of class Jungkook was rethinking his position within it. He was glad when it was over, and he stood up quickly to leave, trying not to notice the pointed looks and the quick whispers from behind him. He walked to the door with speed but without making it look too obvious he was trying to hightail it out of there, and he almost made it, pushing the front doors open even as he felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Hey, Jungkook! Do you have a sec?”

He knew before he heard the voice, before he turned around, that Jared would be there, looking extra soft with gold-rimmed round glasses that didn’t even have lenses in them, and he was nibbling at his lip in concern.

Jungkook saw five or six students from their class - mostly girls, he noted - hovering in the hallway, not doing a very good job of looking preoccupied.

He sighed a little, “Um, sure. What’s up?”

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Seokjin was sitting in the parking lot in his truck, flipping through the photos Jungkook had sent him during his time away, reminiscing over them and trying to pick a good spot on campus to go and ‘recreate’ some of the photos. He figured Jungkook would have fun with that, once he got out of class. He happened to glance up as a small crowd of students shuffled their way out of the building, a
good sign that class had let out, and he smiled when he saw Jungkook stepping out into the sunshine, his thumbs tucked underneath the straps of his backpack. Then, some guy appeared behind him, grabbing Jungkook’s shoulder and making him stop. Seokjin sat forward in his seat, brow furrowing as he squinted, trying to see if he recognized the kid. He didn’t, but Seokjin did think he was looking at Jungkook like he had just met his idol. After a few minutes of watching them talk, the boy took a step closer to Jungkook, making the Omega take a short step back and shrug. The boy’s face crumpled in a strange expression, looking almost irritated from this distance. Without further ado, Seokjin slipped out of the truck, unable to resist slamming the door a little as he made his way over.

“Jungkook!” Seokjin called out, smiling as broadly as he could and waving, deliberately keeping his gaze on Jungkook alone until he was near enough for the other boy to meet his eyes. When their gazes finally did meet, he could see the shy guilt already creeping across the boy’s face, but he still found his own expression hardening with warning. He moved to stand close to Jungkook, until he could catch the faintest whiff of his Omega Scent. “You ready to go? Who is this?”

“This is Jared, we have history together,” Jungkook said, looking up at Seokjin’s face for a moment, as though realizing something. A little smile came to his lips suddenly. “Jared, this is Seokjin.”

*Just Seokjin, huh? What happened to being so flippant and nonchalant because ‘You’re going to be my Mate anyway’?*

Jared offered Seokjin a little smile, nodding in acknowledgement. But without so much as a word, he suddenly seemed to pale and flush at the same time, turning to Jungkook and quietly murmuring, “I guess I’ll see you about it later, then?”

“Yeah, of course!’ Jungkook said with a smile, suddenly looking more chipper than he had a moment ago. Jared shot another look at the Alpha, before ducking back into the building. Seokjin arched an eyebrow at Jungkook’s smirk.

“Well, let’s go?”

Seokjin joined Jungkook as the Omega turned to walk toward the library, unable to keep the trace of confusion off his face. *Wait, no. He’s probably hoping I’ll get jealous, the punk. Just ignore it.*

And that was exactly what he planned to do. Just forget about jealousy and enjoy a day out with Jungkook, just the two of them.
They went to the bridge and took pictures together, they sat and talked in the library with coffees, they stood and watched a busker for almost 20 minutes, sat and studied together in one of the quiet side rooms for a while, even sat out on the grass and just laid out, half-dozing in the warm afternoon sun. It was the kind of afternoon that sounded perfect.

But Seokjin hadn’t expected the followers.

That was the only thing he could think to call them. They were everywhere. Standing in line at the coffee shop, an Alpha turned around and suddenly noticed Jungkook, eyes widening as he moved in.

“Jungkook! I haven’t seen you in a couple of days!”

Then he offered to buy his coffee for him, to sit with him. Seokjin stood awkwardly just behind him, knowing there was no way the smaller Alpha could miss the wall that was his notably wide frame, nor the look of judgment Seokjin was sending his way.

While sitting out on the grass, a gruff-voiced thick-armed hairy sort of man strode over and leaned against their chosen shade-tree for half the time they were there, obligating Jungkook to make half-hearted attempts at small talk with him. All the while the man was openly ogling the soft-looking Omega as he lay on his side, looking out across to the theatre building and smiling softly as they discussed a term paper the burly Alpha had coming up.

Seokjin leaned over while they were studying in the library, intending to feign asking a question and secretly sniff a little at the boy’s Scent, and maybe - just maybe, if he felt a little empowered - steal a quick kiss on the boy’s cheek, feeling warmth in his chest just at the sensation of sitting near him and talking quietly, so easily, as if they’d been doing it forever. But just as Seokjin turned to Jungkook, another Alpha came up - this time a woman, with bleach blond hair and a tight crop top that seemed to be doing its damndest to keep her sizable bust under containment.

She greeted Jungkook for all of two seconds, ignoring Seokjin completely before she sat down next to him, conspicuously leaning forward to rest her chin in her palm, resting her breasts up on the table and letting them spill out in a soft-looking mound. She smirked at Jungkook, tilting her head to the side as she obviously flirted with him as best as she could when she no longer shared any classes with him.

“You should come out with us sometime,” she told him bluntly, “The parties my roommate throws are kind of wild, and the coverage fee is really cheap.”
Seokjin frowned, looking over at Jungkook and noting that he was stealing quick glances down at the voluptuous breasts literally laid out for display in front of him. His jaw dropped a little at Jungkook’s transfixed expression, the Omega’s eyes wide like saucers as the Alpha twisted her fingers in her hair.

“Jungkooook,” she singsonged to him, reaching out and actually running a hand through his hair. The gesture was somehow motherly and yet not at all motherly, an obvious excuse to touch him through the thin guise of fixing his bangs. She lowered her voice, smirking at him, “When are you gonna take me up on that dinner sometime? I’m not even a scout or anything, I just wanna take you out sometime. You’re so cute.”

Seokjin sat back in his seat, knowing he shouldn’t be surprised but feeling dumbfounded by the boldness just the same. He turned to Jungkook, hoping for the ‘I’m already taken’ clarification.

“Sorry, I’ve been really busy with school and patrol lately,” Jungkook said easily, like it was an excuse he had given a hundred times before. “I haven’t had time for that sort of thing.”

At the transparent evasive tactic, Seokjin’s mouth actually dropped open in shock. He was sitting right there and not only was Jungkook not going to explain that the man he had called ‘His Alpha’ not too long ago was with him, but the two of them continued to ignore his entire existence, too.

The girl pouted at his response, tucking her hair behind her ear and leaning forward a bit more, her Alpha Scent of some kind of flower wafting over them like a cloud of perfume. “Come on, just one date. I’m paying for everything. We can go see a movie and eat out some place nice.”

Seokjin narrowed his eyes at the girl’s blatancy, his expression hardening.

“Sorry, but the answer is no,” Jungkook said, no longer ogling her breasts, at least, but now casually flipping through his history textbook. “And I actually really should study right now.”

The girl sighed, the intensity of her Alpha Scent thinning as she saw she wasn’t going to get anywhere with her current tactics. “I guess I’ll see you around then.” With no real excuse for it, she reached out and touched his shoulder, as if trying to call his attention back to her. When it didn’t work, she frowned and strode away. Seokjin sat and watched Jungkook for a long minute, before the Omega happened to glance up.

“What?” he asked, as though innocent.
“What?” Seokjin snapped back, “Could you have been more obvious looking at her chest?”

Jungkook tilted his head to the side, a little devilish smirk coming to his lips. “Well, they were pretty amazing. I mean did you see…” He raised his hands in a rounded gesture, moving to demonstrate, when Seokjin reached out and promptly slapped his hands back down. Jungkook chuckled. “I told you I had other offers. Did you not believe me?”

Seokjin didn’t answer, just sitting back in his chair and frowning. Jungkook leaned forward, now grinning from ear to ear.

“So, are you..jealous?” Jungkook asked, and he could already see the full-fledged victorious laughter Jungkook was barely containing.

“No,” he deliberately didn’t snap the words, knowing it would just sound like a confirmation of the accusation. “It just seemed rude for you to stare like that.”

Jungkook smiled, shaking his head a little as he returned to his book. “I guess, if you say so.”

Seokjin frowned. They spent the rest of the hour in silence.

Before heading home, they decided to go to the university cafeteria, taking advantage of their single-priced buffet style freedom, a policy that always made Seokjin wonder how it didn’t always put them in the negatives, given that university students were particularly talented at tucking away four or five plates at a time, if given no limit. He and Jungkook were already on their second round, and Seokjin was debating with him about the merits of different fruits from the dessert bar, holding them out on his fork for Jungkook to try. Jungkook leaned forward in his seat, taking the piece of pineapple into his mouth sans hands, and Seokjin smiled a little at the casual way he’d done it, going back to his soup as Jungkook browsed his phone.

“Oh, Jungkookie,” Seokjin said, making the Omega look up, “For tonight, I was wondering if--”

“Jeong Jungkook!” interrupted a voice, and Seokjin barely bit back an audible groan as another Alpha came over to their table. This time it was an extremely tall young man with lightly tanned skin, faded sky blue hair and one of those award winning smiles that suggested he always got what he wanted. Seokjin had never felt so much like punching someone as in that moment when the man’s Alpha Scent thickened around them, and Seokjin felt his own Scent rising, heat developing at the
back of his neck as he glared down into his soup bowl. The new Alpha didn’t hesitate before slipping his arm around Jungkook’s shoulder possessively, dimples developing at the edges of his smile. “What are you up to tonight?”

“The usual,” Jungkook replied placidly, picking chunks off of his jalapeno bread to nibble on and not even glancing in Seokjin’s direction. The soup already in Seokjin’s stomach felt like it had just been overwhelmed and turned to acid, dark and bitter in the pit of his belly. “You?”

“I’m taking a cute Omega out and showing him how well a good Alpha can take care of him,” the man said with a breezy sort of air. Seokjin narrowed his eyes, wondering if the implication was what it sounded like.

“Oh?” Jungkook looked disinterested as he stirred his pasta.

The man seemed to wait a moment, with his arms still around Jungkook, expecting to be prompted for more information. When he wasn’t, he continued, “And that cute Omega is called Jungkook.”

“What a coincidence, I don’t come across many people with the same name as me,” Jungkook retorted without blinking an eye. Okay, so that made Seokjin smile a little.

“Jungkook,” the Alpha said, leaning his face in dangerously close to Jungkook’s, an oppressiveness to the air as he smiled at the Omega. Seokjin found himself bristling more and more with each inch that the Alpha neared. “Go out with me tonight.”

“I already told you no, Louis,” Jungkook sighed. “I’m not that kind of Omega.”

“But you see, you might be,” Louis offered with a little shrug, leaning in so far his nose nuzzled up lightly against Jungkook’s cheek. “You’re known for playing hard to get, but I think…you just want a competent Alpha to come along and take care of you. Someone strong enough to handle you.” Louis tilted his head, taking a quick sniff at Jungkook’s neck. Seokjin was clenching his spoon so tightly, his hand ached. “Look at this, you’ve got Alpha Scent on you already, but it’s so weak, it’s barely even there.”

“Louis, back off,” Jungkook was starting to sound exasperated, but then he jumped nearly a foot out of his seat when Seokjin stood and slammed both his palms down on the table, jostling their dishes and spilling some of their sodas out onto the surface. Both Jungkook and Louis stared up at Seokjin, who was now so physically heated he couldn’t see straight, his eyes flashing red as he snarled
“What,” Seokjin said slowly, knowing by the way his instincts and senses were on edge that people were looking at them, able to smell his aggressive Alpha Scent suddenly fuming throughout their section of the cafeteria, a bitter edge to his normally gentler Scent of soap. “The fuck do you think you’re doing?”

Louis stared agape for a moment, then shut his mouth, straightening up a little but keeping his hand on Jungkook’s shoulder. “I’m making him an offer, sub-Alpha. What are you going to do about it? Do you really think you’re gonna deter other Alphas away with that pitiful Scenting?”

Seokjin clenched his fists at his side, already feeling in his bones, like a ghost muscular movement, the punch that he could swing at the man’s pretty-boy face. His shoulders were twitching in anticipation of the movement. It was so close. “He shouldn’t have to deter anyone in the first place, asshole. He said to back off so back off.”

Louis frowned, dropping his hand from Jungkook’s shoulder. There was a moment between them when Seokjin could almost tangibly feel their aggressive Scents competing, tinged with the bitter aftertaste of a territorial challenge. The room seemed to darken, even though they were sitting right next to a sunny picture window, and he saw Jungkook standing up in concern out of the corner of his eye. The Scent of fear was notably mingled into the challenging Alpha’s Scent, and Seokjin could see the firmness in the man’s eyes flicker into concern. He knew he’d be no match for Seokjin.

“If you’re not gonna protect him properly, someone else is gonna come in more willing to do the job. I don’t make the rules, I’m just saying.” Louis turned to Jungkook, “I’ll see you around.” It was more of a demand or a rough statement than a goodbye, and Seokjin audibly growled as the man walked past him to leave. Seokjin turned and watched him go, not blinking or loosening the tension in his shoulders. After a moment, he sensed Jungkook stepping up to him.

“Seokjin?” Jungkook said gently. He turned back to see Jungkook watching him with curious eyes. He gave the smallest of smiles, as though uncertain. “I guess, uh, this means you got--”

“YOU,” Seokjin growled again, pointing an accusing finger right in Jungkook’s surprised face. “Don’t talk. Grab your stuff. We’re going home.”

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Jungkook sat in the passenger seat of the truck, staring worriedly over at Seokjin as he drove. Ever since Louis had first walked up to their table, a heavy Alpha Scent had been emanating from the elder man like thick smoke, almost choking Jungkook with his sensitive nose. Seokjin’s face had also gotten this deliberate hardness to it, as though his face down to the very molecules had tensed and pulled taut. He ran one large hand through his hair as Jungkook watched, revealing dark eyebrows crinkled harshly together like an intricate suggestion. The red in his eyes had, in that moment of actual challenge to Louis, gone from a thick ring to changing his eye color completely, until he looked nearly demonic. Looking directly into his face had caused goosebumps to rise on Jungkook’s arms, his gaze caught for a long moment by the deep glistening red with its intricacies, like his eyes contained caverns and ravines, gleaming brightly and swirling in accusation.

In a way, he was beautiful like this.

In a way, he was terrifying.

They didn’t speak for the entire drive home, and when they got to the house, Jungkook hovered behind him like a pup following its owner while Seokjin stormed his way up the stairs without looking back. Namjoon and Yoongi were seated at the kitchen table, talking about something they were reading between them, and looked up in concern, probably sensing Seokjin’s lingering fury. They glanced over at Jungkook in question, who merely ducked his head in apology before rushing up the stairs after Seokjin.

He reached the top of the landing just in time to see Seokjin slamming the door to his room shut, and Jungkook tentatively reached out to test the handle, breathing a sigh of relief that it hadn’t been locked.

He was a little surprised to find Seokjin standing just inside the room, his broad back turned toward the doorway, and Jungkook could tell that he had his arms crossed as he faced the wall. Quietly, Jungkook closed the door after himself.

“Seokjin…?” Jungkook said quietly, stepping closer but not too close.

There was a long moment of baited silence, and then Seokjin’s shoulders rose, accompanied by the sound of him taking in what Jungkook prayed was a calming breath before he turned to face the Omega.

“You really just let them treat you like that?” Seokjin’s voice was surprisingly calm and quiet, but his tone was low in such a way that Jungkook could almost hear the bubbling anger as it boiled just barely beneath the surface, the red in his eyes still a warning as clear as the protective Alpha Scent.
Jungkook blinked.

“Seokjin, that’s...that’s how most Alphas are.” He gave a little shrug. “You know that. I used to get angry about it a lot, but...it’s safer for me to deflect most of the time.”

Seokjin frowned, apparently not liking the answer. Jungkook knew that Seokjin knew. It wasn’t like anyone hid the fact that Omegas were viewed as the ones to be protected, and Alphas were the protectors. What Louis had said was practically word-for-word from most sex education courses, after all. The world of Bangtan pack, small and strange, was an anomaly - the outside world wasn’t about to suddenly turn over for their sakes.

“I don’t like it. I don’t like that you can’t even have a normal day.”

Jungkook let out a little exhale that was somewhere in the realms of a sigh and a chuckle, a little puff of air that revealed how endearing he found it that that was Seokjin’s main concern, after all the teasing he’d gone through that day. He made it so hard not to pull him closer and tease him some more, in all honesty. Jungkook stepped forward, smiling softly up at him.

“You know me,” Jungkook smiled, “After being with Namjoon and Yoongi so long, there’s no way I’d roll over for just any Alpha that crosses my path and smells halfway good.” Seokjin winced at the last part, as though hearing Jungkook even suggest another Alpha’s Scent could be appealing to him was physically painful. “But even if I do my best to prove that I’m strong and capable as an Omega, they still won’t always take me seriously.”

Seokjin sighed. Jungkook wondered if this was something Seokjin had had a blind spot for, being an Alpha. His only other relationship had been with an Alpha as well, so it wasn’t as if it was something he’d had to deal with before. Jungkook smiled, seeing Seokjin’s blind fury starting to wind down. He stepped forward, wrapping his arms around Seokjin’s broad shoulders, pushing his nose up underneath the soft chin and making a pleased little humming noise. After a moment’s hesitation, he felt Seokjin sigh again, heavily this time as he wrapped his arms around Jungkook.

“Okay, but why didn’t you tell any one of them that your Alpha was literally sitting right next to you all day, though?” Seokjin queried after a moment, now no longer sounding furious but instead, agitated.

“Well...you know,” Jungkook mumbled into Seokjin’s neck, “It might make things easier if you would Scent me properly, since everyone seems to think I smell like a Noble, and I’m an Unmated Omega to boot. I told you I wanted to go to class smelling like you, after all. So if you would just--”
Jungkook was cut off by the rough way Seokjin suddenly snatched him by the shoulders, twisting them around and pushing Jungkook down onto the mattress. Bouncing a little and staring up at Seokjin in surprise, he watched the Alpha crawl over him, eyes now encircled in red, as he straddled Jungkook’s thighs, leaning into Jungkook’s Scent gland. The usual pause, the normal hesitation, was utterly foregone as he wasted no time in heavily inhaling Jungkook’s Scent, pressing in deeply in that intimate way that made Jungkook’s spine tingle, and he arched his back a bit, twisted his head to give Seokjin more access. Jungkook gasped, his nerves shot on edge as Seokjin proceeded to run his hands up and down Jungkook’s body, pressing his fingers into his hair, brushing his wrists over Jungkook’s shoulders, leaning his hips onto Jungkook’s. He would definitely have more than a weak remembrance of Seokjin’s Scent - this Scenting would stay with him for days.

“Oh--” Jungkook managed to wheeze, wrapping his hands around the back of Seokjin’s neck, to trail upwards and run his fingers through his soft, tangled hair. Seokjin continued Scenting him until Jungkook started to moan, lying there on the bed more than a little dizzied. Soft, hot lips pressed wetly to his collarbone, his jaw, his ear. When the sensation of a rough bite against his earlobe shot pain through him, Jungkook’s eyes shot back open and he jolted, still caged in by the Alpha as his crooked fingers yanked Jungkook’s shirt up, bunching it up under his underarms before thrusting his body downward, sending Seokjin’s exploring mouth to Jungkook’s chest. In times before, Seokjin had mostly kept his touches light and gentle, as though afraid to mark Jungkook or leave too many traces of his presence, but that seemed to be the opposite to his current goal, as he licked headily at Jungkook’s nipple, making Jungkook’s back arch up into him needily.

“Oh f-fuck…” The Omega was surprised by the harshness in his own voice, the realness of the phrase that had more of an edge to it than how the sensation had felt in his head, and thereby excited him more. When Seokjin started to bite there, too, he couldn’t help but frantically scrabble at Seokjin’s shoulders for purchase, his fingernails digging in as he tried to grip something solid. Seokjin’s hands, in reply, wrapped around Jungkook’s hips, holding him so firmly he was sure he’d have bruises later.

“Jin…”

“Mmm?” Seokjin didn’t seem like much of a talker, once he got in the mood, Jungkook decided.

“Don’t hold back,” he managed quietly. Seokjin paused, lifting his head, the movement alone making his gut clench, at the question in Seokjin’s eyes, at the Alpha neediness already glowing
there in his gaze. “I...the things you want… I want them, too. So...don’t hold back.”

Seokjin stared at him for a long moment, as though giving himself time to process Jungkook’s words. His voice was surprisingly even and collected when he finally said, “Do you know all that that implies, Jungkook?”

Jungkook smiled, then laughed, placing his hands on Seokjin’s cheeks as he gazed at him fondly. “Yes. I don’t want to wait for Mating. I want every Alpha or Beta, or Omega even, to smell you on me so they don’t even have to ask. You saw how annoying it was.”

At that, Seokjin gave a snarl of realization. “You did all that stuff today on purpose,” he stated. It wasn’t even a question, and Jungkook laughed again, pushing in Seokjin’s cheeks and laughing harder at the look of petulance on his squished face.

“Maybe,” was all he said. “What are you going to do about it? You’re not jealous, are you?”

“You little shit,” Seokjin growled, gripping harder at his hips. Jungkook smiled, closing his eyes a bit at the sensation, surprised that he really enjoyed feeling the power behind Seokjin’s fingertips. When he opened his eyes again, Seokjin’s face was mere inches from his own, staring down at Jungkook with a distant sort of awe in his expression, lips gently parted. Jungkook could see his gaze flicker from Jungkook’s eyes, to his chin, to his forehead and brows, and then to his lips. He tilted his chin up, silently beckoning the Alpha on, and he slowly lowered his head down to meet Jungkook’s lips in a soft kiss.

“Jin,” Jungkook whispered quietly, conspiratorially. “Lock the door.”

The door was locked within seconds, and Seokjin was standing at the foot of the bed, dropping his jeans to the floor before leaning over to yank Jungkook’s sweatpants away, then his shirt. For some reason, the ease with which he accomplished this made Jungkook want to laugh - or perhaps that was just the nervousness starting to bubble in his gut as Seokjin came back to encompass him, as if shielding Jungkook with his entire body and his whole being. They held gazes for what felt like ages, and Jungkook felt that Seokjin was waiting for a go-head, a signal that yes, Jungkook was definitely ready. But first he just needed to make sure he could breathe. After a second, Jungkook gave a nod, and Seokjin refreshed his previous ministrations, with all of the fervor of before but with a trace of something like gentleness, but closer to appreciation. He trailed kisses and traced his thumb along Jungkook’s torso, trying to find his most sensitive spots, and when he got to the rough spot in the front of Jungkook’s boxers, he patted it softly in such a comical way, like one would to a pet, that Jungkook did chuckle, and his burning nervousness eased up for a moment. Seokjin smiled, shifting down Jungkook’s body until he could press his thumb roughly into the skin of Jungkook’s thighs, lifting up a leg until Jungkook’s knee was bent. Seokjin morphed a kiss into a suckling that heightened until it stung, and still he kept going, leaning in to Jungkook’s thigh. The Omega could
feel the edges of his teeth, and then suddenly he was biting at the skin there, marking it with a bruise as Jungkook’s heart shot up into his throat. All he could do was lie there on his back and pant as he watched Seokjin continue to mark him with bites.

Nine...ten...eleven...twelve...

“Okay,” Jungkook gasped, intensely irritated. “Are you going to fuck me or are you going to just gnaw at my thighs all day?”

Seokjin laughed, slowly pulling Jungkook’s boxers off. “Well, we did have to leave in the middle of lunch…”

“What an asshole,” Jungkook sighed to the ceiling in exasperation. Then, he grunted as Seokjin suddenly bent both of Jungkook’s knees, pressing them to his chest.

“Look, you’re a turkey now.”

“Fucking shut up.” Jungkook groaned, but then he imagined what he must look like and he started to laugh despite himself, half moaning in complaint, “Noooo…”

“I’ve always liked the thigh meat best anyways.”

“I’m gonna slap you if you don’t stop.”

“Turkookie?”

“Oh my god.”

Seokjin just laughed, and in a way, Jungkook was grateful that Seokjin wasn’t letting the atmosphere stay so strained and awkward. He could probably smell the nervousness on the Omega. Seokjin leaned forward, his chest pressing up against Jungkook’s calves as he craned his neck, kissing Jungkook again.
This time, when Jungkook pressed up, giving a little whimper and silently asking to deepen the kiss, Seokjin complied. Feeling the warmth and tasting Seokjin so intensely made his stomach clench and then tighten in the loveliest way. Jungkook gave a little hum of appreciation, closing his eyes to sink into the tickling sensation as Seokjin kissed him harder, more roughly and with more need. But all too soon, he was pulling away, and Jungkook’s heart stopped momentarily at the little trail of saliva that connected them for the briefest moment before Seokjin was sitting up on the bed again, lips looking swollen and eyes sparkling with anticipation.

“Hold your knees, like this,” Seokjin instructed gently, and Jungkook complied obediently, smiling softly and not realizing what Seokjin was planning next until Seokjin’s head ducked out of view and suddenly there was a burning hot wetness at his entrance, and Jungkook actually cried out from sheer surprise. Instinctively, he moved as if to sit up and drop his knees down, but Seokjin had already moved his hands to either of Jungkook’s pale cheeks, pulling them apart and pressing heavily down, effectively pinning him back as he continued to lick and tease the puckered skin there experimentally. Jungkook wasn’t sure how to react, wasn’t sure if he liked the way his body was suddenly flashing with an undeniable feverishness.

“W-why are you…?” Jungkook gasped, his very voice seeming to flutter up through his throat as if the butterflies in his stomach were dislodging his words. He tried to crane his head to see Seokjin around the bruised and teeth-marked thickness of his legs, but he could only spy the T-shirt clad shoulders. After a moment, Seokjin lifted his head, panting a little as he stared at Jungkook.

“Open your mouth,” he instructed. Jungkook complied. “Wider.” He dropped his jaw, confused. Seokjin took two of his fingers and pressed them inside Jungkook’s mouth, before his head dived back down again, even though it was probably a difficult angle for Seokjin himself.

Left awkwardly with no instructions, Jungkook lay there for a moment, blinking confusedly at the salty bitter taste of Seokjin’s fingers pressed down against his tongue. Then, without warning, the fingers wriggled back and forth, callouses abrasive against the delicate inside of his mouth, and Jungkook’s stomach did another flip. Taking that as his cue, he began to suck at the fingertips, pleased when the hurried, impatient movements of the fingers slowed to a steady movement like breathing. Not wanting to accidentally bite down on the knuckles, Jungkook couldn’t properly swallow, and soon found drool starting to form at the corners of his mouth, dribbling down the edges and coating Seokjin’s fingers, which scooped at the insides of his cheeks even as Seokjin’s tongue pressed more deeply into him, making Jungkook’s breath catch.

The fingers pulled away, leaving his mouth feeling strangely parched and definitely empty, and he stopped to reel for a moment, thinking he could figure out what came next. This knowledge still didn’t make it the easiest thing in the world, taking Seokjin’s long, crooked fingers down to the second knuckle, but he did, sharply inhaling and unable to stop himself from wriggling his hips upwards once Seokjin’s finger curled upwards, brushing up against something deep inside him that made something even deeper than his gut quiver in anticipation.
“Are you okay?” Seokjin asked. Jungkook opened his eyes and looked down to see Seokjin, hair utterly mussed and pink lips swollen, looking at Jungkook with concern even as his hand was teasing at his insides. Jungkook nodded, closing his eyes again as Seokjin hit the spot again, and he tried to hold in his moan but couldn’t. He gasped at the second finger, writhing around as he started to breath more and more heavily, each intake of air a little more desperate, not sure how to handle the stimulation as his body started to accept that the intrusion was making him feel amazing.

“Jungkook,” came Seokjin’s voice, quiet and low. Jungkook just nodded, eyes still clenched shut. Then, there was a hand in his hair, brushing back his bangs, and the palm against his forehead felt amazing, too. A kiss was pressed to his forehead, and Jungkook opened his eyes to look at Seokjin, who after pulling back was slipping off his boxers, preparing himself to enter Jungkook. Curiously, dazed and still wired from how Seokjin had been working him up, Jungkook watched Seokjin slip the condom on, his member now erect as he positioned himself below Jungkook, beyond where he could see. He looked back up at Jungkook, noticing his wide, anxious eyes, and he smiled.

In the end, it was such a small, miniscule, quickly-passing moment. Brilliant but awkward, silent but with a thick sort of something to the atmosphere that made it hard to breathe. Seokjin slipped inside of Jungkook’s body the way he had slipped into his life - quietly, smoothly, like it was the most easiest thing in the world for him to do. He had gone from a stranger to a friend to a lover without really even trying, and now Jungkook suddenly couldn’t imagine not having him there, even if just on the edges of his consciousness, the edges of his nerves. He filled Jungkook from the inside out and made him feel heavy with purpose and sensitivity, the explosion of new, unfamiliar sensations making him so shocked he couldn’t really respond, only soak it in. The heat and sting of his first time with Seokjin literally took his breath away. When Jungkook felt a strong wave of Seokjin’s clean Scent waft down to him, he finally took in a deep inhale of air, sighing as he felt his body adjust to how full he felt now. Seokjin paused above him, waiting until Jungkook ran a hand up his arm, squeezing at his bicep and nodding. When Seokjin started to move, that was really when Jungkook began to feel the full aspect of Seokjin’s length, and he leaned back heavily into the pillow, his neck exposed as he clawed at Seokjin, moaning.

“Oh, oh shit,” Jungkook managed, falling into the rhythm after a bit of a strange start. Was this feeling like a wave? Or like a slap to the face? Jungkook wasn’t sure which, but either way, he found himself breathing, “More.” And somehow, Seokjin went deeper, as well as faster, and Jungkook’s feet curled up, ankles messily searching to wrap around Seokjin’s waist, clumsily yanking Seokjin closer toward him as though Seokjin was his air, that he needed to take inside so he could breathe again. The bed creaked and Jungkook started to gasp, then whimper, then moan, and he heard Seokjin’s breaths above him, felt the hot exhale on his cheeks.

This was nothing like what he’d dreamed of - it was infinitely better to feel the real Seokjin, instead of dream Seokjin. To have his Alpha touch him, instead of just touching himself. He had been waiting a long time, and this felt right. He hoped Seokjin could feel it, too. Maybe they would never be able to segregate the intricate somethings between them, maybe they would never be able to distinguish what was their wolf, what was their Bond, what was themselves. Maybe there wasn’t even a difference, that gray area, that minglement, being their true identities.
With one hand, Jungkook grabbed at his own cock, easily using the dampness from the pre-cum that had been accumulating there to rub at it, just a little off time with Seokjin’s thrusts. Jungkook’s mouth gaped open, moaning brazenly. He was reminded of that first time he had dreamt of Seokjin, the guilt and secrecy he had felt, the strangeness of the draw to the Alpha. At that time, he couldn’t have imagined things would turn out like this, or that he would be so changed by the time it happened. He gave a little whimper, using the hand he had wrapped around Seokjin’s neck to tug him closer, pulling him into a heated kiss. The roughness of Seokjin’s movements made their teeth knock together, the wetness still lingering in their mouths adding to the obscene slaps and sticky sounds of their conjoining. Jungkook sighed as he fell back into the pillows, feeling the heat at his core building up like a pressure, and him chasing after it with Seokjin’s Scent all around him, his gaspy breaths in his ear, their clammy skin pressed together. Jungkook’s hand continued to pump at his cock greedily, while his other hand clung desperately to Seokjin’s now sweaty T-shirt, letting out a little cry as he felt himself nearing the edge. Seokjin responded by twisting his slender hips with a wider angle, pressing in deeper and slamming up against that sensitive bundle of nerves right in Jungkook’s inner core, and he was beyond.

He trembled like a leaf and came in little bursts, still brokenly moaning out as he finished, quickly becoming oversensitive to Seokjin’s continued abuse of his insides. He cried out from the shock of overstimulation, pained by white-heat. Seokjin immediately paused, and Jungkook grunted in disapproval, shaking his head.

“No, go. Please.”

Seokjin, looking a bit skeptical but currently not in a position to refuse purely based on politeness, kept going, even when Jungkook’s eyes started to water, biting at his lip in ecstasy as the coil in his belly wound again.

“Seokjinnie, I--” he started, quickly cut off when Seokjin orgasmed, his movements almost halting as he paused, silently gasping through his own high, his body tense until suddenly, it wasn’t. He was paused above Jungkook, both of them panting, and Seokjin swallowed heavily.

“Jungkook.”

It was all he said, and it was enough to cause Jungkook to halt. He reached up and brushed the sweat-clumped locks of hair away from Seokjin’s face, studying him with a curious pursing of his lips. Never before had he been so surrounded by Seokjin’s Scent, and he wondered if this was how it always felt, this feeling of calm serenity that was seeping in after the intensity of the last several minutes.

Seokjin’s eyes were filling with tears just at the edges, and Jungkook blinked slowly, feeling content and glad that Seokjin hadn’t pulled out just yet, just lying there with him. He had his Alpha now,
and his Alpha had him. It was a strange sensation.

“I love you,” Jungkook said, his tone revealing how surprised he himself was at the revelation. Seokjin’s eyes widened, then he smiled softly, little creases forming at the edges of his lips like a gentle acquiescence. “I’ve loved you for...well, I dunno how long.”

“Y’know,” Seokjin smirked, “For such a ‘tough Kookie,’ you can be such a romantic little drama king.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes. “Says the man who screamed in a cafeteria full of people this afternoon. You know, since you technically initiated this, you still owe me for getting jealous. I already know what I want.”

“Fine, fine,” Seokjin chuckled, slipping gingerly out of Jungkook and reaching over to run a hand through his hair for a few minutes. When he spoke again, it was quiet and more tentative than Jungkook would have expected, but his words were clear and imprinted themselves in his chest deeper than he was sure any Bonding could even do.

“I love you, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello lovelies~
I don't have much to add comment-wise this chapter, I'm honestly kind of too exhausted for it. lol XD But I hope you enjoy this climactic (lol) moment for Jinkook!

Usually when writing for male characters, I don't like to have the whole 'I love you' thing so blatant, bc guys and feelings y'know, but it felt right for this moment, so I hope it seems believable.

When I wrote the 'Turkookie' bit I couldn't decide if I wanted to high five myself or shoot myself in the foot. lmao

Thank you for all your support! ;A;

Later, lovelies~
Seokjin was, in a word, amazed. He was amazed by Jungkook, he was amazed that he was wanted, he was amazed by the beautiful sincerity with which Jungkook did everything.

He was also cumulatively amazed by the sight of Jungkook beneath him, curved pink lips parted delicately as he moaned, shutting his eyes in blissed out overstimulation. His head tilted back, exposing his neck and allowing a thick veil of his Scent to surround Seokjin, sinking him into a black leather sea, a comforting yet biting smell that suddenly made Seokjin wonder what it would be like to make them mingle forever. Jungkook’s bared neck, dotted with sweat and moving like a flesh-colored sea wave, beckoned him in. He had never felt so compelled to Mate anyone as he was in that moment, as he stared down at Jungkook. Jungkook, the Omega with the rare but unapologetic, open
laugh. Jungkook, the one ready to break expectations of him at any turn. Jungkook, who had already grown and morphed so much in the relatively short time Seokjin had known him, that a selfish, childish part of him was afraid of how else he would change, worried that he would go too fast for Seokjin to keep up.

Tears had already been stinging at his eyes as he felt, rather than consciously thought, that Jungkook loved him, and was awash with the very real self-assurance and belief that it was as pure of a love as one could find in a world so impure. Jungkook hadn’t had to (in the eyes and scrutiny of a harsh society with its cobweb of nuances and unspoken rules) “sacrifice” anything to be Seokjin’s Omega, as Taehyung was viewed to have done for Jimin’s sake. Seokjin hoped he never had to. He was just there, ready and content to be near him.

“I love you,” he’d said. The words could be spoken in so many languages, so many flavors and colors. Did Jungkook even know that? Was he aware of the spite and duplicity that could be threaded throughout the three words he had spoken with such sweetness, such simple directness? Seokjin, in a way, hoped he knew; yet in the same instant hoped he never would.

When Jungkook rolled over and curled up against Seokjin’s bare chest, the back of his hand brushing up against the skin, the Alpha’s breath caught. Jungkook’s breathing was shallow and even against Seokjin’s neck, though he knew the Omega was awake. Seokjin reached over and ran his hand through Jungkook’s hair, his fingertips still smelling a bit of the stale dampness from their cleanup earlier. It was nice, like this, to just be close to him. He could be content with this.

“Mm…” Jungkook moaned happily under his hand, nuzzling in closer. “I’m already hard again.”

Seokjin paused his hand in its movements, arching an eyebrow. “You what?”

“When you kept going after I came…”

“You told me to!” Seokjin gasped, a panic rising up in his throat and heating the back of his neck suddenly.

“Yeah, I know. But what I’m saying is, it made me hard again.”

As if he needed to punctuate the point, Jungkook shifted forward, lifting his thigh up and hooking it up over Seokjin’s waist as he lay on his side. Seokjin could certainly tell he wasn’t lying.
Seokjin sighed, wanting to laugh. “I guess this is youth?”

Jungkook just looked up at him for a moment with the most playful, impish expression imaginable. He was fighting hard to maintain serious eye contact, but the smirk pulling his lips from his teeth was detracting from that effort. “It’s my turn now, right?”

Raising his eyebrows and feeling his cheeks tightening with a smile as well, Seokjin asked, “What do you mean ‘your turn’?”

“I mean,” Jungkook wriggled into a sitting position, seemingly unashamed of his nakedness as the (now mismatched but clean) bed sheet fell away, “It’s time for my prize for winning the jealousy game. Are you ready?”

Seokjin chuckled. He wasn’t sure why Jungkook was so hell bent on this win in particular, but he couldn’t deny it was endearing to see him so excited. “Sure, why not?”

Jungkook practically flew off the bed, then almost toppled to the ground, his body already sore and stiff from earlier. Seokjin shot up in the bed with concern, only to find Jungkook on the ground laughing at himself.

“I forgot,” Jungkook said by way of explanation. Seokjin sighed.

“What an idiot. Imagine if your first time had been during your heat. You’d have gone way overboard.”

Jungkook looked over his shoulder, smirking devilishly. “Wait here.” The Omega stood and quickly pulled on his pants, vanishing out of the room. Presumably, he was going to his own room for something, so Seokjin took the moment to lay back against the pillows, breathing in their lingering Scents that hovered above the bed. The door opened gently, and he heard it click shut again, but he continued to keep his eyes closed, listening. The mattress dipped down as Jungkook crawled over Seokjin to straddle him, his weight making Seokjin grunt a little and smile, his hands coming up to search for Jungkook’s waist. The Alpha wanted to send up a little thankful prayer to the powers above for creating Jungkook’s thighs, the thick muscular legs squeezing in at his waist as he sighed in appreciation. But suddenly, there was a little chuckle, and he found his wrists being held, something slightly abrasive brushing up against the soft skin there.. Seokjin opened one eye, and Jungkook was fiddling with a pair of black fake-fur lined handcuffs, trying to force them down over Jin’s bony wrists. The Alpha jerked in surprise, halfway sitting up.
“What are you doing?!”

Jungkook’s beaming smile fell instantly, and he almost looked surprised. “Well, I’m not good at ropes yet, so Yoongi said this would be --”

“What?!”

The Omega looked genuinely confused, and a cynical part of Seokjin’s brain wondered if he was making that expression on purpose, to throw him off. “But… you said I could pick what we try next…”

“Yeah, I thought you’d want to try, I dunno…” he flailed, and he knew he was flailing. He’d really had no set idea of what Jungkook had meant, he had just liked seeing him that happy. Fuck, I’m really far gone, aren’t I?

“Something else…” he finished lamely.

“But Jin ,” Jungkook wriggled his hips, moving his bottom down a little further until he was able to lean down into Seokjin’s face, smiling sweetly at him. “‘I want what you want,’ remember?”

Seokjin paused. He had said that, and Seokjin had even asked to make sure he knew what he was suggesting. But in all honesty, he had thought that was a concept, a sort of theoretical sharing that would take years to come to any sort of actualization, much less this soon. “Don’t you want to, I don’t know…take things slower? Aren’t you worried you’re moving too fast?”

“Fuck no,” Jungkook stated firmly. “I’ve suspected for years that I’m not vanilla.”

At that, Kim Seokjin nearly choked, falling into a coughing fit as Jungkook sat and grinned at him.

“You seem surprised…?” Jungkook teased. “We’re Bonded, you know. It’s like a soulmate thing. I basically grew up in Bangtan pack, you know, and if you’re as quiet as me and live in a pack house with Presented wolves long enough, eventually you’ll have walked in on things and overheard things you weren’t ‘supposed to.’ Yoongi was never shy. He’s quiet, but not shy. Jimin’s got some kinks that go way beyond me. And Namjoon’s as vanilla as they come but he always went out of his way to have awkward conversations about sexual freedom and things. I just never really had any experience, so you came along and…well…” he lifted one shoulder in a shrug. “I was pretty freaked out at first. It didn’t help you were so good-looking.” With this, Jungkook gave a sigh, as if the weight of the world was on his shoulders for having a good-looking partner.
“I can’t believe I ever thought of you as innocent,” Seokjin rolled his eyes. “When you were walking around watching everybody else like some kinda puppy voyeur.”

“I told you,” Jungkook said, his thumb rubbing gently along the fabric of the handcuffs. He looked down at his hands for a moment, then tilted his head slightly to the side as he stared straight into his Alpha’s eyes. “But don’t get me wrong. I’m scared shitless.”

Seokjin actually breathed out a sigh of relief at that. “That’s a fucking relief, because I am, too.”

“But I know you won’t hurt me. Not that way, you know? I trust you, and I know you trust me, so… I want to let you be yourself, that self, but only in front of me.”

The way he had said it, his voice going gentler and quieter, more demure but somehow more honest and sincere, made Seokjin’s chest clench. “You really love me, don’t you?”

Jungkook rolled his eyes, his lips quirking a little in embarrassment.

“So why handcuffs?”

“Because you’re always holding back,” Jungkook reasoned simply, “If you give me some of that control, then maybe you’ll feel like you don’t have to hold back as much. Like...I can walk away at any time.”

“Please don’t walk out on someone you’ve handcuffed,” Seokjin teased, a nervous laugh bubbling up in his throat. Jungkook slapped his hand lightly against Seokjin’s shoulder. “But really, I think...that makes sense. Honestly I’m still worried, but, I’ll try it with you.”

“Well, you did promise,” Jungkook said, sitting up straight and taking Seokjin’s hands, clicking the handcuffs around them. Seokjin felt something in his stomach flip when he saw Jungkook holding the handcuffs, and the feeling only got stronger as he watched Jungkook bind his hands together, a fascinated look on his face. The cuffs only let him move his hands an inch or so back and forth, and he tested them out experimentally. In all honesty, he thought they felt kind of fragile, and he suspected he could have broken them if he really wanted, but he decided not to say anything about it. Let Jungkook feel his pride over the handcuffs as he would.

“We need a safe word,” Seokjin reminded him, “Something like ‘honeydew’ or ‘seagull,’ something
you’re not likely to say every day. Not like ‘do-

“Pikachu,” Jungkook said firmly. “I choose Pikachu.”

Seokjin laughed. Perhaps it wasn’t sexy or appealing to, as he wore black fuzzy handcuffs while naked beneath Jungkook and his confident stance and his claim to Pikachu without a moment’s hesitation. “Are you serious? You’re not even gonna think about it a little?”

Jungkook then sent Seokjin a reprimanding glare, and Seokjin realized that that was exactly what Jungkook had done - he had had a long time to think about it.

The Alpha sighed, “Okay, Pikachu it is. I can’t believe this.” But a smile twitched at the edges of Seokjin’s mouth, despite himself. It was fitting, and hilarious, and definitely not something he wanted to be so commonplace that it could get confusing in the bedroom, heaven forbid.

“Okay, ready?” Jungkook half-sang, and Seokjin nodded. He could now hear that underlying trace of awkward nervousness in the Omega’s voice, if his sudden wriggling around and the change in his Scent weren’t signal enough. Seokjin wasn’t sure where to put his hands, so he kept them curled up at his chest for the moment. Jungkook shifted his hips, pressing down onto Seokjin, and even through his sweatpants he could feel that Jungkook really was aroused again already, a slight roughness to his movements as he rubbed dryly up against Seokjin’s crotch. It felt nice, but he could tell even Jungkook was distracted, looking as if he wasn’t able to concentrate. After a moment, with a little sound of frustration, Jungkook peeled off all clothing between them, returning to wrap around Seokjin’s waist with a higher note of desperation as he continued. Seokjin watched Jungkook hump faster and faster, switching to Seokjin’s thigh, grabbing himself with his hand, then Seokjin’s member, then his own, then humping against him again. Seokjin tried to help - he really did - by rolling his hips upwards into Jungkook, trying to match the boy’s rhythms, but something unspoken was hovering in the air, thickening as Jungkook’s irritation bubbled. Physically speaking, things were moving as they should, and even Seokjin was catching up to Jungkook’s level of hardness, even though Jungkook’s dick was now starting to color with the abrasive way he had been abusing it. Physically, it was happening, but something was off, like a sense was off, an angle wrong, or a mood off. In all honesty, it was like having a small animal humping his leg, and Seokjin was feeling mostly bored by the situation, and more than a little disappointed, but what he felt was nothing compared to what Jungkook was going through, his face hardening and his bottom lip caught in his teeth. Seokjin moved his handcuffed hands up from his chest to rest them above his head on the pillow, and the movement caught Jungkook’s eye, and he hissed.

“Fuck!” Jungkook snapped in anger, sitting up abruptly. “Why is it so different?”

“Well, we did just have our first time, like, an hour ago,” Seokjin offered, his tone as gentle and placating as he could manage. “Maybe it’s just not the right time.”
“No! That’s not it, I’m...I’m really ready, but..” Jungkook exhaled out in exasperation, his shoulders slumping as he sat up, his eyes fixated on Seokjin’s hands above his head. Jungkook’s mouth dropped open to form a little ‘O’ shape that was endearing and, unfortunately - given the situation - made Seokjin imagine less than pure images. Jungkook suddenly slapped down on Seokjin’s chest, “That’s it!”

“Ow, hey! What’s it?”

“I want to be the one tied up,” Jungkook stated simply. “I don’t like it when it’s you.”

Seokjin’s face crumpled in confusion. He drew his hands back down and rested them against his stomach, and Jungkook’s gaze flickered down and locked onto the handcuffs. “But the whole point was--”

“I know, I know. But it won’t work if it’s you. You have to do it to me. I want you to have control, I can’t do it.”

Seokjin frowned. He was making an offer that was much more appealing, much more tempting, than he believed the Omega knew. “But...But I can’t do it if it’s you, Jungkook. I just...I don’t wanna hurt you or anything, and...I don’t wanna make that image of an Alpha the image you keep for the rest of your life, even if it feels good.”

“But I want you to. I want you to be that Alpha for me, at least when we’re having sex.”

“I know, but... I can’t.” Seokjin frowned sadly, seeing the crestfallen look on Jungkook’s face. He really had been looking forward to this, and Seokjin knew that Jungkook rarely failed to get what he wanted. He was a bit spoiled in that way. Seokjin lifted his hands up so he could touch the edges of Jungkook’s cheeks with his fingertips. “Maybe we can try it later, when I--”

“Wait!” Jungkook’s face lifted up, eyes sparkling, “What if it wasn’t me ?”

“Just wait here, okay?” Jungkook started to slip off the mattress, when Seokjin vaulted himself up into a sitting position, holding out his handcuffed hands in a plea.

“Jungkook!"

The Omega already had his hand on the door handle when he turned around at the rough-sounding reprimand, then laughed. “Oh, sorry.” He walked over and unlocked the handcuffs, dropping them to the corner of the mattress as Seokjin rolled his wrists around experimentally. Jungkook tilted his head to the side as he watched Seokjin, piecing together another one of his ‘brilliant’ ideas. “Can you...lie down and... keep your eyes closed? Like before? I’ll tell you when to open them.”

“What? Okay, I guess. But don’t blame me if I fall asleep.”

For the second time, Jungkook hurriedly pulled his pants on and escaped from the room again. Seokjin sighed as he fell back against the pillows, closing his eyes. This time, when Jungkook slipped back in, there was a strange sort of trace of fear to his Scent, and more excitement than before. It crackled in the air like untapped energy, and Seokjin was strangely tempted to open his eyes, particularly when Jungkook didn’t immediately return to the bed. The lock had clicked, but there was no sign of him moving closer.

“Jungkook?” he called out, uncertain.

“Don’t open them yet,” Jungkook ordered, and there was a rustling sound. Seokjin furrowed his brow in confusion, not expecting the sound of fabric. After a moment of silence, Jungkook’s light footsteps moved across to the far end of the room, and his voice was higher-pitched in poorly hidden concern as he suddenly asked, “You haven’t peeked, have you?”

“No, I haven’t.” The Alpha couldn’t help but laugh, laying a hand over his eyes to help reassure the worried aura emanating from Jungkook. “How much longer?”

“N-not much...” More rustling sounds, and the sounds of containers being opened, and a quietly whispered, “F-fuck...my stupid hands are shaking..” that Seokjin was half-certain Jungkook didn’t think he’d heard. Seokjin licked at his lips a little, wanting to ask if Jungkook was alright, but not wanting to interrupt this whatever-it-was for his sake.

After a while, the noises stopped, and Seokjin turned his head, hand still over his face. “Now?”

“Okay, promise you won’t laugh at me.”
“I won’t,” Seokjin said, but he was already chuckling, wondering what could be more laughable - and simultaneously heartbreaking - than having had to watch Jungkook uselessly dry hump his leg a little while ago.

“If you laugh I’m going to punch you.”

Seokjin, master of his own face when he wished, suddenly sobered up. Seriously, he said, “I won’t laugh. Just let me see.”

“O-okay. Open your eyes.”

And so he did, dropping his hand down to his side and lifting his face up a bit to find Jungkook standing at the edge of the room, staring sheepishly with his head tilted downwards at the floor. He was wearing a white long-sleeved sweater, the sleeves rolled up to three-quarter length and the top of his black and white striped turtleneck peering out over the top. That was all pretty normal, although a bit warm for the recent spring weather. But what struck Seokjin’s attention was the short black skirt, its slightly ruffled edges tugged on by Jungkook’s nervous hands, a belt tucked cutely crooked at the waist. A sizeable expanse of Jungkook’s warm-colored thighs peered out in the short space between skirt edge and the black thigh-high stockings that he wore. It took Seokjin a moment to realize that the blush on Jungkook’s cheeks wasn’t entirely his own, and that Jungkook’s curved lips, with their perfect, tight little Cupid’s bow, had been painted a bright, light red.

Jungkook himself looked terrified and kept glancing nervously up to gauge Seokjin’s face, but finding it unreadable, glanced back down. Silence hung between them heavily.

“Jungkook...I mean...wow…” Seokjin said, unsure how to word his feelings. “You’re really...you’re really cute.” He supposed that was the right word. It certainly wasn’t a lie.

The instant the praise had left his mouth, Jungkook’s painted lips had parted into a wide beaming smile, and he bolted happily over from the edge of the room to make a running leap onto the bed, landing in front of Seokjin and sitting with his knees bent, feet tucked out at either side and his thighs suddenly unbelievably close as he leaned forward to embrace Seokjin.

“I knew you’d like it! I’ve had it for so long, I thought I’d never get to wear it.” Jungkook’s hands slipped up to entwine together at the nape of Seokjin’s neck, and Jungkook leaned forward and planted a kiss on Seokjin’s cheek. He wasn’t sure if Jungkook noticed the deep swallow he’d forced down, or the way his heartrate was suddenly so fast that every beat just seemed to run together.
Jungkook giggled, staring at Seokjin’s cheek, and he was sure there was a lipstick stain there. The Omega nuzzled in, practically purring with happiness as Seokjin slowly wrapped his arms around the younger boy. “I’m so relieved...my Alpha...”

Well, fuck.

“Alpha?”

Seokjin gulped. He pulled Jungkook back a little, taking in once again the slightly crooked makeup on his face, the flush to his cheeks, the cute skin of his thigh peeking out from the skirt. The skirt. Could he do this? Jungkook suddenly looked so young and innocent, even as his pupils were now encircled in a deep blue of arousal, and the way he smiled up at Seokjin was anything but innocent.

He worked his lip for a moment. This felt very suspiciously like a gray area, that was true. But if there was one thing Jungkook had been beating to death into Seokjin’s mind, it was that he was willing and consenting to everything (begging for it, more like, and in more ways than one) to the point where to not cut them some slack was practically a disservice to all Jungkook’s efforts.

Slowly, but with a firmness to his tone, Seokjin asked, “What should I call you?”

Jungkook’s eyes seemed to sparkle with anticipation, with glee. “Call me your Omega. Just that. You never call me that, so.”

Seokjin hadn’t even thought Jungkook would have liked being called ‘my Omega,’ so he was a little surprised, but it made sense. He nodded. “Okay. And tell me what the safe word is.”

“Pikachu!” Jungkook squeaked out, getting more excited as it was sinking in that Seokjin’s reservations were slowly slipping away with the addition of this new element.

“Okay…” Seokjin smirked. “Let’s get started, then. If I call you Omega—”

“I’m your Omega.” Jungkook corrected, a childish pout on his lips.

Seokjin chuckled, reaching up and cupping one of Jungkook’s slightly powdered cheeks in one wide
hand, trailing his thumb back and forth a couple of times before trailing it lightly against Jungkook’s red lips. “Yes. My Omega.”

If he had been surprised by the skirt, he was just as equally surprised when the nickname made Jungkook physically, visibly tremble. *Wow, okay, so he’s not all talk, at least.* A part of him was a little worried that they would have a repeat of the previous handcuff incident, so he decided to take this slow, not in a refrained sort of way, but in a build-up, an atmosphere or scene building sort of way. This was a game, a play, and he wanted to do it right.

“You’re my Omega, so you can only call me your Alpha. Got it?”

“Yes, I got it.”

“Now…” Seokjin smirked, pushing Jungkook’s shoulders back a little so he could survey the Omega a little more thoroughly. Without the slow, gentle hesitation but instead with a firm sort of confidence, Seokjin laid both his hands on Jungkook’s bare thighs, gripping hard at the skin there and smirking at the way Jungkook’s mouth fell open. “You look so cute for me today, my little Omega.”

It was kind of silly, really. Especially since he wasn’t even much bigger than Jungkook. But he looked smaller, kneeling on the bed and with wide, curious eyes.

Seokjin moved his hands up, still with a solid grip, and pressed his hands up until they came to the edge of the skirt, and Jungkook’s body tensed, his breathing a little erratic. His eyes were locked on Seokjin’s face, but he made no move to either slow or speed things up. Seokjin smiled, continuing until his hands were mostly-buried under the soft folds of the skirt, his thumbs now pinching in roughly at the velvety soft skin of Jungkook’s inner thigh. Jungkook gasped.

“Aren’t you worried about me touching you like this, my little Omega?” Seokjin queried, with a tone that suggested that he knew Jungkook was not. “Are you scared of where my hands will go?”

“No, Alpha,” Jungkook breathed. Seokjin responded by twisting his wrists, sending his thumbs forward and up against the hot flesh he found there. He was surprised to find a light material blocking his access, and he pushed the skirt material up and looked down to see a pair of cotton panties, pure white with baby blue cross stitching at the hems and little bunnies printed across it, most of them hopping away from little cartoon-style patches of grass. Seokjin looked up at Jungkook in question, but he wasn’t offering any explanation, just starting at Seokjin as though he was about to consume him alive, even going so far as to lick his lips. The younger man placed his hands in Seokjin’s hair, only slightly pushing him down towards his panty-protected crotch. “Touch me,
Seokjin could do nothing but comply, pressing forward and inhaling Jungkook’s sexual smell deeply, mouthing at the warm bulge beneath the cute printed bunnies and feeling Jungkook grip roughly at his hair, moaning out Seokjin’s name already.

At that, he sat up, and could see the disappointment on Jungkook’s face.

“Why the hell did you stop?!” Jungkook snapped.

“What did you call me?” Seokjin teased, and he loved the way Jungkook’s eyes widened in horror at the realization.

“Guess you’re already in for one point of punishment,” Seokjin said flippantly, reaching off to the side to pick up the handcuffs. “Put your hands behind your back.”

“B-behind?”

Seokjin did his best to glare at Jungkook, trying not to laugh at the dumbfounded look on the Omega’s face. “WHAT did you say?”

“I--y-yes, my Alpha.” And Jungkook, surprisingly, complied, holding his hands behind his back as Seokjin tugged back the sweater sleeves from where they had fallen, slipping the handcuffs onto Jungkook easily. When he came back to sit in front of Jungkook, he was surprised with how much more sexual his posture was, just from adding the handcuffs. Was it the way his shoulders lay? Was it Jungkook’s own awareness that altered his body language? Seokjin wasn’t sure, but he didn’t waste much time before bending back down to continue. This time, when he licked at the front of Jungkook’s hardened member, he didn’t hear his own name but a gasped and needy, “A-Alpha.”

Seokjin placed his hands on the outside of Jungkook’s thighs, kneading at the flesh and muscle there while he mouthed and nibbled at Jungkook, each increasingly powerful bite making Jungkook’s cries rise higher and higher in pitch until he was basically wheezing out the ‘Alpha’ s, making Seokjin moan into his work.

“P-please…” Jungkook suddenly managed. “I want more. Alpha please.”
“Please what?” He lifted his head up, genuinely curious about what Jungkook was looking for next in this little game. The Omega had his eyes shut, biting his bottom lip as he held back more cries. When Seokjin’s ministrations paused, he opened them and looked down, gasping as though air had taken a moment to reach him.

“You know what,” Jungkook said, in a voice Seokjin assumed was him trying to sound seductive. He even went so far as to tilt one shoulder towards him, as if to make himself more appealing, arching one suggestive eyebrow.

Seokjin sat up and away, making Jungkook actually whimper, his arms tugging sadly at the binds as if he was trying to reach out for Seokjin. “That’s not how we’re doing this,” Seokjin said slowly. “You can’t just assume I’ll understand if you don’t say what it is you want. Now tell me. Please what?”

Jungkook seemed a little thrown by that, eyes so wide and worried as if he had offended somehow, and he bit at his lip before looking down at his lap. “I...it’s just…”

The Alpha leaned down, trying to slide into his gaze. “Well?”

Fiddling with his handcuffs, the skirt still rolled up to his hips, Jungkook flushed and glared down at the mattress. “I want your cum, Alpha.”

A beat.

“Um...how?” Seokjin pressed, needing a little more detail. He couldn’t deny though that his own crotch had quite suddenly jumped to attention at the sentence alone, spoken demurely and shyly.

“It’s not as fun if I have to tell you everything!” Jungkook bemoaned, wriggling a little more with his handcuffs and lifting his bottom up to reposition himself on the bed. His whiny tone made Seokjin want to reconsider, but...he had to be strict on this point of communication; it was something he didn’t want to do wrong.

Okay, and maybe a little bit of his sadistic side wanted to hear Jungkook say it. But just a little bit, as an afterthought.
“You have to tell me, or I won’t know. How do you want my cum, little Omega?”

Jungkook pouted, huffing a little before flushing wildly as he said, “I w-want your cum on my face.”

Well, that wasn’t the answer he was expecting, but it was still an intriguing thing to request. At this point he was about 0.5 seconds away from desperately needing to palm himself. And who could blame him, when his Omega was sitting in front him, handcuffed and wearing a skirt, blushing prettily and ask him to do things he would normally find unspeakable?

“...You do?”

“Yes,” Jungkook stated, more boldly now that he hadn’t gotten the reaction he feared - jest. “Like... all over. Major cum. Facial level cum. I want you all over me.”

Seokjin actually had to lean a bit forward and prop himself up on the mattress with both hands at that, he was so overwhelmed by the sudden dizzying heat of arousal. “Oh god .”

“P-please, I’ll do whatever you say, so...” Jungkook sounded almost fearful, afraid as he leaned in and begged.

There was some higher power up that was determined to kill Kim Seokjin before his time, he was sure. Because the universe had sent him, of all people, Jungkook. There was a long, baited breath of silence, then Seokjin let out the deepest sigh he had ever remembered giving.

“Of course, baby,” he said. He hadn’t really planned on the pet name, it had just slipped out, but Jungkook whimpered in glee, wriggling where he sat on the edge of the bed in excitement. “My Omega baby...”

Unable to move much due to his cuffed hands, Jungkook suddenly, precariously leaned himself forward and tucked his head into the crook of Seokjin’s neck, nuzzling in at his Scent gland and inhaling at him heavily. Seokjin’s breath caught, the nerves in his body all flipping over starting from his center outwards in a blissful silent wave, and Jungkook kept going, leaning in more heavily until Seokjin had to hold him up, letting out deep gasps as the Scenting twisted brazenly at his senses, making him dizzy. Jungkook had never quite Scented him that deeply before, that sexually, and that long. Seokjin felt the impact of it to his very core, and he moaned, surprising himself. In response, Jungkook gave a kitten lick to the sensitive, puffed up and tender skin around his Scent gland, making him hiss with sensitivity.
“My Alpha..” Jungkook hummed into his ear, kissing gently at the curve of his jawline. Seokjin felt goosebumps trail along his body in a lightning-flash sort of quickness.

“Turn around,” Seokjin ordered in a dark tone. Jungkook blinked at him in surprise, but then complied, struggling to lay flat against the mattress. “Ass up,” Seokjin added, reaching down and giving Jungkook’s very lightly clothed bottom a hard smack that seemed to echo in the room, along with the gasp Jungkook released. His curved bottom slowly, with a struggle because of his binds, rose up from the mattress. With the shortness of the skirt it was impossible for Jungkook to have remained decent, and at the end of the trail that was his beautiful smooth thigh was the bottom edge of the bunny panties, peeking out from the black fabric that was slowly, agonizingly slipping its way closer to Jungkook’s waist, which was held at a lower position than his lifted bottom. Because of the angle, Jungkook’s face was forced heavily into the bedsheets, and he grunted as he tried to get comfortable. He was already panting slightly, and Seokjin hadn’t even touched him yet.

“Does it feel cool on your little ass?” Seokjin said quietly, reaching out and running his hands smoothly from the top of the thigh highs to the hem of the panties, earning a groan from Jungkook. “Is your Omega ass already calling for me?”

“Yes…” Jungkook replied quickly, which Seokjin hadn’t anticipated.

Seokjin pushed the skirt further down Jungkook’s waist, leaving his panties and thighs fully exposed. Egged on by Jungkook’s breathless answer, Seokjin twisted two fingers around the fabric of the panties, slipping in between the hot skin to find that it was dripping wet. He was so aroused it was calling on his pre-heat self-lubrication. It wasn’t really a sign of a heat so much as a rise in hormones, and varied from person to person. Seokjin wondered if he would always be able to self-lubricate by this kind of play. If he was self-lubricating, that meant his entrance would be significantly more pliant right then, as opposed to a normal day.

He figured he might as well make the most of that fact. Seokjin pressed one of his fingers in deeper, beyond just testing for Jungkook’s wetness, and wriggled it inside of Jungkook with such a lively and playful air that the Omega cried out a solid, “Fuck!” to Seokjin’s delight. The second finger went in even easier.

“N-n-no wait, that’s so fast!” Jungkook whimpered, crying lightly into the pillow with a choking sound.

In response, Seokjin pressed in harder than he had before, and when it caused Jungkook to moan, Seokjin reminded himself that right now, this wasn’t ‘Jungkook,’ this was his Omega. But one little check shouldn’t hurt.
“What’s your safeword, Omega?” Seokjin demanded. Jungkook’s hands balled into fists where they were bound, held tightly against the small of his back.

“P-Pikachu…” Jungkook gasped. Seokjin was satisfied with that, pulling off the panties with one hand and discarding them to the floor, taking a moment to appreciate the soft roundness of Jungkook ass.

He proceeded to then fuck Jungkook with his fingers as roughly as he could.

Instantly, Jungkook was keening, his back arching on the bed every which way so wildly that the Alpha had to pin him with one hand on his waist, only using the leverage to bury his fingers deeper, until he was up to the last knuckle with each thrust. His fingers were covered in slick, wet and warm and making the most obscene squelching noises as he continued making Jungkook cry out.

“Fuck, fuck, fuuck!” Jungkook drew out each repeat a little longer than the last, until he was morphing it into another long moan. “Jin, I’m gonna cum…”

Jin reached forward with his free hand, grabbing a handful of Jungkook’s hair and pulling him up off the mattress. It was almost like a drinking game, keeping an ear out for the times he could call Jungkook out on his slip-ups. “What did you call me?”

Jungkook gasped, then, “N-no, wait, I--”

Seokjin removed his fingers in one smooth movement, and Jungkook practically wept, shoving his bottom backwards in an attempt to regain the pressure. Seokjin could even see the puckered skin around his entrance clenching, seeking to grip down greedily and finding nothing.

“A glutton for punishment, my cute little Omega baby,” Seokjin hummed. He could feel the loss of control, the greediness setting in as he sank into the boiling, maddening heat - the high of controlling Jungkook was like settling into a hot bath, letting it soak in around him and reveling in it. Maybe he was more sensitive to the effects of being directly exposed to Jungkook’s slick than he thought. Seokjin leaned forward, unclasping Jungkook’s handcuffs, lifting him halfway off the bed. He positioned Jungkook on his hands and knees on an old chest Seokjin mostly used for his winter jackets, and he firmly situated Jungkook’s fingertips around the ledge, telling him, “Don’t move.”

When he stood up, his crotch was almost exactly at the level of Jungkook’s raised face, and instantly
Jungkook realized what was going to happen. His eyes widened, but whether in excitement or nervousness - or a delightful mix of both - Seokjin wasn’t quite sure.

“Open your mouth,” Seokjin ordered. He was already plenty hard after all the things Jungkook had been doing to him, but it felt amazingly good to indulge, letting Jungkook’s burning hot, wet mouth encompass his member, tongue scraping lightly against the bottom as Seokjin let out rough little pants, thrusting into Jungkook’s mouth. Whether from the deepness into arousal that he had already sank, or from secret preparation, Jungkook was able to take in much more of Seokjin’s length this time, greedily sucking at the tip each time Seokjin pulled back, and making the Alpha grunt with growing need. Though his hands were firmly planted on the edge of the chest, Jungkook was leaning as far forward as he could, as if needing even an inch more of closeness to the Alpha. When he started to gag, Seokjin finally pulled back. Jungkook coughed a little, tears stinging his eyes, and Seokjin placed a hand in his hair. Then before he could even move, Jungkook was leaning down and forward again, seeking after Seokjin’s dick with his mouth like it was a life force.

“You’re that hungry?” Seokjin teased, one hand tickling under Jungkook’s chin as he had Seokjin’s member particularly far down his throat, the little brush of fingertips making Jungkook choke and gag once again, and this time, it tightened so closely around Seokjin’s member that he actually cried out, one hand flying to the bedpost next to them, clutching it for balance. Unfortunately, Jungkook, being the little rat that he was, discovered this reaction and immediately resolved to chase after it, timing Seokjin’s deep thrusts down into his delicate throat and adding a hearty swallow, the tightness making Seokjin’s core twist and coil rapidly. They repeated the cycle several times, Seokjin always pulling back a little each time the coil wound a little too tightly, until he decided it was time.

“Fuck, I’m close,” Seokjin breathed, and pressed his hips in a little closer. Jungkook coughed again, leaning forward so far his bottom was sticking out as if deliberately, the little skirt shaking back and forth around his thighs with each powerful thrust. Seokjin was almost sorry to bend backward, his member slipping out from between Jungkook’s swollen red lips. “Stay,” he ordered, taking one hand and placing it around his member and moving his fingers up and down a few careful times, feeling the coil finally twist so tightly that it burned, and suddenly Seokjin was crying out, his cum escaping in thick, heavy bursts that splattered against Jungkook’s face. The Omega looked shocked, mouth still hanging open even as Seokjin continued to milk out the rest of his orgasm. He had edged himself to give Jungkook as much as he could, and now he was going to make use of every drop. With one hand, Seokjin reached out and roughly rubbed the dripping cum all over Jungkook’s face, the Omega stiffening up as his Alpha smudged his makeup (or rather, what makeup was left after being washed down his face through his tears) in dark, dramatic streaks.

“Look at you,” Seokjin spat, trying to sound as malicious as he could, deepening his voice to that tone that he knew from instinct, rather than from conscious knowledge, made Jungkook tremble the most. “You’re such a filthy little Omega. With your ass exposed and your face covered in cum.” Jungkook lifted his gaze to him, wide eyes blinking heavily as Seokjin’s cum coated his face and cheeks, sticky and disgusting. The lipstick was stained across his mouth in faded red dustings, the eyeliner dripping and his mouth parted, skirt now having slipping up his hips and exposing him to the air again. Seokjin groaned as the sight caused another burst of cum, this time landing on Jungkook’s cheek. He promptly rubbed that in, too, as Jungkook shuddered in shock and wonder.
“Now it’s your turn, my Omega,” Seokjin promised, walking around to the back and placing one preparing hand against Jungkook’s waist. Jungkook was already leaning a bit back on his knees, back into Seokjin’s approaching hand as he slipped his fingers inside again, roughly using his calluses against Jungkook’s inner walls in a way that made Jungkook’s back arch, pressing his bare cheeks up against Seokjin. The plan was to use the time Seokjin needed to recover for another cumming to tease Jungkook’s ass, until he was begging for an end. Seokjin could already see Jungkook was painfully hard, his erect member calling attention as Jungkook bounced his hips backwards onto Seokjin’s fingers, looking blissed out as he wriggled his body as best as he could while obediently keeping his hands in place.

“A-Alpha...I want you to--”

That was when a knock came at the bedroom door, and the two of them froze. A pause, and then the knock came again.

The knock came a third time, and then Seokjin, as casually as he could, called out, “Yes?”

Taehyung’s voice came muffled and distant through the doorway, and he yelled out, “Is Jungkook in there? Namjoon says we’re having a pack dinner tonight, so you need to come down! Everyone else is already downstairs. You have five minutes.”

Seokjin looked over at Jungkook in a panic, three of his fingers buried palm-deep into Jungkook’s asshole, his skirt hiked up to his back, and Seokjin’s fresh cum and messy makeup rubbed firmly into Jungkook’s horrified face.

Fuck.

Chapter End Notes

Hallo, lovelies! KurageCharms here again~

Hope you guys enjoyed my sudden descent into hell. :’( I know I did. The early update is because I'll be traveling tonight and I really didn't want to stress about getting it uploaded on time, so you get it at 12 noon Fri instead of 12 midnight going into Sat!

This chapter brought to you by: T!
T is for Tired!
I'm tired of ABO/smut fanfics where they 1) always have this ultra amazing sex without issues and 2) never have miscommunication of kinks/needs 3) start having the same step A-B-C sex, with foreplay then finishing together in mega ecstasy and then washcloth = done. Like. Let's mix it up a little. |> Interrupt mega-mid-play because living with 6 other people? That's BOUND to fucking happen, my kittens. Let's be real like Jin's turkey comment.

Also thanks to my beta potterndresden for helping get this ready early, and for the peoples of Twitter for helping me brainstorm. The Pikachu safeword ended up being of my own thought but it was instigated by Jen's comment about Chocobos. lmao

(Also...I think LINP is going to reach 20k hits soon after this upload?! Holy shit, guys. Thank you so much for all the support and for reading. :A; I can't believe it...)

Later, lovelies!
An Awkward Dinner

Chapter Notes

Warning: Continuance of some sin. There's a gross situation involving jizz.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Of all modern notions, the worst is this: that domesticity is dull. Inside the home, they say, is dead decorum and routine; outside is adventure and variety. But the truth is that the home is the only place of liberty, the only spot on earth where a man can alter arrangements suddenly, make an experiment or indulge in a whim. The home is not the one tame place in a world of adventure; it is the one wild place in a world of rules and set tasks.”

— G.K. Chesterton

“What the fuck do we do?” Jungkook hissed, his voice breathless as he tried to remain very, very still under (or he supposed it was around) Seokjin’s hand. He could still feel his asshole clenching and unclenching around Seokjin’s long, bent fingers and god if it didn’t feel really good just sitting there like that, sweat dripping into his eyes as he waited on his hands and knees. Seokjin’s heavily Scented cum was all over his face, already getting crusty and disgusting with the coolness in the air. How on earth were they going to get out of this? He glanced over his shoulder at the way Seokjin had frozen in place. “Jin?”

Once the word left his mouth, a trace of that submissive character snuck back into his mind, screaming that he had slipped and not called Seokjin ‘my Alpha,’ and was going to be (happily) further punished. But Seokjin was definitely preoccupied with other thoughts.

“Oh, I don’t...um... I don’t know if I can make you finish and clean you up, Jungkook. So you’ll...Um. Okay, let’s do this, then.” And Seokjin pulled his hand out of Jungkook, a deep-throated moan escaping the Omega as Seokjin murmured an apology, digging through the drawers and pulling out a small bag of replacement wet wipes. “Here,” he said, handing them to a confused Jungkook. “You take care of one end, I’ll take care of the other.”

“You’re fucking kidding me,” Jungkook mumbled, but with one hand he wrestled out a wet wipe
and started to scrub at his face. Inwardly, he was more than a little crestfallen. It had felt *so good* to have Seokjin smearing himself all over Jungkook’s face, like he was being marked as Seokjin’s and his alone, a tantalizing possessiveness he had allowed the Alpha willingly, and happily accepting the claim. After all the avoidance, the misunderstandings, it was nice to feel Seokjin being greedy with him, and Jungkook hadn’t realized how much he relished being pampered and spoiled by that greediness.

He rubbed and scoured at every crease of his face as carefully as possible, feeling his heart rate rise with the counting seconds as Seokjin worked his fingers back into Jungkook, his other hand slipping around the curve of Jungkook’s hip to grab his member, started frantic tugs. Jungkook hated to waste Seokjin’s work, hated that he would have to slip out of the skirt before they were really able to give things their proper time, but he knew now wasn’t the time. If Hoseok had been that worried about the idea of Jungkook being into ropes, what would his reaction be to hearing they were already having sex upstairs right before dinner? He would *know*.

His momentary focus on washing the now crusty combination of smeared makeup and cum from his face was suddenly interrupted by Seokjin starting to pump his entire hand in and out of Jungkook, and the Omega gasped, dropping his hands to grip white-knuckled at the end of the chest on which he was perched. Seokjin wasn’t going to waste any time. “Oh, fuck!”

Instead of answering, Seokjin just worked his hands harder, until Jungkook was arching his back, his face tilted toward the ceiling as his mouth fell open in a long, low moan. God, he wished Seokjin could drag this out, could let him hover along this line for hours. He could almost sense the Alpha wanting to lean forward, to whisper hotly into his ear and tease him for reacting so strongly. He wanted that, and he had finally gotten Seokjin here, to the point where he reached in and brazenly pressed against his prostate, making his whole body curl and twitch, slipping closer to his edge with tantalizing reluctance. After all that waiting, he had Seokjin not only holding him close, but openly letting his own inner Alpha control the situation, and he’d wanted that for so long now, it ached to think they’d have to finish the job like this.

Perhaps that was the reason why Jungkook’s body didn’t seem to want him to get there, over that edge that would make it end.

“Come on…” Seokjin hissed to Jungkook’s asshole, as if it was solely to blame. “You’re so close, I can *smell* it.”

Jungkook’s eyes popped open. What could he smell, exactly? He felt his ears burning, and he crumpled the dirty wet wipe in his fist as everything under Jin’s hand got wetter and more slick.

The knock at the door made Jungkook whimper quietly, and Seokjin’s hand stiffened around his member as they both stared at the door.
“Seokjin? Jungkook?”

“Yes?” Seokjin called, surprisingly calm sounding for the position they were in, looking like he was fighting to pull something out of Jungkook’s ass, his hips pressed against the bare buttocks as they were arranged on the wooden chest.

“What’s going on?” The skepticism and curiosity burning in Taehyung’s voice was certainly a dangerous one. The door handle jiggled.

“We’ll be down in a minute, Taehyung, okay?” Seokjin added a hollow-sounding giggle, and Jungkook guessed he was trying to make it sound like they were, well, cuddling or something. Which was pretty far from the truth, especially as Jungkook let out a little grunt as Seokjin continued his ministrations. Jungkook pressed his hand to his mouth and bit down on a bit of the skin at his thumb, trying to muffle his sounds.

“Are you coming?” Taehyung queried, even as Jungkook felt the edge slipping away again.

No, I’m NOT, Tae, and that’s the problem!

“In a minute,” Seokjin sing-songed, slotting his knee up between Jungkook’s thigh and rubbing up against his balls, making Jungkook choke on his hand with a jolt. They heard Taehyung’s footsteps on the stairs and continued. But when the edge slipped even farther away, Jungkook let out a noise of frustration, slamming his palm down against the edge of the chest, making his hand sting.

“It’s not--” Jungkook managed, finding his voice crackling. “It’s not working .”

Seokjin let out a sigh, finally pausing and resting against Jungkook’s back for a second. “We just don’t have time . You’ll have to finish after dinner.”

“What?!” Jungkook cried, absolutely devastated at the thought. He had hoped Seokjin would just make some excuse for them to not go downstairs, not skip the important part of this whole thing. “No! They’re gonna smell me!”

“Hopefully not. Here.” Seokjin wasted no time or romance in putting the condom on Jungkook.
“Better be careful choosing your pants this time. And grab one of the scented pads you use for your heats, it might cover some of it up.” He tugged at Jungkook’s skirt, making it flutter down to his knees. He heard the Alpha give a regretful sigh, and he knew Seokjin didn’t want to stop here, either. He pulled out another wet wipe and gave Jungkook’s face another check.

“You’re really gonna let me sit through a whole dinner like this?” Jungkook complained around the smell of antiseptic. “I’m hard as a rock.”

Seokjin smirked, “Well, if you manage to get through dinner, I’ll make sure to take care of it properly later, okay?”

Jungkook pouted. How had he known exactly what to offer to get Jungkook to comply? “Fine. But they’re totally going to know. Taehyung probably already does.”

“Yeah, and you reek right now,” Seokjin sighed, wiping a little harder at the edges of Jungkook’s forehead, hurriedly trying to cover the places the Omega may have missed. “God, I just wanna…” the Alpha trailed off, his brow furrowing, and Jungkook stared up at him in wonder, curious as to what the end of that sentence was going to be. “Okay, get some pants on and take off that sweater, quick. Tae will be back any moment. So suck it up. Or rather, tuck it up”

“I hate your guts.”

“But you love my handiwork.”

Once Seokjin wasn’t wrist-deep inside of him, cleaning Jungkook up took record time, and once they were (haphazardly but appropriately) dressed, they went downstairs to find a full table of the pack sitting, waiting for them quietly. Yoongi was fiddling with something mechanical he had completely disassembled on the table, and judging by the half-broken mobile next to him, with its cute pastel-colored baby toys dangling from it, he was fixing it up for when Namjoon and Kiara’s pup arrived. At his side was Hoseok, half out of his seat as he dished out bowls of rice for everyone, and on his other side was Namjoon and Kiara, their hands clasped on the table and Kiara’s other hand resting on her swollen belly as they talked quietly and watched Yoongi work.

Closest to them was Taehyung, who was uncomfortably curled up in a ball in his seat next to Kiara, and Jimin sitting with his hands in his lap, not saying anything, curiously not sitting next to Taehyung, but Yoongi instead. Jungkook took the seat next to Jimin and Seokjin sat between him and Taehyung. The instant they sat down, Jungkook felt a tension rising in the air. Taehyung must have said something about how strange they’d been acting, locked in Seokjin’s room for hours, and it didn’t take a genius to figure it out. Hoseok only glanced over, his lips pinching into a tight little
triangle of disapproving pink. Namjoon wouldn’t meet his eyes, and his shoulders seemed stiff somehow.

Kiara seemed to be the only one acting normal, smiling up at them as they sat down. Jungkook felt a surge of guilt, lowering himself down into the chair awkwardly and trying not to draw attention to his crotch area in general.

“*There* you boys are! It’s about time, the food’s going to get cold.” She tilted her head to the side, soft red curls falling into her face. Her hair had gotten curlier recently since she didn’t have as much energy to style it, and Jungkook thought it made her look cute and softened. He offered her a little smile, taking the food Seokjin offered to him, barely glancing his way, all casual air as if this was normal.

*Easy for him*; he wasn’t sporting a raging boner at the dinner table like some middle schooler.

“*Yoongi,*” Hoseok said suddenly, patting the Omega’s arm without looking directly at him, that pink triangle still firmly in place, showing that he was really, truly irritated. His voice was clipped despite the attempts to sound casual. “Don’t fiddle with that right now, we’re eating.”

Perhaps because he heard the tone of Hoseok’s voice, perhaps because he was ready to eat anyways, Jungkook wasn’t sure, but Yoongi removed the arrangement of baby mobile clutter as quick as lightning, sitting back down without a word of complaint. Dinner was strangely quiet this week, with only softly murmured phrases, mostly from Kiara and Namjoon.

Jungkook looked over mid-bite to see Jimin looking at him rather strangely. After a moment, Jimin’s nose wrinkled a bit, and Jungkook felt his heart start thudding in his chest. “What?”

“It smells funny in here,” Jimin commented candidly, “Like...I dunno? It’s a weird smell.”

“I don’t smell it,” Jungkook said quickly, shoveling another biteful into his mouth. Jimin jutted his lip out a bit, seeming confused, but then leaned in toward Jungkook’s ear to whisper into it. Jungkook felt his throat constrict, worried Jimin would discover the source of that smell. He didn’t know if Jimin would be fooled by him claiming it was a special new face mask.

“I think Taehyung is mad at me? Has he said anything to you?”
“Huh?”

“Taehyung,” Jimin repeated quietly, his brows pressing inward in concern, his expression more than a little wounded. “Ever since his heat broke he says he doesn’t want me to touch him. But he says he’s fine? I don’t know what to do.”

“Hm. Maybe ask Jin?”

“Jin?” Jimin paused, considering Jungkook’s words, then his nose wrinkled slightly again and he nodded. “Uh yeah, I’ll try that.”

He moved to pull back, halting halfway back into his seat when Jungkook added, “He might just be in a bit of a mood, is all?”

“Yeah, maybe.” Jimin smiled, but the edges of it stopped at the corners of his lips, and didn’t travel up to his eyes, the effort a little too much of a stretch. “Thanks.”

“So, boys,” Kiara interrupted, poking at her salad with a soft smile. “Namjoon and I talked about it, and we think we’ve decided on some name ideas for the baby.”

“Oh?” Jimin asked, leaning forward with a smile. “Like what?”

“If it’s a girl,” she said gently, “Naiara. Benjamin after my father if it’s a boy.”

“Oh, those are pretty names,” Jin offered with a smile, clapping his hands a little to show his approval. At the clapping sound, Taehyung jumped as though spooked, and finally raised his hung head to glance at his older brother. He froze, his expression confused as he stared at Seokjin’s cheek.

“Yeah, I think so, too! Namjoon picked Naiara, since as you know, he’s so sure the baby is going to be a girl,” here she rolled her eyes, nudging against Namjoon’s shoulder as the Alpha beamed down into his plate, dimples deepening on both cheeks like a punctuation mark to the unsaid pride. “I picked Benjamin. Loser gets 10 get out of jail free cards to be used at any time to get out diaper duty.”
“That’s sickening and cute,” Yoongi commented, his expression deadpan, but there was a gleam in his eyes that Jungkook noted always seemed to appear when the subject of pups came up. “Speaking of which, I wanted to--”

There was a rough clatter of Hoseok’s cutlery hitting his plate, his expression pale as he stood up abruptly, earning surprised looks from all around the table. Jungkook withered a little as he could smell the irritation and anger that was sparking off of Hoseok like the time Namjoon had tried to microwave a fork, flashes of blue and white with a dangerous unnatural heat to it that hovered in the air.

“I’m trying to be patient and understanding,” Hoseok said stiffly. “I really, really am. But is everyone really going to ignore the fact that Jungkook reeks of sex right now? Really?”

No one answered him. Not even Namjoon had any words to respond with, as they all awkwardly stared at their plates and said nothing. Yoongi reached up, entangling his fingers with Hoseok’s limp, un-reciprocating ones.

“Babe,” Yoongi said quietly, “Just sit back down, please?”

“No!” Hoseok snapped, moving to pull his hand out of Yoongi’s unsuccessflly. “Seokjin only came back yesterday and they’re just...they’re already going to this?! Aren’t you the least bit concerned?”

“But to be fair,” Jungkook found himself saying aloud, before he could filter his words, “I’ve been trying to get into his pants for months.”

He heard Seokjin choking on part of his dinner, and in all honesty, it was a satisfying sound to have one-upped him this time. Especially considering he was still hiding the worst boner of his life under the table at that moment.

“Jungkook!” Kiara snapped, her eyebrows knitted together as if spelling out the word disappointment in his behavior. “That’s no way to talk at the dinner table.”

“But everyone acts as if this wasn’t what I’d been planning on happening since my Presenting,” Jungkook argued back, leaning forward a little toward the table. He looked around the table at the faces around him, seeing none of them offering any support. “Seriously!? There are lots of Omegas younger than me who are already Mated, so why should it be--”

“What do you mean Mated ?!” Hoseok gasped, and Seokjin sent Jungkook a warning look.
“It’s not like that, Hoseok,” Seokjin said, and Jungkook could almost feel the way Seokjin was trying to soften his voice into more diplomatic tones to use with the wound-up Alpha. “I wouldn’t Mate with Jungkook this soon, but even if I--”

“Why not?” Jungkook jumped in, frowning as he looked to Seokjin for an answer. “What would be wrong with Mating me tonight, if you wanted to?”

Seokjin seemed to lose his bearings for a moment, sputtering and flailing about for a response. “J-Jungkook, I just got back, it would be better if we took things--”

“Slowly?” the Omega spat out the word - it tasted bitter on his tongue. Five minutes ago, Seokjin had seemed fine with taking things at a pace that was finally - finally - faster than a crawl. And now he was basically promising the entire pack that he wouldn’t Mate Jungkook until way down the road? It wasn’t fair. “I don’t understand why it would be better. I know what I want, don’t you?”

“W-well, yes, but--”

“Then where’s the problem?”

Seokjin paused, and the Omega turned to glare at Namjoon, Kiara, Hoseok and then finally Yoongi, the last of whom was watching Jungkook with a calmly calculated air.

“I’m not a child. I’ll respect Namjoon’s decision as lead Alpha but I don’t see why everyone else gets to dictate where and when I get Mated like they have some sort of authority over my--”

“That’s enough, Jungkook,” Seokjin hissed quietly, setting a hand on his forearm to calm him. Much to his chagrin, it had a much more profound effect than expected, as if the Alpha energy in Seokjin’s body was seeping through the points where his fingertips dug gently into the taut muscles of his arm, washing him with the acute awareness that he was probably feeling extra antsy because they had been interrupted in the middle of a rather intimate moment. Leaving things unfinished, especially when it came to being with his Alpha so soon after being reunited, would naturally make his mood sensitive.

And of course, then there was the fact that his groin was still throbbing wildly from not being satisfied before coming downstairs - that would make anyone a little moody.
Jungkook frowned, sitting back in his seat for a moment and considering. When Seokjin’s hand remained on his arm, sapping out the stressful way he had felt the need to defend them, Jungkook found himself paying careful attention to the soothing effects of Seokjin’s touch. Slowly, and with the heavy, weighted eyes of everyone on them, Jungkook gave a little whimper and leaned over to nuzzle into Seokjin’s neck. He just wanted to go back upstairs, back where he was ‘my Omega baby’ and had felt cared for and sheltered in their own little bubble of just **being**. He wanted Seokjin to relieve the ache, not only the literal one between his legs but also the metaphorical one in his chest that was depressingly tangible, the emptiness he’d experienced the entire time Seokjin had been gone, the emptiness he’d unconsciously been carrying around every day before they’d met.

He knew the others felt uncomfortable with the show of affection, unused to seeing it this boldly, but Jungkook didn’t care. He slotted his hands around Seokjin’s waist, feeling the heaviness of his arms as he didn’t return the gesture, didn’t embrace Jungkook back, and Jungkook buried his face in Seokjin’s chest. He could feel the uncertainty like a signal through Seokjin’s skin, could taste the surprised confusion.

“I’m just worried this is going **too fast**,” Hoseok’s voice wafted through the room, now quiet but still strained and pulled taut like taffy. “Especially after this morning…”

“This morning?” Namjoon queried.

“Um, well, it’s just that…” Hoseok fumbled for words. Jungkook could feel his ears starting to burn, could smell the panic in the Alpha’s voice. Seokjin, unaware of what Hoseok and Yoongi had caught him doing, finally lifted a hand around Jungkook’s shoulders, rubbing a soothing circle into his shoulder blade that felt like it was shooting comfort right through Jungkook’s entire body.

“It’s just that this is the first real morning Seokjin’s been back,” Yoongi finished, “And they forgot to close the door to their room, so we heard some...things.”

Seokjin smelled of rising panic and shame, and Jungkook hated that smell on him - it lessened the effects of the comfort he was giving to the Omega, currently curled up awkwardly against him while they both sat at the table. Pressed in as close as he was, he didn’t see the way Taehyung was quietly leaning in towards his older brother, but he certainly heard Taehyung’s voice over his head.

“Seokjin...? Is that lipstick on your cheek?”

Both Jungkook and Seokjin froze in place, and there was a heavy clatter. Jungkook craned his head around at last to see Hoseok already halfway to the front door, Yoongi jumping up after him.
“Hoseok! Hoseok!” And then muffled from the doorway came a, “We’ll be back, just hold on a bit!”

The front door slammed, and Jungkook looked over, wide eyes and nervousness tearing at his chest as he first met eyes with Jimin, who was gaping up at Seokjin. The elder Alpha was frantically rubbing at the spot on his cheek that Jungkook should have spotted during their rushed cleanup, should have warned him about.

“You’re not…” That was all Jimin said at first. His voice dropped, solemn and testy. “You’re not cheating on Jungkookie, are you?”

Oh, god. Jungkook wanted to scream. He didn’t want to have to explain to everyone about the lipstick, or the skirt currently shoved underneath Seokjin’s comforter, or how soon or far in the future they Mated, or any of it.

“Of course he isn’t!” Jungkook snarled, the growl humming deeply in his chest as he unconsciously bared his teeth a little. “Why is everyone acting like they’re entitled to know every little thing that we do?!”

Jimin’s initial reaction was to be startled, blinking at the aggressive undertones, the defensive posture and tone Jungkook had taken on in a moment. Then his eyes flickered into traces of red. “Jungkook,” Jimin said, the single word a warning, and whether he meant to do it or not, Jungkook could hear and feel the Alpha’s commanding tone slipping into his voice, making him hard to ignore. Jungkook gave a petulant little “hmph” sound, leaning back in to bury his face in Seokjin’s shirt, still smelling a bit of Seokjin’s sweat and sex smell lingering there, intoxicatingly sweet.

There was a brief pause, and then Jimin let out a sigh. A small, familiar hand carded through his hair, careful not to push too hard and dislodge his face from the Alpha’s collar. The hand was admittedly soothing, and so was Seokjin’s cautiously continued circles rubbing into his back.

“Jungkook,” Jimin said, the gentleness of his usual tone slipping back in reassuringly. “We’re just worried about you. Both of you.”

The Omega’s head shot up, and he frowned. “Then stop acting like Seokjin is some perverted criminal, come to sweep innocent me off my feet!”
“Trust me, that’s no one’s intention here,” Namjoon cut in, voice calm and in control as he watched Jungkook over his clasped hands with a frown. “Hoseok is doing his best to come to terms with all of you pups growing up and Presenting so quickly. You’re like his own pups in a way, you know.”

Jungkook frowned, and Jimin’s hand in his hair slowed a little, shifting angles and brushing his bangs out of his eyes as he pouted, knowing Namjoon was right.

“Being an Alpha is not about aggression and offense, it’s about protecting the Mate, protecting the pack, sometimes at the expense of our own safety. Alphas, after Presenting, have to learn to channel their energy and time, to know what their Mate needs, and to learn how to fulfill that.”

Jungkook saw Jimin slowly nodding in agreement out of the corner of his eye, catching the mournful side glance that Jimin was sending Taehyung.

“And as an Omega,” Namjoon continued, “You have to learn to control your energy and hormones as well. Being an Omega is not about giving in to what Alphas want—”

Kiara suddenly piped in, finishing for him with, “It’s about being able to keep the peace within the pack, instead of protecting the pack from outside threats. You need to be the first one to control your temper, not wait for Seokjin to reign you in.”

Jungkook bristled at that, not liking the sound of it at all.

“Don’t give me that look,” Kiara reprimanded, her voice firm and as motherly as any Jungkook had ever had directed at himself. That was the tone that always had even Namjoon treading lightly, walking on eggshells around her. “You’ve got a temper on you as bad as any of the Kims, and you don’t have half the experience at controlling it amidst almost a dozen different wolves. Don’t you think, instead of getting defensive about Hoseok overstepping and getting too overprotective, it would have been more useful to reassure him that you were taking this seriously, and that he could let go because he didn’t need to worry in the first place?”

At that, Jungkook knew that Kiara had won this battle. He nuzzled his cheek against Seokjin’s chest, petulant and wanting more than anything to continue being uncooperative. “Maybe,” he admitted reluctantly, having no other out.

“And don’t you think,” Kiara said, more calmly now, with less of that trace of strain that made his hair stand a little on end, “Instead of getting angry and telling everyone you aren’t moving too fast,
you could show it - both of you," she sent Seokjin a warning flash of her eyes, and Jungkook felt Seokjin jolt a little in his seat, “Could have shown a little more restraint before --”

“UGH!” Jimin suddenly screeched, pulling back from Jungkook and holding his hand out in front of his face, his eyes wide as saucers as he stared at the lump of sticky white liquid now trailed between his fingers. “What the hell is in your hair, Jungkook?”

Everyone at the table froze. Taehyung was the first to speak.

“Holy fuck,” he breathed in awe, “Jimin found jizz in Jungkook’s hair.”

“Oh my god! That’s so disgusting!” Jimin leapt up from the table, his face convulsing with a nauseated look as he raced out of the room yelling curses. Taehyung, in the meanwhile, was falling out of his seat with laughter, as the upstairs bathroom door slammed violently enough to echo through the house. Still hiccupping with laughter, Taehyung made his way up the stairs, heavily gripping the handrail so he didn’t topple back down.

Seokjin and Jungkook were practically on fire from the embarrassment, but despite himself Jungkook felt the edges of his lips quivering up into the slightest traces of a smile. Well, the whole goal was to make sure people knew Jin was my Alpha.

Across the table, Jungkook saw that Namjoon had turned a particularly nasty reddish purple color, and he briefly wondered if the leader was breathing properly. Kiara let out a sigh next to him, rubbing her temples with her forefingers as though to ward off a migraine.

“As I was saying,” she exasperated, “You could have shown a little more restraint, both of you, before coming down to dinner with whatever bodily fluid Jungkook is reeking of right now. I don’t want to know, I just never want to smell it like this again, do you two hear me?”

Jungkook nodded, feeling Seokjin do the same.

Kiara sat back, resting her hands on her belly. “In all honesty, I don’t really care if you guys Mate tomorrow or five years from now, Jungkook.”

“Kiara!” Namjoon interjected.
“No, I’m serious. I know that you guys might as well already be Mated and with pups, for all you’ll waver. I don’t know if it’s Bonding or whatever, but I know when something is going to last, and I see that with you two. So I don’t care about that.” She rubbed her belly in little circles, as if it was soothing to her. “I just want you two to be appropriate about it. Don’t bicker with the other wolves, and try to be a little more conscientious as to where and when you’re having your one-on-one time, you know? After all,” she smiled sweetly, “If you come to dinner with Jin’s cum rubbed all over your face when my pups are waiting at the table, I won’t hesitate to beat both of you 10 ways from Tuesday. Got it?”

Jungkook blushed a deep scarlet, but he nodded. He had no doubts that she would make good on that promise, should the occasion arise.

“Now,” Namjoon entered in solemnly, his voice low, “Since our little meal was interrupted anyways, go get yourselves properly cleaned up. But come back down when you’re finished. We still have very important pack things to talk about.”

Seokjin nudged Jungkook off of his chest, and the two of them awkwardly shuffled back upstairs, leaving just Namjoon and Kiara sitting at the table. Jungkook’s climb up the stairs was notably more awkward, given that his crotch was still tightly wrapped in a condom and half-erect as he made his way back to Seokjin’s room, the Alpha gently shutting the door.

“I’m sorry, Jungkook,” Seokjin sighed, “I should have shown more restraint about this. I didn’t meant for us to just ignore the rest of the pack and get you in trou-”

“Shut up,” Jungkook said, with no malice to his words. Seokjin blinked at him in surprise, and Jungkook smiled, reaching up and winding his arms around Seokjin’s neck, bumping up against the Alpha’s jawline with his nose. “We’re not moving backwards, idiot. Kiara didn’t say anything about having less sex, just being more discreet about it, right?”

Seokjin worked his lip, mentally rewinding through the conversation. “Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“And I shouldn’t have jumped in with that whole Mating thing on you so fast,” Jungkook said solemnly. “It was out of nowhere and honestly it was just because I was angry.”

“You know, it’s fine. I’ve been the one that was so wishy washy and I was the newcomer, so if they don’t trust me yet, I don’t blame them. I can’t rush them into believing in me when I haven’t had the best track record.” He looked up and smiled, trailing the back of his knuckles over the soft spots of Jungkook’s cheeks. “But I have every intention of proving to them that I can be a proper Alpha for you. That I’ll make you happy.”
“You already do make me happy, you sap,” Jungkook leaned up a little to press a kiss to Seokjin’s cheek, smirking. “Especially when you wiped your cum all over my face. That made me really happy.”

In response, Seokjin just threw his head back and moaned in exasperation up at the ceiling. “I’m so sad we had to end that so early.”

“Well, let’s get ‘finished up’ for now and get through this family meeting or whatever, and then tonight before we go to bed, you can finish things properly.” And without another word, Jungkook flopped down onto the bed, “Now get over here and take care of my dick, dick.”

“You know,” Seokjin laughed, crawling onto the bed to hover over Jungkook. “You’re much sweeter when you’ve got my hands up against your balls, hiking your cute little skirt up.”

“Shut the fuck up.”

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The smell of oil and rubber stung at his nostrils as Hoseok stormed his way into the garage, picking up the stained rag he always hung next to the door and tossing it over his shoulder with an exasperated sigh. He knew this was him being ridiculous; he was the rational one, the calm one, the one that didn’t get worked up. But he’d known what that smell was the instant Jungkook had sat down at the table, had recognized the haphazard way the Omega’s hair lay. It wasn’t that he didn’t want Jungkook to grow up - that was a painful inevitability, the con that came with the pros of having a hand in raising him.

No, Hoseok wanted him to grow up. He just wanted him to do it slower.

He decided to take his frustration out in one of the few ways he knew how, stepping forward and kneeling in front of the halfway built motorcycle he’d been compiling in his spare time. When Hoseok had first started working at his uncle’s repair shop, he had hated it (what free-running teenager wouldn’t?), but his parents had been far too clever; with his energy diverted to a part time job that left him utterly worn out at the end of the day, he was successfully kept out of trouble for the latter part of his high school years. Then, over time, it had become convenient to keep the part-time position - flexible hours and consistent pay left freedom in the form of pocket money and, eventually, a little savings - and then he had found himself actually enjoying the work. There was something about the simplicity of knowing where each part went, of taking it off, greasing it and putting it back,
replacing bits of the inside of things so the outside had a certain sound or effect or speed. There was something about the utter exhaustion of working on a vehicle for hours and feeling accomplished, feeling under control.

He was still carefully inspecting the teeth on a gear, considering whether it needed to be replaced or just repaired, when he felt Yoongi’s presence in the garage.

“Hoseok.”

The Alpha’s chest ached at the single word, at all the weight and understanding that lay concealed behind it. His knee-jerk reaction was to retort back, to give an excuse or at least offer a reason, but he knew that once he started, Yoongi would inevitably crush his emotional tirade with cool reasoning and logic, and he would feel stupid for it.

Perhaps Jungkook took after more than just Namjoon and Yoongi. He couldn’t help but smile a little at the realization, his lips pulled across his teeth tightly in indignation and a stubbornness that he wanted to outlast his moment of emotion, as if that would stabilize it as more valid. He didn’t answer Yoongi, bending down to replace the gear with a skilled hand that was already smeared and sticky with oil, grease and crud.

Meanwhile, he could sense Yoongi behind him, probably leaning with his arms crossed over his chest as he balanced against the hood of Seokjin’s pickup truck. He could see in his mind the way Yoongi’s shoulders would relax, his body becoming looser and appearing calmer, belying the fact that his mind was picking up speed, flying through the arguments he could choose until he came across the right one. It irritated Hoseok. He just couldn’t think like that - he couldn’t objectively choose his arguments based on the facts, only on what he believed was right. And quietly sitting aside while an 18 year old Omega jumped that quickly into a relationship with a much older Alpha? Even if it wasn’t Jungkook, he would have been concerned.

“He’s old enough to know,” Yoongi said, as if he could hear Hoseok’s thoughts. “And maybe he’s making a terrible mistake, but you’ve got to let him make them on his own.”

“This isn’t like letting a pup fall down when he’s learning to walk. This could be his Mate, Yoongi. And he would rush in head down without even thinking about it? He still sleeps under the fucking table, Yoongi!”

“Because he likes to, not because he has to. He’s grown up a lot,” Yoongi pointed out. Hoseok just growled in response. “And besides, Jimin Presented just a couple months before Jungkook. But you don’t even question him and Taehyung. What’s the difference?”
Hoseok sat back on his heels, frowning up at Yoongi. “You know why. I don’t want him to go what you went through.”

He could see the flash of emotion shiver in Yoongi’s eyes but he didn’t have the wherewithal to identify it with any clarity. “Seokjin’s not like that.”

“How do we know? I’m doing my best here, Yoongi. I’m trying to get to know him, to trust him, but...after this whole Jae thing came out, I’m even more worried. What’s to say Seokjin isn’t just looking - even subconsciously - for someone to replace what he had with Jae? What if Jungkook is just a replacement, a naive young Omega, who admires him so much...it would be tempting to anyone.”

“I knew him, back when he was dating Jae, Hoseok,” Yoongi said quietly, “We weren’t very close, but I knew him. And I didn’t see the face of any of those Alpha assholes that came before you when I looked at him.”

Hoseok paused, meeting Yoongi’s eyes in question, and balled his hand into a fist around the filthy greaserag in his lap.

“I saw myself, Hoseok. He was miserable. You wouldn’t recognize him. He was a pair of shoulders and a gangly body built out of spite and self-loathing. That day he moved into the pack house, he looked like an entirely different person. He’s stronger now, he gave himself time to heal, and he’s trying to do right by Jungkook - as well as himself.” Yoongi pushed off the pickup truck and made his way over to Hoseok, folding himself down to crouch in front of him. “I wasn’t just automatically on board with this either, you know. I’ve had Jungkook since long before you, and I saw him back when he cried if someone looked at him too hard. But the great thing is: people can change. They usually don’t, trust me. But they can.” He reached out, running a hand to cup Hoseok’s cheek as he tilted his head to the side, looking so soft and comforting, and Hoseok could feel that distinct Omega aura calming him, saying your Mate is here.

Hoseok sighed. He was losing this fight. It felt like he always lost, even though he knew that was his heart remembering things in hyperbole. Yoongi made him weak like putty, hard like cement, and he wouldn’t have it any other way. He laid his dirty, tanned hand over the pale, masculine one against his cheek. “You’re right. They can.”

“You raised him well, you know.” Yoongi said gently, smirking, “Namjoon and I are pretty good with understanding and such, but we’re shit when it comes to pulling him out of his shell. If it weren’t for you he’d probably still be living under the table and eating plain rice for breakfast.”
With a little roll of his eyes and a weak chuckle, Hoseok let his body finally relax. It was true. He knew when he’d first started dating Yoongi that one of the biggest obstacles they’d had to face was Jungkook. Yoongi had even joked about it on their second date, saying, ‘Sorry, I forgot to tell you I have a kid.’

Jungkook had hated him. He had flitted around the house like a ghost, glaring at Hoseok from behind every possible piece of furniture like he had a personal vendetta. He had been about to start high school, then, and he was copper-voiced and sleepy, unkempt and bitter. It was almost three weeks before he even heard the boy speak a word. He knew he talked - Yoongi told him the kid wouldn’t shut up, if he was talking about something he liked - but in front of Hoseok he was as silent as the dead, and Hoseok could just feel that child-like trained aura of don’t trust him. Jungkook had seen Yoongi go through bad relationships, had seen him controlled by Alphas who wore one hat until they could get close enough and then switched into monsters to get what they wanted. Of course Jungkook couldn’t trust Hoseok.

He wasn’t sure how it had happened or when, but he supposed patience and longevity had won the day, and eventually, Jungkook had started to reluctantly warm up to him. The first day Jungkook had curled up next to him on the couch, Hoseok’s heart had leapt up into his throat. The first time Jungkook had whined, padding on soft paws and nuzzling against the back of Hoseok’s knees, asking for comfort during his flu, Hoseok’s chest had imploded with happiness. Perhaps Jungkook had known that Hoseok needed to be needed, to care for someone. Perhaps Hoseok had just known that Jungkook needed someone soft and to be taken care of.

Once, Yoongi had started full-belly laughing at the table because Hoseok was berating Jungkook for not changing into a clean T-shirt before dinner, and then the pup had slammed himself into his seat, complaining back at him in a low voice.

Hoseok had blinked at Yoongi in question, and the only answer he had gotten was, “It’s like watching a parent and a pup. It’s cute.”

In the coolness of the garage, the Alpha leaned forward until his forehead rested against Yoongi’s shoulder, the raw smell of earth mixing in with the smell of oil in a lovely little mix of artificial and natural that he adored and loved to sink into.

“He’s going to be fine. He’s going to make lots of mistakes, of course, I’m sure he’s already getting a lecture on their little stunt at dinner, but...he’s gonna be okay.” Yoongi paused for a long moment, then leaned towards Hoseok’s face, brushing his bangs out of his face. “Okay?”

“Okay,” Hoseok nodded slowly, still feeling a dark weight on his chest. “But I’m not going to like
Yoongi smiled, “No, you’re not.” He took Hoseok’s hand, “But we can rip off this Band-aid together.”

Hoseok finally smiled a little, his lips curling just slightly at the corners. He was grateful for Yoongi’s seemingly unending supply of patience in times like these. Without him even needing to ask, Yoongi gently reached forward, delicately running three fingers through Hoseok’s hair, pressing in against the scalp in a way that had him melting like butter, his eyes flickering shut. He hadn’t even realized himself that he was feeling so tense and had a headache - how had Yoongi known?

“You know,” Yoongi teased, “You always get testy right before your rut.”

His eyes shooting open, Hoseok’s mouth fell agape. “Oh, god, really?”

Yoongi nodded, “I can definitely smell it on you, and you act differently right before. But I’ve also been keeping an eye out for it.”

The Alpha paused, leaning his head back a little as he met Yoongi’s eyes in question. “What? Why?”

Instead of answering right away, Yoongi quietly shifted until Hoseok was seated comfortably on the floor, and then Yoongi proceeded to gently crawl into his lap, curling up against Hoseok’s chest in a way he rarely did, and which always told Hoseok he was feeling particularly needy. Without even having to think about it, Hoseok’s hands wrapped around Yoongi, one hand running up and down along his forearm in a comforting, intimate gesture.

“Yoongi?” Hoseok said, and when a full minute passed and there was no response from the Omega folded contentedly in his lap, he added, “We should really get back, the others are going to be wondering where we are.”

Shifting suddenly, Yoongi arranged himself until he was straddling Hoseok’s lap, and if the previous cuddling had been fond and familiar, this gesture was positively underlined with a sexual undertone, a sensuality in the way he snaked his arms around Hoseok’s chest, pressing his face into the Alpha’s neck and Scenting him deeply, tilting his hips forward to press into Hoseok in a possessive gesture.
“Hoseokkie,” Yoongi murmured, breathing hotly against the tanned skin of Hoseok’s neck, running his teeth and tongue over the swollen point of his Scent gland. “I also don’t intend for you to have a whole lot of time to worry about Jungkook and the others.”

At that, Hoseok arched an eyebrow that Yoongi couldn’t see, as buried as he was in Scenting him in that deep, nerve-curling way that whispered *Mates*. “Oh?”

“Yes,” Yoongi pressed a gentle, noisy kiss to Hoseok’s jawline, and he lifted his chin up to whisper in Hoseok’s ear. “Hoseokkie. It’s time.”

Goosebumps actually raised up on his arms, excitement so thick in the air he could have sliced through it. “T-time?”

He felt a slight sting of pain against his earlobe as Yoongi nibbled down on it, tugging it back before the heat of his breath tickled at Hoseok’s ear. “I want to have your pups. When your rut comes, I want you to fill me with your cum until I get swollen with pregnancy. It’s time. For us.”

Perhaps it was the closeness of the rut, perhaps it was his learned sensitivity to the little waves and nuances of Yoongi’s body and breath against him, or the way Yoongi said it, but Hoseok leaned back and let out a long, low moan. “Oh my god. I couldn’t agree more.” He curled in to tuck his head in, placing heavy, rough kisses against Yoongi’s jawline. The Omega tilted his head to give Hoseok more access, as he greedily trailed a path, ending with a rough and sudden Scenting against Yoongi that made the Omega gasp.

“I’m going to breed you so hard you’ll remember it in your bones forever,” Hoseok exhaled, chuckling as he clamped his teeth down against Yoongi’s skin. Ever since their official Mating, he found himself wanting to mark Yoongi up, now that he no longer any fear of accidentally hitting his Scent mark, leaving himself free to nibble and bite and mark as liberally as he liked. When he dove back up from the depths of the Scenting, he found Yoongi with his face tilted back so far he faced up to the ceiling, his eyes shut and the softest Cheshire Cat grin, looking blissed out from just the Scenting alone. Without another moment’s hesitation, he jolted forward and caught Yoongi’s smiling lips with his own, their teeth knocking together like clumsy teenagers as Yoongi cupped his cheeks again, holding him steady there until they could almost feel the heat from their exhales, sweat starting to form on their brows.

“W-we oughta get back,” Yoongi managed to gasp, and Hoseok was unsure when exactly he had slipped his hands up Yoongi’s shirt to rub the edge of his fingernails against the nipples he found there, but from the look on his face Yoongi was enjoying it.

“Yeah, I guess we should.” It was with reluctance that they stood up, and Hoseok, still needing a little reassurance before going back in to face everyone, reached out and curled his wrist around
Yoongi’s elbow. The Omega stopped halfway to the door, turning in place to face Hoseok squarely. Hoseok stopped, feeling the change in the atmosphere as it heated and warmed like an electric blanket. Yoongi reached up, cupping his wide, squarish hands on both of Hoseok’s cheeks, and smiled unabashedly up at the Alpha. He would make such lovely pups, would be such a good parent to them, and Hoseok’s chest actually stung and felt twisted in the most lovely, painful way at the thought.

“I love you,” Yoongi said.

Hoseok melted like ice cream under the hottest summer day, sticky and an absolute mess. “I love you, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here~ :D♥

SO. Lots of different things in this chapter. lol The update is a bit late bc I had plans this Friday night (wow wut?) but here it is now~ Thanks to potterndresden, my lovely Beta reader, for checking things over for me and for all the brainstorming! ♥

By the way I forgot to mention it in the notes of last chapter, but in honor of my Sin Squad member Dan, I was seriously considering titling chapter 19 "Cum, Sweat and Tears" but I figured the bunny reference turned out better. lmao God, why am I like this...

Thanks to Bhavya (Jinotonin on Twitter) for suggesting Naiara for the possible KiaJoon baby name! It's a Basque name that means wanderer~

Later, lovelies~!
Taehyung followed the sound of running water and muffled curses to the main bathroom, finding Jimin already there scrubbing furiously at his hands with soap and water. Taehyung let his feet scuffle against the floor slightly, the noise soft; but it still startled Jimin as he turned with a little jump.

“Oh, Tae…” Jimin murmured, biting his lip for a moment before going back to his task. Taehyung leaned against the door, letting himself feel the headache-like pain that shot through his skull with just the sound of the running water in the bathroom.

“I don’t know how to react to this,” Taehyung said after a moment, fighting the amused smile that wanted to slip out in favor of a practiced wounded pup sort of look, “I just had to watch my boyfriend rubbing a handful of jizz out of another Omega’s hair.”

Jimin’s head whirled around so fast Taehyung wondered if he’d hurt himself, and shot the Beta an intense rebuking sort of glare that made Taehyung’s smile break out. “I didn’t know it was there! I--”

“I know, I know…” Taehyung’s arm twitched forward and he leaned off the door, his instinct to move forward and hug around Jimin from behind in comfort, to tuck his chin over the soft, small shoulder and let the Scent of peppermint coat the air around him. But he halted after a slight jerk in Jimin’s direction, opting to lean back against the bathroom wall. Jimin seemed to watch Taehyung, as if waiting for something, then he continued to wash his hands, although now with a marked stiffness to his movements. Taehyung chewed at the inside of his lip, crossing his arms and reveling in the weight against his sore stomach. “You’re gonna smell like my brother’s Scent for like a week, soap or not.”
Jimin crinkled his nose, but he knew Taehyung was right. He exhaled, turning off the water and grabbing the edges of the sink to lean heavily forward onto the cool white tile, his hands still dotted with droplets of water as a frothy little volcano of bubbles rested in the bottom of the sink.

“Tae,” he started slowly, quietly and in that breathy sort of voice that filtered through sometimes. “Did I...hurt you?”

“Hurt me?” He kept his voice neutral. He saw Jimin’s forehead crinkle in impatience and confusion, as if he wasn’t sure whether he was the one at fault or Tae was.

“Yes, during your heat. You seem like you’re angry about something and now...” Jimin’s voice got unbelievably small, as he looked up and met Taehyung’s eyes in their reflection. “You won’t let me touch you.”

Taehyung shifted, pushing off the wall. His back was already aching from the position. “I don’t want to worry you.”

Jimin frowned. “If I’m not the one to worry about you, then who is?”

“Me, I guess? I’m trying to figure it out, and you were already so stressed out because of my heat and worrying about Jungkook...”

“Tae, I...” Jimin sighed deeply. “I like taking care of you. I want to worry about you forever.”

“And then?” Tae said with a smile. Jimin cocked his head to the side.

“And then?”

“And after forever, are you still going to worry about me?”

Jimin smiled softly, and Taehyung felt like the pain eased up, even if just by a hair. “I’ll worry about you for forever and then some.”
“For forever and then some,” Tae sighed. They stood in silence for awhile, and then he added quietly, “You didn’t hurt me. I’m just working through some things right now.”

“That you can’t talk to me about?” Jimin turned around to face Taehyung, half-sitting on the edge of the sink and crossing his arms.

“That I can’t talk to anyone about, because I just don’t know how to word it yet,” Taehyung said. He hated this part, when he couldn’t explain the distance, the discrepancy between what his brain said and what verbal tools it offered him. It was like trying to speak in a language without knowing enough grammar to convey what he already felt he wanted to express, only able to offer a shallow outline of what he intended. But with Jimin watching him like that, the gentle sadness that swept over his face, he knew he had to try. Jimin was always trying. He hadn’t been exactly coherent through all the parts of his heat, but he remembered Jimin trying his hardest to care for him, and how safe he’d felt wrapped up in the Alpha’s presence. He had to try. “It’s like...you didn’t do anything wrong but I’m so irritated. I just want to yell but there’s nothing really to yell about. I can tell it’s irrational but I can’t stop myself from feeling it. Then suddenly I’m not angry anymore. It’s just that everything hurts.”

“Wait, hurts? Like what kind of hurt?”

“Like...everything aches. The forks at dinner were too loud, and I’ve had a headache since my heat broke, and...I just feel awful.”

Jimin’s face crumpled as he considered this, and Taehyung could tell that his instinct was telling him to move forward and embrace the Beta, to comfort him in the best way he knew how - physical contact. But even just the thought made him feel overheated and miserable, like cuddling on the hottest, most humid day of the year. “Are you sick, maybe? Or is it because of the heat?”

Taehyung could only shrug. He felt so tired just doing that.”I don’t know. I was going to talk to Seokjin about it after dinner.”

“Isn’t Seokjin a little preoccupied?” Jimin said with a little snort.

The Beta tilted his head to the side a little, smiling even though the movement felt like he had just pulled a muscle taut. The trace of humor in Jimin’s voice told him that things were going to be all right - Jimin was one of those people that was good at understanding others, of moving with every muscle emanating a soft, pink sort of empathy like bubble gum. He reached out and took hold of the
edge of Jimin’s sweater, pinching it between two long, tanned fingers as he met Jimin’s eyes. “Yeah, but I wanna hear what he thinks first. I think he’ll know what to do.” Taehyung licked his lips, feeling the dry sort of pull there as though he was parched. “Will you...go with me?”

Jimin’s expression softened, the tension dripping away from it like rain dripping down a windowpane. “Of course, Tae-tae,” Jimin slipped his hand into Taehyung’s, the delicate plushness of his Alpha’s hands feeling lovely with his own fingers intertwined. “I just wish you’d told me earlier, you know?”

“Sorry,” Taehyung mumbled. “And I’m sorry for earlier, when I shoved you off the bed when you were kissing my--”

“It’s fine,” Jimin said mildly, squeezing Taehyung’s hand. He reached up to cup Taehyung’s cheek with the other, and suddenly Taehyung caught a strong whiff of the lingering Jin Scent now coating Jimin’s left hand, and he actually gagged and started coughing.

“Oh god, that smells awful,” Taehyung managed between coughs. “Holy shit.”

Jimin frowned, having dropped his hand immediately with a wide-eyed look of apology. “God…”

They looked at each other for a minute, the atmosphere a little coated in uncertainty, then started to laugh. Jimin’s laughter echoing through the bathroom, mingling with his own, made Taehyung suddenly grab him and pull him close, squeezing Jimin to his fluttering, strained chest and pulling the Alpha’s head into his shoulder, where Jimin froze in surprise. It hurt, when everything felt clammy and gross and on edge, an unsettling sensation like the annoying hum of a lightbulb in an otherwise quiet room, but Taehyung held him tighter, until Jimin finally relaxed against his chest.

“I was worried,” Jimin’s muffled voice came in a hot breath against his shoulder, “That you were regretting becoming my Omega, because of what your classmates are saying now.”

Taehyung halted a moment, caught in the realization that this was still a thing with Jimin, and he wondered if Jimin was ever going to really know what he meant to him. It was uncommon for a Beta to willingly become someone’s Omega, he had known that already. But hearing the snide comments and amusement, or even the innocently intended but still as stressful questions, the shocked commentary, had surprised him.

‘You became an Omega for him? What’s so great about him that you’d do that?’
‘Oh...so you’re an Omega now? I dunno, I just assumed you’d be an Alpha for someone.’

He had not known, however, that Jimin had gotten word. Once the rumors and questions had started, he stopped telling people that it was for Jimin - even though he knew that all of his friends and acquaintances already were well aware of his adoration for Jimin from the start. He’d made friends quickly, introduced Jimin to all of them, even reprimanded them when they shared any misgivings about the Alpha, defending him over petty things as well as bigger things. Jimin is amazing, he’s not stuck up, he’s just kind of shy about some things! Eventually, most of them had come around, and Taehyung had somehow blended together his social circles a little more with alacrity as the glue.

But he didn’t want Jimin to become hated again because of this, because he was an Alpha and because Taehyung had made the decision to become his Mate. There was no reason for him to be ashamed or feel sorry for that, and Taehyung wasn’t sure of how to teach Jimin that. Taehyung was used to being hated, but it wasn’t as if he was wishing that likelihood onto his Alpha.

“If those people talk shit about it, they don’t know us at all,” he said slowly, “And if that’s the case I don’t wanna hang out with them anyways. You’re my Alpha, I was hoping you’d be an Alpha.”

Jimin pulled back a little, blinking a bit in obvious confusion. “Really? But...why?”

Taehyung shrugged, then regretted the movement in the little throb of pain that shot up and down his back like a lightning bolt. “I dunno. I guess I just feel like if you’re my Alpha, I don’t have to worry. We’ll take care of each other and I know you’ll protect me without even questioning it. I also wanted to have your pups one day, of course.”

Jimin chuckled, his smirk tilting to the side. “Taehyung, sometimes I’m just amazed by you.”

At that, Taehyung leaned in so that his mouth was next to Jimin’s ear and he whispered, “It also helps that I can’t wait to have your cute chubby dick up my ass.”

Jimin let out a long cry of, “Ahhh!” as he smacked Taehyung on the shoulder, making the Beta wince before he gently nudged him toward the door. “You’re adorable and insufferable.”

“That’s a good combo.”
“Let’s just go and finish dinner,” Jimin reprimanded, his adorable mothering voice slipping back in to cover up the visible embarrassment that reddened the Alpha’s cheeks. “You should eat properly, and then we can go talk to Jin together and find out what’s going on.” He wasn’t sure when it happened, but their hands entwined again as they stepped out into the hallway, and Taehyung gave Jimin’s small hand a squeeze to comfort himself, even though he already felt sweaty and gross from the contact.


“Of course,” Jimin perked up, smiling at the Beta. “I’m your Alpha, after all.”

“Even if you reek like Seokjin and Jungkook right now,” Taehyung wrinkled his nose, and Jimin almost smacked him again, barely remembering and choosing to just let out a cute whining sound.

Slowly, Jimin’s laughter faded, and he tilted his head to the side as they walked downstairs. “So it smells like both of them to you? I can only smell Seokjin’s Alpha Scent…”

“Yeah, maybe it’s because I’m over-sensitive right now,” Taehyung hummed, “But it smells like both of them for sure.”

“Huh,” he said as they both entered the dining room, and Namjoon and Kiara glanced up at the two. “That’s weird…”

Namjoon glanced casually at their clasped hands before arching an eyebrow. “What’s weird?”

“Oh, it’s just it’s like Seokjin and Jungkook’s Scents are kinda…blended?” Taehyung said slowly. “I can smell both of them on Jimin now.”

This observation made Namjoon shoot Kiara a strange look, and his brow crinkled. “Blended? Like they just Scented?”

“No, more like… I dunno. It’s just blended. Like I can easily pick both of them out but they’re definitely together.” Taehyung wanted to give another shrug but instead opted to just collapse into one of the chairs, carefully pulling his legs up onto the seat and curling up. The pressure on his own stomach made it feel a little less sore and like his entire abdomen was freshly churned jjajangmyeon.
“Joonie,” Kiara said with a trace of warning in her voice, a dash of concern, “Don’t.”

He leaned forward to add something to her in an undertone, but she held up a hand.

“No, you can’t expect to solve every mystery and deal with everything that happens between those two. I already told you, they deserve their own privacy on some things. So let it go and just trust in them.”

Namjoon gave a sigh, as though he already knew.

By the time the other four made it back to the table, Jimin was practically spoon-feeding Taehyung, leaning in close and whispering little encouragements and begging him to just eat a little more. Taehyung did try, but the mere thought of food was making him gag and feel nauseated. The others were sending them questioning glances, but Jimin continued. He wanted Taehyung to feel better, and he wasn’t sure what to do about it, able to sense the underlying tension in Taehyung’s Scent. It made him want to bury the nagging feeling of powerlessness. All he could do was be patient and try to stay positive for the Beta.

“Now that we’re all here,” Namjoon started, looking around. “I’d like to discuss a few things with you all as a pack.”

Jimin looked around the table. He noticed that Seokjin and Jungkook looked noticeably more relaxed (and cleaner) than they had earlier, with their hair still wet and clumped against their foreheads post-shower, but Jungkook still continued to shift occasionally until he was sitting closer to the Alpha, as though he was in need of a little reassurance. Seokjin, however, didn’t seem to be noticing the wolf’s silent call for attention, focusing on his food and the fact that Namjoon was talking. Seokjin bore an unreadably, passive expression on his face that Jimin could see was making Jungkook pout in petulance, unused to being ignored. Jimin smiled a little. Now you know how it feels, he wanted to tease.

Hoseok and Yoongi, Jimin noted, were holding hands and saying little, and Hoseok kept looking over at Yoongi when the Omega wasn’t looking, a soft, emotional sort of look that Jimin could feel the warmth of from his own seat. It was a look of pride, he supposed, of gentleness at a level he couldn’t understand. Things were happening but they were hovering beneath the surface of the conversation, like an ondol, the heat emanating from the floorboards to offer its comfort without the directness of a declaration. Jimin was pretty sure he liked it, the way Hoseok stole glances at Yoongi, the way Kiara’s presence and very aura seemed to blend in with Namjoon’s, the way Jungkook sat leaned in towards Seokjin awkwardly, subconsciously, while they ate.
“First of all, I’m happy to say that we’ve cleared the schedule and checked in with the doctors about going out to the island for Taehyung and Jimin’s Mating in a couple of months, as well as for another hunt. And everything has been given a stamp of approval”

Taehyung’s Scent lifted, then, as though excited, and it was the brightest his eyes had been all evening. Jimin smiled, glancing over at Seokjin just as Namjoon explained, “Since Kiara will still have another month or so left before the birth, it’s less risky to go then rather than if we were to wait any longer. But I promised them they could Mate in the spring, and they chose the end of May.”

“We’ll be Mated,” Jimin breathed, “On a spring day.”

“That works out for me,” Seokjin said, sending the two of them a gentle smile as he scooped another half-bowl of rice. Jungkook bumped up against Seokjin’s shoulder, and was ignored again. Jimin wanted to chuckle when he saw the way Jungkook’s wide eyes searched Seokjin’s face for any trace of give, coming up fruitless.

“We’ll be leaving on the 26th, and we’ll come back at the start of June, maybe the 1st or 2nd, so everyone check your schedules, talk to your bosses - whatever you need to do.”

Kiara rubbed her hand up and down Namjoon’s arm, in a gesture that looked a lot like reminding, a little like giving strength, and a lot like warm domestic familiarity.

“And,” Namjoon took in a deep breath, raising his eyes across the table to catch his older brother’s gaze, “I ran into Yunho this morning.”

Seokjin stiffened, his hand on his spoon tightening a little, his words chosen with careful particularity. “Oh? You did?”

“Yes. And it wasn’t a pleasant interaction, let me tell you.” Namjoon worked his bottom lip, biting it and sucking it into his mouth as he shook his head. “I respect Yunho in a lot of ways as a lead Alpha for such a big pack, but…his methods and mine are very different.”

“Well,” Seokjin said slowly, pausing to take a drink of his water before answering. Jimin saw Jungkook watching Seokjin drink mere inches away from his face, and he wondered who was thirstier in that moment. “He’s been through a lot of pressure, and the elitism the pack was started with was kinda... amplified by his background. In addition, because of the huge shift in pack
loyalties at the time, many strong Alphas had to scramble for lead positions and organize a decent pack, and many of them weren’t really given the right information on how to care for an actual pack. I think Yunho fought fiercely for that position among all the competition, but he is missing a lot of perspective because of it. I always felt Yunho was very hard on himself because of that. Looking back, that’s probably why he handled things with me the way he did.”

“That’s probably true,” Namjoon nodded. “I hadn’t thought of that.”

“But anyways,” Seokjin set his glass down, and Jungkook’s eyes followed his hand. “What did Yunho have to say?”

“Who is Yunho?” Jungkook asked, staring up at Seokjin with curiosity. The Alpha finally turned to the younger, then, but his face was still that calm, cool image of self-control.

“Yunho,” Seokjin began slowly, “Is the lead Alpha of the Rising Gods, my old pack, and Jae’s current one.”

“Oh… What does he have to do with us now, though? Seokjin’s in our pack now.”

“Well,” Namjoon rubbed a hand across his face, his expression getting grim, “That’s why I called this meeting. I don’t do things the way Yunho does. I can’t just make decisions alone based on what I think we, as a pack, want, especially when it comes to your own happinesses. I may be the lead Alpha but we’re a team, here, so I want you to know that whatever answer you two come up with,” here he looked at Seokjin and Jungkook, “That as long as you are safe and happy, I’ll do my best to support you.” He paused for a moment, tapping his fingertips against the table in a quiet display of nerves. “Yunho offered me…well, a deal is what I guess you’d call it. He first wanted to know where Seokjin was. Jae was with him but he didn’t say much. I told him he was where he belonged - with his pack, and that was all I had to tell him. He said he’d heard about one of our new Omegas, and how he was one of the Jeons.”

“That’s what Jae said to me,” Jungkook added, “After he’d caught my Scent. He said my brother was in his pack.”

“I’m not sure whether that’s true,” Namjoon said slowly, his lips pursing together, “Or if Jae lied to you, or was unaware himself. But either way, they definitely made mention of that. And he said we should trade, for the benefit of both packs.”
“Trade?” Jimin queried, as Hoseok audibly gasped.

“Yes,” Namjoon said quietly, “As in, they would give us Jae to adopt into the pack, for Seokjin’s sake, as he suggested…” The lead Alpha gave a short pause before finishing with, “If we gave them Jungkook, to join the Rising Gods.”

“What?!” Taehyung cried out, pulled from his inner achy-shell into the forefront of the conversation. “No, we can’t!”

At the same time, Yoongi darkly growled, “No chance in fucking hell.” And Jimin let out a long whimper, looking worriedly over at Jungkook and Seokjin, who were sitting quietly and staring straight ahead at Namjoon. Perplexed by their quietness, Jimin looked over at Hoseok in a panic, only finding the Alpha’s face pale and his lips pinched tightly together, as though he wasn’t surprised, just drenched in silent fury.

But Namjoon just held up a hand, to quiet them all. “Listen, I know you all have strong feelings on this. Hell, I don’t even want to bring this up, if I’m being honest. Jungkook has been here for years, we’ve helped raise him. I’ve helped raise him. But this pack wasn’t formulated so I could make decisions automated without proper discussion. So, in all seriousness, I ask you two,” Namjoon frowned at the two wolves across from him, “What do you think about all this?”

Namjoon had barely gotten the words out when Jungkook jumped in with, “I’m staying with Bangtan pack. I don’t wanna go to another pack.”

“I understand that,” the Alpha nodded, looking visibly relieved, “But you should know, they promised that you would meet this brother of yours, whoever he is. But not until you join their pack.”

This made Jungkook pause, and he stared at the tabletop for a long moment. The tension in the air seemed to thicken, and Jungkook continued to glare down without blinking, his expression hardening with an inner debate they couldn’t hear. Kiara reached up and rubbed her hand up and down Namjoon’s arm, as though petting him, and looked genuinely worried for the first time that evening.

At long last, Jungkook raised his head, and he looked around the table at each of them in turn. When his eyes came to Jimin, the Alpha could see tears in Jungkook’s eyes, reflected in the lights, and he felt his chest clench.
“I’ve already met my brothers,” he said firmly. “I’m with them already.”

Jimin already felt the stinging at the edges of his eyes, and he heard Hoseok sniffling wetly. He wanted to jump up and embrace Jungkook, nuzzle lovingly into his Scent and let him smell what words couldn’t properly describe or express, but although Namjoon audibly sighed in relief, he was still sending Seokjin a heavy look.

Seokjin, who had been looking down at Jungkook, lifted his gaze to Namjoon. “I think you already know my answer, Namjoon.”

“That’s unnecessarily cruel of them, though,” Jimin said quietly, “Trading away Jae like he’s a baseball card.”

“It happens a lot in Noble packs,” Hoseok explained, still wiping at his tears, eyelashes fluttering wildly as he tried to regain control, “Particularly in the Elite Three packs, the criteria for members is really strict.”

“Most of the members had to go through, like, background checks and tests for months,” Taehyung added, his voice small next to Jimin and laced with sadness.

“Yeah, we were all surprised when they came to Seokjin and asked him to join,” Namjoon mused, lost for a moment in memory. Jimin turned to Seokjin, finding the Alpha blushing down at the table. “We shouldn’t have been, though, Seokjin was one of the best hunters, and his Scent is strong but very calming. “

“And Jae is a Noble, but an illegitimate one,” Seokjin added quietly, “The other pack members never let him forget that, once it came out.”

“Also, Rising Gods only picks beautiful members,” Taehyung offered, “And Jae is really handsome.”

“What?” Jimin shook his head in dismay, “What kind of pack picks its members based on looks?!”

Hoseok met Jimin’s eyes, and sent him the sad smile that reminded Jimin of a parent realizing how naive their child was, “Some packs are like that, Jimin. It’s just how things are with Nobles. The more elite you get, the more rules and expectations that come.”
“But that’s ridiculous,” Jimin sat back in his seat, utterly heartbroken at the prospect that some people wanting to join Rising Gods must have, at some point, been rejected based on their looks. “That sounds like...that’s just...that’s cruel. I’m actually glad I wasn’t born a Noble now.”

“And that’s just getting into the pack,” Seokjin said grimly, his chuckle hollow like a tree that had been burned out into a cavity, still alive but coated with char and emptiness.

“But now that we’ve established things a bit,” Namjoon continued. “We have the matter of Jungkook to discuss.”

“What about me?” Jungkook queried, tilting his head to the side, looking like a pup again for a moment.

“I deflected Yunho’s offer so I could talk to you two about it, but one of his pack members in no uncertain terms suggested that if we didn’t take the trade, they would come after you anyways.” Namjoon sat back, crossing his arms, “The way he said it made me wonder whether they know your brother or not, in all honesty. But it brought up an excellent point: you are an Unmated Omega, you’re known already for having a really powerful Scent, and you may be a Noble as well. This makes you not just a hot topic but a target, Jungkook.”

Jimin’s heart dropped to the floor.

“But I want to stay in Bangtan,” Jungkook reiterated, sounding impatient, “I already said that.”

“Even so,” Namjoon’s voice was gentle, patient, as he tried to explain. “If you were Mated by one of their pack members, that would be the end of it. I would have no authority when it comes to you anymore.”

“But...But Seokjin already Claimed me! I literally reek of him right now!”

“While that’s true,” the Alpha smiled wryly, “They may not care about that, Jungkook.”

That was when what Namjoon was suggesting seemed to sink in for Jungkook, and he sat back in shock for a moment. As long as there was only a Claim between Seokjin and Jungkook, even their
Bonding, their relationship, was seen as impermanent, and verbal only. A suggestion but not a promise, and something that could be overturned. All it would take would be finding Jungkook once in a vulnerable position, and Mating him forcibly, and he would belong to that Alpha.

“Th-that’s horrible,” Jungkook hiccuped, “This is so unfair.”

The older wolves didn’t seem to have anything to say to that, and they all stared at their plates in sober silence. Yoongi was the first to speak.

“It’s not fair,” he began, “And to be honest, Bangtan pack treats each other more equally than any pack I’ve ever seen, but in a way, that’s probably made it harder on you. As an Omega, I have rights in Bangtan pack. I have choice and power, and Mating isn’t possession, it’s a link between two wolves. It’s liberation instead of confinement. You belong to each other but you don’t own each other. But that’s not going to be the case in most places.”

“That’s because of Namjoon’s leadership,” Hoseok added, his voice low but brimming with warmth. “He’s given us a safe space.” All eyes turned to Namjoon, and Kiara smiled up at him with pride. The lead Alpha, a little taken aback, fumbled and his spoon fell off the table with a clumsy clatter.

“Anyways,” he managed after some low, incoherent mumbling, “Our focus right now needs to be on protecting Jungkook, until things cool down a bit with Rising Gods, or until some other solution comes.”

“Protecting Jungkook?” Jimin breathed, mostly to himself. The table was silent in that strangely uncomfortable way, as they all tried to think of possible answers.

“He shouldn’t be on patrol right now,” Yoongi said at last, “It gives him so many opportunities to get caught alone.”

“But that’s exactly what I’m training for,” Jungkook said quietly, “Being able to protect myself and others. I know how to stay aware of my surroundings if I need to, and we have our radios, I don’t want to just back out of my responsibilities.”

“I know.” Yoongi let out a sigh, sitting back in his seat to splay his box-shaped hands out on the table, “Okay, what if you arranged it so you had another officer with you? They’ve done that before, right?”
“Yes, but...what’s the point in me going if they have to make all those accommodations for me?”

At Jungkook’s response, gently and calmly stated, Jimin tilted his head to the side. Whether it was from the blowout from earlier that evening or not, Jungkook seemed different. More self-assured, less anxious. It seemed strange to Jimin, since it came with the presented danger to Jungkook’s safety, and he could only attribute it to the way Seokjin had quietly laid his hand on the table over Jungkook’s, rubbing circles into the back of Jungkook’s hand with his thumb as they sat close together.

The atmosphere altered, like a cloud that wafted through the room and back out again, and Namjoon leaned forward, the corner of his mouth quirking to the side. “He’s got a point, Yoongi. If he’s not able to perform duties like the rest, it’s probably better if he just isn’t there. At the same time, I don’t think you should feel like you have to shut yourself off like you’re under house arrest. But I want you to be extra careful, and I’d feel safer if you were with another pack member as much as possible.”

“At the very least please let one of us know where you are at all times you’re not in the pack house,” Kiara said gently.

“This is so unfair,” Taehyung said suddenly, still curled up tightly in his chair, his voice a deep mourning sound, “Why is it just Jungkook? It’s not like I have to be as careful.”

“In all honesty,” Namjoon said, “I’d prefer if you did the same. And Jimin as well.”

“What!” Taehyung gasped, and Jimin’s mouth fell agape.

“This isn’t just some special treatment because Jungkook is an Omega, it’s also because he’s Unmated, and those are both things he can’t help, but the fact remains that it gives us a weak point where Rising Gods can gain some leverage.” Namjoon looked at the three youngest in turn.

“And what about Seokjin?” Jungkook asked, “He’s Unmated, too.”

“If they wanted me,” Seokjin said quietly, “They wouldn’t have offered Jae.”

Jungkook’s expression fell into a dark, unclear emotion. Jimin couldn’t imagine that that was particularly true, but he wasn’t sure why it didn’t seem to suit. Maybe it was his own bias, seeing
Seokjin as such a strong Alpha, but he felt like he should tell Seokjin to be careful as well. But he
didn’t have the words or the reasoning, so he could only sit quietly, resting his hands beneath his
thighs.

“But…” Jungkook finally said, “How long do I - do we - have to do this?”

Namjoon looked sadly at the Omega, “I’m not sure. At least until this tension seems to die down a
little between the packs. I think this came up now because they’d heard Seokjin came out of his
pseudo-pilgrimage.”

“Namjoon,” Yoongi poked at the remaining food on his plate with some pensiveness. “Are we going
to be alright on the hunt in May? The Rising Gods have the other half of the island now.”

“The other half?!” Seokjin leaned forward, “But what about the other two packs?”

“I ran into Yunho this morning, and Jackson was already going to meet with me this afternoon. He
told me that the Locklears sold their land. To the Rising Gods.”

The table was suddenly thick with the Scent of panic and concern, and Jimin felt the edges of his
skin prickle with anticipation and unknown fear.

“But the Locklears have had that portion of the island for like eight generations!” Seokjin exclaimed,
“They have an entire burial ground on those lands! Even if they weren’t going to use it, there’s no
way in hell they sold that piece willingly!”

Yoongi took in a sharp inhale, slowly letting it out, “So that means it’s just us, Jackson’s clan, and
Rising Gods on that island now.”

Jimin bit his lip. He had never even met or been near one of their pack members as far as he had
known, but just based on what the others were saying, nothing good could come of this. If they
couldn’t go out to hunt on the island, they would have to go back to the public parks to do the bare
minimum hunting, and they were already stressed with Kiara’s pregnancy, oncoming exams, and
Mating plans.

“Namjoon,” Jimin’s voice was low and at first, he wasn’t sure if the Alpha heard him, but the little
sound of acknowledgement encouraged him onward. “What are we going to do?”
The Alpha frowned. “I don’t know, Jimin. That’s why I called this meeting. It’s very important to keep our pack safe when hunting even in normal circumstances, but I want us to take this very seriously.”

Silence encompassed the table, and Jimin strained to think of some possible solution, some easier way out than constantly worrying about Jae and these imposing images in his head that could hunt them down at any moment like the most timid of game. He hated this. But of course, true to form, he hadn’t a single clue where to start, or even how to encourage. It was their Mating that everyone was going to the island for, primarily. He knew that moving the date would solve nothing, of course, but he still felt the traces of guilt tickling up his spine in a horrible fashion.

“We’ll have another pack meeting in a week,” Namjoon said after a sizable stretch of silence. “Until then, I want everyone to continue as normally as possible. Jungkook, we’ll talk later this evening about what to do about your patrol work, I’m sure we can figure something out.”

“Yes, sir,” Jungkook replied, with no trace of sarcasm in his voice.

“Remember, guys, this is not about any one in particular. This is about all of us.” Namjoon took hold of Kiara’s hand, squeezing it more tightly than Jimin thought he normally would, a somber look on the leader’s face. With none of the amusement or awkwardness of the first time he had said it, Namjoon murmured, “Teamwork makes the dream work.”

“-Teamwork makes the dream work,” they chorused soberly. And if it were possible, Jimin’s heart clenched a little tighter. He looked around the table and saw Seokjin looking uncomfortable, with Jungkook at his side biting his lip as though he wanted to say something, but was deciding against it. Hoseok was staring darkly at his plate, deep in thought on something, with Yoongi at his side looking at him in concern. Taehyung leaned in slowly, until the edge of his temple rested against Jimin’s shoulder, and he let out the smallest whimper of complaint. The lead Alpha sat at the head of the table, his Omega with her arm threaded around his, and he looked stony-faced and withdrawn.

“Okay,” Namjoon started to push his chair back. “We can have the next meeting at--”

“Namjoon,” Hoseok interrupted suddenly, immediately drawing everyone’s attention. “I, um.. I know that I should be the last person to suggest something like this, especially given what happened earlier, but… I do have a suggestion to make. I know it’s the obvious answer here, but no one wants to say it, and that’s probably because of me, at least in part.”
“Hoseokkie…” Yoongi breathed.

“I think the best way to protect Jungkook,” Hoseok said firmly, meeting Namjoon’s eyes with a straightforwardness and self-emanating power that was rare coming from the gentle Alpha. “Is to let him and Seokjin Mate as early as possible.”

“W-what?!” Namjoon gasped, and Jungkook let out a strange strangling sound, his hands suddenly gripping at Seokjin’s shirt desperately.

“I love my pups,” Hoseok said quietly, looking over at Jimin and Jungkook in turn, “And I’ve always wanted to do what’s best for them. I’ve seen firsthand what trading and messy Mating threats like this can turn into, and I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy, much less them. And maybe I don’t like the speed at which things are going for these two, but…simply put, the best way to protect Jungkook from being taken away by some other Alpha we don’t know and losing him forever, would be to let him Mate Seokjin.”

It was at this time that Hoseok turned, and he locked eyes with Seokjin for the first time that evening. Seokjin met his gaze back question, but a strange sort of calmness to his aura. It was as though they were wordlessly communicating by eyes alone, and it was a long moment before anyone spoke.

“I’d rather Jungkook be with someone he cares about and trusts than him get taken away from us and forced into a pack he doesn’t want to be a part of.” At long last, he broke gaze with Seokjin, turning to Namjoon and standing up slowly. “That’s all I have to say. Excuse me.”

And for the second time that evening, Hoseok left the table first, with Yoongi following close behind. But the atmosphere was entirely altered, like fire to water, storm to calm. Hoseok’s footsteps were gentle as he went upstairs, and the door shut with a gentle click.

Namjoon looked over at the rest of the table, looking utterly taken aback. “Um… So I think that was kind of a lot for everyone to grapple with tonight. Let’s consider Hoseok’s suggestion but, ah…everyone take some time to think about it and we’ll sit down again tomorrow to talk about it some more, okay?”

There were some half-hearted nods, and Jimin watched as everyone else got up from the table, until it was just Taehyung and himself left.

“I’m gonna be sick,” Taehyung said quietly, sounding like he was about to start weeping instead.
Jimin reached over and gently traced his finger down Taehyung’s arm in soft comfort. “If they let Jungkook Mate early, they’ll let us Mate early too, right? It’s not fair if he gets to go first.”

Jimin allowed himself a little smile at that, tracing his finger down once again. “Maybe, I’m not sure.”

“They gotta let us go first,” Taehyung complained, his eyes shut as though he was going to fall asleep right there at the table. “If Jungkook Mates first I’ll never hear the end of it.”

Jimin looked up at the empty table, and let out a little sigh. He couldn’t believe that Hoseok, of all people, had been the one to suggest the Mating, even though now that he thought of it, it was the most obvious, simple answer. Now, whether or not that was what was going to happen, he wasn’t sure. He had Taehyung to worry about first, as much as his mind was pulled multiple directions, wanting to reach out and tend to everyone, he could only do a little bit as he was now.

“Tae-Tae, what are we going to do?” The words were exhaled in one long puff, as if he could breathe out everything that was cumulating in his chest.

Taehyung made no answer.

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies~ KurageCharms here! ♥

Well, I'm glad I got to do this chapter from Tae and Jimin's POV. It's high-time their perspective was brought back, right? Haha. During the beta-read, Jen pointed out several similes/metaphors that I made, especially for Tae's POV, and that's partially bc I'm a sucker for similes, but also because I felt that was how Tae would kind of express/work through his feelings, is by strange and unusual (but hopefully very fitting) similes. :) I hope to make my writing stronger through small details like that.

Last chapter got a lot of very strong commentary, and I just wanted to say that it's always interesting to read people's reactions and feedback! I really do appreciate hearing from my readers, and some of you are so clever! (I should have expected it, most of us had to survive through the INU/RUN era and WINGS era after all) I always try to make my stories as believable as possible, no matter the AU, and one of those ways is to make characters that have 'gray' areas - as in, I'm not going to spell out characters as clearly 'bad guys' or 'good guys' at any point, or say that one person was 100% in the right or wrong. :) But I do love to see the very different viewpoints and impressions people have, and I hope you all enjoy it -because- of this factor, and not merely -despite- it.

lol I did notice tho that at some point people stopped asking me "when are you gonna
finish it?" Because it seems like every other chapter I bring in new shit and drama. *shrug* I've now had people tell me LINP is "too long" for them to read, and of course that's fine. Haha

Feel free to follow me on twitter under the handle kuragecharms, I'll probably do a poll this weekend about things up until this chapter. ;D I also am taking part in the Alpaca Jin fic exchange, so I really need to get focused on that! >_< omg Pray for my filth-ridden soul.

Later, my lovelies~
“Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her.”

— Lao Tzu

The gentle sounds of Jungkook’s breathing was a soft lullaby in the lull of the cool spring evening. Seokjin shifted a little on the couch, careful not to dislodge the Omega who had curled up into his lap after dinner for a cuddle, excitedly rambling on about how they could probably Mate as early as the following weekend if Namjoon gave it his stamp of approval. The Omega hadn’t been there twenty minutes before he had gone from jittery energy to suddenly dropping off to sleep with Seokjin’s hand running through his hair, obviously worn out from the events since Seokjin had gotten home - not the least of which had been quite physically demanding. Seokjin was glad Namjoon had given them time to go clean up before rejoining the dinner - it had let him get a little proper aftercare in after letting Jungkook finish, but it was still quite a bit to wind down from.

Technically speaking, Seokjin was studying a medical journal he’d been assigned for homework, but in all honesty, he had been staring at the same page for almost twenty minutes, his mind more on the Omega in his lap. Jungkook’s nose wriggled a little in his sleep, and his leg jerked a bit as though he had been startled; he was dreaming of a hunt, probably. Seokjin lowered the journal, watching Jungkook sleep. In books he always read that people looked more child-like in their sleep, but to him Jungkook looked older in a way - strong angled jaw, his wide, emotive eyes shut to the world and merely framed with a line of dark eyelashes, mouth open as he snored lightly. While still soft and sweetened, the ways that made Jungkook appear the youngest - the wide eyes, the goofy smile, the gleam of playfulness that sometimes wriggled and writhed in barely contained excitement beneath every muscle - was hidden under a layer of sleepy neutral-aged warmth. His head lolled off to the side, nearly draped off the opposite side of Seokjin’s legs, his neck lying exposed. That realization made Seokjin pause, his hand moving to delicately brush long fingertips against the vulnerable skin there, stopping for a moment against Jungkook’s unmarred Scent gland at the base of the neck.

Omegas didn’t just sleep so vulnerably like that.

The fact that Jungkook had was another little sign of his affection and trust in Seokjin. The Alpha traced his thumb along the swollen patch of skin, the hint of leather and ocean wafting up as he did so. Seokjin wondered if he should be having doubts, if he should be worried about the prospect of
Mating Jungkook so quickly, so soon, so rushed. He wondered if he should be as nervous as he had been the day Jae had gone to ask Yunho if he could Mate with Seokjin. But looking down into Jungkook’s face, he didn’t feel any inclination whatsoever. He just felt like he was home.

Jungkook snorted a little in his sleep, sniffing suddenly quite frantically. He nuzzled in toward Seokjin’s waist, burying his face in what Seokjin knew was the residual smell of their shared sex Scent that hung around both of them. The Alpha smiled, then was jolted in surprise when Jungkook pushed his face roughly against Seokjin’s crotch, still fast asleep.

“Aw, fuck no,” Seokjin mumbled, nudging Jungkook’s face away, silently mourning as he did so because it had actually felt really good. In the meanwhile, Jungkook seemed to quiet again, so Seokjin picked up his medical journal and continued to read. He was only another paragraph or two ahead of where he had been before when Jungkook started kicking a little, one hand flapping uselessly up in the general direction of Seokjin’s waist as the Omega sniffled and whined. Seokjin chuckled, rolling his eyes. He was definitely dreaming of a hunt. It was extremely cute, and the Alpha sat for a few minutes watching Jungkook, amused by every sudden jerk and then laughing when he tried to bark in his sleep, his human mouth framing the sound with not nearly as much intimidation as his wolf one would have. Seokjin watched the pale pink little mouth, parted and slightly panting with excitement. Jungkook’s cupid’s bow curled up into a tight little angle, as though it had been drawn at the edge of a sharp penknife.

You can just touch it, you know, Seokjin thought at himself, Instead of always just staring at him, hoping and wondering. It was something he had to remind himself of, that he had been given this right by Jungkook himself. That the waiting and the pining had finally ended.

Seokjin reached out one tentative finger, brushing the tip against the top V-shaped curve at the top of that upper lip and pressing in slightly. It was, of course, as soft and pliant as he remembered, and he ran his fingertips back and forth over the skin there.

To his surprise, the still unconscious and apparently sensitive Jungkook started working his lips fretfully in his sleep, letting out a little sound that vaguely resembled a sigh, mouthing at the fingertip as if it was offering him a delicious alternative to his rest. Seokjin stared, then, fascinated, pressed his finger in a little more firmly to Jungkook’s mouth. The next moment, the skin all across Seokjin’s body prickled to life as Jungkook’s mouth suddenly encompassed his finger with a slight wet sound.

“Fuck,” Seokjin breathed, as Jungkook started suckling in his sleep. “You sexual little deviant.”

He stared at Jungkook’s sleep-softened face, pink lips wrapped around the tip of his finger, and he could almost feel that the Omega was on the edge of waking, when suddenly there were footsteps and Seokjin hurriedly pulled his finger away with a little popping sound, wiping his finger off on Jungkook’s shirt.
“Seokjin?” Jimin said quietly, slipping into the living room as if he knew what he was walking in on. When he saw Jungkook was asleep, he seemed a little more relieved, and waved Taehyung in after him. “Can we...talk to you about something?”

“Mm? Of course, sure.” Seokjin immediately set aside the medical journal that he had specifically not been reading. He was starting to honestly question whether Jungkook was really asleep or was just pretending, and he could tell from the way Jimin and Taehyung shared a silent look that this was something private. “Do you want to go to my room to talk, or--?”

“No, here should be fine,” Jimin said, then immediately touched Taehyung’s arm, leaning in close and whispering, “As long as you’re fine with it, I mean? It’s Jungkook, so…”

“I mean, I’m fine as long as you don’t care,” Taehyung shrugged. Their inconclusive banter continued back and forth for almost a full minute before they both concluded that it wasn’t that big of a deal if Jungkook overheard, and the two sat down near Seokjin with an awkward sobriety.

“So what’s up?”

“Well,” Jimin started, looking over at Taehyung with that concerned, surveying expression. “Ever since Taehyung’s heat broke, we’ve noticed some things are...off? Like I noticed he hasn’t wanted me to touch him, and he’s been kind of moody.”

Taehyung shot Jimin the first direct look since they had entered the living room, bristling at being called moody. Now that he thought about it, Seokjin realized they weren’t even sitting up against each other, shoulder to shoulder, like they normally would have. And Taehyung had a little pallor to his cheeks that was as uncharacteristic as could be.

“Are you not feeling well, Tae?” Seokjin asked, his hand going back to pet through Jungkook’s hair without realizing it.

“I feel horrible,” Taehyung finally mumbled in a deep-throated whine. “I’m all hot, and everything feels on edge and even sounds hurt.”

“Like a migraine?” Seokjin worked his lip, biting lightly at the inside of his cheek in thought. “Have you been drinking plenty of water? Did the heat actually break for sure?”
“Yeah, I have. It doesn’t feel like the heat did.” Taehyung let out a sigh, as though he had been plagued with a thousand asinine questions out of the blue. “This is a weird, different kind of heat. And I’ve had a headache since it broke, and I just wanna punch things.”

“Hmm…” Seokjin sat back a little, rubbing one finger along the underside of his chin. He felt the slightly rough catch there of a spot he must have missed shaving that morning. “Do you have any other symptoms? Warped vision? Dizziness? Fatigue? Irregular bowel movements? Bleeding? Stomachaches?”

“My, my stomach kind of hurts,” Taehyung murmured quietly, laying a hand on his lower abdomen. “But other than that, not really. It’s hard to focus my eyes sometimes but I think that’s because of the headache.”

“Well,” Seokjin leaned over a little, patting Taehyung’s knee lightly, “The good news is I think I know exactly what is wrong with you. The bad news is, you’re probably not going to like the answer.”

“Oh god,” Jimin gasped, “Did I hurt him?”

“No,” Seokjin smiled, a little wryly, “Well, in all honesty, you did do something. Taehyung is experiencing symptoms from his hormone shifts, is all. I was a little worried because he had his heat so fast after his Presenting, since it usually takes longer for a Beta to switch. This means that in all likelihood, Taehyung is just naturally very sensitive to Omega hormones.”

“I always knew when my friends were going to be Omegas,” Taehyung added quietly, his brain whizzing through this new information. “And I knew Jungkook was Presenting before anyone else did.”

Seokjin glanced down at the sleeping Jungkook, nodding. “That’s true. It also doesn’t help that you got an Omega hormone bath recently.”

Jimin flushed, staring down at his lap. “I’m sorry, Tae-Tae… I really made it worse, didn’t I?”

“No,” Taehyung said, nuzzling gently against Jimin’s cheek with his forehead, wincing as he did so. “You made it better. It hurts, but this means I have lots of Omega hormones. Right, Seokjin?”

“Yeah, it does,” Seokjin smiled, albeit a little sadly. “But it’s a lot for your body to handle. You’re probably going to be miserable for quite some time, to be honest. Continuing mood swings, severe cramps, headaches, sensitivity. Your Scent will probably act strangely, too.”
Taehyung moaned. “I just wanna hug him.”

“You can hug me,” Jimin said quietly, “Just do it at your own pace, I won’t move unless you tell me to.”

Taehyung let out a high-pitched whimper, and slowly, gingerly laid his head in Jimin’s lap. Jimin smiled, watching the boy sigh against his knee. They were now almost a mirror image of Seokjin and Jungkook.

“Seokjin, is there anything we should do? There has to be something that can help him feel a bit better?”

“Well,” Seokjin hummed in thought. “Most people in this situation go to a specialist and get a prescription for a suppressant.”

Taehyung reached over and grabbed hold of Jimin’s hand, laying it softly into his hair and nudging it around until Jimin figured out that Taehyung wanted him to rub at his hair in little spider-like motions, massaging gently at the scalp. Taehyung’s brow furrowed, tense and stressed by the sensitivity, but he didn’t ask him to stop so Jimin kept going until Taehyung seemed to become a little more adjusted to it.

“A suppressant?” Jimin worked his lips in worry. “I dunno, I don’t like that idea at all… But if it makes him feel better, than maybe--”

“No suppressants,” Taehyung mumbled, half-muffled by Jimin’s thigh. He tilted his head until his mouth was clear, then met Seokjin’s eyes. “I want to have pups as soon as possible. If I’m on suppressants there’s no way I can get pregnant.”

Seokjin’s expression fell, even as his heart clenched happily at the thought of Taehyung finally getting the pups he had dreamed and gushed about since he was a tiny pup himself. “I understand that, Taehyung. But I don’t think you know how miserable you’re going to be. You should keep your mind open to the possibility of at least having the suppressants available as backup. There are also low-end intensity ones which you could start on, and they would be easy to wean off of, if you decide you’re ready.”

“When we decide we’re ready,” Jimin said firmly, obviously having discussed this at length with the
Beta and been assured of their decision.

“We already are ready,” Taehyung protested. “I don’t want chemical suppressants fucking up my insides more than they already are.”

Seokjin nodded. It wasn’t the first time he’d heard someone say that about suppressants, and he was sure it wouldn’t be the last. The stigma surrounding the hormone controllers was certainly a negative one, if anything. “Well, in that case, there are some other options, although they’re not as good.”

“Like what?” Jimin ran his hand through Taehyung’s hair, making the Beta suck in a sharp breath through his teeth as though it pained him.

“Well, as difficult as it is, the best way to level out a severe hormone imbalance like this is to get pregnant,” Seokjin started, a grim smile on his lips. “Of course, that’s not an option right now. The second best way is Mating, which should be sooner than expected, but exactly when is still uncertain for the time being.”

“Ohhh…” Jimin breathed, “Mating would help? Because of the hormones involved?”

“Yeah, it’s kind of like a huge slap of the reset button,” Seokjin said, petting Jungkook’s hair. “But that’s not an option right now, so in the meantime, I can get some natural supplements and some herbal teas that should help alleviate the symptoms. Ironically, it’s probably best if he can stay as close to you as possible, even though he’s probably really sensitive to your... everything Alpha right now. Once he gets over the hump of it, it’ll go back to being a comfort.”

Seokjin was distracted momentarily by the idea of Jungkook, coming to ask him cutely about pups and their future together, imagining him whining at Seokjin about his stomach aching, seeking comfort in the Alpha’s lap. His hand brushing through Jungkook’s bangs, he didn’t see the look Taehyung sent Jimin, or the way Jimin bit at his lip, nodding slowly.

When the older Alpha looked up, he sent them both a fond smile. “I’m happy you two are progressing. I know it’s hard to have patience sometimes, but it’s all for the best for your future Mate, right? So take care of each other well.”

“R-right,” Jimin said, now practically gnawing at his bottom lip.

“It’s difficult, to get to that point where you feel comfortable with each other completely, right?”
Seokjin was now halfway focused on himself and Jungkook, rather than the younger two, and he couldn’t even find it in himself to feel anything but amused at that. “It takes time to build trust and to find out what your Mate is going to need from you, and just as importantly, what your Mate can offer you in return, right?” He brushed his thumb across the apple of Jungkook’s cheek, earning a quiet little snore from the Omega in response. “And I hope you two aren’t angry at the possibility of us Mating before you. I know you two have been together longer than us and all, but…you understand, right? It’s for Jungkook’s safety.”

“Yeah, I get it,” Jimin said quietly. Taehyung frowned, his bottom lip protruding in a pout. “I know you’ve given up a lot to be with him, and with us.”

At that, Seokjin smiled. “Not at a--” There was a little clattering sound, and the three of them looked up to see Hoseok coming downstairs, wearing just a pair of striped pajama pants and scratching at his bare chest. He glanced their way somberly before stepping into the kitchen.

Pausing a moment in awkward hesitation, Seokjin looked back over at Jimin and his questioning eyes, and he tried his best to smile. “Not at all, Jimin. I don’t feel like I ‘gave up’ anything to be with you guys, or with Jungkook. I walked away from a lot of things, yes. But that was for myself. I came to Bangtan pack because of all the things all of you could give me, and I stayed because I want to find a way to give back. If anything, being with Jungkook feels like a lovely selfishness. So I want to grow stronger as an Alpha, and be smarter, and healthier.”

Jimin met Seokjin’s eyes for a long moment, and he nodded. “I wanna be a stronger Alpha, too.”

Seokjin smiled, his eyes wrinkling at the corners in a matured sense of noble pride. Jimin leaned down into Taehyung’s face, kissing the boy’s temple and whispering for them to go back upstairs and nap a little more. Taehyung complained but eventually managed to get himself off the couch and start to trudge towards the stairs, moaning his troubles to Jimin, who patiently hovered around him with a gentle fretfulness.

Seokjin sighed, closing his eyes and dropping his head back against the headrest of the couch, so his face was tilted toward the ceiling. He really was worried about how well Taehyung was going to be able to handle the symptoms until Namjoon would let them Mate. Perhaps if Namjoon knew all the details about what Taehyung - and his body - was going through, he would agree to--

There was the sound of the refrigerator opening and shutting, the clatter of glass from the cupboard, and Seokjin opened one eye to see Hoseok stepping out of the kitchen, carrying a glass of some translucent golden-brown liquid and heading toward the stairs.
“Hoseok, can we talk?” Seokjin said slowly. At the sound of his name, the Alpha paused, one foot on the bottom step as he turned to Seokjin, his expression unreadable but far from what Seokjin would call ‘pleased’ or ‘happy.’

“Mm? Sure,” he said breezily, stepping into the living room and sitting down on the couch that Jimin and Taehyung had recently vacated. “What about?”

Seokjin paused for a moment. He knew what he wanted to talk about, but summarizing it into succinct terms had him at a temporary loss. “Um.. about Jungkook, and you and I, I guess. To be honest, I was more than a little surprised by your suggestion at dinner, and I guess, well...I wanted to talk about it.”

Their eyes were locked together, but Hoseok’s expression was utterly unreadable. After a beat, he suddenly seemed to relax, breaking the eye contact and sighing. “I meant what I said. It makes the most sense to keep Jungkook safe, and if it’s for that, I’d be willing to do almost anything.”

“I know,” Seokjin said, although he felt a little disappointed somehow, with that answer. “I’d tell you I promise to take care of him well, but when I first moved here I also promised you I wouldn’t challenge Namjoon’s authority, and I ended up doing that.”

“Circumstances change things,” Hoseok said gently. “And I know you’ll take care of Jungkook as well as you can.”

That was a bit of an unexpected turn, and Seokjin couldn’t hide the suggestion of surprise from his face. “You do?”

“Of course,” Hoseok sat back into the couch cushion, smiling a little sadly. “Seokjin, we haven’t had much of a chance to get very close, with everything that’s going on, but I like you. A lot. I know it doesn’t seem like it, but I’m glad you decided on Bangtan pack and joined us.”

Letting those words mull in his mind for a moment, Seokjin slowly said, “You just don’t trust me with your pup, right...?”

“I’ll admit I was surprised you picked Jungkook, back when I had a very different image of you. But that’s not why I was so hesitant.”
“Then it was because of my history with Jae?” Seokjin felt like he had this rare opportunity to get a straight answer as to what he had done wrong, and that tempting possibility felt so fleeting, he could hear the desperate eagerness in his own voice. “Because of the Alpha thing?”

Hoseok worked his lip for a moment beneath the bright whiteness of his teeth, one hand teasing at the hem of his jeans. “No, it wasn’t because it was your past, Seokjin. It was because of Jungkook’s.”

“W-what?”

Sighing heavily, Hoseok seemed to take a moment to recollect himself before answering, his eyes falling on the sleeping Jungkook who was still curled up in Seokjin’s lap, one hand curled against Seokjin’s stomach and his socked feet stretched out. It looked like a giant child had cuddled into Seokjin’s lap, and there was a quiet little sound from Jungkook like an infant complaining.

“Seokjin, you’ve fucked up in some ways. We all have. I’ve been in other packs, and I know the kind of things that go down behind closed doors and blur the lines of the rules. After hearing from Namjoon what you went through, I wasn’t shocked, although I was heartbroken about what you - and Jae - have been through. Once I met you, I realized you were really trying hard to break from that. I saw you taking your place in the pack, getting your life together. You did alone what Yoongi and I did as a team.”

The light traces of pink started to fade into the apples of Seokjin’s cheeks, and he lowered his head, feeling his ears start to warm with embarrassment at the flattery.

“You’ve made mistakes, and I can’t say I’m happy about those. But I think you honestly want what’s best for you and Jungkook, and I think that if ‘what’s best’ was you leaving, you would already be gone.” Hoseok shifted on the couch, drawing one knee up to hug his chest as if he needed the tangible something to hold onto, and he looked sadly at Jungkook. “But you weren’t here when Jungkook was younger. He’s been through a lot that I don’t think even he himself knows the depth of.”

Seokjin looked down at the Omega, reaching out and running his hand through the boy’s hair again. “He doesn’t talk about his life before the pack much... I always kind of wondered about it, though.”

“He never had a whole lot to say about it,” Hoseok said quietly. “Because he honestly doesn’t remember a lot of it, and I think he feels bad that he can’t answer many questions. The best we can figure is that he was abandoned, and he wandered into some dangerous areas of the city without realizing it. A loose pack found him, probably looking for drugs or something to do, and he got the shit beaten out of him. It caused some memory loss, and he ended up picked up by the pound and hospitalized. He was about ten years old at the time, as far as we can figure.”
Seokjin’s heart seemed to shoot down like he had just dropped it down an elevator shaft, rushing down through the basement of empathy and sinking into a chilly revelation.

Hoseok continued, his voice a distant calmness that nonetheless offered a weighted purposefulness. “Whatever happened before that point, it was probably better than his experience in the pound. He knew his birthday but not his parents’ names, he was already scared out of his wits and they grilled him for ages. Naturally, they kept him, and he was in the pound for over a year.”

He wanted to weep. He had seen photos of the pound, he knew how overcrowded and filthy they usually were. Seokjin held onto Jungkook a little tighter.

“I think only Jungkook can tell you what that part of his life was like. He’s told me but… I think you should hear it from Jungkook himself. Suffice to say he was sick a lot, and the mix of aggression from other Wolves is never a pretty sight in the best situations, much less packed in like sardines. Some of the Wolves have to be sedated half the time. It didn’t help that Jungkook has always had kind of a strong Scent, and it draws trouble to him. I don’t know how or why he got out, but he spent the next three years doing everything he could to avoid going back.”

“Where did he live for the next three years?”

“On the streets. I honestly can’t believe he survived. He had all these tips about how to best fish out food from dumpsters and how to read people or avoid being seen. When he first came to the pack house, Namjoon said he didn’t sleep for the first three days, because he was so anxious. The bed seemed almost to scare him, then. When they found out he felt better under the table, they just let him stay there. Namjoon made sure he had his own bed if he wanted it, but he’s barely used it.”

Seokjin had always had an appreciation for Namjoon’s ability to read a situation. He remembered getting a couple texts from Namjoon years ago, mentioning a new wolf pup that had joined his budding pack, and how strange and adorable Namjoon thought he was. Not thinking he would ever be near enough to meet Namjoon’s fellow pack members, Seokjin hadn’t paid it much mind at the time. Now looking back, he felt his chest swell with gratefulness at Namjoon, and all the little details he paid attention to so passionately. Namjoon had just been minding his own business, working a late-night shift at the front desk of the hotel where he still worked, even now.

‘A pup came into the hotel lobby tonight,’ Namjoon had texted him, ‘The scranniest thing I’ve ever seen.’

Hoseok continued to speak, and Seokjin let him, merely listening and letting the information sink in slowly. “He came in to ask if he could wait inside for a bit out of the rain, but from the way he was
acting, Namjoon could tell that he was trying to hide from an Alpha that he had almost had a scuffle with. They got to talking a bit, and Namjoon ended up bringing him home.”

‘Yoongi is gonna love him! He’s the cutest thing, all big eyes and his hair is kinda curly, like a cocker spaniel.’

“It was really rough at first, trying to figure out what they could do to make him comfortable. He didn’t talk much and was really skittish. There were some fights, but between the two of them they convinced him to stay a little longer.”

‘I think he really needs someone to have his back right now. I don’t know him well, but I just have this feeling, you know? Like when I met Yoongi. It felt like “it’ll all work out, now,” just like you always say.’

Hoseok leaned forward, still hugging his knees. “Seokjin, I was really worried about Jungkook because all he has are bad memories from before. And I only want him to make good memories from here on out. I don’t want him to worry about being left behind, or being unwanted, or alone. Before you came, I was really worried he wouldn’t be able to find a Mate at all, or that he would find someone too quickly and feel like once he started something with them, that he wouldn’t be allowed to change his mind. He once told me he was so scared when Yoongi brought me home, because he thought he would lose Yoongi, I guess?”

“Like…” Seokjin said quietly, unsure, “He would lose Yoongi’s love or something, now that he had you?”

“Something like that. It changed over time, of course, and we got really close. He was much more worried when Namjoon met Kiara. For almost a month he wanted to be glued to Namjoon’s side, and I found him crying under his table once. He was afraid that now that we had Mates, he would be left behind. That he would be in the way. I tried to tell him it wasn’t like that.” Hoseok took in a deep breath, then exhaled it. Seokjin could see Hoseok’s eyes reddening and puffing up, the tears welling up quickly, despite the Alpha’s efforts. “I told him it didn’t matter if we had Mates or not, or if he had one. That he would always be my pup.”

“He’s mentioned something about that recently,” Seokjin said quietly, feeling a little concern bubbling up in his chest because Jungkook hadn’t made any sleeping noises for awhile, and he wasn’t 100% sure Jungkook would want to hear him telling Hoseok this. “He said he’s felt really lonely the last few months, but he didn’t want to bother you or Yoongi.”

Hoseok nodded. “He worries about that a lot. Jimin comes from a pretty low-level pack. He chose to leave because he wanted a place to feel safe, like a family. His own pack life was pretty normal but not very friendly, so he knows quite a bit about trying to get along with others and adjusting, but he
has a lot of self-esteem issues because of things he was told. But with Jungkook...with Jungkook, he
doesn’t have a baseline, he just has us.”

“That’s a lot, though, Hoseok,” Seokjin said with a smile. “I’m sure Jungkook appreciates all of you.
I know he does.”

Smiling softly, Hoseok looked down at the floor, reminiscing. When he looked up again, he had
tears falling down his cheeks. “I just want him to have a normal life. But the universe doesn’t seem to
want that, does it?” He laughed a little. “He’s got this powerful Scent, he’s been through so much,
and he’s always doing the best he can. He deserves to have people who look out for him and care for
him, but sometimes I just don’t know how to do that. To me he’s always going to be this sickly-
skinny boy hiding under the table and crying because he’s afraid of not being allowed to stay with
us. I know he’s an adult Wolf now, with things he wants and needs and things I can’t possibly give
him, but I’m terrified of it.”

A silence fell between them for a few minutes, with Seokjin staring down at Jungkook’s mouth, with
the soft sleep-breathing the only sound other than Hoseok’s quiet weeping. Hoseok had, in Seokjin’s
observations, been the closest Jungkook had to a mothering figure in his life. The physical closeness
between them, the way Hoseok smiled at him with such pride, even the way Jungkook said
Hoseok’s name all suggested a simplistic tenderness and trust that had been built brick by silent
brick. Hoseok had been fretting and worrying over Jungkook’s emotional wellbeing and
development for a long time, and in the last year Jungkook was almost an entirely new person.

“Can I confess something?” Seokjin said slowly, his uncertainty peppering his words so that Hoseok
looked up in curiosity. “I’ve always kind of... been jealous of you and Yoongi, since I first met you
two. Anyone who sees you two together can tell you’re partners, not just Mates. Like you have this
really beautiful understanding between you. I know that as an Alpha, it must be really hard on you,
sometimes, to keep your instincts in check, and to let Yoongi do some of the things he does…” He
felt like his face was on fire from the way Hoseok was staring at him. “I just...I guess what I’m
saying is, I really look up to you, as a fellow Alpha. I wish I knew how to take care of Jungkook the
way you take of Yoongi. You let him be himself, and yet you’re still undoubtedly his Alpha, you
know?”

Hoseok seemed to blush at that, touching a hand to his mouth as if to cover up the shy smile there.

“After what happened with Jae, I’ve realized that Alpha, Omega, Beta...it doesn’t really matter. I
used to say that a lot, but now I know it. If he’s happy, if he’s cared for and whole and growing, I’m
happy. But... I’m not very good at a balance.” Seokjin thought back to their awkward experiment
with the handcuffs, with letting Jungkook have control. “I think Jungkook wants to be strong for me,
and that’s probably because of Yoongi? But I don’t know if I can match the kind of self-control you
have, as an Alpha...” Seokjin worked his lip. In all honesty, he had wanted to take possession of
Jungkook the moment they had Scented in the cabin, had wanted to truly claim him as his own, to
mark him down possessively. The first time they were together, he had wanted to take him roughly, to break him down piece by piece until Seokjin was the only one who could put him back together again. He wanted to take everything Jungkook could give him, hold it in his hand, and then carefully place it back into him, body and soul. But he would never get some of the images from the time with Jae out of his mind. He knew himself, and he knew his tendency to get caught up too far into the moment, to push things too far. He wanted to piece Jungkook back together like a puzzle, not like broken glass.

“I don’t know,” Seokjin whispered, “If I can hold myself back.”

Hoseok watched the Alpha intently, considering his words and the tone with which they had been delivered. “As Jungkook’s pack member, I wanna tell you to shut the fuck up,” he said, smiling. “But as a fellow Alpha, and your pack member, I wanna tell you that it’s okay to not hold back, if you do it in the right way. Yoongi and I didn’t figure it out in one day, or a hundred days. Sometimes things get out of hand. But we have the foundation of trust, and everything else comes from that, I guess? Usually after we talk, we figure out that we want the same things. But what you do isn’t as important as how you do it. So you find a way to do it right.” He gave a shrug, “It’s hard to explain without a specific situation, but that’s as close as you’re going to get, probably. Just listen to him, check in. And do your best to build trust at all times. To me, that’s what the ‘true’ part of ‘true love’ really is, after all.”

“That’s a really sappy way of putting it,” Seokjin smirked. “I like it.” He looked down at Jungkook, for perhaps the millionth time that day. From the very beginning, he had always been looking at Jungkook. That first moment he had seen him, wide-eyed and curled up under the table with Taehyung smiling down at him, Seokjin’s entire chest had felt a surge of heat, a sense of belonging. *You’re home,* his soul had said.

Home wasn’t perfect, it wasn’t easy, but it was always there, fluttering beneath the surface of everything. He had trusted Jungkook before he trusted himself, and he knew that even just in the last couple of months that a lot of that had altered, and often it felt like a weed stubbornly coming up through the pavement, slowly but steadily making a widening crack to allow itself freedom to grow. Jungkook not only knew Seokjin’s tendencies and tastes, from lifestyle to the bedroom, but he wanted to try it all together. He trusted Seokjin with so much.

“I still don’t have much confidence,” Seokjin whispered. “But I really want to try.”

Hoseok gave a slow nod. “I’m doing the same.”
“I know it wasn’t because of me that you decided to suggest that we Mate,” Seokjin continued, “But I’m grateful, all the same.”

The younger Alpha tilted his head to the side, smiling gently. “Seokjin…? Honestly speaking… I think you shouldn’t be so hard on yourself as an Alpha. I’ve seen how you two are together, and I think you suit him well.” He shrugged with one shoulder. “I don’t wanna have to smell it with my dinner, and I wish it wasn’t so fast, because I’m worried about Jungkook getting ahead of himself, but… I think you’ll stay with him until the end. And I wouldn’t just say that about any Alpha.”

Seokjin felt like someone had just reached into his chest cavity and squeezed roughly at his heart. “Th-thank you.”

“You’ve been through a lot yourself. But when it came to everything with Jae, you’ve done what you had to do, and I think that’s really admirable. To be honest, after the relationships Yoongi has gone through, I really wish there were more Alphas like you, who could learn from their own mistakes.”

To that, Seokjin wasn’t sure what to say. He certainly didn’t know how to react when Hoseok almost timidly got up from his seat and leaned over him on the couch, one hand placed on the headrest just behind Seokjin. His face was mere inches from Seokjin’s as their gazes locked. Seokjin could still see the residual puffiness from when he’d been crying, could see the smooth almost half-moon shaped downward curve of his lips, and the angular, uptilted nose. His eyes were dark and intense, unblinking and calm as he studied Seokjin’s face for an answer to an unspoken question. Hoseok was the sort of Alpha that didn’t stand out on first meeting, but grew in one’s opinion gradually, blossoming out his assets slowly over time, in the moments in-between everything. Seokjin’s breath caught a little as the smell of vanilla washed over him, sweet and dark, overwhelming in its steadfastness. Hoseok leaned in, pressing his face to Seokjin’s neck, a calm and quiet Scenting that made Seokjin’s entire body relax, and he sighed as he turned his face in to breathe in from the source of that sugary fragrance.

They had only Scented once before, right after Seokjin had come to the pack, but then it had been unfamiliar and awkward, almost obligatory as pack members who needed to know each other’s Scent enough in case of emergencies. This was worlds away from that. It was weighted, it was meaningful, it was the gesture Seokjin didn’t know that he had been wishing for. That was what made tears sting a little at the edges of Seokjin’s eyes, and he tried his hardest to blink them away as Hoseok’s arms reached around him, embracing him, holding him as his fists clung to Jungkook’s shirt. He knew the boy hadn’t been asleep for a long time, and he was grateful when Jungkook pressed in further to him, silently comforting.

You’re home.
Hello, my lovelies~♥ KurageCharms here! :D

This chapter update, as I stated on Twitter, was a bit late, due to me being out hanging with friends I won't be able to see after two weeks when I move countries, so thank you for your patience! There isn't any sexiness or crazy drama in this chapter, but I finally got around to showing the 2seok dynamic I've been building and wanting to showcase since around chapter 1 or 2. lol Seokjin really admires Hoseok for a lot of reasons, and Hoseok is just now becoming aware of this, and is learning more about himself THROUGH watching Seokjin and Jungkook together. :) It's a complicated thing, growing up.

Many of you were worried about Taehyung! In the poll on Twitter, most of you thought he was sick or pregnant! lol But technically Jimin and him didn't have 'sex' yet, because they said they wanted to wait for their Mating. (One reason why Taehyung is SO eager to Mate ASAP, tbh.) So no, it's just a severe hormone sensitivity. Actually, Taehyung's hormone situation from the beginning has been based on my own experiences, so most of the details are based on reality. :)

Feel free to follow me on Twitter for my shitty-ass spamming, LINP-related polls and updates about how the chapters are going! (And I'm thinking about doing a live where I read LINP or WIC aloud for some reader fun. Haha) And thanks again to my lovely (and always exhausted) Beta-reader, Jen~ Love you, babe, I'm glad I finally got to deliver some 2seok for your thirsty heart. lol My bad for always making the same goddamn grammar mistakes. LMAO♥

♥ Later, my lovelies!
WARNING (SPOILERS MAY BE INCLUDED):

FAM, this chap has hella kinks and sin. Proceed cautiously if you are uncomfortable with:
BDSM, choking kinks, noodity(*looks at the 4th section pointedly*), cumplay + toys, verbal berating kinks (including the terms slut and bitch), mpreg(????), spanking, temp play.

I...think that's all?? ALL of these are done in within Play and in consensual manner, with safe words and without endangering those involved.♥

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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“If I could have just one wish, I would wish to wake up everyday to the sound of your breath on my neck, the warmth of your lips on my cheek, the touch of your fingers on my skin, and the feel of your heart beating with mine knowing that I could never find that feeling with anyone other than you.”

- Courtney Kuchta. ”

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Jungkook was, in a sense, under a voluntary house arrest.

But he didn’t mind it so much. To the Omega’s utter delight, Namjoon had agreed, in a small quiet conference between himself and the Bonded pair, that they could Mate the upcoming weekend. Until then, Jungkook was taking a break from his classes and his patrol work, and generally staying within the four walls of their home. The pack would be leaving Seokjin and him alone for a couple of days, to give them time to do things at their own pace, and with full run of the house. Jungkook was ecstatic.

In all honesty, he didn’t think the Rising God clan was so set on him that he needed to stay home as much, but the worry in the pack house was even seeping into Seokjin’s bones, deeply ingraining into his Scent, until Jungkook could smell the protective Alpha hormones oozing out of him with a certain kind of hot-irritation. Seokjin was worried, and nervous, and that made him strangely pliant and open to whatever Jungkook wanted - and Jungkook kind of liked it.

For instance, right now Seokjin was curled up underneath the kitchen table, his body relaxed and his
eyes shut as if he were sleeping, but Jungkook knew he was just lying there, probably worrying. After his conversation with Hoseok, the two of them had silently migrated to sleeping in the kitchen most nights, and spent part of their days quietly together there, too. But Jungkook had tired of their quiet cuddling - he wanted something a little more, he was just in a mood of nerves and bubbly need. He first threw one muscular thigh over Seokjin’s trim waist, his socked foot poking one toe into Seokjin’s elbow. No reaction from the Alpha. Then, Jungkook wriggled his way around until he was halfway lying on top of him, still getting nothing. Being on top of Seokjin felt really nice, and he paused there for a moment, head curiously tilted to the side as he tried to memorize each sensation. The warmth of his body heat, the soft but slightly boney feel of his hips poking into Jungkook’s thighs, the broad, solid mounded expanse of his chest. Seokjin’s face was mere inches from his own, and Jungkook reached up and traced his fingers up and down the softened features, humming back the tune that Seokjin was always singing under his breath. He saw the slightest quirk of Seokjin’s lips, as the Alpha was trying not to smile.

“I know you’re awake,” Jungkook teased, craning his head down to kiss the little crease at the corner of the Alpha’s mouth. He received no verbal answer, but he felt a hand come up to rest along the small of his back. The gesture was so simple, but it made Jungkook feel so small and delicate, and he arched his back a little dramatically into the hand, letting out a happy little sound of contentment. That made Seokjin open one eye, smiling a little at the Omega, who was touching little kisses to his jawline.

“Just two days more…” Jungkook whispered.

“Two days more,” Seokjin hummed back, pressing the hand against Jungkook’s back a little tighter, a little more protectively. The weekend couldn’t come fast enough, and Jungkook wondered if Seokjin wasn’t just as nervous about the threat to Jungkook’s safety, as he was about the Mating itself.

Jungkook kissed down Seokjin’s long neck, flicking his tongue out a little to give gentle kitten licks to every crease and dip, and felt Seokjin going limp beneath him, a little sigh making the great chest rise and fall, lifting Jungkook along with it.

“Just two days more,” the younger man hummed, tucking his head in against Seokjin and giving a little nip of his teeth at the skin of Seokjin’s collar bone, simultaneously tilting his hips downward to press up against the man below. “And you can fuck me wild and Mate me for good… Alpha.”

That, at last, made Seokjin’s eyes shoot open, and he stared ahead blankly for a second before his covered half his face with one hand and whispered a gentle, yet emotional, “Fuck you, you little shit.”

“What?” Jungkook giggled, nuzzling in in a puppy-like way, sniffing at the space below Seokjin’s ear and shifting his hips back and forth a little experimentally, trying to get an angle where he could
feel whether or not Seokjin’s crotch was smooth sailing or rocky seas, but Seokjin had slightly lifted one knee, obscuring the truth. “Did that make you come a little?”

Seokjin lowered his hand, tongue stuck into his cheek in a look of highly amused petulance. “No,” he said, but judging by the sound of his voice, Jungkook didn’t think he could be believed.

“Put your leg down, then.” Jungkook laughed, pushing at Seokjin’s pink knee, his eyes glancing down to search the crotch of his black shorts.

“No, I don’t wanna.”

Jungkook pushed harder at Seokjin’s leg, and they started to scuffle and laugh, which promptly turned into an ill-advised sort of wrestling match. Seokjin bumped his head against the bottom end of the table again, making Jungkook laugh unabashedly in deep guffaws at the look of pain, then suddenly Seokjin shifted into his wolf form, a great thundering, heavy mass of white cloudiness that yipped and bowled Jungkook over. Standing up as he was, Seokjin’s broad shoulders now pushed up at the underside of the table, lifting the legs up a bit as he shoved his wet nose into Jungkook’s side, tickling him as he snuffled and sniffed.

“No-o-o!” Jungkook half-laughed, half-moaned, crying out and feebly trying to unbury the wolf’s nose from his shirt, two hands full of the soft white fur. “Ji-i-in!”

There was a light rapping like knuckles against the surface of the table, and Seokjin and Jungkook froze in place, surprised as they turned to see Namjoon and Yoongi standing in the kitchen. Based on where they were standing, it seemed Yoongi had been the one to ‘knock.’

“Hello, lovebirds,” he teased, craning down to peer under the table once he heard the scuffling cease. “Sorry to interrupt, but Joon and I are going to the store for groceries. Seokjin, did you wanna come with? Get anything for this weekend?”

Jungkook looked up at Seokjin, who shifted into human form, his hands against Jungkook’s forearms and pinning him to the floor. Seokjin glanced at Jungkook and worked his lip for a moment in consideration. “Um… I think I’ll stay here,” the Alpha said. It felt to Jungkook as if the grip on his forearms tightened just slightly.

*Seokjin, you can go if you want to. I’m not going anywhere, after all.*
“Okay, as long as you’re sure. We’ll be back.” Yoongi rapped the table lightly again, walking to the door.

Namjoon leaned down, offering them a smile despite the bags that had been increasing beneath his eyes. “And would you guys mind making something for Kiara to eat? She hasn’t been feeling well. I think just something simple and starchy. She can’t stand anything with butter right now, she says it’s disgusting.”

“No, we wouldn’t mind at all,” Seokjin said with a smile, sitting back a little and gingerly tilting his head so it didn’t smack the table again. “I’d love to help.”

Namjoon smiled, one of his rarer broad grins that stretched across his face, seemingly endless. His left dimple dipped into prominence, and Jungkook was as enthralled by staring at it as usual. “Thanks, I appreciate it.” When Namjoon left, Seokjin patted Jungkook’s stomach, spidering his fingers in just before lifting his hand because he knew it would tickle Jungkook, causing the Omega to writhe uncontrollably, even as Seokjin was already halfway out from under the table and safely out of reach of Jungkook’s involuntary attack.

Kiara hadn’t been feeling very well the last few days, and while everyone verbalized that it was because of the quickly approaching birth of her pup, Jungkook knew that the unspoken understanding was that the recently compiling stress wasn’t helping very much. Seokjin pulled out some bread and went hunting in the refrigerator for something easy on the stomach, and Jungkook watched him work for a few minutes before crawling out and reaching around his waist from behind, backhugging him and making him laugh, one hand on Jungkook’s encircling arms.

“What?” Seokjin asked. He received no answer, and continued walking around the kitchen with a half-bent over Omega trailing behind him. He was slicing tomatoes, Jungkook carefully peering around his muscular upper arm to watch him, when Jimin came into the kitchen.

“Seokjinnie,” Jimin said quietly, “Would it be alright if we borrowed your truck?”

“Mm?” Seokjin didn’t even turn from his task. Jungkook looked at Jimin. Taehyung was hovering behind the Alpha with a dark look in his eyes, contrasting with the slight flecks of blue that flickered at the edges of his usual brown. “You guys going somewhere?”

“It’s for a project,” Jimin said quickly. “Please? We haven’t been out of the house except for class since last weekend, but… we have things we need to do.”
Jungkook stared at Jimin for a long moment. He wasn’t sure what it was about Jimin’s countenance, or voice, or the way he stared at Seokjin’s long hands curled around the knife as he expertly sliced through the tomatoes, but Jungkook could tell Jimin was on edge. Taehyung was pressed up fairly close behind him, having slowly accustomed himself to Jimin’s touch again as his hormones started to wax and wane at a moment’s notice. Jungkook gave a furtive sniff at the air, noting the nervousness that hovered around both of them. He figured Seokjin couldn’t smell it over the food he was frying up.

“Sure, that should be fine,” Seokjin said distractedly. Jungkook wondered why Seokjin wasn’t paying his usual full attentiveness to the two younger Wolves, when suddenly he felt the muscles in Seokjin’s hips and waist constrict strangely, and he pressed his bottom back into Jungkook as if adjusting himself. Jungkook arched one eyebrow curiously, letting his hands on Seokjin’s waist demurely dip down a little. Seokjin let out a little sound of surprise, his arm dipping down to throw Jungkook’s hands away. Jungkook smirked. That answered a few questions.

“Thanks, Seokjinnie!” Jimin called out, slipping the truck keys off the wooden holder on the wall and the two of them started toward the door. Jungkook stared after them, his mouth tilting to the side in uncertainty before letting out a little sigh and turning back to Seokjin, burrowing his face into the curve of Seokjin’s spine and into the fabric of his shirt.

“You’re so snuggly,” Seokjin laughed, his voice quiet. “Do you want me to make you something to eat, too? You didn’t eat much breakfast.”

“I’m fine,” Jungkook murmured, tucking his head through the gap under Seokjin’s arms, sizzling greeting his ears. “By the way, you got a package. A big one.”

Seokjin set everything down, pushing his way out of Jungkook’s arms like he was coming out of a shell and quickly going toward the front door. Pouting only the smallest bit, Jungkook straightened and took Seokjin’s place at the stove, stirring the onions around and reaching over for the garlic salt that they always had enormous stockpiles of in the cupboard.
“Okay,” Seokjin let out a sigh as he slipped back into the kitchen, doing his own version of the backhug Jungkook had been doing toward him a few moments ago, although the feeling of it was worlds away to Jungkook. The Alpha’s shoulders were firm and broader than his, and he instinctively leaned back into it as soon as he felt Seokjin’s chest against his shoulder blades. Instead of simply hugging his waist, Seokjin’s hands rested first on Jungkook’s hips, thumbs pressing in firmly - maybe a little too firmly compared to what he was used to, but it felt solid and soothing after he gave it a moment, paused in surprise. Seokjin tucked his head easily over Jungkook’s shoulder, pressing his mouth to Jungkook’s neck and mouthing at it softly, all plush lips and tongue and no traces of teeth.

Jungkook wondered if all the Kim brothers had strange oral fixations. Not that he was complaining.

“I added g-garlic salt,” Jungkook said, his voice stumbling when Seokjin made it up to his earlobe, sucking on it a little roughly and gripping in on his hips with all fingers. “Kiara likes garlic salt on everything. To be honest you should take the container up with the rest of the food.”

“Good to know,” Seokjin hummed. Jungkook wasn’t sure he was fully listening.

“Are you gonna go to class tomorrow? You have a 10am class, right?” He couldn’t remember what the class was called, but it was something -ology and sounded very doctor-like.

“Mn. I might stay home,” the Alpha breathed into Jungkook’s skin. And damn, there were the teeth.

“But you already took Monday off this week,” Jungkook sighed. “And you took off so many days because of your rut.”

“Don’t worry about it, mom,” Seokjin chuckled into his skin. Then, in a more serious tone, he added, “I promise I won’t miss any more days after this week, alright? I just don’t wanna leave you right now.”

Jungkook felt Seokjin’s eyes on him as he dumped the sauteed meat onto a plate, steam and the smell of garlic rising boldly through the air, the combination of attention and aesthetic attacking him for a moment with a strange sort of sensation that Jungkook couldn’t describe as anything but domestic.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he said, turning the stove off and curling around in Seokjin’s arms until he was facing him, tucking his arms underneath Seokjin’s as he held him close and looked up into
his worried, puppy-like face. “Hey, I have something I wanna ask you.”

“Anything,” Seokjin said, and as punishment for the corny twitterpated look he was sending the Omega, Jungkook pinched at the skin of his sides where he knew the Alpha was sensitive, earning a squeak. “Hey!”

“It’s about our Mating,” Jungkook’s voice lowered to almost a whisper, his mind getting quickly organized even as his eyes were fixedly locked on Seokjin’s lips, not far from his own. “It’s a bit of a weird request, but… I want it to happen in here, not the bedroom.”

Seokjin tilted his head a bit to the side at that, considering. “You mean like, under the table?”

“Yeah. Is that okay?”

“Of course it is.” Seokjin’s eyes curled up into that wrinkle-deep smile, and he kissed Jungkook’s forehead. “And that’s not a weird request at all. You feel safest there, so naturally that’s where you would want to do it.”

A tightness that had been forming in his chest as he had been building up to the actual verbalization of the question suddenly dissipated entirely, and Jungkook grinned at his future mate, the wolf he and his whole being had chosen wholeheartedly.

“You spoil me so much,” Jungkook chuckled, laying his head against Seokjin’s chest. “I kind of like it.”

“I’ve always been a little weak to cute things,” Seokjin rubbed one hand in circles into Jungkook’s shoulders. “You should know that doing it under the table isn’t going to be very comfortable, especially for you.”

“That’s fine, I’m used to it under there.”

Seokjin just laughed at that, and they were quiet for a moment, considering. “Besides, I have a few ‘weird’ requests of my own for this weekend, as long as you’re willing to indulge me.”

“Oh? You? Having some requests?” Jungkook hummed, sensing that telltale nervousness rising again in Seokjin’s Scent, hearing it in the heartbeat that was thudding a little wildly against his cheek.
“I’m more than willing to indulge if my Alpha has some ideas to share.” Seokjin’s breath caught, and Jungkook laughed. “You’re so easy to read sometimes, it’s cute…” Jungkook squeezed him tighter, the gesture instantly reciprocated. “But seriously, I was so happy after the other day, with...you know... So I’m glad you have things to ask of me.”

The Alpha made no answer, just running his hands through Jungkook’s hair in a slow, deliberate way. Sometimes the way Seokjin looked at him was as if he couldn’t believe Jungkook actually existed in reality, and this was one of those times. His full lips were slightly parted, as though in surprise, and his brown eyes seemed to be trying to soak in every detail of Jungkook’s face, treasuring every feature.

“I’ll take this up to Kiara,” Seokjin jolted him out of his thoughts, the Alpha leaning over to pick up the plate of food with one hand. “Meet me in the living room? I swear I’ll kick your ass this time.”

“You wish,” Jungkook said, finally releasing Seokjin. He watched him carefully carry the plate up the stairs, then turned to go set up the Wii.

Jungkook wondered if he should tell Seokjin about the dreams he’d been having, a consistent image he’d been seeing every night since their first time together. How all of them had occurred in one very familiar place - under that same table. There was the air of something else changing underneath the surface of Jungkook’s skin, and he wasn’t sure if all of it could be attributed to hormones or outside influence, or if it was also something very intrinsically within himself.

But it had been less than a week. Now was too early.

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Hoseok wiped the sweat from his brow, his back screaming and aching as he bent low over the engine, his hand twisting the cap to the brake fluid in short, choppy motions. The heavy weightiness of the grayish-blue jumpsuit had been a comfort in the winter months, but now that it was getting warmer with each passing day, Hoseok was suffering. There was the constant whirring and cries of engines and electronic machinery, cars revving up and horns being tested, the clanging of metal on pavement and the acrid scent of grease and rubber in the air. Hoseok had been molded in this atmosphere, this closed off sector of the world that was gray and clear and controllable. It was rough but it was comforting and familiar.

He was only halfway through his shift at the car garage when the first sensation began. Or perhaps it had been happening all morning, in weird subtle moments of oversensitivity he had just blamed on sleepiness. But the first moment he truly started to suspect was when he was pumping up a car jack, lifting the back tires up in weird wobbly shifts. It was just a tickle at first, deep in his gut, and then it was a flutter. Without so much as second of warning, Hoseok’s entire groin was consumed in a red-
hot blaze of sensitivity, and his whole body tensed as he fought not to react. Soon following was
nausea, a dizzying sensation that he couldn’t even attribute to the chemicals around him. Then, as
suddenly as it began, it stopped, as if nothing had ever happened. The sounds of the garage around
him, the calling voices and shrill cry of a drill all seemed a little foggy and far away, a slight ringing
in his ears, but other than that, he seemed unaffected.

The rut warning. But he was only halfway through his shift, and there were so many vehicles in the
queue for the day. He looked up at the clock, debating for several long moments. Yoongi would be
there when he got home, so he would try to wait it out. They really needed the money right now.
Hoseok continued to work.

By the end of the first hour, the warnings kept coming back, like little contractions that got
increasingly stronger, more sexual, with each time. He was sweating and it wasn’t just from the heat
of the garage. He gasped for breath as he laid against the harsh concrete floor, half buried under a
Coupe, his legs sticking out but with knees curled up against the side of the car as his body went
through another attack. He tried to think, to focus on anything except the images that were flashing
through his head of Yoongi, of the Omega waiting for him at home with an endearing tranquility,
waiting to be taken for breeding. The overwhelming smell of the engine sitting above his head, the
sticky heat of the grease in his hands was still not enough to occupy his mind. He felt sweat dripping
down his chin, trailing a crooked path down his neck that reminded him of the way Yoongi
sometimes trailed one squarish, pale finger down his skin. Hoseok swallowed, fumbling with
adjusting the monkey wrench when a heavy hand grabbed his knee without warning, making him
scream from the burst of sensations.

Hoseok slid out from under the car, finding one of his coworkers there with a bemused expression,
all wide eyes and awkward distance. “Hoseok? Are you alright?”

“Yeah,” he lied, wiping at his sweat-covered forehead with his sleeve. “You just startled me.”

Maybe you should go home a little early.”

“No, I should be…” Hoseok started, forced to halt and focus on his breathing when another wave hit
him, and he slowly sank to the ground, curled up into one small, aroused little ball on the floor of the
garage. He felt a tentative hand on his shoulder, knew the voice was speaking to him, but he was too
focused on trying to keep everything inside his head. This was stupid. Of course he should go home
early. He could almost hear Yoongi berating him now. He wasn’t some fresh spring pup, unaware of
his own body - he’d known the rut was coming, and he’d seen the signs. Yet here he was, and he
realized he had waited far too long already. The garage was a familiar place on a normal day, but
right now all the sensations around him, the sounds and smells that weren’t his own Mate, were only
aggravating everything. A headache was thrumming steadily in his skull somewhere behind his eyes.
He gave a blind nod, the world spinning a bit as he did so. “Y-yeah, you’re right. I’m gonna go
home. Will you tell the manager on duty for me?”
Without waiting for an answer, Hoseok took the hand proffered to him, hating the way his head swam at the contact, realizing that this coworker was an Omega, and the irrational rush through his body was hard to bury. He rushed off and peeled off the disgusting jumpsuit before grabbing his helmet and swinging his leg tentatively over onto the motorcycle, straddling it. He swallowed heavily, starting up the engine, and instantly let out a strangled sob. The heavy, relentless vibrations of the motorcycle were sending him over the edge, and he wasn’t sure if this was such a good idea. He could call someone at the house to see if they were available, but the garage was on the other side of town, and waiting here sweating was not exactly the most pleasant option. His groin was white hot from overdrive, and he leaned forward a little in his seat, trying to catch his breath even as waves of pleasure wracked his body almost violently, taunting him. He needed to get home. He needed Yoongi. But this stupid fucking bike was fucking him over so badly, and it felt so goddamn good.

He steeled himself, taking in a sharp breath and putting the helmet on, and carefully pulled out of the parking lot.

Every stoplight was an exercise in self restraint, his back now its own little trickling waterfall of sweat as he silently begged the lights to change in his favor, blinking his eyes heavily as he let out his moans with every turn, the engine roaring as if in excitement. Thank god no one could hear him over the noise.

Forty five minutes later, he pulled into the front of the house, and his whole body was shaking with overstimulation. To his great horror, he had come on that last stretch turning into their neighborhood, and he could feel the wet stickiness trailing down his thighs, most of it still pooled against his still very erect member. His legs were wobbly and uncooperative, but he still managed to park his motorcycle properly in the garage, wiping off the seat with some of the spare rags and hurrying into the house.

He was instantly met with the coolness of the air conditioner and the sounds of Mario Kart, and found Seokjin and Jungkook in the living room alone, surrounded by some empty chip bags and sodas. The Alpha was seated up on the couch, his shirt missing for some reason and his legs spread to nestle the Omega in between, caged in with his bent knees. Jungkook lay slumped against Seokjin’s chest, both their eyes locked on the television without blinking, controller cords coiled and entangled around their bare feet. Seokjin had his hands resting around Jungkook’s waist, the Omega holding his controller just over Seokjin’s. As Hoseok closed the door, Jungkook suddenly shouted around the lollipop he had jutting out of his mouth, punching the air and whooping as Seokjin let out a sound of good-natured frustration.

“Blue shell!” Jungkook screeched. “Oh, hi, Hoseok.”

“Hey,” Seokjin called out cheerily, eyes darting over to the Alpha, before a look of concern washed over his features. “Are you okay? You’re home early.”
Hoseok couldn’t manage to even look their direction, fury burrowing under his skin wildly as he rushed past the couple. It wasn’t an anger at any person so much as it was at his own body, his own frustration, and he stomped up the stairs as quickly as his quivering legs could manage. He heard the game pause, knew the reeking smell of his arousal would be easy to pick up soon, and he fumbled into the room he and Yoongi shared.

And found it empty.

The Alpha felt his breath catch. No. Yoongi had said he didn’t have class today, he was supposed to be home. He was supposed to be waiting.

But the bed was cleanly made, the way Yoongi did it whenever he was in a particularly good mood, and empty. The Omega’s computer desk lay void of his quiet presence, the laptop closed and his empty coffee cup still sitting there. Hoseok wanted to weep.

“Yoongi? Yoongi!?” Hoseok called out, his voice cracking as he rushed around upstairs, opening the bedroom doors and checking the bathrooms. He felt increasingly panicked, and whirled around only to almost slam into Seokjin, who had come up the stairs with Jungkook hovering close behind, worry painted on their faces.

“Hoseok, what’s wrong? Did something happen?” Seokjin asked, trying to get Hoseok to meet his eyes. Hoseok wanted to punch him. It was irrational, it was ridiculous, but it was still there. Telling himself to calm down was like telling a fire not to burn.

“Where’s Yoongi!?” Hoseok practically wailed, clenching his fists at his side, knowing his eyes were wide and wild, burning red. Seokjin took a step back - not out of fear, but out of respect - and let out a quiet breath of realization.

“He’s at the store with Namjoon,” Seokjin said quietly, his voice obviously trying to soothe, but it wouldn’t work. No one’s voice would work but Yoongi’s.

“I need him!” Hoseok snarled, pulling out his phone and trying his best to let out his frustration on the device, but slamming his thumbs onto a touchscreen was sadly incomparable to the way he wanted to throw a chair across the room.

“He’ll be back soon, Hoseok,” Jungkook said, his voice thin and demure, like the way it was when he used to tell Hoseok about his nightmares. The sound-memory made Hoseok freeze, his body still
hyper-alert. This time, the delicacy in Jungkook’s voice was deliberate, but he couldn’t deny it made it easier for him to remember that he needed to stay calm. Taking deep breaths, Hoseok pushed CALL on the contact ‘SyubSyub,’ holding it to his ear as he nibbled nervously at his thumb. Jungkook moved forward, touching his arm gently and offering him an encouraging look. The hand on his arm made every hair on the back of Hoseok’s neck stand up, and he just nodded at Jungkook, even though he hadn’t actually asked him anything.

To his relief, Yoongi picked up on the first ring. Hoseok felt his entire body react to the muffled sound of Yoongi’s voice going, “Hello?”

“Yoongi,” Hoseok meant to say the name casually, like normal, but it came out more like a guttural cry, coming from somewhere deep in his gut. “Yoongi, it’s time.”

There was a long moment of silence on the other end of the line, and Hoseok held his breath. Then, he heard Yoongi say to Namjoon, “We gotta go home. **Right now.**”

“What?” Namjoon’s voice came as though far away, utterly confused. “But we need to get onions.”

“Namjoon.”

Yoongi must have sent some signal to the lead Alpha, some look or expression which his best friend understood, because the next sound was Namjoon going, “Ah, okay. Let’s head to check-out.”

Hoseok breathed a sigh of relief, which Yoongi must have heard. He heard the Omega’s voice get a little breathless, and he could tell they were rushing through the store. Jungkook looked at Hoseok, arching an eyebrow, and the Alpha did his best to give them a little smile, mouthing a thank you. Seokjin touched Jungkook’s shoulders, leading them back downstairs to give Hoseok his space. “Are you still at work? Do we need to come pick you up?”

“No, I’m home,” Hoseok managed, his voice strained as he went back to the bedroom, closing the door. The worry in Yoongi’s voice was so cute it was making him hard again already. He felt selfish and **needy.** “I came home and you weren’t here.”

“I’m sorry, babe,” Yoongi said, and there was the sound of beeps from checkout, and Namjoon was mumbling something in the background. “I’ll be home as soon as I can. Just wait there for me, okay?”
Hoseok pouted. “Yoongi…” his voice dipped low and sensual, curved around a tone like rebuke.

“What?”

“Wrackspurt.”

Another silence stretched across the line, and Yoongi knew what that word meant. It was phrased like a statement, declaring a need to be fulfilled, but it was, in all actuality, a question.

“Okay,” Yoongi said, “Of course, baby.”

“I’ll load up,” Namjoon was saying in the background, and the car door slammed shut, and sudden silence enveloped the other end of the line as Yoongi’s voice became very muffled and close to the microphone, huskier as he whispered, and it made goosebumps rise up on Hoseok’s arms. He pictured him curled up alone in the passenger seat of the truck, cupping the phone to his ear.

“We’ll be home soon, baby. Then you can let it all out. I want you to fuck me into next Tuesday with that cute little cock of yours.”

Hoseok’s stomach churned. Somehow his free hand had gotten into his pants already, the hot and sticky member fitting easily into his palm. For all his sweet, doll-like face might suggest, Yoongi’s mouth could be a well of filth.

“I’d love to have you breed me during wrackspurt,” Yoongi let his voice half-moan the word ‘breed’ in such a way that had Hoseok grunting, arching his back as he shuffled onto the bed and out of his filthy shirt, his hand fumbling stupidly for his dick as soon as he could. “I like it when you fuck me roughly, make me really feel it all the way down to my bones, baby. Fill me up with pups and make me scream your name.”

“You’re gonna scream, alright,” Hoseok found the words flying from his lips, slowly and deliberately, like honey dripping from a jar. He grabbed roughly at his cock, lying on the bed facing the ceiling. A particularly well-angled tug made him body jerk in reaction, and he grunted. “Shit. I wanna fuck you so hard.”

“My ass has taken in lots of Alphas,” Yoongi murmured, humming a little in satisfaction because he knew that always made Hoseok jealous, an ace card he pulled out of his sleeves only during play like this. “But it likes yours the best.”
“Yeah?” Hoseok wanted to come up with a sexier response, but it was difficult to do when his dick was actually crying. “Hurry that ass home and I’ll feed it well.”

The car door opened, and Namjoon’s voice filtered back in. His voice still that even, low calm, Yoongi said, “I’m on my way now, baby.”

When the line went dead, Hoseok felt tears stinging at his eyes. He was so fucking horny. But he wanted to wait until Yoongi was home. A strange, slightly paranoid part of him didn’t want to waste any of his seed when it could be inside of Yoongi, possibly creating pups. In the meanwhile, he moaned and rolled off the bed, trying to put off the inevitable with preparations. He went to the closet and pulled out the container of toys from the hidden spot in their closet. He went to go get water and found a pile of half a dozen water bottles lined up neatly next to the door. Hoseok smiled. Then he brought them inside and shut the door again.

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When Yoongi got to the house, he didn’t even bother helping the boys unload the back of the truck (they had only been about halfway through their grocery list anyways, so there wasn’t much) and instead he bolted up the stairs, taking them two at a time. He burst through the bedroom door, instinctively turning to where the bed was, but Hoseok wasn’t there. To Yoongi’s surprise, he was just behind the door, standing there waiting. He still smelled strongly of oil from work, a smear of black grease on his jaw that he had probably missed, his hair mussed and his Scent so strong it nearly bowled Yoongi over, the sweetness a dark, biting sort of acuity. He wore no shirt, and he was panting heavily, his slim, bony chest heaving as he stepped forward, eyes locked on Yoongi alone. It was a hard, heavy-handed stare that would have been unsettling enough on its own, but what made Yoongi gasp slightly was how deeply red Hoseok’s eyes flashed, a powerful blaze that remained unblinking as the Alpha reached over and locked the door.

“Welcome home, Sugar,” Hoseok growled, the nickname dripping off his tongue like syrup, sending chills up and down Yoongi’s spine. This was the only time Hoseok used his Alpha voice on Yoongi, the only time Hoseok was allowed to be everything. He practically pounced forward, slamming Yoongi against the door using his mouth and hips, both delicate, slender hands slipping up Yoongi’s T-shirt and scratching at his nipples. Hoseok dove into Yoongi with a rhythm all his own, a rough but fluid dance of wet and heat that exploded into Yoongi’s mouth, and he wanted to swallow it all down. Hoseok’s entire lower half rammed against Yoongi, rough edges and heat that lifted him up and against the door, his feet not carrying any weight for a moment as his heart leapt into his throat. Yoongi’s eyes squeezed shut at the slight ache that came with how hard Hoseok’s hips were pushing up against him, cherishing it for what it was.

When the only sound, the only signal from Yoongi came in the form of a weak and guttural moan, Hoseok paused. His eyes were still glassy but Yoongi knew from his posture, from the subtle muscles of his face, that his gentle, sweet Hoseok was still in there, dizzy but aware. Yoongi could
see him trying his hardest to focus, the red-laced pupils of brown doing their best to meet the Omega’s.

“Wrackspurt, right?”

Even now, drugged by his rut and driven crazy by hours of waiting and accidental torture, he was still checking. Yoongi smiled softly, reaching up and trailing the back of his fingernails in a lazy gesture across Hoseok’s barren, browned clavicle.

“Yes, wrackspurt. It’s your time, now. Don’t hold back, baby.”

As if set off like a firecracker, Hoseok growled, an animalistic cry from deep within his chest as he lifted Yoongi up, carrying him princess style and dropping him to the bed.

“I hope you know that riding that motorcycle was like having three dildos shoved up my ass,” he snarled. “You _will_ know.”

Yoongi let out a laugh, watching Hoseok fumble through peeling the Omega’s clothes off so frantically he made it harder on himself than necessary. Calmly, Yoongi threaded his arm between them, reaching out to grab experimentally at Hoseok’s hardened dick. Hoseok actually cried out, right up against Yoongi’s ear, and his head rang from the sound as Hoseok broke off into a string of curses.

“Fuck, it’s so _sensitive_ ,” Hoseok panted, moving to pull Yoongi’s pants away. He actually gave a sharp intake of air when he realized that that was the last layer, Yoongi’s pink cock on ready display. “You weren’t wearing any underwear?”

“I haven’t for the last week,” Yoongi said with a coy smile, one arm curled above his head on the mattress, the fingertips bending down to lightly caress his own cheek. “Some say it helps with fertility.”

“God, hearing you say that makes it even sexier,” Hoseok laughed. “Now roll over.”

Well, that was a little strange for Hoseok. Usually he was a sucker for fucking while facing each other. “You don’t wanna see me come for you?” Yoongi queried, even as he rolled over onto his stomach, assumptively lifting his ass up into the air.
“Not the first time,” Hoseok said, his voice crackling as Yoongi heard him taking off his pants. He took a rough, painful hold of Yoongi’s pale hips, making the Omega stiffen a little in surprise. Then, Hoseok’s breath was in his ear, the warm, thrumming chest against his back as he whispered, “Some say fucking your Omega doggy-style, just like the little bitch he is, helps with fertility.”

Yoongi’s whole body went awash with a chill of excitement, one that continued into waves of pleasure as Hoseok worked his fingers into Yoongi in preparation, even as he kissed the back of Yoongi’s neck, his free hand gripping at Yoongi’s nipple, alternating between rough scratches in tight little circles, and almost apologetic rubs of his soft fingertips.

“Mm, I can smell you about to go into your heat,” Hoseok hummed, the third finger slipping in and circling around inside of Yoongi, and he leaned back into it a little, eager to start. “You must be ovulating.”

“Can’t you feel for yourself? Fuck, you barely used any lube and I’m already like this,” Yoongi snapped. That was when the first sting across his ass cheeks resounded, and the Omega gasped, his breath catching with a sharp cutting sensation in his throat.

“Shut up, bitch,” Hoseok snarled, leaning back a little to inspect the vague redness his hand had left on Yoongi’s ass. “Hands and knees. It’s time to breed.”

Yoongi whimpered, nodding as he lifted himself up. Hoseok’s hands waited inside of him until the last moment, before he grabbed Yoongi by the waist, sliding into the Omega like he had always belonged there. Yoongi closed his eyes, letting out a soft little hum as his body accepted the intrusion, consumed it with all he had.

Hoseok tugged on Yoongi’s hair, tilting his head back. “Do you want it, huh? Do you want me to fuck you?”

“Yes,” Yoongi smiled, wickedly, his lips parting as he closed his eyes. “Fuck me good, Alpha.”

Hoseok bit lightly at Yoongi’s jaw, then his shoulder, then his Scent mark. “You want me to fuck you full?”

Yoongi gasped, feeling the way that Hoseok’s own words were making his cock inside of Yoongi swell even bigger. What an asshole. “Yes, fill me up, please.”
He had been home less than twenty minutes, he was positive. But it still felt like it had taken forever for Hoseok to start pounding into him. It was a relentless sort of insanity, an abrasiveness that no amount of preparation in the world could prepare him for, as his body burned with the heat of an Alpha in the high of his rut. He barely had room to breathe, being slammed forward so hard it was almost futile to even attempt holding himself up with his hands, constantly crumpling forward and pressing his face into the mattress. He stopped lifting himself up, laying there and deciding to just take the beating, when Hoseok’s hand was in his hair again, and he cried out from the shocking pain as his heated, flushed face was pulled back up.

“I said on your hands and knees, bitch,” Hoseok snarled. “Didn’t you hear me??!”

“Yes, sir,” Yoongi wheezed. But no sooner had Hoseok returned, curling his hips forward at angles that had Yoongi crying out, one hand grappling for purchase on the headboard, before Yoongi fell forward again. His body was smaller than Hoseok’s, lighter but not feebler, to be sure. But at this moment, he was starting to feel like a rag doll, thrown back and pulled forth by the Alpha relentlessly.

“Oh my god .” Gasping for air, Yoongi tried to hold himself up, feeling dizzied by Hoseok’s efforts. Hoseok removed one of the hands that had been yanking at Yoongi’s hips (which were now thoroughly bruised) so he could press his fingers along Yoongi’s spine, forcing him to arch his back downward.

“Angle down, Sugar,” Hoseok’s voice was smooth like polished stone, with the irregular remnant suggestions of grittiness that once was, as he dug the side of his thumb into the cool, clammy skin at the small of Yoongi’s back. “Don’t want to hurt yourself.”

“You fucking kidding me?!” Yoongi managed. As if he was gonna be able to walk at all for the next couple of days. Most of his arguments were empty, however - he liked the rough treatment. But he knew Hoseok got off on the sound of his voice, especially when it was ragged and edged, and that hearing more of his fake protests would make him tumble deeper into his headspace.

He heard Hoseok tut, then there was another resounding slap, and Yoongi shouted out a curse. “You’re a snarky little bitch, Sugar.” Another slap. And then another. Yoongi’s let his voice out loudly, his tone and volume escalating like a stairway to a certain kind of heaven that only the most sinful of souls could ever actualize.

“You like that, don’t you?” Hoseok hissed down at him, yanking his head back up off the mattress from where it had fallen.

“Yes! I li- I like it! Do it again!” When he didn’t immediately get what he wanted, Yoongi slapped his palm against the mattress. “Again, you asshole!”
In response, Hoseok chuckled and gave him another heavy spank, this time kneading at the sore and still stinging skin. Tears prickled at the edges of Yoongi’s eyes, and he blinked heavily to clear his vision, more out of instinct than necessity. Hoseok picked up the pace again, this time reaching forward and holding Yoongi up by grabbing one shoulder, using it as leverage to slam into him harder. The angle rang true, and Yoongi let out a scream when Hoseok roughly found his prostrate. Yoongi writhed, now being lifted up from the mattress and held up solely by Hoseok’s grip, his elbows trembling and his body on fire.

“Yes, fuck, it’s there!” Yoongi cried out, as if Hoseok hadn’t known exactly where it was before. His hands laid against the mattress but held up nothing. Hoseok had control of him now, and he was using him like a 130lb sex toy. Yoongi’s repeated cries lifted up into breathlessness, crackling off painfully and then stopping altogether as he felt the warm rush of Hoseok coming inside of him, felt Hoseok trembling violently above him, and finally letting Yoongi rest a moment against the mattress, gasping.

“Ohh…” Hoseok sighed, not even enough air left in him for a curse, and laid against Yoongi’s back. His hands curled around Yoongi’s stomach, squeezing there lightly. Yoongi’s ass clenched out of instinct, feeling the slight, distant pressure.

“You feel that?” Hoseok rubbed his fingers in a circle in the spot below Yoongi’s belly button, the gesture slightly tickling and making Yoongi’s chest flutter. “You take in my seed like such an obedient little bitch. So pretty.”

“I haven’t come yet,” Yoongi retorted over his shoulder.

Hoseok chuckled. He chuckled.

“I just needed a minute to catch my breath, Sugar. Plus I wanted to give you a moment to soak everything in.” He patted Yoongi’s lower abdomen pointedly. Then, he shifted, forcing Yoongi up into a sitting position, Hoseok lying on the bed. He hadn’t even had to pull out yet. The smooth motherfucker. Yoongi was straddling Hoseok, facing away from him, the Alpha’s hands planted on his waist. Hoseok moved a bit beneath him. Yoongi glanced over his shoulder and saw that he was arranging the pillows beneath himself so he was halfway propped up. Yoongi shifted his hips a little experimentally, wanting to feel that wet, filling warmth inside of him again, and was surprised that Hoseok’s erection hadn’t gone down even a little.

Yoongi, out of habit, expected Hoseok to ask if he was ready, so when the Alpha quite suddenly lifted Yoongi up off his dick, pulling him back down with a painful burn, Yoongi actually screamed.
“That’s right, bitch, cry out,” Hoseok, who now had a comfortable and closer angle, reached up and wrapped one slender hand around Yoongi’s neck, squeezing at it until Yoongi’s breathing altered into short, abrupt gasps. He used the additional leverage to pull him down harder, making the Omega grunt out a useless breath of air. The burn didn’t ease up, and his eyes flickered closed, mouth dropping open in an attempt to breathe more clearly, even as he loved the restricting sensation. His tongue lolled a little out of his mouth as he tilted his head back toward the ceiling, allowing Hoseok to grab his slippery, sweat covered skin a little more easily. The high of his building orgasm, spurred on by the headiness of his lack of air and the way Hoseok tilted his waist up into him in such a wide, circular motion warned Yoongi that it wasn’t going to be long. At some point, he had started leaking so much slick that everything from his waist down was practically swimming, and he clenched his eyes shut at the distinct, grotesque squelching sounds.

“Fuck, I’m gonna come,” he managed, and as he did so, Hoseok released the hand that had been gripping Yoongi’s waist, giving him another firm slap on his ass that caught him off guard.

“Then come for me, my cute little bitch. Show me how you crumble.”

Yoongi hiccupped, trembling as he came utterly untouched. His body shook in uneven convulsions, Hoseok’s hand letting go of his neck but still jerking his hips up to meet Yoongi’s ass. The orgasm felt like it lasted forever, something that only happened when he was at his most wrecked. Maybe Hoseok hadn’t been the only one getting worked up lately. He let out a long, low moan, his hair stuck to his forehead and his face toward the ceiling, every bone in his body melting away into the most lovely, cushioned weightiness. He slumped over and slowly fell onto his side on the mattress, caught by Hoseok, who stayed with him but as still as possible, waiting.

“God, I love wrackspurt,” Yoongi gasped. Hoseok laughed, kissing his arm, the closest bit of skin the Alpha could reach.

“Will you wear the plug today?” Hoseok asked, reaching up to run a hand through Yoongi’s hair, soothing his still shaky nerves. “For me? And the pups?”

Yoongi nodded, staying on his side as Hoseok carefully pulled out of him, coming back with a simple dark purple plug that he slid inside of Yoongi, who stiffened a little at the lingering sensitivity. It felt cold and rough, and grated up against his walls in a way he decided was unpleasant. Especially when Hoseok patted the plug, although lovingly intended. He hissed, and Hoseok murmured an awkward apology, crawling up onto the bed to wrap his arms around Yoongi. He could still feel Hoseok’s erection up against his back, but the Alpha seemed to have been calmed, compared to how wound up he’d been earlier.

“I wanna fill you up with so much semen you can’t shit for a week,” Hoseok half-sang, nuzzling into
Yoongi’s hair.

Okay, so maybe he was still kinda wound up, but he was bearing it better, laying quiet kisses against Yoongi’s skin and praising him.

“You look so beautiful when you’re being wrecked, did you know that? I like when you can just sit there and I can do all the work.”

Having no coherent response formed in his mind, Yoongi just snarled, burying his face into the pillows, letting Hoseok pamper him and coo softly in his ear. Yoongi wasn’t sure how long they lay there resting, but at some point Hoseok went to leach-like curl himself all the way around Yoongi, and the Omega growled lowly.

“You still smell like that shitty-ass garage,” Yoongi mumbled. “Let’s take a bath before the next round.”

“But we’re already in bed, and we’re just going to get messy again,” Hoseok whined drowsily, still drugged off the post-orgasm high as he rubbed his nose up against the nape of Yoongi’s neck.

“Nope,” Yoongi chirruped, wriggling out of the Alpha’s hold, still feeling the clench of the plug following his every movement. “You get the grease smell off so I can smell you, or we’re doing nothing and you can just cry while jacking yourself off, for all I care.”

“That would be a real…tear jerker,” Hoseok wheezed. Yoongi turned around and smacked Hoseok across the head with one of the pillows, before gingerly making his way to the bathroom. He didn’t even look behind him to see if Hoseok followed, just went to turn the bath water on. He moved carefully, the plug a self-aware sensation with every movement, making him treat his whole abdomen rather tenderly. He stood naked in the bathroom, watching the water fill up the tub, with one hand resting against his stomach quite naturally. Yoongi stared blankly, imagining what it might feel like to have the pups growing inside him, kicking lightly, coming to life slowly in little movements and silence. He wondered how it would feel for his stomach to swell, his body to ache as it fed and grew their first child. He liked that imagined feeling, as much as he liked the very real, experienced feeling of what Hoseok and he already had.

Slowly, Yoongi went to the cupboard, pulling out the black box of pheromone-infused bath salts, dumping a healthy amount into the water with an expert hand. He put it back into the cupboard moments before Hoseok stumbled in, mumbling that he’d changed the sheets.

“Shit,” Hoseok cursed, for all the world looking and sounding like a drunk. “Smells so strongly in
here. What bath salts did you use?"

"The fun ones," Yoongi said vaguely, "Now get in the tub."

"Is that gonna be okay?" Hoseok queried, gesturing toward Yoongi’s ass.

"We’ll see."

Yoongi nudged Hoseok into the water, seating him with his legs outstretched. Once Hoseok was submerged up to his waist, Yoongi placed one hand against the plug, ensuring it wouldn’t fall out, and carefully stepped into the tub, seating himself propped up on Hoseok’s legs, facing him. When Hoseok reached around his hips, slipping through the frothy, cream-colored water to touch the plug carefully, Yoongi wound his arms around Hoseok’s neck. The water felt hot - extremely hot, so that their skin was already almost burning, red and stinging. They sighed into the rising steam, all skin and sensitivity.

"Shoulda added a little bit more cold water, huh?" Hoseok commented, one slender finger slipping between the sore, angry redness of Yoongi’s cheeks, pushing the plug in a little further and making Yoongi hum in appreciation. The Omega trailed his hands down Hoseok’s chest, lingering over the pinkened line of where the water ended. He leaned forward, sitting his bottom back into Hoseok’s hand as he caught Hoseok’s left nipple in his mouth, biting delicately at it. The high temperature of the water had been deliberate, but he wasn’t telling Hoseok that - at least not yet. Currently, Hoseok was still using the powers of wrackspurt, demanding and degrading just as he praised and gave recklessly. One hand was pushing and tapping at the plug in uneven, unexpected bursts, while the other kneaded away at the pliant skin of his ass, working it in wide circles that tugged at his entrance. Yoongi lathered up a mint green loofah, wordlessly starting to wipe it across Hoseok’s skin, wiping away grime and sweat alike. At the same time, Yoongi slowly shifted his hips in tilted angles, starting to moan closer and closer to Hoseok’s ear, letting the slight dizziness of the extreme steam in the bathroom overwhelm him just a bit.

"You still have my seed in there," Hoseok hummed, smirking at Yoongi’s blissed out face, “Do you like how it feels?"

As much as Yoongi enjoyed the verbal attack on his senses, especially in the heat of the moment, there was something about the way he was sitting against Hoseok that made him click over. They had had their fun with wrackspurt, but now he just wanted to demand back that control that Hoseok willingly allowed him, the petulant part of Yoongi that had kept him holding back for so long. The maddening rush of Omega hormones that attacked him from all sides, soaking into his skin until it was like a toxic secretion in his very pores. He was quickly molding and shaping into a potentially dangerous animal.

“I do,” Yoongi said sensually, his voice controlled as he sent Hoseok a dark look through his eyelashes. “But I’m not nearly full enough yet, Angel.”
Hoseok arched an eyebrow, laughing a little at the change in Yoongi’s demeanor, but not offering protest. Having mostly finished cleaning and rinsing off the top half of his Alpha, Yoongi leaned in and licked a stripe up Hoseok’s neck, trailing along his sharp, angular jawline with purpose. He felt a slight weightiness against his inner thigh that he was pretty sure was not Hoseok’s hand.

“Alpha,” Yoongi hummed, leaving short pecking kisses on Hoseok’s chin, cheek, and beneath his eye, “Is your cock ready for another go?”

“Do you even have to ask?” Hoseok sighed in exasperation, tilting his head back and providing Yoongi access to his neck again, which Yoongi didn’t take advantage of, enjoying the slightly questioning look in Hoseok’s eyes.

Curling his hands behind Hoseok’s head, arms outstretched, Yoongi smiled at the younger man. “Now wash me, too.”

Hoseok took the loofah, rubbing suds and fingertips against Yoongi’s chest, brushing a thumbnail across Yoongi’s nipple, making him arch his chest forward a little and hum, his voice dripping seduction. Omega’s had various powers, most of which they never tapped into. But with the years of experience, combined with Hoseok’s rut and the heated steaminess of the hormone-clouded bathroom, Yoongi was going to hit the Alpha with all the coercion he had. He giggled a little, moving forward so that Hoseok would expect another kiss, then smirking up at him and wriggling his body.

“My neck, get my neck,” he demanded. Hoseok slowly complied, and Yoongi tilted back and forth so Hoseok could get the spot behind his ears, could spread the soap into every crevice and could silently worship every curve and bone. “And my back.”

Hoseok’s hands preoccupied, one with continuing to tap at the plug buried inside the Omega, continuing to occasionally stimulate him, and his other hand reaching fully around Yoongi to reach his back and wash it, Hoseok had no leeway when Yoongi coyly reached into the water with one hand to grab at Hoseok’s hardened cock, pumping at it ruthlessly.

“Oh f-f-fuck!” Hoseok keened, his whole body stiffening and curving into the little explosions. Just the tip could reach up and out of the water, and Yoongi held it up, rubbing his thumb over Hoseok’s slit with an expert air until he was leaking precum, crying out under Yoongi’s hand. He came in a few minutes, his pink member still throbbing and twitching through the aftershocks as Yoongi swung his hips in another circular motion, pushing into the weakened Alpha’s hands. Even when Hoseok whimpered from oversensitivity, Yoongi continued, letting the Alpha cry and stiffen. He knew Hoseok liked it, even though he had never directly admitted it. There were some things that years of intimacy allowed you, some things that were left unsaid, but understood through other means, other
intricacies.

“Baby, you tremble so beautifully. You’re such a little slut for me, aren’t you?” Yoongi leaned forward, catching Hoseok’s earlobe in his teeth. “I’m gonna ride you while you’re crying for me. How would you like that?”

“Yes,” Hoseok exhaled, a little incoherently.

“I wanna suck you off,” Yoongi whispered huskily, “Wanna make you writhe like a needy little slut.”

Hoseok groaned, coming again as Yoongi pressed into his Scent mark and nibbled down at the edges, finally pleased to only smell sex and hormones and lovely, sickeningly sweet, intoxicating vanilla.

“Let’s get out,” Yoongi commanded. “I’m clean now.”

“No,” Hoseok hummed, giving Yoongi one of his stupid sentimental smiles that made his heart stop. He pressed a pointed kiss to Yoongi’s lips. “You’re really not.”

They wriggled and untangled themselves, the sloshing of the water like a punctuation mark. Their fingertips were wrinkled and pink from the hot water. Hoseok’s chest was so warm and lovely to touch, practically gleaming in the light as he gracefully stepped out of the bathroom, his nakedness on full display. Cock out, hands easily at his sides, each movement graceful and relaxed, a body pliant with contentedness. He was not an Adonis or a god, but a slender immortal descended nonetheless, all quick angles and sun-kissed elegance. Yoongi only took a moment to gape at him - only a moment, a silent one to himself. Then a gleam came to his eyes, the blue-rimmed edges so bright they seemed to glow.

“Wait there,” he told Hoseok, who had curled back up on the bed, grabbing one of the water bottles he’d placed next to the side table. “And use the blindfold.”

Hoseok arched an eyebrow, but he leaned over to the toybox for the blindfold as Yoongi made his way downstairs.

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Jungkook and Seokjin were seated at the table for dinner. Namjoon had taken two bowls up to his room for himself and Kiara, due to her still feeling pretty worn out and sick, and Jimin and Taehyung were still out. That left the two of them to goof off at the table, teasing each other and quietly enjoying the simple meal of macaroni and cheese.

“Okay, okay, your turn,” Seokjin teased, wiping the bit of cheese off his nose. “Ask away.”

“Hmm…” Jungkook took a large bite, chewing on it as he contemplated. “If you had a million dollars, what would you buy first?”

Seokjin hummed, thinking loudly before he added more pepper to his bowl. “I’d buy a building.”

Jungkook laughed. “A building!? Why?”

“It’s an investment. Real estate is what buying gold once was, really. And I could make money renting it out to companies and such.” He took a sip of his soda, “And I’d leave the top floor for myself, maybe. Let my parents live there in a nice little flat, maybe raise my own family there.”

“Oh?” Jungkook tried not to sound too interested, but he knew he was failing. “In the future do you want to--?”

“Not fair, it’s my turn for a question,” Seokjin diverted, pointing his spoon at Jungkook and narrowing his eyes in accusation, “I let the other one slide because it was a ‘why’ question.”

“Fine, fine,” Jungkook mumbled, resting his cheek in one palm, elbow on the table. He made a mental note to remember that question for his next turn.

“Oh,” Seokjin added another heaping of salt to his macaroni, stirring it around and smiling. “How about a more serious one? What’s one of your most precious memories?”

Jungkook looked across the table at Seokjin, his bare feet propped up onto the Alpha’s lap, just staring at him for a long moment. Seokjin was preoccupied, finishing off his second bowl before moving in to get a third, and when he finally looked back up to meet Jungkook’s eyes several minutes of silence had ensued. Seokjin let out a little noise of inquiry.

“C’mon, just any memory is fine! Just something that’s meant a lot to you in your life.”
But it wasn’t that Jungkook had been unsure of his answer, it was just that he wasn’t sure what kind of a reaction he was going to get.

“"The day you first Scented me.”

Seokjin paused, blinking roughly before one of his hands rubbed against his neck and his bare collarbone, traces of awkwardness from that time many months ago still lingering in the edges of his smile. “Yeah… I felt so bad after that, like I’d violated you against your will.”

“It felt so good,” Jungkook hummed happily, wriggling his feet on Seokjin’s lap. “But I was confused, because I never really felt like I needed to be Scented by someone before. I was waiting for you to do it again.”

“I was waiting for you to ask,” Seokjin breathed. The quiet settled in again, and Seokjin’s hand was massaging up and down Jungkook’s ankle, squeezing lightly at the bony point with the pad of his thumb. Gently, he added, “Your turn.”

He had had his question planned, but seeing the way Seokjin was looking at him, almost forlornly, he asked, “What would you have done, if I had rejected your Claim?”

Seokjin sucked in a breath. It had only taken him a few days before he had known, decided on what he wanted. It had taken months for Jungkook to come to terms with what Seokjin had so quickly identified as something his heart cried out for, a painful but silent plea that one could only hear in their own chest.

“I would have tried again, maybe, if I was feeling particularly weak. But I’d decided if you really wouldn’t accept me, I’d leave the pack. I’d go lone wolf and just suss it out on my own.”

Jungkook frowned, feeling his chest constrict. He knew what it was like, living alone, surviving alone. The certain tortures that came from the knowledge that you had no hand to reach out for, no one to lean on or break things open with. There were reasons the death rate among lone wolves was the highest of any subgroup.

“I’m glad you stayed.”
“I’m glad you said yes,” Seokjin smiled, his face doing that same contortionism that Jungkook had noticed the first time he’d seen it. The way Seokjin’s countenance utterly reformed upon smiling. What was handsome and attractive before became warm and encouraging as a better priority, his eyes crinkling and his teeth gleaming, thick lines at the edges of his impossibly pink lips like parentheses surrounding the most important footnote of Jungkook’s life.

“Okay, okay,” Seokjin still smiled, chuckling softly. “Let’s lighten it back up now.” He tilted his head to the side, smirking through a slightly dramatized cockiness. “What’s the most handsome part of me?”

Jungkook rolled his eyes.

“Oh, come on, JK!” Seokjin, crowed, leaning forward and tugging on the Omega’s shirt sleeve. “It’s an easy one. Just generically say my eyes and be done with it. That’s what everyone says.”

“The lines around your mouth,” Jungkook said slowly, deliberately, “When you’re really smiling. I think those are the prettiest.”

That made Seokjin pause, and Jungkook could have sworn a blush was creeping across Seokjin’s face, but the Alpha tried to laugh it off, smacking Jungkook’s shoulder and goofily berating with an exaggerated, “The lines around my mouth!? What is that supposed to be?”

“When you smile, there are these lines,” Jungkook gestured, trailing two fingertips down the edges around his mouth in little curved motions. “They’re really pretty. I feel like I could watch forever.”

“You’re so weird, nobody likes my stupid smile lines.” Seokjin laughed, turning back to stir his macaroni around. Jungkook smiled, hearing the slightly embarrassed way Seokjin’s voice had shaken at the praise. The tips of Seokjin’s ears were bright red, and Jungkook wriggled his feet a little on Seokjin’s lap.

They fell into a contented silence, considering whether or not to make another batch of macaroni when suddenly, who should proudly strut downstairs but Yoongi.

A completely naked Min Yoongi, as barren of clothes as the day he was born.

“Evening, lovebirds,” Yoongi chirruped. His skin was flushed hot pink and his hair was wet, so he
must have been fresh from a shower, Jungkook assumed, and looking as happy as a clam (albeit a freshly cooked one). Jungkook chewed at his food, murmuring back a greeting without thinking much of it. Then, he glanced over at Seokjin, whose jaw had dropped open, gaping at Yoongi with eyes wide. Jungkook wanted to laugh.

The Omega was seemingly unaffected by their gazes, humming as he turned to open the freezer. When he bent slightly forward, Jungkook caught the briefest glimpse of purple between his ass cheeks, a little jewel on the end that resembled a diamond, and Jungkook smirked to himself. Seokjin started to choke on his macaroni, and Jungkook thumped the heel of his hand against Seokjin’s back to help him dislodge the offensive pasta.

“Is this all the ice we have?” Yoongi pouted, turning around with the singular tray.

“There’s another tray behind the ice cream,” Jungkook said. “And there’s also a little ice pack in the door, for like ice chests? Take that, too. It’ll last a bit longer.”

“Sweet, thanks,” Yoongi dumped the contents of both trays into a metal bowl, along with the icepack, and started for the upstairs, actually singing some upbeat number off-key under his breath.

“Asshole didn’t even fill the trays back up,” Jungkook chuckled looking over at Seokjin. “You still breathing?”

“Holy shit, I wasn’t expecting that.”

“Obviously,” Jungkook guffawed. Then, he rested his chin in his hands, sighing with a dreamy look on his face. “Isn’t his body so beautiful? I love how pretty his butt is, it’s so squishy. It looks like one of those Renaissance paintings Taehyung has, of all the naked people. And his soft little stomach.” Jungkook sighed. “He’s like the perfect Omega.”

Seokjin seemed to sputter at that, “I don’t know about perfect!” he snapped, “Is that--? Is that something that happens a lot with them?”

“Well, I’ve actually never seen him use the ice, so that’s kind of a new thing, I’m guessing.”

“Jungkook, I’m not talking about the ice.” Seokjin seethed in impatience.

“Usually he wears boxers,” Jungkook shot Seokjin a playful side eye, tipping his bowl back to try and scrape the last of the cheese into his mouth, the sound of his spoon against the glass abrasive. “But Hoseok gets super horny during his ruts, and they both kind of stop giving a fuck. Hoseok
doesn’t rut very often, though. Maybe just a couple times a year?”

“Holy shit…”

“Yeah,” Jungkook stood up, going to rinse his bowl in the sink and patting Seokjin’s shoulder in an attempt at comfort. “Just you wait until you see the shit Jimin’s into. And by the way, I’m expecting you to help me out-kink them. I’m tired of being stuck with the baby image.”

“You are a baby,” Seokjin grinned at Jungkook, winking with purpose. “But only my baby.”

“Yeah, yeah…” Jungkook rolled his eyes. He didn’t like admitting to it so easily, it wasn’t as fun as pretending he wasn’t self-aware. “Whatever.”

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Yoongi slipped back into the bedroom, closing the door behind himself with a gentle little click. Hoseok was still waiting, laying flat on the bed with the blindfold pulled securely down over his eyes. He lifted his cheek from the pillow when he heard the door, a little smile coming across his cheek.

“Yoongi?” Hoseok called out softly, tenderly. Yoongi paused in the doorway, his breath a little shortened. He wished he could hit a rewind button and replay that sound throughout the rest of his life. *Fuck, I’m so far gone for him.*

It wasn’t as if he didn’t already know that.

“It’s me, angel,” Yoongi purred, crawling up onto the bed on his knees, feeling the plug tearing slightly at his insides, clinging desperately to what he still had locked up safe inside his body. He leaned forward, his bottom stuck up into the air slightly as he bent over Hoseok to set the bowl on the side table. Smelling him there before he felt him, Hoseok reached out and coiled his arms and legs up around the Omega like a monkey, nuzzling in towards where he knew he’d find the strongest aroma of freshly tilled earth.

“Mm…” Hoseok hummed against him, exploring Yoongi’s body with his mouth and fingertips, traveling long stretches of skin, pinching Yoongi’s waist between his calves. “You smell amazing. You smell happy.”
“I’m very fucking happy,” Yoongi kissed Hoseok’s cheek, letting him have his tender moment. Then, he reached out one hand and slammed Hoseok’s head back against the bed, thudding against the headboard slightly on his way down. Hoseok cursed.

“But right now,” Yoongi hissed, “It’s *my* time. Your wrackspurt is officially over.”

Hoseok just gave a little whimper, working his mouth as though contemplating a protest. Yoongi wasted no time in hunting through their toy box, pulling out the handcuffs and slipping them down over Hoseok’s cute, petite wrists. Then he reached up to slide aside the small tapestry Yoongi had nailed on the wall a few months ago. Hidden below the tapestry, its Native American inspired colors bright and eye-catching, was a small ring that had been imbedded into the wall just above the headboard. Yoongi attached Hoseok’s wrists to it at the end of a short length of silvery chain, which clinked as Hoseok tested out its strength with a few tugs. At the same time, his hips wriggled a little underneath Yoongi.

The Omega slid himself down to rest between Hoseok’s legs, clutching his knees together to hold the plug in as he lowered himself down to wrap his mouth around Hoseok’s tip. Hoseok let out a sigh as Yoongi quickly moved down, dropping his mouth and mentally measuring out how far he had to go before he was satisfied with how deeply he was taking the Alpha in his mouth. Any moment he wasn’t praising the gods above for not giving him much of a gag reflex, he was flicking his tongue into all the most erogenous places, until Hoseok was letting out a low growl of contentment, a rumbling that shook through his whole body in the form of a wordless *Yes*. He was writhing in the chains so prettily, and he chuckled when Hoseok came quickly and roughly, a shuddering moan accompanying as Yoongi swallowed, running his hand along the base to help him maintain the high until the end. Hoseok lay panting for a few minutes, a light sweat already formed on his skin as his body fought to continue, to fulfill a need that only his Omega could satisfy.

“God,” Hoseok bemoaned. “I’m already hard again, fuck! It *hurts*, Yoongi.”

“Today is touch play,” Yoongi said, his voice clear and instructive. He positioned himself to where he was straddling Hoseok’s hips, gently setting his bottom down against Hoseok’s crotch, hoping the Alpha would remember the intrusive plug waiting just above him. “Did you enjoy the bath?”

“Way too much,” Hoseok managed.

“Are you feeling warm and comfortable?”

“Like I wanna be snuggled and laid down for a nap,” Hoseok chuckled, “And yet not at all.”
Yoongi hummed, reaching over into the bowl for the first piece of ice, clenching his hand around it. It stung, to hold it, but he drew out the moment as long as he could, until he could feel the melted ice water start to drip down his palm. He held his hand over the lower part of Hoseok’s stomach, and watched the couple of droplets land there, seeing the slight quivering of the muscles in Hoseok’s slender waist rise and fall in sudden, uneven succession. The surprise was evident, even before Hoseok let out the quiet, “O-oh..”

He dropped his hand, pressing the ice directly to that sensitive place just below Hoseok’s belly button, pleased to hear the bright little gasp the Alpha released. Yoongi’s fingertips, now cooled by holding the ice, reached out to trail along the tanned skin that was still so warm it felt like it was burning from the inside out. Hoseok’s breath came in little shudders as he cried out that it was too cold.

“You’ll deal with it,” Yoongi said with a smirk. He leaned down until he was laying across Hoseok’s chest, grinding his erection against Hoseok’s bare skin, and also sandwhiching the ice between them, making it melt faster. Hoseok sucked in a breath, his hand tugging at the handcuffs as Yoongi leaned in and caught Hoseok’s mouth with his own. He shifted his hips enough to move the ice as he wished, and deepened his kiss with Hoseok at the same time. Eventually, one hand lifted, trailing up Hoseok’s torso, dipping and relishing every curve of Hoseok’s chest, until he was inching his fingertips up to wrap around Hoseok’s throat, his thumb knowing by instinct now where to press in, happy to hear the change in Hoseok’s breath and heart rate.

He ground harder down onto him, until Hoseok was whimpering, gasping around the hand on his neck, “Please, please, Yoongi. Please.”

“Please?”

“Please, let me fuck you.”

“Hmm…” Yoongi sat up, his hand still pressed down on Hoseok’s neck. “Maybe not yet. I thought you wanted me to carry your pups with this little thing?” Yoongi tilted back enough that Hoseok’s painfully hard erection slipped in between Yoongi’s cheeks, brushing up against the fake little diamond on the end, rough against the sensitive tip and making Hoseok cry out, from both physical and emotional distress.

“So close!” he managed to gasp. “So close-so close so-close!”

“And the plug?”

“I’ve got more for you,” Hoseok promised, his voice crackling in a way that it rarely did, rough and
frenzied. “I’ve got lots more. We can go until daylight tomorrow without stopping. I’ll give you all of it, until you can’t take anymore.”

“Mm…” Yoongi purred against Hoseok’s chest, reaching down with one hand to draw a new piece of ice between them, making Hoseok start to pant. The chains rattled violently, and Hoseok’s breathing was erratic, even after Yoongi released him so he could sit upright, lifting his bottom off of Hosok, reaching behind and easing the plug out with a little grunt. Hoseok heard him, but being unable to see, unable to touch made the Alpha continue to whimper with need.

“Yoongi…”

“There,” Yoongi said as he removed it, letting it drop to Hoseok’s stomach, sticky and wet. He felt the slick wetness dripping onto his Mate, and he held himself crouched above him, keeping himself inaccessible even as Hoseok sat in wonder, feeling the warm remnants of his own come as Yoongi eased it out from around his entrance with two fingers, reaching out and smearing it in with the melted water. “Are you going to fill me properly this time?”

Hoseok sucked in a breath. “Yes, I pro-”

“It’s still coming out, Hoseok,” Yoongi whispered huskily, “You can’t see it but I know you can smell it. You can smell us.”

The Alpha was unable to form a response, just jutted his hips upward, making Yoongi jolt, thrown up a bit into the air by the violent thrust, the plug clattering to the floor, leaving a collection of messy white smears on the sheets and the floor as it spun lightly. Yoongi took hold of Hoseok’s member, tugging on it and letting his fingertips trail down to the balls beneath, tickling at it just enough to work Hoseok into an even deeper frenzy before he knelt up, positioning himself around Hoseok before sinking down with a guttural sigh.

“Oh my god,” Hoseok moaned, wriggling his body wildly as though he had just been set on fire. “Go, go, go!” His hands in the handcuffs clenched and unclenched in frustration.

“I’m going, I’m going,” Yoongi snapped, the feeling of fullness making him ache. He’d just sucked him off and he was already this hard? It was unfair. He lifted himself up, simultaneously grabbing two more pieces of ice, reaching up and pressing one against Hoseok’s lips. The Alpha protested at first, trying to speak around the ice cube, but Yoongi quickly demanded, “Just fucking take it, bitch. You’re burning my asshole.”

He felt Hoseok physically react inside of him at that, letting out a muffled cry as he parted his lips
and let Yoongi shove the ice cube in, and Yoongi imagined the freezing coolness stinging slightly in Hoseok’s sensitive, sensitive mouth, the melted liquid dripping down his throat and tickling. When Hoseok coughed, fighting to keep it balanced on his tongue, Yoongi smirked, pressing himself back down into Hoseok.

Yoongi knew he’d have to set a brutal pace if he was going to really bring Hoseok any relief, and as much fun as he was having, he knew he was going to be raw and swollen by the end of it, so he didn’t want to make the rut last any longer than necessary. With one hand running the ice up and down Hoseok’s chest, making him shiver at the increasing puddle of cold water that dripped and ran up and down his body, Yoongi leaned forward and added a shift to his hips that allowed him to fuck himself on Hoseok’s already swollen member as quickly as possible. Yoongi gasped, his voice edging towards spent as he started to cry out. Hoseok, still unable to speak with the melting ice cube balanced on the tip of his tongue obediently, merely spluttered a little and tried to lift his hips higher, to angle them deeper.

Hoseok came into him in a rush, a sigh escaping him that was more of a gasp as he trembled violently beneath the Omega, who was far from satisfied. He slapped his hand down firmly against Hoseok’s painfully erect nipple, knowing the ice had made it ache and throb, and the contact of his hand made Hoseok shudder.

“I’m not full yet, you bastard!” Yoongi said as he continued to chase the end. He slapped Hoseok again, on the cheek this time, and heard the groan as the small bit of the ice cube left tumbled from his lips, sliding down his cheek and dropping to the mattress. “Come for me!”

“I c-can’t!”

But Yoongi kept going, and it wasn’t long before the savage jolts like electric shocks ran through the Alpha again, and he grunted as another wave of semen rushed into Yoongi, making the Omega tremble. He wanted to stop, but he knew Hoseok wasn’t there yet. He gave them only a short amount of time to catch their breath, not pulling himself off before slamming himself down against the Alpha again, feeling the quiverings start almost immediately.

“Y-Yoongi, I’m..” Hoseok was a trembling, sweaty, dripping mess on the sheets, and the chains clattered against the wall as his voice lowered into a fiery crackle. “L-let me…”

“One more time,” Yoongi gasped, “One more time.”

“Yoongi!” Hoseok shouted, his voice spent and crackling as he pulled on the chains pointedly, “I’ll fucking pull this out of the wall if y-you don’t--” He groaned, throwing his head back as he gasped noisily, and Yoongi knew he was close. Frantically, legitimately worried he would tear the ring out of the wall (it wouldn’t be the first time) Yoongi unlatched Hoseok’s handcuffs, fumbling through
releasing his hands even as the Alpha continued to ram up into him, making Yoongi gasp and whimper, letting go of Hoseok once the Alpha’s hands were free so he could desperately try to hold on, thrown back and forth as he was. In seconds Hoseok had thrown away the blindfold, biting his lip between his teeth as he grabbed hold of Yoongi’s hips.

*I guess wrackspurt wasn’t over quite yet*, Yoongi thought, as suddenly he felt himself choking on his own spit, tongue lolling out as Hoseok thrust into him over, and over, and over. He could only cling onto dear life, a ragdoll as his full body, already feeling like it was bursting from the inside out, was further abused in the most beautiful moment of helpless pleasure. This time, when the quiet rush of Hoseok’s come filled him again, Yoongi trembled as well, sweat dripping into his eyes as he let out a low howling type of sound, crying out as he came across Hoseok’s chest, some of it ending up on the Alpha’s blissed out cheeks.

Yoongi trembled in violent aftershocks, suddenly lowered to the bed face-first, a sheet brought up around his clammy shoulders. It was several minutes before he was able to speak, even the gentle hand against his back that rubbed in circles feeling uncharacteristically heavy in his sleepy sensitivity. After a while, he felt Hoseok cleaning them both up, nudging him to roll onto a fresh sheet and then wrapping him up in it like a fragile human burrito.

“Holy fuck,” Yoongi finally managed, several minutes after the fact, earning a chuckle from Hoseok. The Alpha let out a sigh, taking the sentence as leave to curl back up against Yoongi, tucking his head beneath the Omega’s chin.

“Sorry, I should have asked instead of telling you.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Yoongi sighed. “That was fucking amazing. I feel like I’m gonna die.”

“Please don’t,” Hoseok chuckled, giving sweet, gentle kisses that trailed up and down Yoongi’s neck and carried an oddly chaste sort of air to them. He wrapped an arm and a leg over Yoongi, carefully pulling the Omega to his body in a koala-like hug. “I like you and wanna keep you forever.”

“Well, you’d better,” Yoongi grumbled. He was embarrassed at how brusque he was being, after Hoseok had almost made him weep during sex. His own aftercare was very different from the Alpha’s, and he accepted the giggle-filled kisses with a frown that belied the comforting warmth that filled his chest. “There’s no fucking way I’m not pregnant after all that.”

Hoseok just laughed, obviously giddy as he kissed Yoongi’s forehead, intertwining their fingers together as he held Yoongi in his arms. Yoongi was utterly wrecked, and Hoseok’s voice had a
lovely crackle to it as he curled up and nuzzled into Yoongi the way one might curl up with a favorite book on a rainy day. When Hoseok drifted off to sleep, Yoongi couldn’t help it - he touched a hand lightly to his stomach, and he wasn’t sure if it was still aftershocks or if it was really just the brimming warmth of hope that was stirring in his gut.

Meanwhile, in the far corner of the room, hidden inside Hoseok’s discarded work pants, his phone blared with a blinking light, indicating he had one missed message.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here~♥

Wowza, this update was a fucking BEAST for us to write. DX Many many props and kisses to my Beta Jen, who had to take this in two parts to edit (bc we were worried about time. Stupid timezones) and she was up until the wee hours of the morning, poor bab. She suffers for my art. lol This chapter is over 14,000 words, easily the longest yet! :O And I was happy to give it to like a shitten of Yoonseok smut scenes. lol

The Yoonseok sex I dedicate to my Sope-loving babs, esp Jen, Dan and Renee.♥ I hope it satisfies~ I had a really intense time writing it.

Okay, now for kind of an important update?

As some of you know, I'm moving from Japan back to the States soon. Next Friday, actually. So that means I'm going to be in an airport (after probs 10+ hours of traveling) at the time I would normally update LINP. I discussed with Jen whether or not we should try to do an early or late update, and it was getting really complicated, as I have a LOT of things to do this week. :(  

So after this chapter grew and grew to such a length, I've decided that I'll just have to skip next week's update, and let this kinda-sorta serve for 'two updates.' So the next LINP update, as it stands now, will probably be August 4th, and will be in UTC. But it should be a hella good one. :) If the time of the new update changes I'll probs mention it on my Twitter, so you can search for LINP and it'll be there.

Thanks for your patience, guys! ♥ And thanks for all the support and love~ LINP has now reached 25,000 hits, and 1,500 kudos, which both are numbers that utterly blow me away!♥
The Drive

Chapter Notes

WARNING: This chapter contains The Deeper More Tainted Sins™. Be forewarned if you are queasy about (safe, consensual) BDSM, light bondage, pet play, rimming, verbal berating, overusage of the term "baby" and hyperbolic use of a dildo.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“We were a galaxy exploding into a million pieces, creating a whole new world, as we crashed against each other on the soft surface of his mattress, a cloud in the darkness, our bodies finally falling together like rain.”
— Emme Rollins, Dear Rockstar

“Do you think they noticed?” Jimin breathed, as Taehyung tossed their backpack into the backseat of the cab in Jin’s truck and climbed in.

“Jungkook did, but I don’t think he’s gonna tell.” Taehyung’s voice still had that slight edge to it that Jimin alone seemed able to detect. It made him worried, like watching a full glass sit precariously on the edge of a table. Taehyung looked over and saw the look on Jimin’s face, and he offered him a smile, reaching over and touching a hand to the back of Jimin’s neck.

“Hey,” he said gently, “You still with me?”

“To the end of the world,” Jimin uttered the phrase so easily, dripping it off his tongue without hesitation as he had the other hundreds of times he’d said it. He wasn’t wanting to back down, per se, it was just…

“Namjoon, Hoseok, the others… They’re gonna be so angry.”

“Yeah,” Taehyung sighed. “But this feels right. I’m tired of waiting, I’m miserable, and I just wanna be with you. And if this is the fastest way… I won’t regret it.”
Jimin looked into Taehyung’s eyes and saw the line of gold around the edges of his eyes, observing the tenseness in his shoulders that suggested pain. Taehyung was right. He wouldn’t regret this. The others just couldn’t see the signs, couldn’t understand. Jimin let out a breath.

“Okay, then. Let’s go get Mated.”

He started up Seokjin’s truck and pulled out of the garage, leaving behind an as-yet-unawares pack. The drive to the island felt much longer than before, especially with the way Taehyung’s Scent was tinged with nervousness and pain. Jimin drove with a tight grip on the wheel.

They had decided it together. The island was where they’d had their first hunt together, their first real kiss, and it was a special place in Taehyung’s bloodline, as well as to their pack. It had to be the island.

“Do you remember when we were fighting about those tuna sandwiches?” Taehyung interrupted Jimin’s thoughts. He looked over and blinked at the Beta.

“What?”

“It wasn’t long after I moved in. You still didn’t like me, then.” Taehyung laughed, adjusting the seat belt across his shoulder as though it bothered him. “I think I liked you already, though, but I wasn’t ready to try and get to know you.”

“Well, what was I supposed to think? The first day you were already snuggled up next to Jungkook. It took me ages to get him to even let me touch him.”

“Different Jungkook,” Taehyung said simply, shrugging. “But one week in you didn’t like me, and we argued over tuna sandwiches.”

“Tuna sandwiches,” Jimin hummed. He remembered it well, of course. He had a knack for remembering the minute, especially when it had to do with people. Especially when it came to Taehyung. But it seemed to be calming Taehyung to talk about it, which in turned calmed Jimin, so he let him continue.

“I left a bowl of tuna in the fridge.”
“Uncovered, as if you were raised in a barn,” Jimin retorted.

“I was raised next to a barn,” Taehyung shot back cheekily, “Does that count?”

“You brat,” Jimin chuckled. “What am I gonna do with you?”

Taehyung leaned over until he could rest his head against Jimin's shoulder as he drove, quiet blanketing the truck for a moment, comfortable in the way things always were when they were together.

“You ate my tuna,” he said. “And we fought. You were really mean to me, when it was you that took my tuna.”

“You didn’t even put your name on— Ugh , we’re not going down this road again,” Jimin sighed in exasperation. Taehyung chuckled. “I didn’t understand why you were so worked up over tuna, when we always have so much going on, like people Presenting early, couples fighting, school…”

“I want what I want,” Taehyung purred, nibbling at the taut, muscular Alpha arm. “And I wanted that tuna. And I wanted to get to know you.”

“So we screamed about tuna sandwiches,” Jimin mused.

“And ended up crying and unloading everything,” Taehyung reminded him. “You were really good at being honest with me, and I liked that. I felt that after that, I could tell you anything.”

“Mmm.”

“Jimin,” Taehyung said quietly, “Did I ever tell you that my granny was a Beta?”

“Mm, yes,” Jimin said. He remembered Taehyung had told him over ice cream on a cool autumn day, following the younger’s whimsical demands for a spontaneous ice cream run. He had been wearing the red sweater that always made Jimin want to cry from how soft and sweet he looked in it. It had been a Thursday, and he’d told him matter-of-factly, but part of Jimin had wanted to believe, had started to suspect even then, that Taehyung knew he’d be a Beta, and Jimin’s Beta alone. “I am
pretty sure you told me,” he added, with false uncertainty.

“I take after her in a lot of ways,” Taehyung said. “We looked and thought a lot alike, especially when it came to people. We liked to argue. We liked honesty. Often it made it hard to get along with others. She told me, ‘Mate someone who loves you beyond the mask, beyond your faults, into the beyond.’ I think it was from a poem she’d read. You would have loved her, Jimin. I would have taken you home with me, and we’d have played with the ducks or the horses. Pick strawberries right off the vine together. She would make tea and complain in the most beautiful way. Her and grandpa always bickered, were always honest. It would have made you laugh to see it.”

Jimin reached over, and in the stretching silence, he took Taehyung’s beautiful hand in his smaller, thicker one and brought it up to press lightly against his lips, squeezing it.

“I never told you,” Taehyung said, “But my granny was an Omega-type Beta. My grandpa was an Alpha.”

Jimin halted a little at that, feeling like Taehyung had just given him a very strange and colorful puzzle piece. “She was?”

“Yeah, back in her time there was more of a stigma against it. She didn’t talk about it much.” Taehyung sighed. “She and grandpa went through horrible things to be together. Things that would be illegal now.”

Jimin drove for a very long moment of silence, considering. “That’s why you hoped to be my Omega?”

“Not just that, but yeah,” Taehyung hummed. “She made me see how beautiful a strong Mating can be, what it can go through. I never doubt us. Because I know better.”

Jimin squeezed again at Taehyung’s hand. “I still doubt, sometimes. Not because it’s you, but because of myself.”

“Don’t think about it anymore. Those old pack mates didn’t know you anyways. I know you and I want you. All of you.”

It was easier said than done, of course. But Jimin couldn’t imagine anyone else he’d rather try for.
“Granny was the one who told me I should look for a soulmate, like she did. She made me believe soulmates exist. Someone I can fight with and love inside out.”

“I can’t imagine not having you, now.” Jimin breathed, that addictive warm sensation creeping into his bones, as it always did when Taehyung brought out the more delicate edges in him. “I was so lonely before.”

“Because you hadn’t met me yet,” Taehyung chirruped, full of confidence. Jimin smiled.

When they finally pulled into the campground on the island, Taehyung was curled up against the window, napping. Jimin had enjoyed a long stretch of soft silence, his hand still curled into Taehyung’s as it rested between them. He put the truck into park, slowly releasing Taehyung’s hand and sliding it down to his leg.

“Babe,” Jimin squeezed his knee once. “Babe, we’re here.”

“Hmm?” Taehyung slowly blinked, his face swollen and lips parting as he squinted out at the clearing. “Oh.”

The cabins were eerie and solemn, with their dark windows and lack of life. They stepped delicately past the two bunk cabins, as if afraid of disturbing something that lingered behind the wooden walls, and went to the Main Hall, their backpacks balanced on their shoulders.

“How do we get inside?” Jimin frowned, looking up at Taehyung with skepticism. “Namjoon is the only one with a key.”

“Not exactly,” the Beta sent his Alpha a wink. “There’re two keys.”

Jinmin blinked, then watched as Taehyung reached out to feel around inside the small abandoned bird’s nest that was tucked neatly under the cabin awning. His jaw dropped open as Taehyung pulled out a small key, along with some feathery down and crumples of too-long-since-dried branches.

Taehyung smirked. “He gave a copy to Kiara, but she doesn’t keep it with her. She knows that sometimes there’ll be emergencies when we need the Main Hall without Namjoon, so she hid it.”
“Is that really safe?” Jimin mumbled, as Taehyung fiddled with putting the key into the door.

“Probably not as safe as Namjoon would like. But it’s not a place most people would think of to look.”

Jemin reached out, touching Taehyung’s shoulder so that the Beta turned around. “Hold on a minute, then how did you know she’d put it there?”

The Beta grinned, placing a hand at the back of Jimin’s head and running his fingers through Jimin’s soft locks. “Because, Chim-chim, I’m cute and Kiara has a soft spot for me.”

At that, Jimin gave a pout that had Taehyung laughing, his teeth glowing and his lips wide, eyes crinkled up as he nuzzled in to give Jimin a comforting Eskimo kiss. They took their time in getting set up, setting their backpacks next to the couch and laying out the pull-out bed. Taehyung was in charge of the fire, and Jimin put their food provisions away. It was going to be a long afternoon and a long evening, if he had anything to do with it.

Once their favorite blanket was laid out across the bed, Jimin started to unpack his backpack, laying out various objects that started out relatively innocent, but quickly altered in their implications. Toothbrush, socks, hairbrush, spare underthings…. two kinds of lubricant, a human-sized collar, a whip…

Taehyung, who was warming his hands while crouched in front of the fire, glanced over, then quickly turned back to stare into the flames.

“It’ll be strange, not doing it at the pack house this time…” The Beta’s lips were pressed together, his head slightly lowered so that his bangs covered his eyes.

“Yeah…” Jimin mumbled, his voice faltering as he stopped in his work to look over at Taehyung. He licked his lips, feeling how dry they were.

“And this time we don’t have to stop partway through,” Taehyung continued.

Jemin stared at the Beta for a long moment, worry bubbling up in his chest at the deadpan way Taehyung spoke. “Are you...are you okay with this? If any of it isn’t okay, you can tell me, I promise.”
Taehyung didn’t respond, didn’t even look his way, for almost a full ten seconds. The crackling of the fire as it caught on the piece of oak was the only background noise. Then he blinked, seeming to be shaken from a reverie, and then when he looked at Jimin, his expression was somehow very altered. “What? No, I’m fine with it. Great with it, I think, actually? I’m just...” Taehyung looked at the fire, his eyebrows knitting together a bit. “I guess I’m just getting into my headspace.”

“Oh, okay.” Jimin’s eyes widened, watching as Taehyung, his Beta, continued to stare into the fire. Even as he stood there, Taehyung seemed to curl in on himself, becoming somehow smaller and less intimidating by the moment. “T-take all the time you need.”

Jimin continued to unpack, flushing as he glanced down at the array of toys which, apparently, had taken up the majority of his backpack. He usually avoided thinking about this sort of thing, if he could help it. Jimin knew that he had a strong sex drive - he’d suspected it since he was a pup, barely into his first pack at 13. The other pack members, looking at his stature and soft mannerisms, had taunted him, nicknaming him somewhat vulgar references to needy Omegas. He’d known better, then. He wasn’t submissive. He wasn’t an Omega. As to *how* he’d known, he couldn’t say. It was just a feeling. Around the end of his time with his old pack, he’d started his collection. Just one or two things, at first, like a strap or an old belt, and then gradually getting bolder and buying full on collars. He would spend his time during late hours watching increasingly graphic videos on his phone, curled up in his bunk and constantly afraid of being discovered. They never did, to his surprise, but there had been a lot of close calls, and continued verbal beratement as his Presenting came nearer only caused Jimin to finally realize that they would never have his back, that he could never open up for them. He had joined Namjoon’s pack after having heard him talk about how they were like a family. That was what Jimin wanted. To feel like he *belonged*, and would be cared for, even if everything in his chest was drawn out and brought into the light. Namjoon was never shy about candidly praising Jimin, and counting him as one of the family. Jungkook had trusted in him, in his quiet way. Yoongi was always piling his extra food onto Jimin’s plate, calling him skinny during the times Jimin felt the exact opposite. Hoseok had taken him under his wing, and in the end he felt like there was this unspoken promise in the air of ‘You’re accepted, exactly as you are.’

Namjoon had never asked him about his kinks, even after he found the box of various sized dildos underneath Jimin’s bed when they were in the midst of the move to the new pack house. He had just quickly shut the box and held it out to Jimin, who had already started to flush bright red in a nauseating mix of embarrassment and fear.

Jungkook had been the first person he told. Jimin was still ashamed of how he’d handled that, but Jungkook had forgiven him so easily, told him it was fine. It had taken a long time for Jimin to believe him, but they had clicked back into their same, easy routine, and Jimin realized that you shouldn’t chase after something just because it didn’t attack you back. There were some hard lessons he still had to learn.

Perhaps it was because of all those fears that he hadn’t wanted to tell Taehyung. But Jimin had never
been good at hiding things from Taehyung - he was right when he had said Jimin was honest with him, but he just didn’t seem to realize that it wasn’t for just anybody that he bared his soul, it was for Taehyung more than anyone, a special star that made words fall from his mouth as easily as water.

“I don’t want you to hate me,” he had said quietly, his arms curled around the box protectively, feeling very small. “It’s not pretty.”

Taehyung had wordlessly reached out and lowered the box from Jimin’s hands to the bed. “I could never hate you. I don’t know if I’ll like it or not, but even if I don’t, that doesn’t mean I could hate you.”

Jimin’s chest constricted, torn in two ways. There was nothing in the world he wanted more than to share all of himself with Taehyung, to indulge freely in this guilty pleasure of his that had grown the more he fed it, like a starving wolf inside of him that would never really be satiated, only becoming further addicted to this little bit of sensory heaven he had created.

“Are you sure? I’m just...I know I’m...I can be pretty...well, intense, so... you might be weirded out.”

“Show me,” Taehyung curled in underneath Jimin’s chin, kissing his jaw. “My Alpha.”

“Okay, I’m ready,” Taehyung sighed, facing the fire. Jimin had been standing at the edge of the bed, watching him for the last several minutes. He clenched his fists, moving to the door and locking it, pulling the curtain extra-carefully over all the windows, then moving back to the bed and picking up the most precious object he had ever bought for Taehyung: his collar. It was a simplistic piece, one that Seokjin had helped him pick out, surprising him with the straightforward supportiveness and only asking questions in that same easygoing tone with which he had asked what kind of burger Jimin wanted for lunch. It had been the most awkward afternoon of his life, but having Jin’s advice (and unspoken moral support) had been a big help.

It was black leather, with understated dark purple lace along the edge of it. The leather was soft in his hands and plush on the inner side, so it wouldn’t chafe his Beta’s delicate skin. Instead of a regular buckle, the collar was held together by a heavy sterling silver lock, in the shape of a heart. He had loved the weight of it in his hands, and he knew Taehyung would enjoy it, too. Taehyung was so sensitive to some things, and the heaviness of the lock, he was sure, would be appreciated.

But now Jimin had to focus. It was time to get into his headspace.
“Tae-Tae,” Jimin said lowly, not surprised when Taehyung continued to stare into the fire, his back to Jimin. “Come here. To the bed now, boy.” When Jimin patted the mattress with his palm, the slight sound made Taehyung sit up a little straighter, whipping his head around in curiosity. His shoulders rose up, as if to make himself smaller, and Jimin replied by patting the mattress again. “I said to come here, boy. Get up on the bed.”

Taehyung’s attention seemed to prick up at that, and Jimin imagined it in the way it usually did when he was in wolf form, ears standing to attention and his eyes flashing. Instead of rising to his feet, Taehyung slowly, gingerly crawled over on his hands and knees, clambering up onto the bed as though he was afraid it would collapse on him.

“Do I get to wear my collar today?” Taehyung’s voice was quiet, timid even.

Jimin nodded. “I bought it especially for you. Come.” Taehyung obediently went up on his knees, walking that way across the mattress until he was in front of Jimin, then plopping his bottom down to sit on his heels. He looked up into Jimin’s face with an intense, unblinking curiosity as Jimin wrapped the collar around Taehyung’s neck. There were two silver hoops through which the heart lock looped through, and Jimin used the tiny silver key to lock it, resting the heavy heart against the little dip at Taehyung’s throat. The Beta swallowed, and Jimin watched the adam’s apple bob up and down, his eyes transfixed. He was sure Taehyung could see the red starting to creep into his eyes, giving him away.

“It’s heavy,” Taehyung whispered, amazed.

Jimin smiled, reaching out and trailing his fingers in a butterfly-wing delicate way over the heart lock, and then Taehyung’s prominent collarbone. “I know. Do you like it?”

Eagerly, like an overexcited pup, Taehyung nodded, making the locket click a little against the rings. He beamed, and Jimin could imagine the way his tail would have wagged, his tongue lolling out between sharp wolf-teeth in a strange sort of smile. Taehyung lifted his hands up, resting his fists gently against Jimin’s chest and beaming up at him. “I like it a lot… sir.”

A deep rumble seemed to tear through Jimin’s abdomen, a lovely sort of strain and a powerful heat striking throughout his body at the words. The heat forming at his belly only quadrupled when he saw the look in Taehyung’s eyes, saw the lovely gold rim there, promising him everything.

Everything.

“What are the safety words?” Jimin said, already breathless with anticipation.
“Green means go,” Taehyung smiled, “Yellow means slow down and red means stop.”

“Okay.” Jimin sighed a breath of relief. It wasn’t like it was rocket science, of course, but not only was it good for them to make sure every time, it was also reassuring to Jimin. It was the foundation, the lifeline Jimin could hold onto and remind himself that Taehyung was on the same page as him. “Remember, you can use the colors anytime you want, I promise.”

“Of course,” Taehyung said, his fingers splaying out over Jimin’s chest, fingertips pressing down into the fabric of his sweater. He lifted his eyes to Jimin, a hunger in his eyes that made Jimin just feel so overwhelmed. Something deep inside of him was starting to crackle, a wall threatening to crumble down at just a look.

“But first…” Jimin almost gasped, as if he was a drowning man resurfacing above the water for a moment. He took Taehyung’s hand in his, entangling their fingers. He cleared his throat, and into the cool dimness of the cabin, he spoke. “Kim Taehyung. May our blood always run together, our battles be side-by-side, our paths continue as parallels and our dreams align with our realities. With all the blessing from the earth, I, Park Jimin, now pronounce us Mates.”

Taehyung’s face was solemn and blissful at the same time, his eyes sparkling in the firelight as he leaned up towards Jimin, pressing his lips to the Alpha’s. It was a gentle kiss, still budding and unsure. Jimin leaned his chin forward to catch Taehyung’s mouth more confidently. The room still carried the slight chill of a spring day afternoon, the shadows of the cabin melting ever-so-slowly with the warmth of the fire, but against Taehyung’s skin was only heat, lovely, lovely heat.

“I love you,” Taehyung whispered against the skin of his cheek, a hot breath that mingled with the rising Scent of citrus and peppermint, of Alpha and Beta. “I love you so much my chest hurts sometimes.”

“I love you, too,” Jimin breathed, his hands entangling in Taehyung’s hair, one deep exhale escaping him as the wall inside crackled and crumbled. His fists clenched down hard in Taehyung’s hair, gripping it roughly and tugging Taehyung’s head back. The Beta let out the tiniest of gasps, half-expecting it as Jimin forced Taehyung to bare his neck, long and elegant, glowing with a reddish-orange light from the fire. With his free hand, Jimin grabbed the lock heart and gave it a rough tug, making Taehyung grunt a little as the air was forced out of him.

“I love you so much, I want to make you weep. I want you to close your eyes and see only me, to love only me.” Jimin’s voice trembled slightly, not quite as prepared for the role he was slipping into as he wished. The words felt selfish and ugly on his tongue, and Taehyung gazed up at him, looking solemn but not quite convinced. _Try me_, he seemed to be saying. Jimin’s shoulders shifted, the muscles in his back tensing. Jimin’s jaw set, and he leaned in to wrap his mouth around a sensitive part of Taehyung’s neck, biting down and making the Beta stiffen in surprise and pain.
“Ah!” Taehyung gasped, jolting as Jimin bit down even harder instead of letting go, his fingers squeezing at Taehyung’s shoulder. The pretty collar brushed up against Jimin’s cheek, cold and rough.

Into his ear, he growled, “Give me a color, baby.”

“Green,” Taehyung said quickly, hands grappling at Jimin’s chest again, rubbing him all over as if warming Jimin’s inner fire up with his hands, desperate to touch, to feel. “Definitely green.”

Jimin suckled at the skin of Taehyung’s neck, suddenly gentle as his tongue licked at the mark, hoping to lessen the redness for later. Okay, so maybe Taehyung would be wearing a turtleneck home, no big deal. He stood up, making Taehyung straighten before Jimin started to tug the Beta’s shirt off. Taehyung moved to help, and got a little slap on the wrist.

“Don’t move until I tell you to,” Jimin snapped, his eyes flashing. Taehyung bit at his bottom lip, instantly complying. Jimin slowly removed Taehyung’s shirt, tugging him to his feet before yanking his pants and boxers to his ankles. Taehyung shivered a little, but obediently didn’t move unless directed to. He was now completely barren before Jimin, only wearing the collar, and Jimin could see the shy way Taehyung lowered his head, the little twitches at the corners of his mouth that said he was embarrassed, that he secretly liked the attention but didn’t know what to do with it. One thing Kim Taehyung was used to was casual affection. Touches as one walked past, meaningless nibbles at shoulders, laying his head in someone’s lap. Most of the time, he was overlooked or this was treated normally. But there were times when the attention shifted completely to himself, in a sharp, knife-like way, and Taehyung would crumble into coy smiles and timidity.

It made Jimin want to crash into him, like the sea against the rocky shore, and consume him whole.

“Look at your naked body,” Jimin purred, running his hand down Taehyung’s chest and to his stomach. When his fingers brushed against the lower belly, he could feel the muscles there quiver back in shock and sensitivity. “You’re so beautiful, Tae-Tae.” He leaned over and picked up the leash on the bed, reaching up to click it onto Taehyung’s collar, gently caressing his jawline. “Turn around, and put your ass in the air for me.”

Taehyung did as he was told, working his lip to try and bite back his eager smile, turning his bottom towards the Alpha.

“What are you going to do, sir?” Taehyung breathed the question out so lightly, Jimin could barely
“Master is going to complete you,” Jimin said sweetly, moving the leash so that just the lightest bit of pressure was on it, so Taehyung would feel it against his throat. Jimin placed one hand on Taehyung’s cheek, kneading roughly at the skin there. “You’ve gained weight, Tae-Tae. And every bit of it went to your ass.”

He saw Taehyung look over his shoulder, frowning at him. Jimin lifted his hand, and Taehyung’s mouth opened to form a protest that he swallowed down just before Jimin’s palm slapped against him. Taehyung gasped, a high-pitched sound escaping him because he had seen the first one coming, but hadn’t expected the third and fourth ones.

“Your pretty pink cheeks,” Jimin kissed the left one tenderly. He lifted his eyes to see that Taehyung was still looking at him from over his shoulder, both hands bunched roughly into the sheets, his bare body starting to quiver a little despite the heat from the fire that edged its way to them but never quite reached the bed. “Tae-Tae, baby…” Jimin hummed darkly, “Did I tell you to turn around?”

Instantly, Taehyung’s petulant look melted away, and he whirled around to face ahead, but Jimin just laughed.

“Too late,” Jimin cooed, moving around to the other side of the bed, taking one of the logs from beside the fireplace and using it to anchor the end of the leash to the floor a couple of feet from the edge of the bed. Taehyung’s eyes widened, still dutifully remaining on his hands and knees, but forced to lean forward to match the tension of the leash.

“S-sir?” Taehyung whispered, his voice wavering a little as he stared at the log that was weighing him down. Jimin watched Taehyung for a moment, then added another log, further along the leash, pulling Taehyung down a few more inches, his chin almost brushing up against the ledge of the mattress.

“Keep your ass up, baby, and spread your legs,” Jimin ordered, going around to the other side behind Taehyung and giving his bottom another slap. “It’s time to get to work.”

Taehyung was still shocked into his strange quietness, but he stuck his bottom up a little higher, clutching the mattress on either side of his face. Jimin looked and saw a slight tremble in the man’s thighs, showing his nervous anticipation.
Reaching down to his side, Jimin moved some more of the toys closer before crawling up onto the bed on his knees, leaning down to spread Taehyung’s cooled cheeks, leaning in and just exhaling heavily against his skin. He saw goosebumps rise along Taehyung’s skin, his back arching a little as he let out a little whimper. Jimin sent a dark look over at Taehyung’s ducked head, even though he knew the Beta couldn’t see him, and ran his hand along the curved spine, as if petting an animal.

“My beautiful Tae-Tae,” he hummed, drawing his fingernails in as he drew his hand back, leaving little red streaks that faded into prominence. “Tell your master that you want to be eaten out.”

Taehyung didn’t respond at that, just burying his face into the sheets, shaking his head and wriggling his hips against the coolness in the room.

“Come on, Tae-Tae, you can do it,” Jimin purred, scratching up and down Taehyung’s back again, his free hand reaching between Taehyung’s legs and taking hold of his member, already half-hard from being so exposed. “You’re my pretty little pet now, aren’t you? You want to take me in, to swallow me completely.”

“I...I do…” Taehyung managed, his voice muffled, utterly embarrassed. His naked body contrasted with Jimin, who was still fully dressed down to his very boots, and Jimin liked watching him be all shy and unsure. Taehyung rocked a little on his knees, shifting back and forth as much as the pinned-down leash would allow.

Jimin’s slow, smooth scratching turned into soothing pets, trying to calm Taehyung. “Come on, baby,” he breathed cool air against Taehyung’s entrance, making Taehyung stiffen and then shiver. “Tell me you want me. You can do it.”

Taehyung’s weight shifted a bit on the bed, and he wriggled as if to give himself a stronger position on the bed. “I...I do. I want you to eat me out. Please, s-sir.”

He was still half-muffled by the bed, but Jimin figured he was even more nervous than Jimin himself, so he didn’t reprimand him. Not this time. Instead, he leaned forward, kissing up against Taehyung’s entrance, licking at him with a long, well-versed tongue. Instantly, Taehyung was letting out muffled moans against the mattress, gasping and panting in short bursts, as if he was already on edge. Jimin pumped at Taehyung’s long, smooth cock, the obscene sounds mingling with the pops and crackles from the fire and Taehyung’s little noises. After a few minutes, licking around every available corner in his entrance, filling his face with Taehyung on all sides, he pulled a little ways away and inspected his work.

“Hmm…” he hummed contemplatively, leaning back. He wasn’t sure if that was enough, but he didn’t want to hurt Taehyung. They had played with toys a few times, but tonight was a little different. Tonight he wanted it to be absolutely special.
He reached over for the cherry lubricant, spreading it on one of his hands, warming it up before pressing one finger into Taehyung, making Taehyung’s pants start up again. Jimin rested his free hand against Taehyung’s buttocks, petting him with his thumb.

“You’re such a good little pet,” Jimin cooed, using his Alpha voice to calm Taehyung. Instantly, Taehyung’s ass relaxed, letting Jimin slip a second finger inside. “Look at you, all obedient and loosening up for me. You’re so good, such a good boy.”

“Yes, sir…” Taehyung whispered, still shaking from nerves. “I wanna b-be a good boy.”

Jimin arched one eyebrow, smirking. Moments of silence passed by, and finally Taehyung was ready for the ending touches.

“I’m putting it in now, baby,” Jimin said, picking up the next in their list of toys - a cute little butt plug with a fluffy wolf tail at the end. He dragged the end of it along Taehyung’s spine, tickling him and making him shiver as the fur brushed up in the little dip between his shoulder blades. Then, Jimin slipped it into his entrance, the egg-shaped metallic end sliding in smoothly, leaving only gentle, soft fur hanging between his trembling, naked legs. Taehyung let out a little choked sound.

“M-master, it’s so cold,” he whined, his elbows starting to quiver. “It’s so cold inside of me.”

“Then you better eat it well, pet, and warm it up with your insides,” Jimin hummed, running his hands through the furry tail, pleased at the little whimpers that escaped Taehyung whenever his fingers caught, adjusting the butt plug just slightly inside of Taehyung. He scooped his palm along the inside of Taehyung’s thigh, his knuckles touching lightly against the back of his balls and making Taehyung shift, trying to get the Alpha to touch him again. The logs pinning down his leash gave him little room to move or shift about.

“But master…” Taehyung whimpered, his Omega voice trailing in, “You still have all your clothes on. I don’t have anything. It’s chilly, s-sir.”

“Does a pet wear clothes?” Jimin snapped, making Taehyung jolt a little in surprise, especially when Jimin gripped roughly at his thigh, digging his fingers in there until the skin paled. “If you’re cold, I guess you need more exercise.”

Taehyung watched as Jimin released his leash from the heavy logs, instead yanking on it and making Taehyung jolt forward.
“Get down on the floor, baby,” Jimin growled, “It’s time for your walk.”

They had done this once before, and Jimin had walked Taehyung around the pack house rooms on a rare day that it had been void of any other pack members. That day, Jimin had just had him walk around like a human, but with a collar and leash. So it was understandable that Taehyung started to stand upright, and that he was confused when Jimin yanked his leash down, forcing his head down to Jimin’s eye level.

“No,” Jimin said, his throat thickening with his Busan accent, a deep rumbling sort of growl forming in his chest. “On your knees, like the dog that you are.”

Taehyung blinked wide-eyed at Jimin, but dropped to the floor. Instantly, Taehyung’s head dropped in that shy embarrassment, and Jimin smirked, reaching down and grabbing a handful of Taehyung’s hair, forcing him to lift his face. The collar was stressed tight with the angle of Taehyung’s neck against it, and the heart lock clanked against the metal of the collar.

“You like being shamed that much, do you? You love being my pet? Your knees getting dirty on the floor and your tail perked up all excited like that?”

Taehyung didn’t answer. But he looked worried that he had no formulated reply, almost panicked, his mouth working back and forth before he struggled to lower his head, to not meet Jimin’s red eyes. Jimin forced him to continue looking up at him. The further he seemed to sink into his headspace, the less he seemed capable of speaking. Jimin hoped that that was alright.

They walked around the room, Jimin leading him around like a show-dog. Around the couch, towards the doorway (where Taehyung started to panic a little), against the curtain, up onto a chair and back down again. His awkward movements only served to make the butt-plug shift even more deliciously, and Jimin could see Taehyung was starting to pant a little more, worked up and his member hardening against his stomach.

“Your throat all dry, baby? Let’s get the pet some water.” Jimin walked them over to the kitchen, pulling out a bowl and filling it halfway with water. Taehyung’s hands and knees shuffled softly on the wooden floor, and he kept his head low, only watching Jimin through his bangs. Jimin set the bowl down in front of Taehyung, naked and shivering mostly from nerves, and patted his head like he was a dog instead of a human.

“Drink up, baby,” he reassured. Taehyung leaned forward, arching his back so he could put his face into the blue little plastic bowl. His bottom stuck up into the air, the soft tail bouncing a little with the
movement. Staring at the tail for a moment, Jimin’s eyes glowed a deeper red. He looked down at Taehyung, struggling to lap up water with his tongue alone. Jimin reached out and, overcome with another sudden surge of heat that washed over his mind and body, slapped the bowl up into Taehyung’s face, giving him a face-full of water and tipping the bowl over.

“Shit, Tae-Tae,” Jimin said gently, reaching out and touching Taehyung’s hair as the boy coughed out water, confused. “You’re an awful clumsy pet, aren’t you? Poor baby. Let’s get you another one.”

He filled up another bowl of water, setting it down in front of Taehyung. “Drink up, baby.”

This time, Taehyung looked up at Jimin with some skepticism, but Jimin pulled a little on the leash, insistent. Taehyung bent low, his elbows crooked as he lowered himself gently downward, dipping into the bowl again to lap up what he could. With the way the bowl was set up, Taehyung couldn’t even see out of the corner of his eye for warning, so he didn’t know to prepare when once again, Jimin tossed the bowl up, knocking it up into Taehyung’s face and over. Water spilled everywhere, and Taehyung spluttered, shaking his head a little and frowning at Jimin. The Alpha shook his head, clucking his tongue.

“Poor baby, you’re really fighting, aren’t you?” Jimin sighed. “I guess you’ll have to be punished.”

The pet looked up at him, lips parted as Jimin yanked him behind, until he was able to grab the whip off the end of the bed.

“Turn around for me, baby. Put your front paws up onto the bed.”

Taehyung clambered up, laying his torso against the bed as his bottom and legs draped down, hands clutching the sheets, half-tugging them away. His body stretched out and naked, vulnerable and unable to see where Jimin stood, made the Alpha’s stomach flip pleasantly.

“You spilled water all over the floor, baby, and you didn’t drink properly,” Jimin explained slowly, as if to a child. “So I’ll have to give you a little bit of a spanking, okay?”

The Beta nodded, his shoulders tense. Jimin lifted the whip, with its dangling soft leather cords, and slapped it across Taehyung’s already pink cheeks. Taehyung gasped, sitting halfway up as though an electric shock had been sent through his entire body. Jimin spanked him again while Taehyung whimpered, the butt-plug becoming slightly dislodged with the inevitable movement. Jimin was sure it was heated up by now, could see the traces of sweat starting to form around Taehyung’s rosy cheeks.
“Tae-Tae,” Jimin said darkly, looking down at the Beta. “What are you doing?”

He froze, looking over his shoulder at the Alpha. Jimin had caught him jutting his hips into the edge of the bed slightly, his barren member finding friction in the dip of the sheets he had tugged downward.

“M-Mas—”

The whip flashed again, and Taehyung let out a little squeak, breathing with effort as his ass burned, inside and outside. The last two spankings were in quick succession, a forehand and a backhand movement across first one cheek and then the next, and Taehyung cried out a guttural cry at the pain, one arm reaching out across the mattress in front of him. Jimin could see the slight scar from when Taehyung had fought Jae, a strange coloring in the elbow of his beautiful skin. Jimin cooed, reaching down to massage a cool hand into the red skin there.

“You were so good, baby,” Jimin purred, “You’re all warmed up and obedient now, right? Let’s get back up onto the bed.” Taehyung continued to whine in short, breathy gasps, but complied easily, soft and pliant and now very, very needy, his hips jutted at an angle to help lessen the strain against the sensations his body was undergoing.

“Master knows what will make you feel better,” Jimin said gently, petting a hand down Taehyung’s spine, making the Beta whimper and nuzzle his head in against Jimin’s chest in silent plea. “You aren’t satisfied until you have my body, are you?”

Taehyung whimpered, and Jimin reached out and ran his hand through Taehyung’s hair, gripping it again and forcing him to look up. It was irrational, the surge of power and anger and irritation that bubbled up every time Taehyung shied away now, bending his head. It made Jimin want to correct him, to force him into a new posture. Not because he wanted a certain end result, but because Taehyung kept faltering back into that dipped head, chin tucked against his chest and ashamed. He was embarrassed, and Jimin wanted to render of him incapable of remembering what shame was.

“Baby,” Jimin growled lowly, “Look into my face. You need to pay attention when your master is speaking, you know.” Taehyung blinked up at him, and Jimin was surprised to see tears forming. Had he gone too far? Panic surged through Jimin’s chest. He didn’t think he’d done anything too intense, other than the things he’d said to urge Taehyung along, but now he was worried that he had touched on something he shouldn’t have. “Tell me, baby,” he whispered gently, his hand that held the leash coming to rest under Taehyung’s chin, “Tell me a color.”

“G-green…” Taehyung hiccuped, tears starting to form in the corner of his eyes. It was the first thing he had said for a long time now, but the little twitching smile that accompanied it helped Jimin breathe again. “Very green.”
“Very green?” Jimin questioned, an eyebrow arching. Was Taehyung really enjoying this? Jimin’s mind was utterly blown at the prospect.

“Please, master,” the pet named Taehyung whispered, one hand (paw?) coming up to drop into Jimin’s lap, its suggested purpose very clear, “Let me touch you. You know what I want, sir.”

Jemin watched Taehyung’s eyes, as if expecting the Beta’s mind to suddenly flip, then he smiled. “Yeah, I know. You aren’t satisfied until you’ve eaten me, too, right?”

Taehyung nodded, a tear trailing down his cheek. He moved to lower down onto his elbows in front of Jimin’s crotch, his bottom wriggling in the air as he smiled playfully up through his tears. “I want to eat master’s chubby little cock.”

Jemin nearly choked on his air, breaking character for a moment to blush deep crimson. “Y-you don’t have to call it that. Fuck.”

The pet giggled, wriggling his butt a little more. Jemin was half-convinced he had found a pleasurable angle for friction, and he was momentarily distracted by the cute little swing of Taehyung’s tail. Then, he nodded. “Go ahead, baby.”

Taehyung almost pounced forward, spreading Jimin’s legs until he was comfortably seated on the bed, then unzipping his jeans. Taehyung wasted not a moment, quickly (and clumsily) wrapping his mouth around the end of Jimin’s cock, bobbing his head up and down it in an eager way.

In all honesty, Jemin got harder watching Taehyung enjoying himself, especially with their little roleplay, than he actually enjoyed the physicalities of having his dick pleasured. But Taehyung was almost mad at him when he didn’t let him do it, so Jemin left it in their little practice sessions, let him touch it and almost play with it at times. Part of Jemin was a little exasperated, a little amused, and extremely grateful that Taehyung loved his dick so much that he wanted to achieve The Perfect Blowjob, as if it was a mini-game he was addicted to. To help Taehyung along (and hurry things up, because god, they had already been at this for ages ) Jemin encouraged him with little nothings, petting his hair and shifting his hips up into Taehyung’s eager, wide mouth.

“Such a sweet little baby,” Jemin moaned, petting the Beta’s cheek. “You eat me so well. I love feeling your hot insides around me. My cute, messy pet, Tae-Tae.” Then, that sadistic flash jolted through Jemin again, and he lifted his foot to press up against Taehyung’s cock, feeling it was hard as a rock. Well, shit. I guess that’s why he was ‘very green.’
“Wow, you’re so ready to come, aren’t you, Tae-Tae?” Jimin cooed, loving the way Taehyung started to hum and moan around him, taunted by the pain and pleasure that Jimin’s foot rubbing against him caused. “I actually thought you would get scared of me..” Jimin’s voice dropped off, the character faltering for a moment as he looked down at Taehyung, the tears in his eyes as he suddenly gagged on Jimin’s cock again, his bottom in the air, tail wagging because of the way his whole body shook with each movement. “I thought you might come to hate me, if you saw this.”

Taehyung slowly backed off, eyes wide and glassy as he looked up at Jimin. A little smile came to his face, and it wasn’t pet Tae-Tae, eager to please, but his Taehyung, the one he never wanted to lose.

“I could never hate you,” he said. He probably didn’t even realize that he’d said the same thing before. Jimin’s chest felt tight with emotion, and he blinked hard to force the tears back down. “I trust you.”

Jimin pressed his lips together, willing them not to tremble as he tried to slip back into his character, into the dominant Alpha he wanted to be for Taehyung, which he had wanted to become for so, so long. “Baby,” he hummed, petting the Beta, “Are you ready for us to Mate?”

Taehyung’s eyes lit up, as if Jimin had just offered an early Christmas. “Yes, yes!”

At that, Jimin couldn’t help the smirk that twisted across his face. He jerked a little at the leash, making Taehyung’s mouth open, his tongue lolling out, lips a bit swollen from where he’d been suckling on Jimin’s now fully-hardened and leaking cock.

“Are you sure?” Jimin queried, even as his fingers itched and slipped their way to the fake wolf tail, gripping it as Taehyung nuzzled in to Scent him.

“Yes, yes, I’m sure, master!” Taehyung let out an awkward, excited little bark, Scenting him harder. Waves of pleasure washed over Jimin, making him gasp a little in surprise.

“Okay, okay,” Jimin chuckled, “Then let me up.” Taehyung shifted back, about to sit upright on his heels before deciding to turn around, exposing his ass to Jimin once more.

“I like the logs,” Taehyung whispered, as Jimin took hold of the tail firmly. “They make me nervous.”
Jimin tilted his head to the side, then got up and reset the logs on top of the leash, effectively pinning Taehyung in the doggy position on the edge of the mattress again. Before he crawled back up, Jimin took a moment to watch Taehyung, his cheek laid against the sheets, his bottom sticking up, ass exposed. He was so *naked*, in so many senses of the word. Maybe it was time Jimin became naked, too.

Taehyung glanced up curiously, seeing Jimin watching him, and he flushed with shyness. “Sir?”

The Alpha smiled, peeling off his clothes in front of the fire. Taehyung hadn’t been lying when he said it was still chilly in the room. Additionally, he couldn’t tell because the curtains were down, but he suspected the sun had set by now. Once freed of his garments, Jimin crawled up behind Taehyung, noting with some consternation the size difference between them, for the nth time.

Taehyung, who had re-buried his face into the sheets, mumbled, “You’re so pretty…”

Jimin halted, not expecting the praise, then he leaned forward to wrap his arms around Taehyung’s waist, leaning his chest down against the Beta’s broad, tanned back.

“Thank you,” Jimin whispered against the raised and red scratches in Taehyung’s skin, “For picking me.”

The original plan in Jimin’s head, had been to continue to egg Taehyung on with their characters, throughout the entirety of their first time together. The general idea was (secretly) to cover up his inevitable awkwardness by keeping up that aggressive, loosened front. But when it came down to the actual moment, he could do nothing but allow it to remain awkward and tense. He positioned himself behind Taehyung, leading his member inside Taehyung’s entrance, and instantly the Beta started to writhe on the bed, struggling against the weight of the logs, his pretty collar digging into his equally pretty neck as he pressed himself backward, upward, and to every which side.

“Oh, god…” Taehyung groaned, “You’re so thick…”

Jimin arched a concerned eyebrow. He had known this was true, but… what was Taehyung going to say when he saw what happened during Jimin’s ruts? “Color?”

“Green, but fuck… You’re…” Taehyung gave a little wheezing gasp, “Ah… maybe a little yellow…ish?”
At that, Jimin slowed himself down, giving a little grunting exhale as he struggled to maintain their position. “Shit...you're so tight.” Maybe adding the logs hadn’t been the best idea. Taehyung - or rather, Taehyung’s body - seemed to be fighting against him.

“Ouch!” Taehyung hissed, and his back arched forward and downward, his neck straining against the leash and his hands gripping fiercely at the sheets. “Shit!”

“Relax,” Jimin managed to say into Taehyung’s ear, “Just relax…” But worry was starting to bubble up in his throat, keeping him from being able to use his Alpha voice to calm the Beta.

“I’m trying ,” Taehyung snapped, shifting where his knees pressed into the mattress, his breath coming in quick, frantic pants that told Jimin he was doing the exact opposite of trying to relax.

It took them several minutes of easing Taehyung into it, and Jimin had to use a lot of shushing and shakily get his Alpha voice under control, but eventually, Jimin felt like he could move. Perhaps that would help Taehyung loosen up.

But fuck, was he already on edge, his member hot and raw from the tightness around him. He was close. Probably too close, he imagined. Maybe he should have prepared Taehyung more, used a bigger toy. But either way, they were there; and he pressed into Taehyung’s bottom with his hips, and suddenly Taehyung’s cries of pain started to lengthen, to round out into moans that were sweet, and Jimin finally found their rhythm.

“Tae-” Jimin managed, gasping against the Beta’s back, clawing at him as he fought to press in harder, increasing their pace as Taehyung continued to whimper softly. “Taehyung, I’m close.”

“Well, I’m not there yet,” Taehyung cried, gripping at the bed and trying to press more against Jimin’s member. That was when Jimin noticed that, in their current position, he couldn’t possibly Mate Taehyung. The long, lanky body of his Beta was too far for him to get to his Scent mark. Jimin growled, suddenly pulling out and making Taehyung squeak.

“Flip over,” he demanded. He didn’t want to reach his high point before Taehyung did, but he certainly didn’t want to before he’d officially Mated with him, and made it official, once and for all.

“Okay..” Taehyung nodded, twisting his body amidst little complaining noises, shuffling until he was on his back, the leash draped across his face. He was gasping, sweat collecting on his beautiful brow.
His nipples were erect, and Jimin’s hand reached up absentmindedly to play with them, as he clambered up Taehyung’s body and leaned in to Scent him. Taehyung let out a long curse, his body shivering as he let the effects of the Scenting wash over him. Jimin slipped inside of Taehyung again, this time from both ends, his member more smoothly easing inside of him this time even as his caught Taehyung by the mouth, diving into him with a steady, smooth rhythm. Jimin shifted his hips down into Taehyung with energetic purpose, even as his lungs started to ache with the effort. The strain came not so much from his own weight as with holding back, waiting for Taehyung to catch up.

“Taehyung,” Jimin gasped, realizing after Taehyung met his eyes that he still wasn’t there yet. *Fuck.* Perhaps after the Mating. Jimin kissed at the edge of Taehyung’s mouth, his words sweet and his voice raspy as he asked, “May I Mate you?”

“Yes,” Taehyung said, smiling. Jimin dove down, nuzzling fondly at the sensitive Scent mark before digging his teeth in, in much the same way he had bitten down on the other side of Taehyung’s neck earlier that evening.

Taehyung actually screamed, his eyes screwed shut as he writhed beneath Jimin, the delicate edges of his nerves thrown in complete array when Jimin broke the skin. The metallic taste of blood slipped its way into his mouth, and he gasped at the smell of citrus and peppermint colliding, a toxic sort of sweetness that had his head spinning on edge. Was it supposed to feel like the greatest high of his life?

Beneath him, once he had control over his flailing, Taehyung heatedly grappled a hold onto Jimin’s shoulders, craning up painfully against the leash that still bound him to the floor, pulling Jimin down lower against his chest. Without hesitation, Taehyung dove in and bit down ferociously into Jimin’s Scent mark, and the pain and power of it knocked the air out of Jimin’s lungs, making his heart skip a beat. It was reeling, as though all the other little nibbles and bites that had led up to this point were practice, a gaining of momentum to that moment. The world spun, his body swept up in hot and cold flashes, and he found himself laughing deliriously even as he cried against Taehyung’s chest. He wasn’t sure when it happened, but even with Taehyung still clamped down on his neck, Jimin had started moving again, rocking deliciously into Taehyung, making the bed creak noisily and the logs shifted and rolled further down along the leash. He came loudly, messily, crying out in broken shouts and with Taehyung’s name on his tongue. Taehyung lay beneath him, moaning at the sensation as Jimin emptied out into him, filling him from the inside out. The Beta’s hands were in his hair, brushing the clumped, sweaty locks away from his eyes as Jimin felt his face flush with embarrassment, coming down from a lovely high only to find that Taehyung hadn’t made it there.

“S-sorry…” Jimin managed. Taehyung shushed him, smiling and looking utterly blissful.

“Shh, don’t worry,” Taehyung whispered against his cheek, where Jimin was falling forward, his bones like jelly. “I’m so happy right now, Jimin. I’m so happy.”
Jimin took in a deep breath of air, almost coughing on the smell of smoke from the fire and the dryness left in his throat after all the shouting he hadn’t planned on doing. His voice rasped painfully as he trailed his knuckles along the side of Taehyung’s cheek, staring at him in wonder.

“Tae-Tae,” he crackled, “We’re Mated, we did it.”

Taehyung beamed up at him. He kissed Jimin’s palm where it rested against his cheek. “I love you.”

Jimin kissed his mouth, the sweet, lovely, broad mouth. But god, he was exhausted. Between them, he could feel Taehyung’s member just throbbing away, seeming to be painful.

He lifted up a little, his eyes not quite focusing fully, and did his best to meet Taehyung’s eyes. “Do you wanna try the Driver?”

Taehyung blinked up at Jimin, looking a little unfocused himself. It was like they were both drunk, and Jimin wondered if this was the best time to be trying something new. But with the way Taehyung’s breath suddenly caught, his chest lifting and pressing up against Jimin’s clammy, bare skin, he was quickly sobering up from his sleepiness. “I’ll bet if we did, you would get there. You’ll love it, Tae-Tae.”

He seemed incapable of responding for a moment, letting out a little whimper and shifting underneath Jimin, considering. Then, he murmured one word: “Green.”

Jimin nodded, gingerly slipping out of Taehyung, feeling cold. He shivered, taking a moment to get dressed and throw another log onto the fire. He went back over to the now almost-depleted selection of toys, and picked up the one that was the heaviest. It had cost more than a pretty penny, and Jimin was certain that it was worth it.

(He wasn’t admitting it to Taehyung anytime soon, but he had made a rule that any toy he brought to Taehyung had to be tested on himself first, no matter how challenging. This one had thrown him through the roof in amazement, and he had been gushing about how much Taehyung would enjoy it for weeks.)

“It looks so scary,” Taehyung breathed, rolling over carefully onto his stomach and inspecting the toy.
It was, basically, a sort of electronic power drill. The heaviness of the base felt dangerous in Jimin’s hands, and in the best sense. He felt powerful holding it, his finger waiting on the trigger. On the end, instead of a proper drill-tip, there was a dildo attached, one of the ones Jimin had specifically picked out for Taehyung. He prepped the dildo with plenty of lubricant as Taehyung watched in fascination.

“Is that really the same size as yours?”

Jimin quirked his lips to the side, offering Taehyung a look. “It’s smaller, baby.”

“Oh.”

He paused in his lubricating, the clear cherry-scented liquid making his fingers gross and sticky, and he met Taehyung’s gaze. “Baby, are you okay with this? What color can you give me?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine.”

But Jimin just frowned. “Give me a color.” He was starting to feel that paranoia creep in, the self-doubt that Taehyung was feeling pressured and just indulging him for Jimin’s own sake, that he was still on the edges of his headspace where he was submissive and compliant to everything. That was not the way he wanted to start off their Matinghood. He was, in a way, extremely relieved when Taehyung paused and really considered for a moment, the glassy look in his blue-rimmed eyes that revealed that he was buried in self-reflection, in a miniature world away from Jimin’s direct influence.

“Green,” he said at last, blinking and spreading his knees. “I want to try it.”

Jimin smiled, patting Taehyung’s raised bottom. “Beautiful. Lift up a bit more.”

Taehyung did as he was asked, and Jimin eased the dildo into the Beta carefully, letting it rest inside of him for a moment. As he counted the seconds, as he had taught himself, Jimin considered that maybe they should have started with the Driver before they tried Jimin himself.

“Oh?” Jimin queried, curving around a bit to glance at Taehyung’s face where he was buried into the mattress, taking in pointed, deep breaths. His bare chest expanded, brushing down against the mussed up sheets. His member was discoloring from pressure, but now that they had decided on the Driver, Jimin was determined to avoid touching him if he could help it.
After a moment, Taehyung nodded. “Green,” he managed.

Jimin flipped the switch, hearing the hum of the machine flipping on, letting it warm up for a moment before he started to squeeze the trigger just slightly. It was good, he realized, that he had tested it out first. Like the gas pedal of a car for a new driver, he had already worked through the sensitivities, and knew to start off slow. Agonizingly slow. The dildo pumped in and out of Taehyung at the slowest possible speed, to where it was barely even moving. Slick and lubricant stretched across the sides of the dildo, and Taehyung was letting out his breaths as evenly as possible, trying to teach his body to relax.

“Wow,” Taehyung managed, “That’s pretty good, too. It’s easier than I expected.”

Jimin tilted his head to the side, smirking as he held the drill with one hand, his other on Taehyung’s bottom. “You okay with trying some different speeds?”

“Yes!” Taehyung said, his voice breathless but eager.

It was then that once again, Jimin’s sadistic streak resurfaced, seeing the chipper, easy way Taehyung took the dildo. *He should have taken me half this easily,* he cursed inwardly, mostly toward himself. He squeezed the trigger more, the pace increasing and the machine letting out a louder whirring sound, pumping in and out of Taehyung to a pace similar to what Jimin had tried for. Taehyung puffed, and Jimin knew the wind had been knocked out of him.

A low, deep, gravelly moan escaped the Beta, and he threw his head down against the sheets. “Oh, god...Yes, Jimin! Yes!”

“You like this dildo in your ass, baby?” Jimin’s voice dropped low again, like he had just fallen into the shell of his character as easily as people changed clothes. His eyes flashed pure red, and he angled the Driver a little more, laughing aloud when Taehyung screamed that he’d found it. The lovely little bundle of nerves that their other nerves had prevented them from finding, had prevented Jimin from hitting that first time, much to his chagrin - it was there. He was able to pound into it relentlessly, tirelessly, pressing in deeper as Taehyung started to yell that it was so much, that he was so sensitive.

That was when Jimin increased the pace once more. The dildo started to blur in his vision as it screamed inside of Taehyung, the squelching noises of Taehyung’s developing slick soon covered up as a wordless, incoherent babble of screams and moans were thrown out of Taehyung, a force to be reckoned with. He writhed on the bed, the logs becoming dislodged as Taehyung’s knees yanked and edged him further back, trying to increase the depth, to press harder even as his back arched and
his body was shrieking at him to pull away.

A messy, babbling, “Ooooh gooddd..” managed its way out of Taehyung, his whole body vibrating and pulsing on the end of the Driver, and he started cursing, slapping his hand against the sheets in a futile effort to find relief. In between moans he was hiccuping, sniffling. He writhed, his cheek pressed to the sheets as tears streamed down his cherry-red face from all the exertion. “FUCK YES! FUCK YES! FUCK-ES FUCKS!!”

“Come on, baby,” Jimin coaxed, reaching out and slapping Taehyung’s buttocks hard, making him brokenly squeak. “Lift your ass up, that’s right. It feels good, doesn’t it, baby? You’re so fucking good for me, I’m so amazed at you.”

Taehyung let out a broken cry, suddenly shuddering headily against him, and Jimin let up the pace only slightly, letting Taehyung collapse forward onto the mattress completely, his whole body quivering in ecstasy as he tumbled down the steep incline, gasping for air. He had fallen forward into his own mess, his ass still tilted up into Jimin’s hands, into his control, as he wept.

Jimin waited until the aftershocks slowed, being extra-careful with removing the Driver. Taehyung let out a deep, bodily-heavy sigh of relief, his entire frame sinking into the mattress. Jimin leaned forward, kissing Taehyung’s temple and moving to take off the collar. The tiny, delicate key slipped into the lock, dropping the heart heavily into Jimin’s hand as he slipped it away, massaging at the Beta’s neck.

“Baby, are you doing okay?”

Taehyung laughed, sounding almost drunk as he opened one weary eye for Jimin. “Holy sh-sh-shit..”

The Alpha smirked, running his hand through Taehyung’s bangs and smoothing them away from his forehead. Conspiratorially, he leaned in and whispered, “I told you that toy would be amazing.”

“A new favorite,” Taehyung giggled. “Now...can I sleep?”

“Not until we finish the aftercare,” Jimin whispered, “Just a little while longer. Are you thirsty?”

Taehyung looked across the room, as if his answer was there, and considered a moment. “Yeah, I think I am.”

“Would you like some water? Something to eat?”
“I’m not hungry,” Taehyung mused, strangely childlike in his voice and mannerisms now. “I just want water. And to be warmed up.”

“Water and warmth, coming right up,” Jimin singsonged, sitting up from the bed and cleaning up their mess before dropping two comforters on top of the Beta. He left the wasted towels in the sink to be dealt with later, and got Taehyung a temperate cup of water, waiting curled against his side until he drank all of it. As he watched Taehyung sip, he cuddled in close, petting him all over and peppering kisses against any exposed skin.

“Mates,” he breathed, when Taehyung finished the cup completely. “Mates for life.”

“Soul mates,” Taehyung sighed, smiling as he curled his leg over Jimin’s. The Alpha kissed his forehead again, and the Beta hummed contentedly. “I feel so much better. Like a fever just broke. Sleepy, but…” Taehyung yawned, long and hard, letting out a single note as he exhaled. “Sleepy and clammy, but content.”

“I’m glad.” Jimin leaned over, touching his lips to the top of Taehyung’s soft hair, reaching over and messaging Hoseok. “I’ll let the others know we’re safe, and we’ll be back in the afternoon tomorrow.”

“Okay,” Taehyung murmured, his eyes already shut as he nuzzled in against Jimin, sniffing happily at their combined Scents mingled in Jimin’s Scent mark now. “Mm… Citrus and peppermint. It smells like Christmas.”

Jimin chuckled, curling up inside Taehyung’s arms, allowing himself to feel small and needy for a moment as the larger male curled up around him like an octopus. “Goodnight, baby.”

“Mm…” Taehyung barely managed, “Goodnight, my Alpha.”

Jimin flushed, grinning from ear to ear as he buried his face in Taehyung, drifting off to sleep.

The two of them had fully intended on waiting until the late morning before starting the journey home. However, just as the sun rose over the trees, birds singing in a welcome for a cool, sunny spring day, their slumber was rudely disturbed by a clattering sound like something heavy being thrown against another, and the sound of gruff, angry voices and wolf snarls just outside the door.
Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here! ☆*:;°、・(≧▽≦)o、::*☆
I was so excited to post this chapter, haha. To be perfectly honest I've been waiting for WEEKS to use that goddamn dildo drill.

But yay~ Vmin are now Mated! lol And of course they had to do things their own overly romantic way, right?

There was quite a bit of backstory and such for both Jimin and Taehyung in this chapter, and I got to bring full circle little moments like 1) JK knowing that Jimin was kinkier than even JK, that 2) Jin and Jimin went for some 'Alpha Bonding/Shopping' together the day of JK’s Jealousy Game that was never explained, 3) Jimin's feelings back when Taehyung first entered the pack house and slept cuddled up next to Jungkook, 4) Taehyung believing it wasn't fair for Jinkook to mate when he and Jimin have had to wait longer, etc. Just little things like that. lol I didn't know if I would be able to pull all those details to light, tbh? I figured I'd get lazy and forget. XD

Anyways, I ended on a cliffhanger...yet again. I swear it just happens. Thanks for reading/supporting, my lovelies~♥
"When your values are clear to you, making decisions becomes easier."

~Roy E. Disney

By the time Taehyung’s eyes shot open, Jimin was already sitting upright, the Alpha’s whole body tense and quivering with anxiety as he stared at the door to the cabin. The Beta whimpered quietly, curled up against Jimin’s side as the sounds of wolf snarls and yips filled the air. It sounded like so many of them. Taehyung could hear them, could even smell them, a large hoard of bodies and fur and strength right outside their door. There was a bang, and a rattling against the door, and then a bark. Things stilled, and Jimin’s hair seemed to stand on end.

“Jimin…” Taehyung breathed in fear. Jimin laid a hand on Taehyung, the strength of his Alpha Scent oozing across the room, defensive and powerful. The smell of peppermint was so thick against him that Taehyung could almost taste it on his tongue, and he looked up at Jimin in worry.

“Stay here,” Jimin said. His voice was deep, guttural and aggressive. Taehyung whimpered again, reaching out to hold him back and keep him near, but Jimin slipped out of his grasp, sending him a deep, long look. It was a promise, a reassurance and a rebuke, all at once.

“Stay here,” he warned once more, then went to the door. Taehyung watched him go closer, clutching the blankets around himself tightly. The cabin had, only just the night before, been a sanctuary of safety and openness; a place to be vulnerable. The sanctity of that haven had now been utterly disrupted in a way Taehyung was sure he was not ready to deal with. He wanted to move forward, to stay at Jimin’s side, but the pull of the Alpha’s command left him quivering nervously on the bed.

Hoping that they would go unnoticed was impossible. They must have seen the truck outside, seen the smoke from the fireplace, smelled their Scents lingering outside. Now they knew the door was locked, and that someone must have been home.

Jimin placed his hand upon the knob, turned it, and was met with the entirety of the Rising God clan at their doorstep. He felt the light coolness of the early spring morning, his breath escaping from between his lips in a lazy fog as he exhaled slowly. All eyes were on him, a small legion of wolves that sat at the ready, postures aware but relaxed, knowing the force of their own strength. Jimin was alone, and with his freshly Mated and still delicate Beta inside, waiting for him. He didn’t know what to do, and felt the hopelessness of the situation sinking into his bones like poison into freshwater.

He was totally, utterly, at their mercy.

But he wasn’t about to let them enjoy that.

“What do you want?” Jimin growled, letting his voice deepen and turn thick with feigned self-assurance. He willed his mind to walk away from the anxiety, not allowing it to seep too deeply into his bones and muscles so as to reveal itself. He forced his mind to focus on the inner aggression, the
defensiveness. That was his Mate inside. Futile or not, it didn’t matter. He would fight to the death for Taehyung, and things were as simple as that. He straightened, his hand on the door as he frowned at the trespassers, the ones infringing on his territory, and glared at them evenly. It was a technique he had learned from Namjoon, who knew the value of putting off the right Scent at the right time, of not lying but refocusing energy into what you needed for the moment. It was coming in handy now, he felt. They may have been able to tell someone was there, but he realized that they may not attack if they weren’t sure how many of the pack were present. For all they knew, Namjoon and everyone else was waiting inside for the word. “Your own claimed territory is clearly marked,” Jimin continued, “So move along.”

The wolves’ ears twitched, and a few shifted in impatience at the tone. They looked at each other in question, and Jimin fought to keep his focus clear. He heard Taehyung shuffling behind him, and he was tempted to turn around, his head subconsciously tilting a bit toward the noise. He hoped Taehyung would listen, would understand that this was his task, his job, and he wanted to do it right. But as moments passed, he started getting worried. Why weren’t they just attacking?

Finally, one wolf out in the front shifted, revealing a feminine-faced man with concern on his face. “Jimin,” the mysterious Beta said, his voice surprisingly gentle, making Jimin feel even less at ease. He stepped onto the bottom of the wooden steps that led up onto the porch, and Jimin bristled visibly. The Beta stopped. “Jimin, is Jungkook here?”

“Why do you want to know?” Jimin snarled, unsure why the man knew him by name and not liking it, not one bit.

“Because, I need to speak to him, about his brother,” he said, in a voice of practiced diplomacy. Jimin looked up into the man’s eyes, conflict burning into his chest. He wanted to know - for Jungkook’s sake - if there was new information on the location of his brother. But his instincts screamed at him that the limitation of access to the brother was suspicion enough. Namjoon had even suggested that the existence of such a brother was a lie in and of itself. And looking into the Beta’s eyes, Jimin saw a strange, broken gentleness, but he also saw fear. He was risking something, something big, by being here.

“That’s not why you came,” Jimin said evenly. “You didn’t know we’d be here today.”

The Beta’s eyes flashed in fear, and he tried vainly to smile. It twitched weakly at the edges. “My name is Geun Suk. I don’t mean any harm, and I’d like to speak to Namjoon or Jungkook, if you please.”

“No,” Jimin stated firmly, closing the door behind him and stepping out onto the porch. The closest of the wolves stepped forward, taking a defensive stance, and Jimin paused, crossing his arms. “If you have anything to say to either of them regarding Jungkook’s brother, you can say it to me. No games.”

“But you don’t understand, I--” He was cut off by a growl at his back, and the Beta turned around frantically. To the wolf walking up, teeth bared, he berated in warning, “No, he said there was to be no aggressive engagement, that’s not why we’re here!”

Despite his words, the wolf continued to press forward, until Geun Suk moved towards him. The wolf snarled, snapping his maw at Geun Suk and making the Beta take a step back. His brow furrowed, first in confusion, then in fury.

“Would you really? Now?” He turned to the rest of the pack, gesturing in the wide, exaggerated style
of a man pushed to his limits. “And are you all in agreeance to this?”

In response, the majority of the wolves growled, pressing forward. Geun Suk shook his head, shifting back into wolf form and seating himself off to the side of the porch, glaring at them with eyes narrowed. He seemed to be waiting for something, and Jimin felt his anxiety pulse and increase. The aggressive Alpha who had challenged him stepped forward, up onto the porch, and met Jimin’s gaze calmly. Jimin pressed his lips together, frowning. The man intended no compromises or bartering. Jimin shifted into his wolf form mere seconds before the Alpha wolf leapt forward in attack.

Teeth ripped into fur and flesh, snarls shaking the morning air as Jimin met him from beneath, pressing upwards and unbalancing the bigger Alpha. He bit furiously at anything he could reach, moving his body skillfully in order to avoid being caught. If he were to be pinned, it would all be over.

The Alpha growled against him, and he could hear the rumble in his chest, could smell the acrid smell of his breath washing over him. Jimin pressed in against him, knowing from muscle memory how close the edge of the porch waited. The majority of the Alpha’s weight was on his shoulders, and he was still shoving, biting, tearing at whatever he could. He tasted blood in his mouth and felt the sting and coolness that he knew meant he was bleeding, too. Where was the edge? He should have reached it by now, he should have--

The wolf was pressed off the edge of the porch. It was a short distance, but it was plenty in order for Jimin to leap down after him, pinning him with the entirety of his weight to the ground. The Alpha scrambled, hoping to get a foothold and run away, but the wolves were pressed in so closely, and Jimin was too quick. He tore into the wolf mercilessly, knowing the right tendons to tear at to weaken him the most, high off the smell of offensive Alpha in his territory, still able to smell the faint whisps of Taehyung’s Beta Scent clinging to his own body, a sign that he belonged to another, and had something -someone - to fight for. When the wolf stilled, panting weakly and lying in defeat, Jimin finally looked up to see that many of the wolves had drawn away, although their teeth remained bared. Another wolf stepped up, and moved to attack. In a brief moment, Jimin caught the Omega’s Scent, and realized that this was the fallen Alpha’s mate. His ears pinned down, but he braced his body for the oncoming attack, racing back up to the top of the porch and placing the door at his back. He would defend the Main Hall until he couldn’t anymore.

There was a little creak, and the door opened just a crack behind him.

“Jimin…?” Taehyung breathed, “Are you okay?” He could hear it in Taehyung’s voice. He wanted to come help. He knew he should. Every instinct in Taehyung’s body would be telling him he was supposed to be fighting at Jimin’s back. Jimin watched the oncoming Omega, and crouched lower, snarling. No, Taehyung. Go back inside. Someone has to make it back home.

The Omega was at the steps when another wolf entered from the edge of the woods at a full run, barking as he ran full-speed against the oncoming Omega, knocking them both to the ground. The wolf was black in fur, with red eyes that suggested Alpha.

A gasp was let out behind him, and he heard Tae whisper, “That’s Jae.”

Jimin’s ears shifted, confused. The Omega and Jae scuffled, each yipping and trying in vain to best the other. The Omega eventually ran off toward the clearing, trying to get Jae to stop pursuit, and their snarls continued. What was going on? Was Jae defending them?

Another wolf entered the clearing, halting for a moment and twitching his ears, sniffing the air to figure out what had happened. Then, he howled, and the wolves seemed to become uncomfortable. The large wolf shifted, revealing a man Jimin knew mostly by association. This was Yunho, their
lead Alpha. Jimin straightened a little more, attempting to appear even a little bit more formidable. This Alpha was tall, broad-shouldered, masculine in face and in form. Jimin noted, however, that the man’s Alpha Scent was not as strong and overwhelming as he expected, a strangely familiar flowery Scent that he realized afterwards was that of roses.

“I’m sorry,” Yunho said, smiling sadly, “Are you hurt?”

Jimin blinked. No, he wasn’t hurt, at least not badly. But that was the last thing he expected the lead Alpha of the Rising Gods to say. The suspicion started to blossom in his chest, an acute awareness of Taehyung at his back ever-present.

“We’ll leave straightaway,” the Alpha promised, “May the rest of your Mating go peacefully.”

Yunho gave a little bow, and albeit hesitantly and in bemusement, Jimin responded in kind. He carefully watched Yunho walk down the steps, turning to look at Geun Suk, who had his head bowed and tail curled inward in melancholy.

“We’ll talk about this back at the pack house,” Yunho snarled at them, his voice suddenly cold and rebuking, harsh and utterly opposing his previous treatment of Jimin. “Get home, now.”

The wolves started to move out as one, and Yunho turned to offer one last apologetic bow before he shifted, setting off at the tail end of the party. Geun Suk lingered a little longer. He didn’t look their direction, but rather, towards the clearing, where Jae was sitting and waiting for him, keeping his distance from the Main Hall cabin. Geun Suk turned and, with slow, heavy legs, made his way to the Alpha before they followed after the others.

Jimin didn’t move a muscle until he could hear and smell that they had truly left. He still felt wired, as though expecting them to leap out at any second. His heart nearly leapt out of his chest when Taehyung practically fell on top of him from behind, burying his face into Jimin’s neck and trying to dry his tears in Jimin’s soft light-brown fur.

“You asshole,” he snapped bitterly, “You’re such an asshole. You did so beautifully, so bravely, so stupidly. My Alpha. I’m so glad you’re safe.”

At that, Jimin relaxed his body, a warmth of relief rising up into his chest. They were okay.

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“Hoseokkie,” Yoongi murmured. The Alpha hummed contentedly into his pillow, wanting to purr at the feeling of Yoongi’s warm hand running through his hair. “It’s time to get up. It’s almost noon.”

“Mm?” Hoseok opened one eye. “No way.”

The Omega was curled up against Hoseok’s chest, one arm wrapped protectively around Hoseok’s shoulders. He leaned forward and placed a kiss against Hoseok’s lips. “You know how you get during wrackspurt.”

“Wow,” Hoseok ran his hand over his face, trying to rub the sleep out of it. He squinted his eyes into semi-openness as he looked over at Yoongi. “How are you feeling?”

“Got up for a piss and nearly died,” Yoongi stated in a deadpan. Hoseok gave him an apologetic smile.

“Poor baby,” he teased. “Should I carry you around all day and pamper you?”

“Maybe.” Yoongi shuffled in a bit closer. “I don’t want to go to class.”
“I’ll carry you to all your classes on my shoulders, then.”

“Okay.” Yoongi held out his arms, and Hoseok chuckled, tucking him into his embrace and rolling them off the bed so he was on his feet with the Omega in his arms. He carried Yoongi to the bathroom door and set him down gently before turning to go back into the bedroom. “I’m still naked.”

“I know, I’m getting us clothes for a shower,” Hoseok said, going around the room and collecting fresh clothes for them to change into. The ground was littered in discarded articles, and he picked up his jeans to shake them off and throw them into the hamper as he went, when his cell phone dropped to the carpet with a clatter. He looked at it in surprise for a moment, then moved it to the charger, ignoring its blinking lights and tossing it on the bed before going to join Yoongi.

They showered quietly, shuffling around the tiny shower and at one point playfully splashing each other from the stream. By the time they got out, the bathroom was full of steam and their muscles felt loosened and relaxed. Yoongi wrapped his arms around Hoseok’s upper arm, his cheek resting against the Alpha’s shoulder. Using one hand to dry his hair a bit more, Hoseok unlocked his phone with the other and started to scroll through his messages. There were a couple of phone calls from his coworker, probably about his time sheet, and one from Jungkook that morning asking if they were awake and wanted waffles, and he smiled as Yoongi tucked his head into the space between his jaw and chest.

“I’m not ready to go back out into the real world,” Yoongi whined, clasping his hands on the opposite side, palms pressed up against Hoseok’s neck. “Tell them all to go away.” He whimpered childishly, then turned to look at Hoseok, contemplating a kiss. What he found was Hoseok staring at his phone in shock, jaw dropped and face paling. “Hoseok? What is it?”

“It’s Jimin…” Hoseok whispered, “He and Taehyung are at the island. Th-they eloped…”

“What?!” Yoongi snatched the phone out of Hoseok’s hand, gaping as he read. “Are you fucking kidding me?!?”

“I’m… I can’t believe…” Hoseok was shaking his head, and then his hands were shaking instead, a quivering through his body as he pushed his way out of Yoongi’s embrace, rushing toward the door. “I have to…I have to go get them.”

“Hoseok!” The Omega followed him out into the hall, tugging on the back of his shirt as they rushed down the stairs. “Wait, wait up!”

They thudded past the kitchen, where Seokjin and Jungkook were sitting cross legged under the table, looking up in confusion when they saw Hoseok storming out to the living room with Yoongi chasing after him.

“Hoseok, let’s talk to Namjoon first, before we do anything rash, okay? If we just rush off, it’ll only make things worse…”

“What’s going on?” Seokjin called out, crawling out from under the table and following in time to see Hoseok reaching for the doorknob.

“Listen, Hoseok, I’m worried, too!” Yoongi reasoned, gripping Hoseok by the arm, his voice raised as if to penetrate the wall of irrationality that had risen on every side of Hoseok. “But if something happened, you may not be able to fix it on your own, we need to work as a pack.”

Hoseok froze, visibly affected by Yoongi’s warm undertone from his Omega voice, the homey smell
of tilled earth wafting through the room in a calming cloud. The Alpha sighed, relaxing his hand.

“Namjoon is in his room with Kiara right now,” Seokjin said, “Should I go get him?”

“Yes,“ Yoongi said, turning to look over his shoulder at him. “Taehyung and Jimin eloped.”

There was a beat of silence, and Jungkook slipped into the living room to tuck himself in behind Seokjin.

“What?!” Seokjin’s voice raised in pitch in a painful sounding way, his eyes wide. “They did what?!”

“I got a text from Jimin, like at 2 in the morning, saying they were safe on the island and that they’d gone to Mate, and not to worry.” Hoseok scoffed, his fists clenching and unclenching at his sides.

Jungkook hugged in at Seokjin’s side, poking his head around his waist and peering up at him. Quietly, he pointed out, “Taehyung did say it was only fair if they Mated before us, I’m not surprised.”

Seokjin ran a hand through his hair, letting out a long, low groan. “Oh my god… I’ll go get Namjoon.” He brushed Jungkook off of him and walked off, leaving the Omega to step towards Yoongi and Hoseok quietly.

“Are you okay?” he said.

Hoseok sighed, “Yes, I’m just worried. This was so stupid of them.”

“I’m sure they’re gonna be alright,” Yoongi reassured, his hand on the Alpha’s shoulder. “They said they were safe.”

“But why did they just run off like that?” The Alpha looked exasperated, on edge, and he started to pace back and forth across the living room, the two Omegas hovering around him. Namjoon came in, hair mussed and eyes swollen-looking but held wide in alarm.

“When was the last time anyone saw or heard from them?” he demanded instantly.

“Two this morning,” Hoseok sighed, holding up his cellphone. “They said they were safe, but that was hours ago.”

“How did they even get there?”

“Oh my god,” Seokjin let out a groan. “Jimin asked to borrow my truck yesterday. I didn’t even think anything of it.”

“Well, naturally,” Yoongi sighed, “This isn’t exactly typical Jimin behavior.”

“Or Taehyung,” Namjoon was scrolling through his phone, checking in case he had any additional information. After a moment, he dialed Jimin’s phone and placed it to his ear, straightening his shoulders. “Okay, so here’s what we’re going to do. I need some of us to stay here in case they come back, and to keep an eye on Kiara. She’s having contractions and I’m a bit worried that--”

“Wait,” Jungkook said, having stepped closer to the front window, “Isn’t that them pulling in now?”

Everyone halted, as if surprised that that was what was happening, of all things. Then, Yoongi was leaning into the window, pressing against Jungkook’s back. He gasped, “It is them.”
“Oh, thank god,” Namjoon breathed. Hoseok was already halfway outside, the screen door slamming noisily behind him as he rushed out.

By the time the others followed after him, Jimin had already gotten out of the truck, instantly attacked by Hoseok’s aggressive embrace nearly bowling him over.

“You scared the shit out of me!” Hoseok practically wept into Jimin’s shoulder, the smaller Alpha looking over Hoseok with a slightly embarrassed look on his face. He slowly met eyes with Namjoon, who stood staring from the edge of the driveway with an unreadable expression, then Jimin lowered his head. Taehyung closed the passenger door, shrugging their backpack onto his shoulder.

“We came back as soon as we could,” Taehyung tried to reassure, his voice quiet and his form somehow smaller and more fragile-looking than normal. Already looking towards his brothers with the same puppy-eyes he usually gave when he needed comforting, he was stepping towards Namjoon and the others when suddenly Hoseok was rushing at him, grabbing him and pulling him roughly into a tight embrace. The Beta’s backpack dropped to the ground with a strange clatter, his eyes wide in surprise as Hoseok squeezed him tightly, holding him long and hard.

“Don’t you ever pull a stunt like that again,” Hoseok demanded, voice muffled as his face was buried into Taehyung’s shoulder. “I was so worried about you two.”

“Um.” Taehyung looked to Seokjin as if for an answer. He lifted his arms and hugged Hoseok back, patting his shoulder, “M’sorry…”

“God, you two are gonna be the death of me.” Hoseok finally released him, wiping almost angrily at his eyes before leading Taehyung toward the house. Jimin walked to the front of the truck to meet them, stopping in front of the leader. Namjoon was standing with his arms crossed, expression solemn.

Jimin lowered his head, “Namjoon…”

“Are you two okay?” Namjoon snapped, cutting him off with a clipped edge to his voice that left the air thicker, as though he had drawn blood with it.

Jimin blinked, then nodded. “We’re okay. Stuff happened, but… we’re okay.”

“Good.” He seemed to hesitate, then reached out and pulled Jimin to him, holding him and breathing a sigh of relief. “Thank god. You’re in a shitton of trouble, just by the way.”

“I think that’s fair,” Jimin smiled, his voice muffled by Namjoon’s arm as he nuzzled in.

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“I can’t believe this,” Kiara said, curled up onto the couch against Namjoon’s chest with a blanket tucked around their laps. The entire pack was seated or sprawled around the living room as between the two of them, Taehyung and Jimin related the events that had transpired that morning. “The Rising Gods are clearly out of hand.”

“You shouldn’t have even been there,” Yoongi said simply, Jungkook curled up into his lap and watching them all quietly. “You put yourselves and the whole pack at risk.”

“I know,” Jimin sighed. Hoseok had grabbed hold of him once they were inside and hadn’t let him go, burying his face into the younger Alpha’s shoulder and breathing in his Scent for reassurance. Meanwhile, Taehyung had his head in Jimin’s lap, enjoying his hair being petted gently and draping his knees across Jungkook’s legs. “But Taehyung was so miserable… and Seokjin said that if we
Mated, it would help, so--"

“What?” Seokjin’s voice piped in, squeaking in surprise. “I wasn’t suggesting you two run off and Mate!”

“We know that.” Taehyung yawned, his eyes blinking slowly. “That’s why we didn’t tell you.”

Seokjin gaped at Taehyung, reaching out and slapping him on the leg. The Beta yipped, then laughed.

“I’m serious, though. You two acted against the best interests of the pack, and deliberately against what I told you,” Namjoon said. “This pack is a family. We would have been devastated if something had happened to you two.”

Jimin lowered his head again, his cheeks reddening a little. “I know…”

“If you had come to me and told me how badly you wanted to Mate, we would have talked about it and figured something out.” Namjoon frowned. “You were lucky to have survived. What am I supposed to do with two pack members who can’t listen to my orders, which I made for your own safety?”

“I’m sorry, Namjoon,” Jimin said quietly.

There was a long silence, and Namjoon sighed. Yoongi was the first one to speak again, after several long moments.

“You realise,” Yoongi started slowly, “That the reason you were even attacked was because some of the Rising Gods pack members went against their leader’s orders? Whatever reason they were there, they weren’t supposed to attack you. Probably because Yunho knew that it was unlikely that you two would be going anywhere on your own, especially that far from the pack.”

“Jackson says that there are rumors going around,” Namjoon added, “That the Rising Gods are having a sort of coup against Yunho. He’s lost all their respect, and apparently it’s been building up for years. I’m not sure the reasons, but it’s been coming for quite some time.”

Taehyung shifted uncomfortably in Jimin’s lap. “Th-there was something else that bothered me, too.”

“Mm?”

“Jae…” he mumbled, “He protected Jimin from that Omega. He attacked his own pack member.”

Seokjin, who had been sitting quietly, looked up to find all eyes were flickering towards him. “Don’t look at me - I haven’t heard anything. But it seems weird to me, too.” The Alpha seemed to consider, glancing towards Jungkook but with eyes glassy, deep in thought. “I decided to stop hoping for him to change, in all honesty.”

“But you said that the pack turned on him once they found out about you two,” Taehyung reminded him. “So what are they going to do with him now?”

“Probably nothing nice,” Seokjin murmured bitterly. He turned his face away, blinking heavily and pressing his lips tightly together. Jungkook reached out and touched his arm, but received no response.

“Seokjin…?”
It was delayed, but eventually, Seokjin turned to Jungkook, offering him a sad smile. He laid his hand on Jungkook’s knee, and gave it a slight squeeze.

“He made his choice,” Seokjin said quietly, “And I made mine.”

Jungkook’s expression seemed to crumple at that, but before he could formulate a proper response, Kiara cut in with:

“Meanwhile, we have to make a few choices of our own. Should we continue with the plan for Seokjin and Jungkook’s Mating tomorrow as usual? And do we contact the Rising Gods and see what they have to say about this whole brother situation?”

“That,” Namjoon murmured, turning over Kiara’s palm in his, rubbing at the tendons of her hand slowly. “Is an excellent question.”

He lifted his eyes, looking towards Jungkook. The Omega seemed to withdraw for a moment, second-guessing himself, then he met the leader’s eyes.

“I want to Mate as soon as possible,” he said. “But... I also...would like to know what they have to say.”

“Very well,” Namjoon said. Seokjin stiffened, the soft Scent of soap and worry hovering in the air. “I’ll go talk to Jackson tomorrow and see if he knows anything from his side. They went for a hunt the other day on the island, so they may have heard something. In the meanwhile, we continue with the Mating plan as before. Although I suppose with decidedly less danger of Jimin or Taehyung being targeted.” He sent a pointedly grim look to the two of them, then patted Kiara’s shoulder. “So I suppose we should go start getting ready.”

“Yeah,” Taehyung curled his legs off of Jungkook’s lap, curling up closer to Jimin. “Let’s go get packed so tomorrow the lovebirds can finally let off some of that steam.” He sat up, leaning in to whisper something in Jungkook’s ear, then let Jimin help pull him to his feet.

When they were alone in the living room again, Jungkook crawled over to lay down in Seokjin’s lap, silently requesting a hand running through his hair. They sat in silence for a span of time, saying nothing and not moving, lost in their own thoughts.

“You don’t need to worry,” Seokjin said quietly. “Jae and I are completely over. It’s not even a consideration.”

“I know,” Jungkook mumbled, but he didn’t sound convinced himself. “And you don’t need to worry, either. I won’t put myself unnecessarily at risk, I just...kind of wish I knew what the big deal was, why they keep trying to get me to meet with him.”

“Yeah...” Seokjin sighed, curling downward to kiss Jungkook’s forehead as his hand brushed the bangs back in a smooth, wave-like gesture. “It’s just that neither of us has exactly had a great experience, when it comes to the Rising Gods, and now Jimin and Taehyung can say the same. I think even if I try not to, I’ll still worry about it. They were really lucky that nothing more serious happened.”

“Mmm...” Jungkook curled in closer. “I’m glad they’re back.”

“Me, too.” There was a pause, then, “So how do you feel about Taehyung snagging a Mate before you could?”
Jungkook snorted. “I couldn’t care less.”

Seokjin chuckled.

“But hey…” The Omega wriggled his body up so that he was half-dangling from Seokjin’s shoulder, nuzzling his face into the Alpha’s chest. “Guess what? One day left.”

“Yeah,” Seokjin smiled. “One day left.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello my lovelies! KurageCharms here!

My apologies for the short (and hella late) update! It’s been crazy this week, and I’m traveling and out of state. I got 2 hours sleep the other night and I had to edit this on my cell phone, it was a beast from start to finish. Lol

Thanks for your patience! I promise a more fulfilling update next time. Lol In the meantime have some soft Bangtan pack family time, I guess. Lol

Later, Lovelies!
Belong With Me

Chapter Notes

WARNING: Chapter contains all the smut power I’ve currently got for you, fam. Watch out if you’re sensitive to: crossdressing(?), not really pet play but something like it(you’ll see), a lot of swearing, some pretty strong-ass pain kinks, healthy relationships/consent, cuteness and some blood. lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where. I love you simply, without problems or pride: I love you in this way because I do not know any other way of loving but this, in which there is no I or you, so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand, so intimate that when I fall asleep your eyes close.”

— Pablo Neruda, 100 Love Sonnets

“Are you all ready yet?” Hoseok called from the doorway, letting out his nth sigh of the hour. Jimin was standing at his side with his backpack already slung over his shoulder, playing with something on his phone, but he looked up at the exasperation in the older Alpha’s tone.

“They’ll be done soon, I’m sure. Taehyung was mostly packed last night, and Namjoon has to take care of his own things and Kiara’s.”

“I know, but we planned on being out of the pack house an hour ago.” Hoseok’s lips pursed into their tight little triangle, and Jimin watched him for a moment, sniffing the air demurely.

“You’re nervous…” Jimin said slowly. “Are you worried about Seokjin and Jungkook’s Mating?”

The Alpha looked over at him, turbulence evident in his eyes as he bit at his lip. “No...I mean, well, maybe.”
Jimin stared at Hoseok harder, leaning in and bumping up against his shoulder lightly. Hoseok was a worrier-type, that was for damn sure. But in this instance, Jimin got the feeling that there were a lot of unspoken concerns bubbling beneath the surface. It wasn’t like Hoseok to be nervous like this.

“Hoseok...what’s wrong?”

Before responding, Hoseok looked around the empty living room. There was a pile of forgotten, untended-to socks on the coffee table. Namjoon’s daily paper lay unread next to a cup of coffee that was half-emptied and fully-cold by now. There was a stray shoe strung halfway across the living room that looked like a fancy slipper, and the game controllers were strewn about haphazardly like a tangle of black vines, ready to capture an unsuspecting traveler.

“It’s nothing, really...it’s stupid.”

“Hoseok, I’m sure it’s not stupid if it’s you,” Jimin chuckled lightly, but he leaned in to touch the Alpha’s shoulders, squeezing lightly and leaning in. “It’s because of Jungkook, right?”

Hoseok frowned, crossing his arms as if in petulance. “He’s the last one,” he said at long last. “He’s the last of the Unmated pups, but it all happened so quickly. I knew it was coming, but...”

“But we’re like your pups,” Jimin finished gently. A soft smile graced his lips.

Hoseok sighed. “He’s the last one. And he’s so excited, but...”

“I know,” Jimin patted Hoseok on the shoulder comradely. Taehyung’s familiar footsteps trudged down the stairs, the Beta looking put-out. “And who knows? Maybe there will be lots more pups running around the pack house soon enough!”

“Hm? What?” Taehyung queried, frowning as he adjusted his backpack on his shoulders. He seemed sluggish or disappointed, the two emotions looking so similar on him that Jimin was constantly amused by it.

“I was talking to Hoseok,” Jimin said, instinctively reaching out to pull Taehyung over to stand next to him. “We were talking about pups in the packhouse.”

“Oh, yeah,” Taehyung’s lips didn’t curl upwards like Jimin hoped, but his eyes sparkled a little, and he took Jimin’s small hand in his own, holding the palm up to inspect the hand with his eyes and with his fingertips, as if he were a fascinated child. “Pups would be good.”
“I think so, too,” Jimin smiled. He nudged up against Taehyung, nuzzling against his cheek. In response, Taehyung wrapped one arm around Jimin’s shoulder, touching their temples together and giving a delicate smile.

“Okay, let’s get on the road already,” Namjoon called out, thumping noisily down the stairs as if walking on his heels. He was soon followed by the rest of the party, including Jungkook, who looked about ready to explode from barely contained excitement. He was grinning in that way that let his teeth peek through, the crinkles at his eyes deepening as soon as Seokjin walked in from the kitchen, the picture of calm. Hoseok sighed, feeling a strange mix of happiness and melancholy in his chest.

Yoongi leaned over, picking up the newspaper from the coffee table and tucking it under his arm for the ride before turning to the two soon-to-be-Mates. Normally he waited his turn to read after Namjoon finished his morning cup, but the schedule was a bit chaotic today. “You two know how to contact us, should you need anything. Which I highly doubt you will.”

“The hotel isn’t far,” Kiara said, taking gentle hold of Jungkook’s shoulders and squeezing at the muscle there, sending him a smile. “So if you need anything, you call right away, alright?”

Jungkook nodded, and Kiara lifted her chin up. The man then leaned down a little so that the short woman could press a kiss to his forehead, a simple gesture that filled him with warmth nonetheless. One by one each of the pack came forward and offered hugs or pats on the head, and Jungkook felt a sudden jolt in his gut that he hadn’t expected. If things had been calmer, if things weren’t always so intense and crazy, then this moment, this instant, would have been the baseline for how the pack would have handled his Presenting, and they could have done things their own way and in their own time.

Not that he was exactly complaining. Seokjin’s arm snaked around his waist as Yoongi said his final goodbyes to them both. It was just that he hadn’t thought too long on how sincere their wishes of good will were, reflected in their eyes as they smiled knowingly.

Hoseok was the last to bid him goodbye, and Jungkook paused as he realized the Alpha had tears in his eyes, his face starting to redden from pre-crying stress.

“Hoseok?” Jungkook said quietly, his hands shifting forward without his willing them to, without needing to will them.

“I just…” Hoseok sniffed, rubbing furiously at his eyes and letting out a slow breath as if to calm himself. “I’m fine.” He rushed forward, embracing the youngest tightly, squeezing him so close he
couldn’t breathe for a moment. Over Hoseok’s shoulder, Jungkook saw Seokjin smiling, eyes sparkling in amusement. “I’m proud of you, you know,” Hoseok managed. “You’re growing up well, Jungkook.”

Jungkook’s face crumpled in emotion, moved by Hoseok’s words but unable to form a response that even held a candle to what he wanted to convey. So they stood in silence instead, with Jungkook squeezing harder at the hug until Hoseok finally let out a strained chuckle, moving away as he wiped his tears. Yoongi was waiting in the doorway for him, a crooked little smirk on his face.

“Come on, Hoseokkie,” Yoongi chuckled, gesturing for him with one hand, his keys in the other. “Leave the lovebirds alone, we have to get Kiara to the hotel before her pregnant bladder betrays her.” Over his shoulder, he pointed a warning finger to the two inside, “Don’t you dare do anything in our room, and for your own safety, don’t trespass into Kiara’s nest. Not for anything. She’s already gotten it just as she likes it, and it’s gonna be stressful enough for her to leave it for this long. We’ll see you on Monday morning, so have pants on by then.”

“You, of all people, demanding we wear pants,” Seokjin mumbled under his breath, shaking his head. Jungkook giggled, leaning back against his chest and taking hold of his wrists, wrapping them around his body like a protective blanket as he grinned mischievously at them.

“Come home safe,” Jungkook singsonged, obviously brimming with excitement but trying to focus. Yoongi rolled his eyes, taking hold of Hoseok’s arm and leading him out the door, the Alpha waving one last time to the two of them with a sniffle-ridden smile before the door shut and locked.

Seokjin hovered around Jungkook’s back, slowly swaying side to side with a gentle rhythm they had established. He tucked his head over the Omega’s shoulder, kissing along his jaw and feeling the warm rush beneath the Omega’s skin, smelling the leather and salt rising with nervousness. Jungkook suddenly wriggled around in his arms until he was facing Seokjin, encircling the Alpha’s trim waist with his arms and grinning up at him.

“So what’s my surprise?”

Seokjin laughed. “Surprise? What surprise?” There was a playful lilt to it, indicating that Seokjin knew exactly what Jungkook was hoping to see or hear, and Seokjin felt the nervousness bubbling up in the pit of his stomach.

“You’re surprise. You said you had requests this time.” Jungkook shuffled in, nuzzling in to Scent Seokjin thickly, making goosebumps rise on his arm. “What is it? Is it a toy? Is it a nickname?”
The laugh that escaped the Alpha this time was decidedly more riddle with nervous energy. “What if I told you it was just that I want you to settle down and behave yourself for once?”

“As if *that* would be your request,” Jungkook laughed. Then, at Seokjin’s silence, he paused, drawing back with a puzzled look. “It’s not, right?”

In response, Seokjin laughed, earning a rough punch on the arm from the Omega. Jungkook continued to smack at his arm as he followed Seokjin, who started moving upstairs while dramatically shouting at Jungkook as if he was being violently beaten.

“Ow, why are you so mean to me?” Seokjin playfully whined, trying to shove the clingy Jungkook off of him as they stumbled and laughed their way to Seokjin’s room. “What will you do if you hit me so hard I forget what your surprise is?”

Jungkook offered no verbal retort or response, just laughing. They fell against each other as Seokjin leaned into the door to open it, the Omega’s foot landing roughly on Seokjin’s and making him yip. They tumbled into the room, and once past the threshold, Seokjin turned to grab Jungkook by the hips, lifting him up and dumping him face-first down onto the bed, a grunt escaping the Omega as he continued to laugh into the blankets. Seokjin shook his head, crawling up onto the bed and pinning Jungkook down by laying down on top of him. He heard Jungkook laughing, his voice muffled as he tried to turn his head to gain more air.

“You’re heavy!” Jungkook complained. In retaliation, Seokjin leaned down into Jungkook harder, digging his fingers down and into Jungkook’s sides, tickling him. The Omega started to cry out in peals of laughter, trying to wriggle away and escape, but to no avail. “Jin! Jiin!” he laughed, writhing and shoving at Jin’s hands, their fingers entwining as he threw his head back. Seokjin laughed, his teeth gritted as he tried to keep his upper hand. When he figured Jungkook had had enough torture, he stopped his tickling and kissed the back of his neck, leaving his lips there so he could feel the thrumming beat of Jungkook’s racing heartbeat gradually start to slow and relax again. The smell of his Scent was so strong and pure in that moment, emanating off of him, Omega Scent mingled with joy. Jungkook slowly shifted until he was out from under Seokjin, one of his legs thrown casually across Seokjin’s lap as he leaned back onto the heels of his palms.

“Who is the real mean one here?” Jungkook teased, “When you al--”

Jungkook froze suddenly, staring at the edge of the bed. Seokjin looked up in concern, following the line of Jungkook’s vision, and felt his stomach drop as he saw the slightest edge of pink sticking out from under the comforter where he had tucked it earlier. There was a full five second period where they both stared at the fabric, then both leapt forward in a rush, diving frantically for the edge of the bed. Jungkook’s hand grabbed the edge of the pink, moving to yank the article free, when Seokjin’s
hand slammed down, keeping them both and the cloth down.

Seokjin’s heart was racing as though he was being chased as he looked down and saw Jungkook staring up at him, sparkling eyes mere centimeters from his as the boy grinned wickedly.

“What is it?! Is it for me?!” Jungkook chirruped gleefully, struggling against Seokjin’s hand and trying to fish the pink material out from its hiding place. His expression was so bright, it somehow made Seokjin even more scared.

“I j-just wanna explain it a bit, first.” Seokjin said in a breathless rush, the words all slurred together and incoherent.

Jungkook blinked. “What?”

“It’s just, I wanna explain it, first.” Seokjin blushed.

“Explain what? I asked you to give me a cum facial, I don’t think we have anything to be shy about at this point, Jin.” Jungkook rolled his eyes, impatient as always. Before Seokjin had a chance to respond, Jungkook reached out and jabbed a finger into his stomach, making him choke a bit and allowing Jungkook the moment of surprise to yank the material free.

“Jungkook, wait I--”

The Omega was holding the material up in confusion, a soft nylon leotard of what Seokjin remembered from the website was ‘fairy tale pink,’ tumbling between Jungkook’s fingertips until it hung at full length. It looked kind of like a one-piece swimsuit to Jungkook, soft plush fluffy material at the chest part in a long strip, and the straps for it only a thin, elegant white ribbon. He slowly turned it around, looking at the little fluff of white cotton at the top of the butt.

“It’s… a bunny.” Jungkook said in a deadpan, looking lost.

Seokjin blushed. “Like I said, I wanna explain. See, after that first time, when you wore those panties, under the skirt? I just… it surprised me, I suppose? That was the last thing I expected to find at that moment, but you didn’t even seem worried about it. And I guess I couldn’t get them out of my mind, and…” He frowned, blushing deeper, his words slurred together from the anxiety. “I guess I just thought it was cute. You don’t have to wear it if you don’t want to, I swear.”
Jungkook blinked uncertainly at the outfit, then at Seokjin. Then, after a pregnant pause, he lifted one shoulder in a shrug. “I mean, I guess we could try it? I dunno if I’ll like it, but…” He smirked crookedly, teeth gleaming. “I wanna try things that you want to try.”

Seokjin took in a sharp breath of air, one of surprise but also relief. “Really?”

“Of course.” Jungkook smiled. “I’m a little worried it won’t fit, though…”

“It’ll fit,” Seokjin smirked, “I’m sure.”

Jungkook shrugged, taking him at his word. He tentatively scooped up the outfit to his chest, sliding off the bed. “I guess I’ll go change?”

Seokjin bit his lip, nodding slowly. “And uh…” He leaned over, reaching underneath the comforter one more time before removing a black headband with a pair of pink ears attached. Jungkook groaned.

“Are you for real?” Jungkook was half-laughing as he reached out and took the ears. “I just want you to remember, I’m a big strong training-to-be-a-cop guy.”

“I’ll remember,” Seokjin smirked, crossing his arms. “But my Omega is also cute and needy and secretly enjoys feeling pretty.”

Jungkook flushed pink and growled at the same time, the title obviously having its intended effect. Jungkook waved the headband dramatically at Seokjin. “If you breathe a word about the ears to the others, I’ll cream you.”

“Fair enough.”

With a pout, Jungkook slipped off to the bathroom, and Seokjin chuckled, flopping back onto the bed. He ran his hands through his hair, disbelieving. It was Mating day, of all days. It had actually arrived, after all. A day that Seokjin had thought would never come, that this was a part of his life that he had lost, a part that he had missed out on.
But the door opened, and there he was.

Jungkook scrunched up his face as if to pout, but it only looked all the more endearing as he stood in the doorway, one hand on the doorknob. The pinkness against his flushing cheeks was soft and sweet. His undoubtedly muscular but slender arms fully exposed, the thin ribbon resting against his broad neck. The high-waisted edges swooped up in a broad oval, exposing the deceptively slim waist and hips. Jungkook wriggled self-consciously, reaching around to adjust at the back of the outfit.

"The back is like fucking shoestring," he complained. But his posture was altogether altered as he stepped across the room in small, light steps, as if he was lighter, more fragile. He pouted, and one of the pink ears drooped down as if waving dismissively at the way Seokjin was staring openly.

"You look so cute," Seokjin breathed, holding out his arms to wordlessly beckon the man closer. "But that’s to be expected of my Omega."

Jungkook let out a little whimper, shifting his weight from foot to foot. His eyes widened, as though he was surprised at his own reaction, then scrunched up his face in that resignedly intrigued expression again before stepping over to the bed. Seokjin reached out, smoothly wrapping his arms around the Omega’s waist and pulling him closer, the tips of his fingers brushing against the fluff of a tail. His hands trailed against it, then slyly floated down to cup Jungkook’s cheeks, kneading at them in such a way that the ‘shoestring’ inevitably pulled a little. Jungkook stiffened, eyes wide and breath catching.

"Woah," he breathed. Seokjin smiled, leaning forward to kiss the center of his chest just above the white fur-like material that lined the top.

"You make an adorable bunny," Seokjin insisted, before reaching down with one hand and scooping at all of the front of Jungkook’s crotch, feeling out how the Omega had arranged himself carefully inside. Jungkook instinctively grabbed Seokjin’s wrist, but merely arched his back into the sensation. "Cute," came the Alpha’s whisper, as he leaned down to kiss it.

"A-Alpha…" Jungkook breathed, reaching out to run his hands through Seokjin’s hair. The man practically purred into it, tilting his jaw forward as he mouthed at the already damp pink fabric, his hands back to work at the exposed skin of his ass in wide, circular strokes.

"What’s the safeword?" Seokjin whispered, as he always did. And Jungkook whispered it back, tugging lightly at Seokjin’s hair to pull him in further, loving the heat of the Alpha’s exhales against him, needing more.
“Bunnies,” Seokjin murmured into his crotch, “Need a lot of tending to, during their heats. They’re very needy.”

“Thanks for the biology lesson, Doc,” Jungkook hissed, rolling his hips and stepping forward, trying to push Jin back onto his back on top of the mattress so he’d have more to press against.

Seokjin leaned back pliantly, as he had hoped, but halted Jungkook with the grip on his hips, smiling. “Aren’t you going to show me how the bunny hops when it’s in heat?”

“Oh, god,” Jungkook sighed. “You’re not serious.”

“As a heart attack.”

“Why couldn’t you have been into, I dunno, spanking?”

“Says the man who likes cum facials,” Seokjin teased, crawling backwards onto the bed and bending his knees up. “Although to be fair, that’s actually good for your skin, it’s backed by science.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes, following Seokjin up onto the bed, placing his legs on either side of Seokjin’s legs so that he was straddling them, his bottom planted on Seokjin’s feet. He lifted his bottom up a little, pressing the half-hard erection against Seokjin’s shins, and leaned forward over the man’s knees. A sudden slapping sound caught him off guard and he gasped indignantly at Seokjin.

“Hm, turns out I’m into spanking, too,” Seokjin chuckled, leaning back against his pillows and crossing his arms under his head so he could watch. “Okay, now go.”

“Cocky asshole,” Jungkook half-growled, half-laughed at the ridiculousness of his position. He started to grind slowly against Seokjin’s raised knees, leaning further and further forward as he started to pick up the pace. Perhaps it was the outfit, perhaps the slight swaying of the ears on top of his head, drooping forward and brushing against his forehead and the edges of his black fringe, was distracting in the most lovely sense. Perhaps it was leaning over Seokjin, or having the Alpha’s eyes locked intently on him, or the excitement of the day and the promise of what was to come. But either way, after less than a minute it was as though a switch had been set off inside of Jungkook, and the lazy, humiliated humping against his Alpha turned more energetic, more frantic and messy. His thick thighs shook with the movement in gentle earthquakes, his breath coming in increasingly high-strung pants. Jungkook’s deep, intensely blue eyes locked with Seokjin, who still lay calmly watching him from his pillow.
“Does that feel good?” Seokjin’s face broke out into a sudden smile at the cherry-red glow to the Omega’s cheeks, the way his mouth dropped open as if to receive more pleasure from the air, the very thought of them together. “Bunny, you look like you feel really good already. Do you like it?”

“S-shut up…” Jungkook whispered, more like mumbled, in essence. “I’m t-trying to--oh, fuck!” The Omega’s eyes clenched shut as he started to slam heavily against Seokjin, his hips moving wildly. His upper body hung almost limply over Seokjin’s knees, one hand clutching uselessly at Seokjin’s chest. His eyes flickered up to Jin’s through his dark bangs, and he was gasping for breath. Seokjin could smell it in the air, Jungkook’s high, hovering against the edge that was coming towards the Omega. It mingled with the smell of his slick, and Seokjin felt that strange, sticky wetness against his shins. The thighs gripping to him for dear life had a strange sort of sensation to them, a feverish clamminess. Jungkook’s eyes stared into his, and he panted more deeply, fists tightening.

Seokjin realized that he had gone into his heat. He wouldn’t be satisfied with just humping against his Alpha’s legs, as adorable as he was.

“What a cute bunny,” Seokjin murmured, smiling softly as he reached up and brushed Jungkook’s bangs out of his eyes, readjusted the bunny ears on his head. It was no use - they just slipped forward again. Seokjin chuckled, meeting the Omega’s eyes squarely. “I want to taste you.”

Jungkook’s movements slowed, trying to think through the haze as to what Seokjin meant. Seokjin slipped off his T-shirt, dropping it off the side of the bed. The Alpha repositioned them, moving so that Jungkook was kneeling over his chest. The Omega’s eyes widened, and he shuddered a little in anticipation and realization as Seokjin started to run his hands all over his erection, the fabric now utterly damp all across the bottom.

“You’re so wet,” Seokjin breathed. He tucked one finger inside the thin stretch of material that ran all the way back and tucked between Jungkook’s cheeks. He trailed his finger along it, then grabbed the front with his other hand and suddenly yanked at the fabric, tearing it clean off. His knuckles rapped against Jungkook’s thighs and the Omega actually gasped in surprise at the gesture. The bottom of the outfit now rolled and coiled up to Jungkook’s stomach, leaving his lower half free.

“Let me taste you, Bunny.” Promptly, the Omega obliged, shifting forward until his erect member brushed up against the pink mouth. Seokjin looked up at him, gripping one of his thighs tightly. “I want you to fuck my mouth.” he grinned mischievously. “Can you do that?”

Jungkook whimpered, then, and Seokjin was giggling as he took Jungkook into his mouth in a sizeable mouthful, lips wrapping around tightly and sucking him in with a force Jungkook hadn’t been prepared for. The Alpha’s hands grabbed his now barren-ass and slammed him forward, and Jungkook groaned brazenly at the warmth and wetness.
Wet, taboo sounds met the air as he slammed into Seokjin, his head pushed further and further back into the pillow at a steady rate. Jungkook could feel the Alpha’s tongue flickering, teasing mercilessly and searching for a spot that would have him coil like a loosened rubber band. The chilling part, the one that made him shudder and incapable of controlling his sounds, was whenever Seokjin would open his eyes and look up at him with that intense, almost worshipful look. His eyes said *you’re beautiful.*

That was when Seokjin’s hand snaked up to his chest, thumbs dragging across the pink nylon and making Jungkook’s breath hitch. When he reached the top of the costume, Jungkook expected him to start back downward, but Seokjin yanked the front of it down, revealing his chest and pinched one nipple roughly between two fingers. Jungkook’s breath stopped, and the world seemed to tilt a little with the sensation.

“Oh, fuck,” Jungkook gasped, his torso bending forward, shoulders rolling as he leaned his hips into Seokjin’s mouth even deeper. He heard the choking sounds, the deep guttural warning sounds and felt the fluttering, squeezing sensation around his cock, but Seokjin’s hand still pressed him in, the Alpha’s eyes rolling back a little. “Fuck,” the Omega let out in a breathless murmur. “You’re so kinky.”

A laugh escaped the Alpha, cut short when he choked on Jungkook’s long but slender dick, but the vibration felt so nice that Jungkook wished he would laugh again. Jungkook planted his hands on either side of Seokjin’s head on the pillow, staring down at him in wonder.

“You look pretty even when you’ve got my cock in your mouth,” Jungkook gasped. “I can’t believe it.”

Another chuckle was earned, quivering all around him, and Jungkook keened.

“God,” Jungkook swallowed heavily, hips still gyrating. He felt like every sensation was gradually snowballing, compiling and growing the further they took it. Rather than nearing satisfaction, he felt teased, edged, like there would be the most beautiful build. How the fuck was Seokjin able to suck that hard, as if it was nothing? His lips were swollen and pink, his eyes locked on Jungkook and he just looked so, so pleased with himself.

A shudder ran through him, and suddenly Seokjin’s chest was covered in slick, and it dripped all up his collarbone and off his shoulders onto the mattress. The smell of Jungkook’s arousal soaked through the room the same way as his powerfully scented slick soaked into the sheets.
Seokjin blinked up at the Omega, who touched one curled finger to his lips, biting it lightly in concern and embarrassment. The Alpha could feel the slick soaking in all around him, leaking out of Jungkook and continuing on and on and on, a sign of his heat and neediness. Jungkook groaned another time, sending another wave of slick that Seokjin could feel pooling on his belly.

“S-s-sorry,” Jungkook gasped, confused and fearful. “I couldn’t help it.”

The Alpha continued to gape up at Jungkook, then removed Jungkook’s member from his mouth with a little pop. He rested himself in the wetness, the heat and overwhelming Scent of Jungkook that surrounded them, thick and heady. Here was something he wasn’t used to, an experience only an Omega could provide.

“That was... hot,” Seokjin rasped, his voice breaking. “Can you do it again?”


“Yeah, you are,” Seokjin chuckled, pinching Jungkook’s nipple in his fingers again, amused at the way Jungkook seemed incapable of holding back whenever he did so, the way his back arched so cutely in response to the feeling. The Omega’s lips were parted, eyes glowing blue. Seokjin switched tactics, lowering his voice. “You’re a fucking mess, Jungkook. Look at what you did to the bed.”

The reaction bubbled and rose as Jungkook let Seokjin’s words sink in. He looked around at the mattress as though for the first time, mouth gaping like a fish, at a loss for words or an excuse.

“You dumped slick all over my bed, and me,” Seokjin growled lightly, yanking at his nipple quite suddenly, pulling it at an angle so that when Jungkook instinctively leaned forward, it still hurt just a little. “I’m just sucking your dick and you decide to just go all over me like that, like a kid who wet the bed.”

In all honesty, he expected the petulant Jungkook to emerge, the one that would laugh and slap his shoulder, that diverted petty attacks without much concern. But the Jungkook that responded instead actually trembled a little, straddling Jin’s chest and whimpering quietly, his expression making him look so much younger and innocent. He seemed like he wanted to speak, like he was searching for a reason to explain it away, but came up empty-handed, and it was so adorable that Seokjin wanted to hug him.

“Are you like a little kid? You can’t control your slick?”

“I d-didn’t... I was trying to...”
“A horny little bunny,” Seokjin cut him off, scoffing for dramatic effect and turning his head as though disgusted. He was a little surprised to find slick waiting there for him when his cheek touched the pillow, wet but cooling against his jaw. “And you can’t even do it again when I tell you to. What a fucking joke.” He tugged on the other nipple, lifting his torso off the bed and lifting Jungkook with it, rattling the boy and making him gasp, his erect member bouncing with the movement.

“J-Jin, I…”

“Slick for me, Bunny,” Seokjin tugged. “Slick all over my chest again.” He considered a moment, while Jungkook released little heated sounds, and then one hand wound its way around the Omega’s hips, tucking into the crease of his ass. “Or do you have to be played with first?” The question was genuine, spoken in sincere wonder, and the reaction was instantaneous.

“No, wait, I--” Jungkook shuddered, his shoulders hunching up as another thick wash of slick rushed out of him, soaking Seokjin through with another pool of warmth. “F-fuck…”

“Wow,” Seokjin’s eyes rolled back a little, and he rested against the pillow with a smile. “That feels pretty nice.”

“J-Jin…”

“I just sucked you off, and I did a good job,” Seokjin reasoned, closing his eyes and relaxing. “Give me a moment to relax.”

“F-fuck you,” Jungkook gasped, already grinding his hips down against Seokjin, only to find that every movement was met with an obscene squelch that made him burn crimson. After a few minutes, he arched his back, slick rushing out of him again as he let out a grunt of effort. Still, Seokjin remained as he was, eyes shut and a playful smile on his face. In retaliation for being left to his own devices, Jungkook crawled backwards until he was rubbing his ass over the front of Seokjin’s sweatpants, feeling the arousal there and was pleased when Seokjin’s face crumpled a little in concern. Jungkook lifted his bottom, grinning as he slammed it back down right onto the Alpha’s dick, cause Seokjin to jolt up in a cry of pain. Jungkook laughed as Seokjin gasped for air, surprised at the attack.


“That dirty mouth of yours,” he teased flippantly. “Now take care of me.”
“With what?” Seokjin snapped, hand covering his crotch, “How am I supposed to take care of you if you squish my dick into a pancake?”

“Sitting on you once isn’t gonna do that.” The Omega rolled his eyes.

Seokjin pouted, still petulant and his eyes still a little watery. “You don’t know that. You’ve got those thunder thighs, so you need to be careful.”

“Thunder thighs?” Jungkook howled with laughter, even when Seokjin reached over with both hands to squeeze and tear at the thighs that were still wrapped around his waist.

“Yes, thunder thighs.” He gave one a slap, and they both watched the flesh there quiver with the gesture. “Very nice.”

“Great, now will you just fuck me already?”

“Horny Bunny strikes again,” Seokjin chuckled, but he sat up, still damp from Jungkook’s slick all around them on the bed. He shifted the Omega off his lap, taking him by the shoulders and moving him easily to the edge before standing up.

Jungkook laughed. “You’re soaking wet.”

“And whose fault is that?” Seokjin retorted, slipping his jeans and boxers off in one movement and kicking the slick-dampened material to the corner of the room. “My poor dick needs time to recover, so I guess we’ll have to use something else.”

At that, the Omega perked up, perching a little higher on the bed as Seokjin moved to his closet. When he came back, a purple dildo was clutched in his hand, and Jungkook’s eager look fell into a frown. Seokjin saw the look and raised an eyebrow in curiosity.

“What is it?”
Jungkook looked up at Seokjin in uncertainty. “I know you’re trying to punish me for sitting on your dick, but... really?”

“Really what?”

“That thing is like half your size,” Jungkook frowned deeper. “It’s tiny compared to you.”

At that, Seokjin’s face twitched through a plethora of emotions, ranging from flattered to defiant, and he straightened his shoulders up and tried to collect himself. “Well, for your information, this one’s mine. And it’s average-sized.”

Jungkook’s jaw dropped, and Seokjin coughed, busying himself with lubricating the dildo. He hated the way he could see Jungkook piecing things together.

“Wait, wait-wait-wait-wait...” Jungkook shifted on the bed, the pink nylon of the bunny costume rolling up even further on his chest, until it looked like all he was wearing was a crookedly made crop top.

“Are you saying his dick was that small?”

“I’m not saying anything,” Seokjin pouted, “Now bend over.”

“Okay,” Jungkook turned over, facing away from Seokjin. He rested his chin in his palms as he cheekily raised his bottom. “But you’ll probably have to let me know when it’s in. I may not feel it.”

“You’re such a little shit,” Seokjin said. Jungkook couldn’t tell by his voice if he was just teasing or if that was a trace of warning, and he couldn’t see his face, so the Omega fell quiet. Seokjin slipped the dildo in with careful movements, then once the muscles in Jungkook’s thighs seemed to relax, he took a firm hold of the torn fabric of the bunny costume, yanking on it even as he shoved the dildo in and out. Jungkook let out an exhale, as though the air had been forced out of him by the movement.

Seokjin’s voice came quietly behind him, as if mostly speaking to himself. “I didn’t even need the lube, really.”

“Well, I wonder why.” Jungkook snapped back. Although he was enjoying the sensation for what it was, it wasn’t quite enough. Seokjin increased the pace, and Jungkook grunted, hands dropping to grip the sheets and finding that they were still wet, and now cold.

“You really that spoiled already?”
Jungkook considered for a moment, waited until Seokjin had shoved in with a few more heavy-handed strokes, then nodded. “Yes, I’m that spoiled. I like you better.”

“Duly-noted, then.”

“Does this mean you’d take my dick up your ass?” Jungkook pondered, his thumb rubbing back and forth across the sheets. “I don’t feel so bad about being smaller than you now, if you actually like little ones.” He hiccuped as Seokjin ground the dildo into him roughly, and he enjoyed the way it made his insides flip, his muscles contracting pleasantly with the bit of abuse. “I just think that, since we have the whole house to ourselves, with no one around to hear, you could do a little better than this,” Jungkook shrugged, his words jostled by the movement. “The bunny costume is an interesting addition, though. I think I like it. But now it’s all ruined.”

Seokjin sighed, removing the dildo. “Fine, then. What would you suggest?”

Jungkook turned halfway over, curling around so he could look at Seokjin over his shoulder. “Fist me.”

The Alpha arched an eyebrow. “You did seem to like that last time.”

“I’ll like it even more if you can draw it out.” Jungkook thought back to how he’d wanted it to be dragged out for hours, liking the feeling of Seokjin wrecking him. He wondered if Seokjin would come on his face again, like before, or if he would have to request it specifically.

“Wait, I have an idea…” Seokjin patted Jungkook’s bottom affectionately, moving back to his toy collection and coming back with what looked like two chains connected to a bit of leather, a silver ring dangling at the end. Jungkook rolled over, his head lolled to the side in confusion.

“What is it?”

“Clamps. Your nipples are really sensitive,” Seokjin explained, picking up the ends of the chain and opening and shutting the twin rubber ended contraptions. “I got it thinking you’d like it.”

Jungkook stared at the toy for a moment, his eyes rolling down to the end and back up in curiosity.
He shrugged, shifting to the end of the bed.

“Let’s get this off, I think we’re done with it,” Seokjin tugged the remains of the bunny costume over Jungkook’s head, the bunny ears discarded off to the side as well. Seokjin knelt in front of the Omega, laying his palm against the unerect nipple, massaging at the skin there. Jungkook felt himself leaning forward, heard the noise escaping his lips, even though he hadn’t permitted either. Damn, someone’s been paying attention. He bit his lip when Seokjin leaned forward, wrapping his mouth unceremoniously around the spot, lips and tongue teasing against him in long and languid movements. Jungkook leaned back onto his palms, mouth agape as he tilted his head down towards Seokjin. He ground his erection up against Seokjin’s leg gently, slowly. Then, Seokjin lowered the clamp down firmly around his left nipple, making him audibly gasp. The pain that surged across his skin burned and ached, but his stomach flipped in unexplainable ecstasy. It felt amazing even as it hurt, the shock making him jolt. Seokjin tended to the other, and when the second clamp went on, pinching tightly and making Jungkook keen, the Alpha seemed satisfied.

“Why do I never start with things like this?” The Alpha shook his head, then knelt on the ground in front of Jungkook. He took up the end of the leather strap that dangled loosely from the ends of the chain, and wrapped his fingers around the silver ring that waited there. Forming a circle with his thumb and pointer finger, Seokjin slipped the ring around the base of Jungkook’s member, the tight feeling a welcome temptation. After the Alpha moved backwards, Jungkook went to sit up, and found the distance between the start and end of the chain was a couple inches too short, meaning his nipples were tugged, stinging as he let out a groan.

“That’s more like it,” Seokjin patted his shoulder, pleased. He gently turned Jungkook around until the man was kneeling away from him again, careful so there was slack in the chain. The Alpha inspected Jungkook’s ass for a moment, parting the cheeks and seeing that there was already fresh slick leaking out of him, enjoying the tingling sensations of the clamps. He’d struck gold, as far as he was concerned. Seokjin slipped two of his fingers inside of Jungkook, moving smoothly in up until the last knuckle, hearing the hissed exhales escaping the Omega. He coiled his fingers inside of him, pressing up against the tightness there, loving the gasps that he caused to escape. He pulled in and out several times, before pulling out a little more, angling all his fingers to a point like an arrow before shoving the whole hand inside, encompassing his hand to its widest point in heat and wetness. Jungkook cried out, writhing against the mattress at the fullness, and in so doing only yanked the clamps against himself harder, the multi-angle attack working him into a fast frenzy. Seokjin’s hand was suddenly hot with leaking slick that shot out of Jungkook and into Seokjin’s lap, and the Alpha growled at being smothered yet again with the smell. He worked his hand deeper, and Jungkook cried out, unable to stop arching his back downward, starting to scream as the clamps were tugged farther. Jungkook bounced his hips back towards Seokjin’s hand, needing the abrasiveness, wrapped in primal need for further stimulation. Seokjin leaned in until his legs were curled around Jungkook’s leg, using his hand on Jungkook’s waist for leverage as he groped in further. Jungkook was cursing, but in a babble of meaningless drawls, cries that escalated higher until they seemed to echo through the room. Seokjin was in to his wrist before he realized Jungkook was screaming and that he should probably slow down a bit, blinking away the headiness that accompanied the action, sitting back a little and making his movements less aggressive.
“F-fuck…” Jungkook moaned helplessly against the mattress, his body shaking in visible trembles. “Don’t slow.”

“Well,” Seokjin leaned until he was knelt over Jungkook’s back, their clammy skin pressed up against each other and reeking of the Omega’s heat. “I was just wondering…” Seokjin teasingly brushed Jungkook’s bangs from his eyes, “If you wanted me to keep this up or use my actual dick, which has decided to forgive you now that you’ve been so good.”

“YES.” Jungkook spat out firmly, suddenly extremely excited. Seokjin laughed, positioning himself, slipping on a condom and rubbing at his hard member a few times. He didn’t even really need to do it, it was more of a habit than anything. Seeing Jungkook happily getting wrecked and teased did a lot for raising his attention, and his own flags, so to speak.

Seokjin pressed himself across Jungkook’s back, and the Omega realized with a blinding shock that this was it. This was the position Seokjin had been in, from the dream from so long ago. Wetness of all kinds all around him, chills from the cooling slick against his skin contrasting with the heat pooled in his belly, the mattress soaked and Seokjin’s dark growl in his ear. The rain had been his slick, the field Seokjin’s room, unfamiliar and safe at the same time. Seokjin’s member was pressed heavily against him, the Omega’s hips slightly raised because he liked the way the clamps pulled.

Now he knew what the dream Seokjin meant, saying that it would hurt and then it would feel good.

“Jungkook,” Seokjin was saying into his ear, soft and gentle as he brushed some of the hair away from his face. “Jungkook? Look at me.”

The Omega blinked slowly, craning his head to look over his shoulder at the Alpha, who was looking at him with an expression of concern.

“Are you alright?”

For a long moment, Jungkook waited, trying to make sure that his answer was the true one, not just shrouded in the feeling of the moment, of the rush, of the inevitable craziness of his head. He lifted his head to the Alpha, and he smiled.

“Yes,” he murmured softly, reaching up and touching Seokjin’s cheek. His gentle Alpha with the hungry dark streak, his loyal Alpha who would suffer if it meant Jungkook was even a little bit closer to feeling safe. He leaned over and kissed him. “I just love you.”
Seokjin’s expression relaxed, “Well, good. Because I love you, too.”

And he breathed a sigh of relief before he pressed himself into Jungkook, rolling his hips inward and upward, lifting Jungkook’s knees a little off the mattress and making the chains clatter. Jungkook moaned, dropping his face to the mattress, inhaling his own Scent, enjoying the feeling of being filled, of being pressed forward. Seokjin was pounding into him animalistically, and Jungkook almost bit his tongue from being jolted back and forth so roughly, and he felt himself cry out before he actually did. His Alpha wolf was taking him, solidly and without restraint, and Jungkook let out a long sigh when he felt Seokjin groan and come in a rush. Jungkook saw stars before his eyes, knowing Seokjin was still inside him and knowing he was reaching around to slip the cock ring off. He missed the extra pressure on the clamps but it felt so good having Seokjin’s hand on him, an arm tucked around his waist and his lips pressed into the curve of his neck as he made Jungkook come the hardest he’d ever came before.

Jungkook fell limply forward onto the sheets, still coming into Seokjin’s hand and rendered senseless with tremors as he rode the high for long, lovely, well-earned seconds. He gasped, inhaling slick smell, and stilled against the sheets. Seokjin dropped down to the bed over him, as if shielding Jungkook with his body, and continued to kiss behind his ear in long, purposeful kisses.

“Feel better now?” Seokjin asked. Jungkook gave the slightest nod, wriggling his face in towards Seokjin, feeling sleepy and suddenly wanting something akin to a cuddle. Sensing this, Seokjin ran a hand through Jungkook’s hair, brushing his bangs back in a soothing movement that was quickly lulling him toward sleep. “You should clean up, and we can go downstairs to the table, get something to eat before next time.”

Jungkook grunted lowly, as if in protest, and Seokjin giggled, letting him rest for a couple minutes more before nudging him up. Jungkook didn’t really see much point in a shower when he was in his heat, especially since by the time he stepped out again, he was already feeling flushed and feverish, and he knew he’d be gross and slick-ridden again before long. Seokjin tended to him carefully, keeping one eye on the Omega at all times as they cleaned, and playfully batting at him with one hand, as if needing a response from him at regular intervals.

He wanted to tell Seokjin he was fine. Great, even. But he figured his body was doing most of the talking at this point, and he was still in the post-coital exhaustion, so he grunted wordlessly in reply to Seokjin’s comments and ran a brush through his hair in silence.

They stepped back out into the room from the steam and shampoo smell of the shower, and instantly both wrinkled their nose at the smell they’d left.

Seokjin went over to the side table, where his phone lay, and noted that he didn’t have any messages from the others.
“What time is it?” Jungkook managed, yawning and staring at the soft bed which he had effectively ruined.

“Way beyond dinner time, now.” The Alpha chuckled, “We should get some food in you.”

“What about the bed?”

“I’ll clean it up a bit later,” Seokjin sighed. “The mattress actually has a plastic cover on it, but the sheets are pretty much ruined anyways.”

“Sorry…” Jungkook flushed, flopping lightly against Seokjin’s chest and burying his head beneath the Alpha’s chin.

Seokjin laughed, wrapping his arms around him. “Don’t be, it was really amazing.”

“I can do it again,” Jungkook whispered, “I can feel it’s gonna happen again.”

“I guess your heat’s in full-blown mode now. I’ll just have to go against my better judgement and spoil you more, I suppose.” With that, he leaned down and suddenly scooped Jungkook up, bridal-style, making the boy laugh. His nose crinkled up as he wrapped his arms around Seokjin’s neck, feeling small and protected, and as if he weighed next to nothing as Seokjin easily carried him, moving towards the doorway.

“Oh, wait!” Jungkook suddenly started, almost kicking his way out of the Alpha’s embrace. “C-can we take the clamps with us?”

Seokjin blinked, then laughed. “Sure.”

With the clamps held in the curve of his lap, Jungkook clung needily to Seokjin as they went downstairs, letting the Alpha take him to the dining room table and release him to crawl underneath. Seokjin stood up with a contented sigh, moving to grab them a couple of large cup ramens from the cupboard. Jungkook watched him move through the kitchen, staring at his back, the way his loose pajama shorts clung to his waist, the stretch of skin and Seokjin in front of him compelling in a silent way. Jungkook himself was only wearing the largest of Seokjin’s hoodies, a giant monster of a thing
that draped down to his knees and always clung loosely at his shoulders, the hoodie pulled up and dangling down into his eyes. Jungkook fiddled with the edges of the table, hooking the edges of his sheets into the nails he had placed there earlier that week, surrounding him in a thin curtain-like domain. It felt safe under here, it felt familiar. He wriggled around on the blankets, his hands exploring the various different fabrics he had collected over the months. Seokjin crouched down and crawled inside, smiling at the tent-like walls Jungkook had set up.

“It’s very cute,” Seokjin pointed out. “Like a blanket fort.”

Jungkook hugged his knees to his chest, accepting the cup of water Seokjin handed to him.

“It’ll take a couple minutes for the ramen,” Seokjin said, cranking the ugly stained egg timer that Yoongi had found at a garage sale and setting it on the seat of a nearby chair. “I don’t want us to get too distracted.”

“By what?” Jungkook smirked, finishing up the water in deep gulps. He tilted his head back to take down the last of it, and then jolted when he felt Seokjin’s fingers against his neck, trailing down his adam’s apple and tickling him. He coughed, making the Alpha laugh.

“I have a question for you.” Seokjin took the cup and reached over to put it next to the egg timer. “About your nest.”

“Why do people keep calling it that?” Jungkook rolled his eyes. “Wolves don’t have nests they have dens.” He protectively adjusted a couple of the pillows on the edge of their cushioned little circle. “It’s just how I like to sleep now, that’s all.”

Seokjin chuckled, leaning in to nuzzle against Jungkook’s neck, kissing it and touching his nose to the Omega’s Scent gland. “No, I’m talking about how you’re nesting. Omegas do it sometimes, it’s perfectly normal.”

“What?”

“Jungkook,” Seokjin said slowly, smiling. “You picked the table for your nest, just like how Kiara chose her and Namjoon’s bedroom? A wolf nest is kind of your way of preparing...for...y’know, a family. The pack house is like our den and the nest is...well.. It’s a nest.”
“Wait,” Jungkook looked around, hugging one of the body pillows to his chest as he realized what Seokjin was saying. “But… I’m not pregnant? At least I don’t think I am.”

“You don’t have to be pregnant to nest,” Seokjin explained, his voice warm as he ran a hand through his hair. “It just means… I dunno. That you’re thinking about it. That you’re trying to be prepared. For us. It’s why I wasn’t surprised when you said you wanted to Mate here. This is your safe place, so you made it into a nest so you could Mate and maybe have pups here someday.”

“Oh.” Jungkook blinked. It made more sense now, why he got so irritated whenever Taehyung or Jimin tried to crawl under the table with him now, when it hadn’t bothered him before. Or how he had needed the walls to close him in more, or felt anxious if one of the blankets went missing. “I didn’t even realize it.”

“I suspected as much,” Seokjin shrugged. Jungkook leaned forward, nuzzling into Seokjin’s chest. Muffled as it was, when Jungkook spoke, Seokjin couldn’t understand him. He asked him to repeat what he had mumbled against his chest. Jungkook let out a sigh, his voice embarrassed as he said, “I do I want them. Y’know. Pups.”

“You do?”

Seokjin was keeping his voice decidedly neutral, waiting for what the Omega would say next.

“Yeah…” Jungkook tilted his forehead and leaned it against Seokjin’s collarbone, twisting his head back and forth in a rhythm, despite knowing it would make his hair stand on end later. “I want to have pups with you someday. “

Seokjin felt his breath catch, one hand resting in Jungkook’s hair. The timer went off.

“Oh, there’s our ramen,” he said, reaching over and up onto the table to carefully cradle their twin cups of ramen down with them. He held one out to Jungkook, who took it eagerly. “Make sure you finish it all, you’re gonna need the energy.”

Jungkook grabbed a tangle of noodles with his chopsticks that was over half the contents of the container, dipping it up and down and blowing on it gently before he shoved the whole mess into his mouth, slurping loudly and practically inhaling it. Seokjin laughed when Jungkook had obviously
burned his tongue, and they were finished with the ramen before long, enjoying the quiet of the pack house and the closeness the table underside offered them.

They didn’t readdress the unspoken question until the food was gone and they were curled up again, resting. Seokjin drew Jungkook to his chest, the Omega leaned up against him with Seokjin’s arms surrounding him, and the Alpha kissed the back of his head slowly, repeatedly. Jungkook wasn’t going to press, he knew. But it was something he had to say.

“I don’t think I’m ready,” Seokjin murmured quietly. “I wanna do it, but… I wanna do it right. ‘Let’s enjoy the time we have right now,’ that’s how I feel.”

“Yeah?” Jungkook played with Seokjin’s hands, resting against his stomach as he traced his thumb over every inch, every curve of those familiar palms. “I think that sounds fair.”

“You do?”

“Yeah, sure.” Jungkook tilted his head up to look up at Seokjin, his expression soft. “We should wait.”

Seokjin breathed a sigh of relief. “I thought you would have been more eager to get started right away.”

“I’m impatient about a lot of things,” Jungkook said quietly, tilting back into Seokjin’s chest. “A lot of things about us. I didn’t want to give up before we had started. I didn’t want to miss our chance. But when it involves a whole new, living being? I think it’s reasonable you’d want to wait. At the very least to wait until things have calmed down a lot more.”

At that, a silence fell between them, gentle and understanding. Seokjin kissed the back of his head one more time. “Thank you,” he whispered.

“Okay.” Jungkook wriggled his hips a little, letting out a little sound of discontentment. “Let’s do this. I wanna Mate before I get too sleepy from my heat.”

Seokjin laughed. “Another reasonable request.” He reached down, gently laying his hand across Jungkook’s crotch, running his thumb across it and building up friction slowly, sensually. Jungkook turned into his neck, exhaling. He mouthed at Seokjin’s Scent mark, swallowing the taste of his Alpha, inhaling the now-so-familiar smell of powdered soap, tingling at his senses as he leaned into
Seokjin, slightly dizzy but content. He gave a kitten lick at the Scent mark, feeling Seokjin shudder a little at his touch. Seokjin pressed in further, easing Jungkook to a point where he could no longer hold still beneath him, suckling cloyingly up his neck and along his jawline, catching his mouth and deepening the kisses as Seokjin continued to palm him. Jungkook’s hands trailed into Seokjin’s hair, burying his fingertips deep within it while he started to grind slowly against him, hot exhales and that hormonal need burning throughout his skin.

“This is the last time,” Jungkook gasped, “That your Scent won’t have mine in it.”

Seokjin hummed against him in pleasant gratification.

“You’ll always smell me on you. Everyone will know you belong to me.”

At that, the Alpha shifted a little, looking a mite displeased. “Not belong to. People don’t belong to people. I belong with you.”

The Omega tilted his head a bit to the side, still slowly curving his hips into the Alpha in careful, relaxed movements. “Yes. You belong with me. And I belong with you.”

“That sounds lovely,” Seokjin exhaled, as though expelling from his body all the trials of the days before, a dark distance in his eyes that only seemed to lessen when he tilted his face to smile at Jungkook.

The Omega kissed the edge of the Alpha’s mouth, trying to will away the bit of concern that still lingered, the worry that always seemed to darken his features. “I belong with you.”

The sweet repetition of the words seemed to stir up something deep and strong within Seokjin, his expression softening into one of tenderness as he cupped Jungkook’s face with a smile. “So. How do you want to do this?”

“I want to lead,” Jungkook said firmly. “I want you to be sure every moment throughout that this is what I want.”

Seokjin let that sink in for a moment, and then he nodded, sinking back from his sitting position into the pillow-made sides of the nest. Soon he was laying down, and Jungkook was straddling him, thick thighs on either side of the trim waist, bare skin quivering a little under the experimental touch of
Jungkook’s hand as he laid his palm there in wonder. “You already know it’s what I want.”

“I don’t have any doubts,” Jungkook chirruped. “Especially not when you let me do whatever I ask.”

The Alpha rolled his eyes. “Oh? That makes me sound like such a pushover.” Jungkook tugged Seokjin’s shorts off until they dangled at the Alpha’s ankles, wrapping one hand around the Alpha’s member.

“You are a pushover,” Jungkook lifted one shoulder, his free hand massaging up Seokjin’s chest to curve up to the crook of his neck, fingers digging into the flesh there and loosening the nerves, making him relax into the Omega’s calming touch. “But only for me.”

Seokjin snorted at that, but he smiled up at Jungkook, lightly silhouetted in the dim light that bled in through the sheets he had hung up around them, hidden away in their protective nest. It was fragile, and quickly built, but it was their own, untarnished by the outside world and left only for two souls, two wolves who had been waiting for a long time, pressing against instinct, judgment, and whatever ancient power their alleged Bonding created between them, boiling hot and reassuringly cool at the same time.

Jungkook lifted up the edges of the oversized hoodie, then hesitated, opting to slip it off entirely to avoid as much mess later. He dropped it off to the side, now naked on top of Seokjin and taking a hold of his member, leading it to his entrance slowly, shifting his hips to make the movement smoother.

“You’re not ready,” Seokjin whispered, taking hold of his arm.

“Just wait a moment, I’m sure I…” The Omega leaned forward, leaning his stomach down onto Seokjin’s, kissing his collar, his cheek, his forehead. He scooped up Seokjin’s head in his arm, cradling it to his chest. “God… Yeah, I can tell it’s…” Seokjin, breathing hotly against his bare skin, turned until he could mouth at the still sore and sensitive nipples, taking one into his mouth and suckling on it as he had earlier, his fingernails finding their way into deep lines across Jungkook’s ass. Jungkook lifted his bottom into the claw-like hold, moaning as he clutched Seokjin even more tightly to his chest, his member abrasive against the Alpha’s Scent and his bare skin. Seokjin bit down lightly on him, and Jungkook let out a high-pitched little cry that crackled and broke, and then came the wave, washing through his body and making him shiver. Slick spilled out of him in a silent stream, coating him and Seokjin in preparation for this moment. Their movements were fluid and flowing, due to his natural lubrication, and the added warmth helped take the edge off the chill in the air, even though Jungkook felt sweat on his brow already.
“Okay, god...fuck...okay.” Jungkook reluctantly released his grip on Seokjin’s head, letting him move back against the pillows as he repositioned over the erect member, leading it forward as he moved back. They both hissed together in time as Seokjin sunk more deeply into Jungkook, and Seokjin waited for Jungkook to lead, to take his time. When they were seated together, Jungkook with his arms planted on either side of Seokjin, his Mate, filled with him from the inside out, they shared a look of understanding. Jungkook rocked forward on his knees, tilting hips and crotch so as to move Seokjin in and out of him, pressing back in a little more roughly each time, wanting to reach for that edge. Nothing felt as satisfying, as well-fitted as Seokjin inside of him, underneath him. The Alpha let out his usual little hisses and shaky breaths, quiet even when Jungkook leaned into him the way he knew he liked. Jungkook was never so quiet as Seokjin was, somber and mature in his added years of experience, in the gentle giant aura of his nature. He panted, moaned, keened in the close air of the nest, curled up on top of Seokjin and angling down into him with his bottom, clutched at the Alpha’s shoulders and hair. Seokjin’s eyes fluttered closed, and he did something Jungkook didn’t expect - he tilted his head back, exposing his neck to Jungkook in the ultimate sign of vulnerability and trust. Jungkook’s thrusting ceased, and Seokjin opened his eyes in question.

Their gazes met, and Jungkook bit his lip. Seokjin nodded. “It’s okay, Jungkookie.” His voice was a deep thrum, soothing and serene. “I belong with you.”

He bared his neck again, this time his eyes remaining open and locked on Jungkook, and the Omega leaned down, Scenting him deeply, feeling the physical and emotional reaction in his Mate, smelling the arousal as he went into that overwhelmingly powerful Scenting that always made his toes curl. He pressed his face heavily into the Scent mark, admiring its simplicity and retained purity, knowing that despite the difference in their years and experience, despite knowing they could never erase the past hurts, that this one thing was all his, only his, that Seokjin had given him. He licked at the Scent mark, tasting it in its untarnished glory one last time before he sunk his teeth into it, biting down as roughly as he could.

The strangled cry that escaped Seokjin was heavenly, that was all he could describe it as. They were floating, ephemeral and mortal yet transcendently eternal. Seokjin cried longer, writhed weakly beneath him, and ground up into Jungkook as if balancing their playing field. Jungkook felt Seokjin’s hands on his neck, cool and grabbing for purchase, then he felt the Alpha’s hot breath against his own Scent mark. The bite stung, then exploded into a thousand little nerve endings that shot through every fibre of his body, and Jungkook moaned, spilling more slick out between them, grinding needily against his Alpha as their Scents mingled in a lovely, blind dance. He saw stars, saw Seokjin’s face, and tasted little diluted streams of blood in his mouth as he drew back.

The world was spinning, the greatest high, like a trip that he never wanted to come down from. Seokjin cried out, the loudest Jungkook had ever heard him, his voice ringing in the Omega’s ears as he threw his head back one more time, writhing feverishly. The sound escalated, growing higher in pitch and desperation as he clung to Jungkook, orgasming slow but hard inside of him with a delightful rushing sensation. He hiccuped, dropping back limply against the bedding of the nest, and stared up at Jungkook through lazy, hooded eyes, a thin trail of blood dripping down their necks. The smell of soap and leather mingled in the air, thick and relentless.
The irises were coated deeply in burning red, matching Jungkook’s own icy blue as he whispered quietly.

“My Mate.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello, my lovelies!

The moment I've been fuckin' slowburning up for for over 174,000 words!??  
JINKOOK’S MATING ♥♥

Wowza. I hope it satisfied, my friends. I mega stressed over this chapter because I'm a perfectionist at heart and Jinkook is precious to me. My Sin Squad™ had to put up with me acting kinda insane all the while I was writing on this. lol

Now that we've had this precious, special moment, you can tell we're getting close to the end of the road, my sweets. I hit 30,000 hits on LINP this week, and it blew my mind. I expected people to enjoy the story but 30k seemed like an impossible number for ME and my lil fanfic lovechild here. ;c; Thanks for all your support and your messages on my CC or Twitter. I love getting hype with you cats.

Thanks again to my Beta Jenni, who is always sweet and supportive and has spent ALMOST as many hours as me dedicated to this monster, from brainstorming to editing to fine-tuning.♥♥ You are a doll and deserve smut that's even better than I'm capable of creating. lol

♥ Thanks, and later, my lovelies!
“When you look back, I think things are as they are meant to be. Timing is very important.”

- Lesley Nicol

On Monday morning, Seokjin crawled out of his bed with the full knowledge that Jungkook would not be following him anytime soon. The ugly orange backup top sheet tucked over the mattress (their last resort while waiting for all the other sheets they’d soiled to be washed) was already rolling up underneath Jungkook’s legs, and he lay soundly asleep in the quiet, as the sun crept in through the blinds. Seokjin leaned back down to plant a kiss on his forehead, and when he lifted up to straighten his back, he found the Omega had clawed up to grab hold of his large T-shirt, pulling him back toward the bed with a little whine. Seokjin chuckled, prying Jungkook’s fingers off of him and patting his head.

“I’m just going to go clean up a bit before the others come home. Do you want me to bring you some breakfast?”

Jungkook nodded into the pillow, his eyes still closed but his face coiled into a delicate, sleepy pout. Seokjin pulled the comforter off the floor, tucking it over Jungkook’s shoulders to fill the void of his own body heat. Jungkook made a small sound like an infant, curling up into the comforter until only his wild hair poked above the top of it.

Downstairs, the pack house (particularly the kitchen, to which they had holed themselves up for the majority of the weekend) was an utter wreck. There were ramen cups half-finished everywhere, dishes piled in the sink, and an ungodly amount of used condoms tucked into a plastic bag that hung unceremoniously from the back of one of the chairs. Blankets were strewn about, some of them still sticky from sweat and slick, and there was the undeniable smell of an Omega’s heat throughout the room. His Mate’s heat. Seokjin let out a sigh, opening the windows first as he started the cleanup. Everywhere from Jungkook’s nest to the front door had been either used or abused, and he found bits of clothing even dangling from one of the bookshelves. When the fuck did that get there?

Laundry was thrumming in the washroom, the dishes in the sink quickly finished, and Seokjin was mopping the kitchen floor while breakfast cooked. That was when it hit Seokjin again. He stopped, kneeling up on his heels and pressing a wonder-stricken hand to his Scent mark, still feeling the slight scarring of Jungkook’s bite there. He let out a slow breath, smiling softly as he tilted his head to the side. Kim Seokjin, after everything that had happened, had found a Mate. Someone to be happy with. To laugh with and fight with. He couldn’t believe it, and if the physical reminders hadn’t been there, he still would have suspected he would wake up at any moment to find all of it had been one long, elaborate dream.

The pot on the stove sizzled, and Seokjin hurried to finish mopping and finish the meal. He was just laying out the bowls onto a tray, arranging silverware on it along with a cup of water, when the front door opened.

“We’re home, are you decent?” Jimin called out, poking his head in the door and cutely grinning.
“I am, but Jungkook’s not.” Seokjin smirked. “But he’s upstairs in my room resting.”

“She should have figured you to be one of those Alphas that renders your Omega an invalid…” Jimin sniffed the air, wrinkling his nose. “You haven’t aired the place out yet? It’s like walking underwater in here.”

“It’s like living in a bubble bath,” Taehyung giggled, following after Jimin.

“I did air it out already. And used up a whole can of de-Scenter.” Seokjin sighed, going back to the kitchen to retrieve Jungkook’s breakfast with Taehyung already clinging to his back like a koala.

“Woaaah…” Taehyung mused. He Scented into Seokjin’s neck gleefully, light-hearted and pure. “You smell really good together.”

Seokjin flushed. He’d been enthralled with the realization of the Mating for the last three days, but it hit him fully afresh, having someone else acknowledge it. Jimin pushed in next, curious but not quite as forward as Taehyung, and he complimented the new combined Scent, too. By that point, Yoongi and Kiara were filing in, the former helping the exhausted-looking latter by easing her in and seating her on the couch. They called out greeting to each other, muffled and casual, in that certain lilt of tone that only occurred within a close pack.

“Smells like the inside of a washing machine in here,” Yoongi joked. “And sex.”

“Hey, can I have some of that?” Taehyung asked, pointing to the bowl on the tray Seokjin had. The Alpha tugged the tray closer to himself, a bit protectively.

“No, I only made enough for Jungkook, so keep your paws off,” he warned, smirking so Taehyung wouldn’t take it too hard. The Beta whimpered, tugging on Seokjin’s T-shirt.

“Can we see him? I wanna see him!”

“Maybe after a bit, he’s too tired right now.” Seokjin patted his brother’s head, and the Beta pouted prettily.

“Come on, you’ve had him all to yourself for three days,” Jimin whined, butting in.

Seokjin frowned at that, not liking the argument, and Yoongi chuckled from the couch. “Welcome to pack life, Seokjin.”

“We were just Mated, too, you know,” Taehyung continued petulantly.

“And you’re trying to tell me you two didn’t end up in your own hotel room?” Seokjin arched an eyebrow, and Taehyung stopped in his tracks in the doorway. Jimin grinned archly, turning his face so that his humor was not quite so obvious. “Let him eat and rest awhile, and I’ll let you two in when he says he’s ready. Fair enough?”

“Fine,” Taehyung sighed, turning to follow Jimin into their room. Seokjin let out a little exhale, shaking his head in amusement before he went back into his room. Jungkook hadn’t moved from his previous spot. The tray found a place on the bedside table, and Seokjin turned to his Mate.
Seokjin tugged the comforter back, staring appreciatively at the softness of Jungkook’s features when he slept. His expression was that of a child, mouth slightly parted and the soft, wide expanse of his closed eyelids just begging to be kissed - a temptation to which Seokjin indulged with a smile. As innocent and youthful as Jungkook’s sleeping face was, however, everything below that suggested of much more matured, needy body. He was entirely naked underneath the tangle of blankets and sheets, his slender form firm with well-toned muscle and decorated in a plethora of red marks, bites and hickies. Seokjin kissed the scarred Scent mark on his neck, running a hand down the Omega’s well-tone body. Jungkook didn’t even react when Seokjin’s hand brushed over his flaccid member tucked beneath one corner of the sheets, now delicate in its satisfaction.

“Jungkookie,” Seokjin half-sang. “Wake up~”

The Omega didn’t react, and Seokjin rolled his eyes. He lifted both hands to Jungkook’s exposed nipples, twisting them to the side and making the boy gasp, shaking him from his deep slumber. When he opened his eyes and saw Seokjin smirking down at him, he reached up and gave a fairly sturdy punch to the Alpha’s arm, making the older man laugh.

“The pack is home, you should eat something and get some pants on before Jimin and Taehyung burst in to visit you.”

Jungkook pouted, rubbing at his eye with the heel of one hand and sighing. He moved to sit up and got about halfway before his face twitched in pain and he groaned, flopping back against the mattress. “Oh, fuck…” he whispered in deep complaint. Seokjin reached over and helped him sit up, then gently placed the tray in his lap before adjusting some pillows behind him to prop him up. Once situated, Seokjin found a pair of sweatpants and laid them across Jungkook’s knees, crawling back up onto the bed to curl up at Jungkook’s side. The Omega ate rather more slowly than usual, but it didn’t take him long. He patted Seokjin’s shoulder, indicating that he was finished, and Seokjin smiled up at him.

“How you feeling?” the Alpha inquired.

“Like I was hit by the sex bus,” the Omega shot back.

“That’s perfect,” Seokjin said, kissing Jungkook’s forearm, the closest bit of him that the Alpha’s lips could reach. “I’m proud of me.”

“Right, well why don’t you--”

A sudden eruption of obnoxiously persistent knocks interrupted their quiet moment, and Seokjin smirked up at Jungkook. Taehyung’s voice called through the door, with Jimin’s echoing in kind as they called the Omega’s name.

“Your public awaits,” Seokjin teased. Jungkook sighed, letting Seokjin slide the tray off the bed. With grunts of achiness and pain, Jungkook pulled the sweatpants on, catching the large t-shirt that Seokjin tossed to him. He had it halfway on before he realized it was one of Seokjin’s shirts, not his own, and he reveled in the smell of it for a moment before adjusting it on his shoulders properly.

“Okay,” Jungkook sighed. Seokjin unlocked the door, and instantly in bounded the two boys waiting, happily yipping as they leapt up onto the bed. Taehyung curled up against Jungkook’s side, naturally finding his usual spot, and Jimin knelt on his other side patting his head reassuringly and smiling down at him with pride. They started a barrage of questions, and Seokjin chuckled, taking the now empty tray out with him as he went back downstairs. He was sure they would spoil Jungkook plenty in his short absence.
Dropping the dishes into the sink, he heard the door to Namjoon and Kiara’s room open, and turned to find Yoongi standing there with an expression of some trepidation. Seokjin paused, sensing in the air that something was off.

“Where’s Namjoon and Hoseok?” Seokjin asked, seeing the weariness in Yoongi’s shoulders and automatically moving to start a pot of coffee for him.

“They went to the island,” Yoongi said quietly. “Jackson said he found a lead that may answer some questions about Jungkook’s brother. They said they’d be back tonight.”

Seokjin frowned. “That’s not good. That sounds like a trap, Yoongi.”

“I know,” the Omega sighed. “And Namjoon thinks so, too. But he said if it’s for Jungkook, he’s willing to take some risks. As long as the pack and the packhouse are safe, he’s going to try.”

“He’s been protective of Jungkook ever since he first found him,” Seokjin said quietly, crossing his arms as they both watched the coffee maker percolate. “I remember Namjoon talking about him back then, and it was like he had found a diamond abandoned in an alleyway.”

“Yeah…” The bubbling steam of the coffee maker punctuated the air with a moistness, the smell of coffee slowly slipping into the room, weakly attempting to mask the smell that said that this room had Jungkook’s chosen nest in it. “And that kind of devoted love has its own dangers. But to make matters more complicated… I think Kiara’s pups are going to come, and very soon.”

Seokjin blinked, worry reflected in his eyes as he turned to the younger wolf. “How soon?”

Yoongi pursed his lips, as if in contemplation. “Very soon. I think her contractions have already started, Seokjin.”

The Alpha took in a sharp inhale, letting it out slowly. “We should call a doctor, just in case.”

The Omega nodded. “That’s exactly what I thought. I just wanted to check with you.” Yoongi looked up for a minute at Seokjin, thoughtfully tilting his head as he went to retrieve two mugs for them. “You do realize you’re the lead Alpha until they get back, right?”

Seokjin paused, his hand on the handle of the coffeepot, and bit his lip. “Yeah, I know.” He slowly poured them their two cups, and they sat down at the table, careful to avoid sticking their feet under the table and into Jungkook’s nest. “I don’t like it either, but it can’t be helped.”

“Seokjin, I have no issue with you being the lead Alpha for the time being.”

Arching an eyebrow, Seokjin slowly added sugar to his coffee. “I’m a bit surprised at that. You of all people have the right to have misgivings. You saw what I was like before.”

“Call me soft,” Yoongi said with a frown. “But I, of all people, understand what forgiveness means.”

Seokjin nodded at that in understanding, teeth working at his lip a little bit. “I’ll call the hospital, you check on Kiara. If she’s still having contractions, time how far apart they are. I won’t be able to go in her nest, since I’m an Alpha. But since Namjoon is gone, she may let you in.”
“I’ll need Taehyung and Jungkook’s help, most likely,” Yoongi frowned. “If this is really happening.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t.” Seokjin let out a sigh, pulling out his cell phone. “It would be better if Namjoon was here for this.”

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Life, however, never liked following much of a schedule. Kiara’s contractions lasted throughout the entire day, through dinner and into the night, just intermittent enough that the midwife didn’t see much cause for concern. By the time ten o’clock came around, Jungkook was up and around, gingerly following after Taehyung and Yoongi and running things back and forth into Kiara’s nest to help make her more comfortable.

Seokjin was on the phone for what felt like the hundredth time, calling his brother and cursing when the ringing clicked away into his voicemail.

“Where the fuck are they?” Seokjin hissed, tossing the phone onto his bed with a sigh. The door creaked open, Jungkook poking his head in, and he offered Seokjin an attempt at a reassuring smile.

“Hey,” the Omega said quietly. “No word from Namjoon?”

“None. And they should have been home hours ago. This isn’t going to help Kiara’s stress levels at all.”

“Or yours,” Jungkook pointed out, wrapping his arms around Seokjin’s waist from behind. “He’ll be home as soon as he can. Trust him.”

“It’s not that I don’t trust him, it’s that I’m worried about him.”

Jungkook, in reply, nuzzled gently into the dip of Seokjin’s shoulder blades. Something about the gesture made Seokjin exhale a slow, heavy sigh, his muscles doing their best to relax from the tension that had been slowly building over the last several hours. Jungkook lifted his head a bit, pressing a kiss to the back of Seokjin’s neck that was barely a breath, and Seokjin shut his eyes momentarily, soaking in the soothing effects of his Omega.

“How is Kiara doing?”

A soft chuckle. “Well, I’ve never witnessed a birth before, so I’m not too certain. But I think she’s doing as well as can be expected. She’s practically squeezed mine and then Taehyung’s hand off, and she’s screamed at Yoongi almost as much as she’s screamed at the contractions.” The Omega was quiet for a moment, then laid his forehead gently against Seokjin’s back. In a lower voice, he added, “I may be wrong, but… I get the feeling her water is going to break soon, and things will really start.”

Seokjin’s brow furrowed. “How soon, do you think?”

“I dunno. Probably before midnight, I guess?” He felt, rather than saw, the slight shrug that lifted Jungkook’s shoulders. “I think it might be her smell.”
“Well, you’ve been around her this many years, you can probably tell the slighter differences.”

“That makes it sound gross, somehow.”

“No, not really.” It was Seokjin’s turn to shrug. “Pack members in small, close-knit packs often can sense when other wolves are going into their heats and ruts, if they’ve been together long enough. If you think about it, any prior warning can be a help, no?”

“I suppose so.” Jungkook paused, then added. “Also, I’m kind of glad we made the decision to wait.”

Seokjin chuckled. “Intimidated by the prospect of labor?”

The Omega was quiet for a long moment, and Seokjin turned around in the man’s arms to find him playfully sulking.

“Maybe.”

He laughed again, kissing Jungkook’s head. “There’s more than enough time. Let’s go check on things downstairs.”

As soon as their feet hit the landing at the bottom of the stairs, a sudden half-shout half-howl shrieked through the walls of Kiara’s room, echoing against the walls in a long, desperate cry. Jimin was sitting curled up on the couch, a book held in his hands that he had been attempting for the last hour or so to read.

“It’s hard to listen to,” Jimin sighed, looking up at Jungkook and Seokjin. “I feel like I should go in and help somehow.”

“Yeah, but you’d just aggravate her more,” Jungkook said with a level of certainty. Seokjin sat down on the couch, pulling Jungkook in his lap.

“Other than the obvious,” Seokjin said to Jimin after a moment, “How are you doing?”

Jimin looked over at Seokjin, pouting his lips a bit in thought. “I’m a little sad I couldn’t go help Namjoon, but… I’m not surprised he made me stay behind, after what happened.”

“Yeah,” Seokjin hummed, petting Jungkook’s hair. “I think that’s fair.”

The younger Alpha sighed. “I just wanna try to be helpful.”

“You’ll have your chances,” Seokjin reassured him, “Just don’t push things before their time.”

Jungkook said nothing, his head craned over towards the door to Kiara’s nest. If he had been in his wolf form, Seokjin was sure his ears would have been perked up, tilting in to listen carefully to the little sounds beyond the door. Suddenly, Yoongi was calling out Jungkook’s name, and the Omega frantically leapt into action, pushing his way out of Seokjin’s arms, off his lap and rushing into the door.

Seokjin looked over at Jimin, who shrugged. “Maybe we should make tea?” The younger nodded,
Meanwhile, the inside of the room Namjoon and Kiara had been sharing was utter chaos. In the last several hours, Kiara had spent any spare moment between contractions piling up her items around the bed in very particular ways. Namjoon’s shirt hung up over the headboard, dangling down until it brushed down against her pillow. Her grandmother’s jewelry box perched on the side table, an antique brush that she loved perched on top of it. Namjoon’s collection of books on evolution and socio-political changes was stacked up on the floor to the height of the bed. Taehyung, Yoongi and the midwife were all trying to dodge their way around the comforting items, doing their best not to disturb the delicate balance as they offered her cool water and more pillows. The room smelled heavily of coffee and (although notably weaker) of woodfire smoke.

At the moment, Kiara’s face was flushed, Taehyung tenderly patting at her forehead with a damp cloth and frowning down at her in worry. Yoongi was listening to the midwife’s order, a long rambly explanation that was murmured in hushed tones.

“What’s happened?” Jungkook asked, receiving no answer for an infuriating moment and having to repeat himself.

“Her water broke,” Taehyung explained. He gestured for Jungkook to come nearer, and the Omega dodged a pile of Namjoon’s beanie hats on the floor so he could stand at Kiara’s other side. Instantly, her pale hand reached out, seeking his desperately. The moment their fingers entangled, Kiara squeezed down, letting out little cries as she lay there with her eyes closed, just on the tail end of a contraction. She clenched even more tightly at their hands, and Jungkook worked his bottom lip, biting back the complaint at the pain, and waited patiently with her.

Kiara’s breathing slowed, and Jungkook reached up to brush her curly red bangs away from her forehead. She slowly, painstakingly opened her eyes to look up at him. Already she looked so tired, but she glowed with a mature strength and determination that had Jungkook held in awe.

“Jungkook…” she gasped, trying to smile up at him. “Jungkook-Jungkook, my baby…”

“I’m here,” he reassured her, leaning down and touching his forehead to hers.

“Jungkook, where’s Namjoon?” Kiara’s face crumpled, since she already knew the only answer he could give. Her green eyes pleaded with him, to please, please tell her differently. “Is he going to be here soon?”

“I’m sure he will be,” Jungkook murmured. “He’s probably on his way right now.” Jungkook licked his lips, bit at them for a moment, then added. “You know he would want you to focus on your pup right now, and not worry about him. He’ll be okay.”

It made him feel guilty, even attempting to have such confidence in their leader’s safety when he, for one, had no real reason to believe otherwise and, for another, was part of the reason Namjoon had gone out in the first place.

“You’re right,” Kiara nodded, taking a few noisy deep breaths to brace herself. “It’s the puppy’s time.”

“The puppy’s time.” He repeated the phrase to help her believe and focus on it a little more, squeezing her hand back in a feigned display of confidence and understanding. After a few moments, he smirked playfully, kissing her knuckles with a certain aura of lightheartedness. “Hey, at
least the pup didn’t choose a really bad time and place for this important life event. Like…say, in the middle of the woods at night in fucking winter, right?”

“Don’t jinx my pup’s Presenting or I’ll grind your ass into a flour to make my motherfucking pancakes out of, I swear to fucking god.” The threat gradually rose in pitch and animosity, the pain of the birth striking her from the inside out and leaving her nearly screaming the words at the end. Jungkook looked up briefly at Taehyung, and the Beta’s eyes were sparkling with amusement.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, Seokjin was checking his phone obsessively, seeing no word from Namjoon or Hoseok. Jimin sipped at his tea, watching the older Alpha in concern. Seokjin called his brother one more time, leaving a message.

“Hey, Namjoon. Please call me back as soon as you can. Kiara’s having your pup, probably this very moment. We’re all safe here, but…” Seokjin breathed in shakily, and Jimin could see that the Alpha’s hands were trembling a little. “Everyone’s still worried sick about you. Get home safe.”

The man set down his cell phone, barely two seconds passing before he was hitting the button again to check for a message he may have missed. Jimin reached out, laying his smaller, round hand on top of Seokjin’s long, angular one.

“Seokjin,” he said slowly, meeting his eyes with a calm evenness. “I’m sure he’s fine. It’s a long drive to the island, they could just have been delayed and had to start out much later.”

“But then why isn’t he answering his phone?!” Seokjin sighed in exasperation. “We shouldn’t have let them go.”

Jimin pursed his lips together. Silence encompassed the table, save for the muffled shouts and cries from Kiara’s nest, and the elder Alpha rested his head in his hands, tension oozing off of him in little waves like a radio signal, wavering and uneven. A long time passed, and Jimin watched the clock on the stove slowly and agonizingly tick away into the night. It was now three in the morning.

“Seokjin…” Jimin whispered, his fears compounding in the silence and bubbling up into something resembling panic. “What if… what if the Rising Gods found them snooping around?”

The Alpha looked up at Jimin through his hands, a frown evident on his features. “I don’t know. I really… I just don’t know.”

“They went with several wolves,” Jimin pointed out, “But the Rising Gods clan is huge, I don’t know if they’d run into all of them, like Tae-Tae and I did, or if they’d be able to fend them off…” He pouted, staring into his empty teacup as though it was keeping all the answers from him.

“Meanwhile, we just have to sit here and do nothing.”

“No,” Seokjin said, in a bit of a harsh tone that made the younger look up in question. “We’re doing a lot. The Omegas inside can focus on their tasks more easily, because we’re out here to protect them. Because we’re here keeping an eye out for Namjoon and Hoseok to come home. That’s a whole lot, Jimin. And you know that.”

The younger Alpha’s eyes flickered downward as though in embarrassment, and slowly, he began to nod in agreement, a tiny sigh escaping his lips. “You’re right.”

Their conversation was interrupted by a new sound, fresh and previously unheard of in the world—the first cry of Kiara’s pup. Seokjin and Jimin froze, staring at each other in alarm, mouths dropping open.
“Oh my god,” Seokjin breathed. They both leapt up, moving to the doorway. Seokjin was the one who dared try the handle first, twisting it and poking one head in.

“We heard the pup,” he called out gently. “Is…is it alright if we…?”

“Kiara?” Jungkook was asking, looking at her and waiting for her weak little nod. He turned to the two of them and waved them in. Seokjin slipped into the room, his footsteps as light as he could make them as he and Jimin crossed the floor. The midwife and Yoongi were seated on the edge of the room, exhausted and with their sleeves rolled up, but smiling in blissful contentment at the bed. Kiara was barely propped up by pillows, Taehyung and Jungkook hovering over her, one at each shoulder. The tiniest bundle was curled up against Kiara’s chest, and she smiled down at it with the warmest, most serene smile possible. The two Alphas slowly tiptoed into the room, and Seokjin’s senses positively tingled and crackled on edge from the headiness of the Omega hormones running rampant in the room. Despite the permission given, there was a protective aura still hovering around the edges of the room that told his senses that he shouldn’t trespass, that he shouldn’t be in there. But the draw of the tiny pup held in Kiara’s arms was too compelling, too drawing.

They came near, leaning in delicately on the edge of the bed. The pup was still discolored from birth, freshly cleaned with a little tuft of light-colored hair on top of the still-pliant head. Two tiny hands clutched instinctively at the blanket wrapped around, moving in time to the pup’s breathing as it rested.

Jungkook leaned in until his shoulder was up against Seokjin’s, a proud beaming grin on his face. “It’s a girl,” he breathed.

“A girl…”

“Seokjin, Jimin…” Kiara breathed quietly, smiling up at them. “Meet Naiara.”

They leaned in, eyes sparkling. Jimin reached out a tentative hand, touching a single finger to the velvety soft baby hand that coiled around his index finger without much hesitation. He practically purred. “Hello, Naiara…”

“She’s absolutely beautiful…” Seokjin almost sang into the quiet, looking over at Yoongi. “Were there any problems?”

“Not a one, once she was ready to go.” Yoongi exhaled, leaning back against the wall behind him and looking positively spent. “It all went smoother than expected.”

“I’m not surprised,” Seokjin hummed. He reached out and petted a hand over Kiara’s hair, a soothing gesture that made her sigh a little. “Not from our lead Omega. She was already a natural mother from the start.”

“She’s so beautiful…” Taehyung breathed in wonder, touching his fingers to the soft little head and then leaning down to kiss the crown ever-so-gently. Jimin moved up next to his Mate, slipping his arm around the Beta’s waist and pulling him close.

“Soon,” Jimin promised into his ear with a whisper. “We’ll keep trying.”

Taehyung sighed.
Everyone hovered around the baby for a few more minutes, and Yoongi came in with his trusted camera to shoot a few photos of everyone with the newborn pup and her mother. Then, the midwife scooted them out, insisting that both mother and child needed their rest. Jimin and Jungkook were the last to leave, nuzzling in to Kiara’s neck as she lifted her head a little to receive them, letting them Scent her gently. The smell of coffee and sweat mingled across her skin like a blended perfume, a powerful mist that hung in the air around her and coated everything. Jimin touched a hand to Naiara’s tiny wrist, smiling at Kiara for a long moment. She touched a hand to his round cheek in fondness, then quietly let him go. Jungkook nuzzled into her neck a little longer, even curling up as if he was about to crawl up and lie in the bed next to her, protecting her and the pup through the night. Kiara chuckled, albeit weakly, and leaned over to kiss Jungkook’s forehead.

“Try not to look quite so jealous,” Kiara teased. “You’ll always be one of my pups. You’re just not the youngest anymore.”

Jungkook pouted. “That wasn’t what I was thinking at all,” he lied.

“Of course not. You have your big, strong, handsome Alpha to keep you occupied,” she laughed, mocking him even in her exhaustion.

The male Omega dramatically looked down at the sleeping pup, saying, “You’ve been here less than an hour, and you can already see what a meanie she can be, Naiara.”

Kiara chuckled, patting playfully at Jungkook’s cheek, wordlessly sending him off to bed. Jungkook gave her forehead one last kiss before finally standing and leaving the room and the smell of Kiara and the newborn behind.

He nearly jumped out of his skin when he peered into the living room and found Seokjin sitting in the semi-darkness, all alone and facing the front door. He leaned a little further in, earning no reaction from the Alpha. He crept in, trying to drag his heels on the carpet a little in order to warn the Alpha gently of his presence, but upon further, closer inspection he found that Seokjin’s eyes were fluttering closed. As soon as Jungkook was close enough to try and warn him properly, he suddenly noticed the Omega and promptly jolted nearly a foot in the air out of shock, letting out a little cry that was certainly louder than necessary, given the hour. Jungkook shushed him, chuckling a little as he crawled onto the couch to get into his usual spot in Seokjin’s lap. It felt good to sit there, especially when Seokjin wrapped his arms around him, since it was a softer hold that his still-sore body appreciated, particularly given the late hour.

“Why aren’t you in bed?”

Seokjin grunted a little, grumpily nosing his way into Jungkook’s T-shirt. “Mmrgh. Waiting for Namjoon.”

“You can’t stay down here all night,” Jungkook insisted, running his hand along the back of Seokjin’s neck and massaging the tense muscles there. The Alpha instantly preened, leaning into Jungkook’s touch and blinking lazily. “Let’s just go to bed. They’ll be home soon enough.”

“I can’t,” Seokjin insisted. He was too sleepy to offer up much of a good argument, but he was stubbornly looking towards the front door as if willing the lead Alpha to come back through it immediately. With a grim, crooked quirk of his mouth, Jungkook went to the kitchen, retrieving a couple of pillows and a blanket for them from his nest and coming back to the couch. He curled up next to Seokjin, sighing as they arranged themselves on the cushions as best as they could.
“You rest first,” Jungkook instructed, sitting up and gently tugging Seokjin’s head into his lap, running his hands through the Alpha’s hair. “You’ve exhausted yourself worrying.”

“Mmrgph,” was the Alpha’s only reply, curling into Jungkook’s lap with only a thin, easily crumbled layer of resistance. He was asleep within moments, and Jungkook smiled down at him.

Unfortunately for his plan of standing guard for Namjoon and Hoseok, Jungkook had forgotten that he had obtained, in the last semester or so, the uncanny ability to sleep while sitting fully upright, and the hour wasn’t out before he was joining Seokjin in slumber, head angled to the side and lips slightly parted.

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Jungkook was woken up by the door opening, the slight jingling of keys and muffled voices. He opened his eyes and saw two welcome sights. His expression brightened, and he breathed a sigh of relief, shifting Seokjin’s head from out of his lap and rushing across the room to embrace Namjoon first, quickly followed by Hoseok.

“Thank god!” Jungkook whispered, clutching Namjoon’s arm as he felt so relieved he was dizzy. “Where the hell have you two been?”

Hoseok, looking like he had been dragged through hell by his ankles, blinked over at Namjoon. In the dim, bluish light of pre-drawn, Jungkook saw that they were both covered in mud and scratches, leaves sticking in Namjoon’s messy hair and a world-weariness that even permeated their Scents indisputably.

“We’ll talk about it more later today,” Namjoon sighed, laying a hand on Jungkook’s shoulder. “Right now we just wanna sleep.”

“Didn’t you get any of our messages?!” Jungkook hissed, looked between them frantically.

“No, I lost my phone,” Namjoon grimaced. “And Hoseok left his in the truck, so it was dead.”

“Namjoon,” Jungkook took firm hold of the lead Alpha by the shoulders, looking into his eyes. “We were trying to contact you because Kiara went into labor while you were gone, and she—“

The Alpha’s expression quickly crumpled like a tin can, and he paled, pushing past Jungkook and towards his bedroom in a few long-legged strides, rushing into the room before Jungkook could finish.

He halted in the door, mouth agape, and Jungkook peered in over his shoulder, smirking. “—had the baby.”

Lying amidst a gentle swaddling of blankets, barricaded in by the items Kiara had instinctively collected around her, Kiara looked like a princess locked into a tower and held captive by a deep sleep, the tiny bundle curled up next to her in a protective manner. Namjoon, the prince here to break the spell, stepped easily around the debris of collectibles, a normally clumsy man who quite suddenly found his grace, as though he had made his way up to the top of this tower a thousand times in his dreams.

Sensing his presence, Kiara’s eyes flickered open just as he came to the bedside, dirtied and smelling of the road, of the coolness of the night, of whatever it was he had had to fight through to get home to her. She smiled up at him, her green eyes meeting his in bliss as she reached out for his hand. He
took her pale fingers and entwined them with his own, his expression one of a man stunned as he stared down at her and the pup.

“Namjoonie,” she breathed quietly. “Meet your daughter.”

It was as though her voice broke the trance Namjoon was under, and he leaned in, touching his huge hand against the soft head, inspecting each one of the tiny fingers and toes, the delicate pout of the already petulant and egotistical mouth. Namjoon’s tears had started as soon as he had walked in the door, but they fell freely now, streaming down his cheeks as he looked up into Kiara’s proud eyes. She caught his lips in her own.

“My Alpha,” she whispered into his mouth.

“My Omega, my love.” Namjoon wept back. “My queen.”

“And your princess,” she giggled, angled the tiny pup so her father could see her. “Just as you predicted.”

The tears fell afresh, and Namjoon choked through a half-sob, half-laugh, biting at one of his knuckles in barely contained glee.

Jungkook smiled, stepping quietly out of the room. Hoseok was waiting at his side, looking into the room. He turned to meet Jungkook’s gaze, and he nodded in understanding.

“I should go let Yoongi know we’re home safe,” he whispered to Jungkook.

“I’m glad,” Jungkook whispered back. Hoseok leaned in, tugging Jungkook into another tight embrace, the irony being that the more tightly the Alpha squeezed his ribcage, the less prominent the tightness that had been lingering in his chest all night seemed to feel. Hoseok smiled at him, tickling lightly under his chin the way Hoseok had done since he was young, and then went upstairs. Jungkook returned to the living room, sighing but feeling relieved. He curled up against Seokjin’s body, seeking it for warmth and comfort.

At the little movement against him, Seokjin blinked awake, looking up at Jungkook in dazed question. Jungkook leaned in to kiss his cheek, brushing his hair back.

“They’re back. Safe and sound,” he breathed.

“Oh, thank god. Then I can kill them in the morning.” The half-awake Seokjin managed. But he squeezed Jungkook’s hand in his, silently seeking comfort.

Perhaps the arrival of the pup could have been considered quite ill-timed, keeping in mind everything in the pack house that weighed upon their lead Alpha’s shoulders. But nonetheless, she was a gift to their little family that was more than simply warmly received – but cherished.

Naiara, Jungkook suspected, would certainly grow to earn her title of princess.
Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here!

The baby is finally arrived! Let's welcome little Naiara, the cutie Kiajoon pup, into the world~♥

Hopefully the next chapter will have some answered questions to it, as we find out what happened on Hoseok and Namjoon's journey.

:> Thanks for all your love and support, my sweets. It helps on days I'm feeling down.

When I finish LINP I'm probably going to do a sort of author commentary audio recording answering some questions about the story and bg and characters, so if you'd like to see that, let me know (probs on like CC or Twitter or something). It feels rather self-indulgent but there's a lot that went into this story and the changes that was made in it that seem a shame to never go known. lol

Later, lovelies~♥
It's amazing. Life changes very quickly, in a very positive way, if you let it.

-Lindsey Vonn

In the morning, Jungkook found that he had a crick in his neck from the way he’d curled up against Seokjin, and he was jolted awake by the sound of clanking and talking in the kitchen. Jungkook sat up, Seokjin’s arm still heavily draped over his stomach and his hair sticking up on end, and blinked. The sunlight spilled into the living room, warm and white, and there was a buzz of energy that tingled through the household, gentle but distinct. He wriggled his way out of Seokjin’s arms, hearing the Alpha grunt, half-asleep. Ignoring him and moving into the kitchen, he found Hoseok standing in front of the stove, his back to the pan of scrambled eggs and with his arms crossed as he pouted at Yoongi. The shorter Omega, in that moment, was sitting at the table with shoulders shaking as he chuckled at something he had said to Hoseok.

“That’s not what I was suggesting,” Hoseok sighed back, and Yoongi just chuckled harder, busying his hands with tearing apart one of their paper napkins bit by bit as he watched Hoseok cook. “Y’know, for being so clingy last night, you’re being awful mean to me today.”

“Part of the job,” Yoongi laughed, turning to see Jungkook scratching at his stomach from the doorway to the kitchen. “Morning, Jungkook.”

Hoseok sent him a smile. “You hungry?”

Jungkook gave a little noise of assent, coming to curl up against Hoseok’s side and wrap his arms around him, burying his nose in the Alpha’s shirt and inhaling his sweet smell. Hoseok patted his head, chuckling and saying over Jungkook’s head, “Don’t look so jealous, you got your turn.”

“It’s always my turn,” Yoongi grunted.

“Would you like some eggs?” Hoseok asked, brushing Jungkook’s hair out of his eyes and speaking softly. Jungkook nodded. The Alpha laughed, turning and taking Jungkook with him. “Yoongi has
Jungkook grunted, then finally let go of Hoseok and moved to sit at the table across from Yoongi. He rested his chin in his palm, watching Yoongi tear up the already tiny bits of soft paper into even tinier ones, until he could barely see the flecks of white pressed between Yoongi’s squarish fingers.

“So what happened on the island?” Jungkook queried, looking over at Hoseok. “Why were you so late?”

Hoseok’s movements slowed, and his expression fell. He slid out some eggs onto a plate, turning to push it in front of Yoongi before returning to the stove. “I think Namjoon wants to explain it to you.”

“But he’s in with Kiara and the baby,” Jungkook argued quietly. “He’ll probably be in there all day. Just tell me.”

Hoseok sighed. “Even so…”

“Namjoon will have to be out and about anyways,” Yoongi said as he ate, demurely putting more salt on his food while Hoseok’s back was turned. “He has to go put in paperwork at the dean’s office about his absences yesterday and today, and Friday’s for the rest of the pack. Hopefully they’ll take the excuse of pack business without needing a meeting.”

“I’ll need to put in extra hours this week at the shop.” Hoseok sighed, “We’re already pretty tight on the food budget this month.”

Jungkook paused, mid-buttering a slice of bread, and pressed his lips together in concern. He knew he’d been eating more food at the pack house, since he’d started his ‘house arrest.’

“I can put more hours back in once I start my patrols again,” he offered helpfully, sprinkling a spoonful of sugar into his bread. Hoseok looked over at Yoongi, and the two exchanged a look of concern. Jungkook glanced between them, worry bubbling in his belly. “What?”

“Talk to Namjoon,” Hoseok sighed. He set the two remaining plates on the table, sitting between the two Omegas.

“But I’ve already been Mated, there’s no more danger, right?” Jungkook said. The other two didn’t answer him, a silence stretching on. Jungkook poked a fork at his eggs and noticed that Yoongi wasn’t eating as much.
“Yoongi?” Hoseok mumbled quietly. The Omega stood up, dumping the rest of his food onto Jungkook’s plate.

“I’m not very hungry. Jungkook, make sure you eat plenty. Don’t worry about the money right now.” He leaned down to kiss his Mate on the forehead. “Thanks for breakfast, Hoseok.”

Hoseok watched Yoongi leave with worry in his eyes, and then turned to Jungkook. “I guess he’s just tired.” The Alpha gave a weak smile. “He acts like he isn’t so clingy but you know he was curled around me like a scarf all night.”

“I’m not surprised, it’s Yoongi.”

There was the sound of the downstairs bedroom door opening then, and the two of them listened as they heard Namjoon’s voice coming from the living room, then Seokjin’s sleepy mumble. Jungkook shoved the rest of the eggs into his mouth, mentally thanking Yoongi as he scuffled off into the living room, where Namjoon was seated on the couch up against Seokjin’s side as the older Alpha lay still curled under Jungkook’s blanket.

“That’s good,” Seokjin was saying, a smile on his face. “You’re her father, after all.”


“Namjoon?” Jungkook queried, coming up behind the lead Alpha and moving tentatively up against his back. He wasn’t as broad or as warm as Seokjin by any means, but there was plenty of room for him to curl, like he had in the early days when he’d learned how to ask for comfort.

“Morning, Kookie,” Namjoon chuckled. He sent Jungkook that tender smile that would never have won any awards or defeated any critics, but which had convinced Jungkook early on that the usually cool, collected leader had a gentle heart when it came down to it, making him feel secure and safe. “I need to talk to you two.”

“Both of us?” Seokjin arched an eyebrow, watching the way Jungkook’s fist curled up against the nape of Namjoon’s neck, his cheek against the Alpha’s shoulder.
“What happened on the island?” Jungkook asked.

“Well…” Namjoon sighed. “We got there with Jackson and part of his pack. We had a contact within the Rising Gods Clan saying they wanted to meet with us.”

“That sounds like a trap,” Jungkook pointed out, his brow furrowing. “You shouldn’t have gone.”

“Yeah, well, sometimes being part of a family means you have to take some risks. You wanted answers - we all wanted answers for you. But I’m afraid it’s a little more complicated than that.”

“How so?”

“We met with him, at the border between our lands. He was alone, and he hadn’t told the rest of the pack about the meeting. Not even their lead Alpha.” Namjoon frowned. “He took as big a risk as we did, in the end. But he explained that there had been some rumors about the Jeon family, that there was a reason their pack was so strong and their Matings so sure. It was like the pack could communicate telepathically at times, like they were in-tune with each other.”

“There was a rumor,” Namjoon said slowly, “That wolves of the Jeon line, being of a more pure blood, still carried the Bonding ability, perhaps in some complicated gene. Jeons choose their Mates, and it’s stronger than most wolf Matings nowadays.”

Jungkook lifted his head, meeting eyes with Seokjin. His stomach churned.

“But we don’t even know if I am a Jeon,” Jungkook mumbled. “The pound had my name written as Jeong.”

“They could have gotten it wrong,” Namjoon shrugged. “Maybe you did, I don’t know. But either way, the Rising Gods pack suspects that you may be one of the only two Jeons still alive.”

“That’s not how genetics work anyways, right?” Seokjin mumbled, “Even if Jungkook inherited that ability it would be dor-”

“It’s connected to his wolf’s genetics,” Namjoon said slowly. “All of us have the gene, they think, but some people are able to ‘trigger’ it. That ability is suspected to be connected to the same genes that determine his Presenting. In the Jeon family’s case…it’s attached to the genes in their Omegas.”
Jungkook swallowed. “So me Presenting as an Omega means that the Rising Gods think I have the gene.”

“And your brother,” Namjoon said slowly, “Or the man they say is your brother, presented as a Beta last year.”

The room seemed to spin a little, and he felt Seokjin sitting up, grabbing his arm, but it felt very far away for the moment, as Jungkook sank into his own head.

“Yunho didn’t want to get involved in any of this,” Namjoon said slowly, “According to the man we spoke to. But he’s under pressure from his family to create the strongest wolf pack known to man, to make a legend for their family name. But they see Yunho as a weak leader, and there’s been a coup rising for some time now. It doesn’t help that he’s shown ‘mercy’ by allowing some pack members to remain in the Rising Gods, or by following some of the more humanitarian pack rules. The pack members want to be the first to break open the world’s understanding of Bonding. They don’t just have pretty members - many of them are scientists or lawyers or just come from family businesses that make a fuckton of money. But none of them are used to losing.”

Namjoon stared at Jungkook, who sat gazing distantly off at the carpet, his expression unreadable. The lead Alpha bent forward, patting his head. “Jungkook, that’s why they want you. They’re willing to risk it if there’s even a chance.”

“So what about my brother? If he’s a Beta, there’s still a chance he could Bond. How did he end up with them?” Jungkook breathed. He felt Seokjin’s hand reached out and fall gently against his back, trying to reassure him or trying to brace him, the Omega wasn’t sure.

“From what I gathered, they found out about the gene after he joined them. He’s been forced to stay…” Namjoon frowned. “The man who brought us there… he showed us the pen he was being kept in.”

Jungkook’s eyes flashed, icy blue with fury as he met Namjoon’s eyes. “What?!”

“Yeah, I know.” Namjoon sighed, his expression pained with the memories of what he had seen. But he offered Jungkook a grim smile. “But he escaped.”

“Escaped? Where? When?”

“The pen was empty. I got the feeling our little insider let him out, but to be honest, I don’t know for sure. The Rising Gods didn’t know yet. It was the middle of the night, and the pen was empty, no sign of how he got out. I’m only pissed we can no longer prove it and so can’t call the authorities on their asses. I’m sure the pen is disassembled by now.”
Jungkook stood up, abandoning the comforting touches and Scents of his lead Alpha and his Mate, pacing up and down the room a bit as they watched him sadly.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon said quietly. “You know this means we may never find your brother. He’s long gone by now, in all likelihood.”

The Omega bit his lip. They had probably gotten there so close. They could have helped him. He knew without a doubt in his heart that if Namjoon had found him, he would have brought him home. To their home. But he had had to leave and slipped out right under their noses. Jungkook’s pacing got more frantic, and he heard Seokjin softly calling his name, but he didn’t stop until he had let out some of the nervous energy, had let the words sink in a little more.

“Namjoon,” he said finally. “Was his Scent still there?”

The man nodded.

“What was his Scent?”

Namjoon glanced over at Seokjin for a moment, then back at Jungkook, his lips curved down into a strange expression that was somewhere between sadness and something almost like empathy.

“Fresh paint,” he said slowly, “And saltwater.”

Jungkook sank to his knees on the floor. He’d known, somehow. Maybe in the shattered, frayed edges of his memory or perhaps instinctively, but he’d known.

His brother was out there. His blood brother. Alone. But utterly and hopelessly out of their reach.

“Jungkook…” Seokjin said quietly, suddenly at Jungkook’s side. “Are you okay?”

The Omega nodded, albeit slowly. “I’ve never even met him, but somehow, I’m more worried about him than me.”

“Well, be that as it may,” Namjoon hummed. “You’re at risk. While we were there, the Rising Gods clan found out that he had escaped. We almost got caught, even though we technically hadn’t done anything. We had to hide in the woods for hours, and we only managed it because he knew how to hide us, and helped us wait until it was safe. If they had found us, I’m sure they wouldn’t have
hesitated to beat out of us whatever they could.”

That explained their tattered and dirty state when they had come home, then. And also the delay.

“Namjoon…” Seokjin spoke quietly, staring down at the little bit of space he had left between Jungkook’s knees and his own. His face was dark and drawn tightly as he looked up at his brother. “It was Jae, wasn’t it?”

The question wasn’t really a question, it was spoken as more of a knowing statement, and Namjoon only confirmed it by the way he pressed his lips together.

“He told me not to tell you,” Namjoon mumbled. “But I figured you’d know. You know him better than anyone.”

Jungkook got a bitter taste on his tongue as soon as Jae’s name was spoken aloud, but nonetheless he mentally sent out a thanks to the man that, for whatever reason, had helped send Namjoon and Hoseok home safe to him.

“He’s different now, Jinnie,” Namjoon said quietly as he touched a hand to his ear, scratching it contemplatively. “I don’t know how, but he seems…kind of broken. I don’t think he’s going to last much longer in the clan.”

Seokjin’s lips pressed together so tightly that the color drained out of his normally pink lips, and he stood up. “I figured that’s why you wanted to talk to us both.” He sighed. “I’m going to go get something to eat.”

“Jinnie,” Namjoon’s voice was suddenly reprimanding, forcing the Alpha to turn and arch an eyebrow in question. “That’s not why. Or rather, not the main reason. They know you two are Mated by now, I’m sure. Or if they don’t, they’ll know very soon. You’re in just as much danger as Jungkook.”

“But why? We’re Mated, what can they do now?” Jungkook’s voice rose in concern.

“I don’t know what they’ll do, but I know that they want to know what makes a wolf Bond with another. And you two are both Bonded now, or so they suspect.”

“So what do we do, live in house arrest forever?” Jungkook spat, temper boiling. “Keep me locked
Namjoon’s lips curved up into the first semblance of a smile for quite some time, and he chuckled. “No, that’s not what I’m suggesting. I know you wouldn’t put up with it for long, anyways. What I’m suggesting is that we take whatever evidence we have, whatever case we may have, to the authorities. Perhaps it won’t do much for us, maybe it’ll do everything. But at least we would be on the right side of the law, and inevitably when the Rising Gods oversteps, we’ll have that ace in hand.”

Jungkook, feeling the aura of anxiety mingling now with a strain of hope in the air, turned to see Seokjin’s eyes glimmering. Their gazes met, and Seokjin gave a little smile before saying, “I think that sounds like a reasonable place to start.”

“Excellent. That means you two just need to lay low for a little longer, until we can at least speak to a court about, I dunno, a restraining order? Maybe even force the Rising Gods to be disbanded, I’m not sure. We’ll have to talk to some people and figure it out.”

It was a lot more work than it sounded like, and Jungkook was aware at least of that. Things like restraining orders and forcing pack duties and rules was a messy, subjective business in the eyes of the law, and it would likely involve a lot of hoops, paperwork, and begging to speak to the right people. It was also a danger - not only to them, but to Namjoon, to the pack. Calling out another pack on unjust actions was like painting a red bullet mark on your forehead, and would likely cause some packs to lose respect for them. But if the Rising Gods was really that awful, had that bad of a reputation, had truly become that poisoned and corrupted, then it was possible other packs would rise up to support them and their claims. It was messy, it was risky. It had to be done.

Jungkook nodded. “Let’s do it. I want justice for my brother.”

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Exactly as predicted, it was a long process. Over a month into the claims, and Namjoon was exhausted. Jungkook and Seokjin were allowed to go back to school as usual, but stayed close to each other at all available times. Seokjin was often waiting outside Jungkook’s classroom every day, his expression hardened as he watched each passing wolf with suspicion.

Jungkook, on the other hand, was feeling optimistic. Perhaps it was in his nature to not remain down for so long, or perhaps he wasn’t good at taking things very seriously, but how could he remain depressed, when actions were being taken as best as they could, and when he had his Mate waiting for him every single day?
He leapt forward, almost bowling the Alpha over, and reveling in the quiet, cautious whispers around them. He nuzzled into Seokjin’s tank top, clung to his bare arms, and smirked up at the way Seokjin always tried to look nonchalant whenever Jungkook indulged in the blatant PDA. Jungkook didn’t care. He was now a Claimed Omega, happily Mated long before half his peers, and there were no longer annoying advances or flirtatious Alphas dogging his every step. He was taken more seriously, which Seokjin found despicably shallow but which neither of them could do anything about.

It also helped that Jungkook liked going through his day able to clearly smell Seokjin around him, permeating off his clothes, his skin, hovering in the air like a comforting cloud. Sometimes, he felt like he even heard Seokjin, like a distant blur of a memory playing in his mind’s ear. It was like he was talking, in that gentle lilt of his, but Jungkook never understood the words.

Most times, if Seokjin was actually feeling irritable or angry, Jungkook knew before the class had even ended.

“Jungkook,” Seokjin grunted, a weak, breathless chuckle escaping him as he tried to pry the needy Omega off of him. “I can’t breathe.”

“Mmm...you smell all happy today,” Jungkook smirked, hooking his arm in Seokjin’s as they went to walk out to Seokjin’s truck. “And maybe a little horny.”

“God, I…” Seokjin rolled his eyes, but there was a smile creeping and twitching around the edges of his lips, right where the dimpled curved hid. “Are you sure that’s not you you’re smelling there? You’ve got the libido of a fucking rabbit, after all.”

“Hmmm…” Jungkook chuckled, opening the passenger side door, the wave of oppressive heat from inside the vehicle stifling. “Maybe it’s my youth. You may have forgotten what that feels like.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Seokjin growled, “Or I won’t let you ride me.”

“Are you using sex to bargain with me, Kim Seokjin? That’s so cruel. Sex is not a commodity, it’s an activity. An activity that feels damn good.”

“You’re getting so spoiled,” Seokjin rolled his eyes. “If I didn’t like you so much I’d--”
“You’d what?” Jungkook laughed, shoving at the Alpha’s shoulders as he stopped at a stop sign, looking over at him and furrowing his brows. Jungkook smirked at him, as though he’d won some sort of game, watching as Seokjin surveyed around them as if searching for any eyes pointed their direction. Then, Jungkook let out a hiccup of a sound as Seokjin reached over and grabbed firm hold of his shirt collar, and slammed his mouth unceremoniously against Jungkook’s. He wanted to laugh, to make fun of the eager way Seokjin held him, as if appreciating and reprimanding him at the same time. But he had no time to come up with a decent retort as suddenly something slipped between Seokjin’s teeth and past Jungkook’s tongue, nearly choking him as the overwhelming taste of full-power cinnamon bit across his taste buds. He coughed as Seokjin pulled away, the Alpha licking his lips in satisfaction as he turned back to the road as if nothing had happened. It was one of Seokjin’s cinnamon-flavored mints that he had gotten addicted to, a too-strong taste that no one else in the pack could bother to keep in their mouths for longer than a dozen or so seconds, and he had just slyly forced it into Jungkook’s mouth.

“You trying to kill me?” Jungkook snapped, when he had managed to adjust to the strong flavor of cinnamon, his eyes threatening to water.

Seokjin shrugged. “Sharing is caring.”

When they pulled up to the packhouse, Jungkook was already bickering with Seokjin again, although this time over pizza toppings, and when that didn’t successfully aggravate Seokjin into full-on playful mode, Jungkook used a free moment while the Alpha’s back was turned to lay a few taunting slaps to his ass. Seokjin sighed, still on the phone with the pizza place, and looked up into the heavens as if praying for patience. Jimin was at the table as they entered the kitchen, looking up and sending them both a warm smile as he went through data sheets he had brought home from work to survey.

“You ordering dinner?” Jimin asked Seokjin, earning a nod from the older Alpha. “Kiara asked for extra pineapple. I’m sure Yoongi will be happy about that.”

“Is Kiara awake?!” Jungkook’s head popped up from the other side of Seokjin’s shoulder, where he had been reaching up to rub at Seokjin’s hair, making it stand on end in little Medusa-like strands from where his hair gel still clung.

“Yes,” Jimin rolled his eyes. “But the baby is still asleep so don’t--”

Jungkook was already rushing to the downstairs bedroom, abandoning the two Alphas. Jimin sighed, and Seokjin laughed, his voice squeaking on the phone so much that the pizza shop worker on the other end had to repeat back their order twice.
“He’s so giddy these days,” Seokjin pointed out as he ended the call, sitting down at the dining room table for no particular reason. Jimin hummed in agreement, reading glasses perched on the tip of his nose, threatening to fall at any moment.

“Mostly because of you, I think.” Jimin said.

Seokjin blinked, and Jimin glanced up, smirking mischievously.

“Don’t get me wrong, he’s always been silly and utterly ridiculous. But now he seems more at ease to be that silly. Like he just knows you’ll put up with him.”

“Isn’t that just a side effect of being Mated, though?” Seokjin teased, resting his chin in his palm. “He knows he’s stuck with me and I’m stuck with him? That kind of thing?”

Jimin stared at Seokjin for a moment as though he had just uttered the most asinine thing on the planet. Heaving a deep sigh, he returned to filling in notes on his pad in rushed, heavy strokes of his pen. “Delude yourself as much as you want, but Jungkook loves you. I don’t make the rules.” A few more swipes of his pen, and Jimin glanced up again, seeing the conflict in Seokjin’s eyes. “You make him relaxed. You let him act like a little kid. He didn’t get much of a chance to be a little brat when he was actually a kid, so you give him that.”

“Isn’t that the same as saying I spoil him, basically?”

The younger Alpha laughed. “Yes.”

“You two!” Namjoon hissed, suddenly stepping into the kitchen and making both of them jump nearly a foot out of their seats.

“What the fuck, Namjoon?” Jimin mumbled, trying to erase the long pencil mark he had accidentally scrawled across the page.

“I come home from a long day at the courthouse and I wanna cuddle with my Mate, but your Mates are hogging up my bed!” The lead Alpha fumed, his face crumpled in irritation as he jutted one harsh finger toward the bedroom. “That happens to be my Mate and pup in there, you know! Get them out!”

“Just tell them off yourself, jeez,” Seokjin laughed, sliding his chair out and following Jimin to the
downstairs bedroom. When walking in, the soft purple curtains were opened, allowing light to spill in on the bed which was (in all fairness to Namjoon) extremely crowded. Kiara was positioned up on several pillows, laying on top of the main comforter and wearing a pair of Namjoon’s favorite Ryan socks, a thin afghan draped across her and the baby she held against her chest. On either side of her lay Jungkook and Taehyung, knees pulled up just enough that they could balance on the edges of the bed without falling off, each with one hand draped up and against the baby’s tiny back. All four were now softly asleep, the sound of their overlapping sleep breathing echoing in the room, and the Scent of comforting, protective Omegas wafting through the room like a heady incense.

Seokjin and Jimin looked over at each other.

“Well, fuck.” Seokjin breathed, as Jimin’s whole face and body seemed to curl up in glee. “That’s really cute.”

“They’re so cute!” Jimin breathed, excitedly fumbling in his pocket for his phone. With one hand he pushed up his glasses further onto his nose, moving further into the room to get a good angle for his photos. Jimin, Seokjin had come to realize, liked to document everything in his phone, but particularly when it came to Taehyung or Jungkook. He had a feeling that Jimin would be the best resource in five or so years down the line, when anyone needed baby photos of Naiara. Jimin would have thousands by then.

“Tae-Tae…” Jimin half-sang, half-whispered, brushing Taehyung’s long bangs out of his face. “You’re going to make such a good parent, I know it. Look at you.”

Taehyung, meanwhile, with his puffy cheeks and innocent, unaware expression in sleep, looked closer to a child than anyone allowed to have a child. And Seokjin had to admit Jungkook was basically the same, curled up with his long, unfairly masculine and perfect hands coiled up protectively against Naiara’s back, his face pressed against Kiara’s shoulder. Seokjin’s mind reeled back like a hearty push to an invisible rewind button to their conversation under the table, about the future.

“I do I want them. Y’know. Pups. I want to have pups with you someday.”

Seokjin felt his chest tighten painfully, as if a large hand was squeezing around his torso and trying to crush him beneath the weight of it.

“Come on, Tae-Tae,” Jimin cooed, tugging on the sleep of the Beta and nudging him into half wakefulness. They shuffled out of the room, but not before a sleepy-smiling Taehyung laid one last soft kiss on the gentle crown of Naiara’s head. Rousing Jungkook took significantly more effort, and
when he did wake, it was with a jolt as he turned to look immediately to his side, as if checking that the pup and her mother were still here. Sighing in relief, Jungkook accepted Seokjin’s hand and stood up, rubbing his eyes. Seokjin took Jungkook’s hand in his, squeezing it tightly as they left the room.

*I’m sorry, Jungkook. I just need a bit more time...Please don’t come to hate me for it.*

It was silent, locked away in his head, but the instant he thought it, Jungkook looked up as though in alarm, and squeezed Seokjin’s hand back.

“Pups make you sleepy,” Jungkook commented. “And it’s scary how delicate they are.”

“Yeah, I suppose so..” Seokjin said.

“Hey,” the Omega bumped his shoulder against Seokjin roughly. They were standing in the hallway outside the bedroom, and Jungkook spoke in a quiet voice. “I said I wanted to wait too, didn’t I?”

Seokjin looked up to meet Jungkook’s eyes, still feeling that vice grip in his chest but finally able to breathe enough to allow a little smile. “Yeah...yeah, you did.”

That night at dinner, as they all gathered around the table to messily share pizzas, Namjoon interrupted Hoseok’s spirited debate wherein he was trying to get Yoongi to eat more of his actual *pizza* and less of just the *pineapples*, much to the Omega’s chagrin, in order to announce some news.

“It’s been over a month since we started the movement against the Rising Gods Clan,” Namjoon started, a weary smile on his face as he held hands with Kiara, the baby curled up against her and swaddled in blankets. “And I’m happy to say that they’ve approved our request for a restraining order.”

“Oh, thank god,” Yoongi breathed.

“And the island?” Kiara prodded quietly.

“Until they’ve had a chance to speak in their defense, they’re not allowed on the island.” Namjoon smirked. “So we can finally go back and have another hunt.”
“That’s good timing, isn’t it?” Jimin perked up, “Since Kiara’s had some time to rest up after the baby, and everyone’s about to do their finals. I can put in some vacation time again if I have two weeks notice…”

Namjoon gave a nod, and a smile that stretched across his face. “It’ll be good to go back to the island for a proper hunt.”

“We haven’t exactly had the best luck so far,” Yoongi scoffed.

Kiara sent him a glare, “Don’t you jinx my baby’s first time on the island, sir.”

“I’m not, I’m not,” Yoongi rolled his eyes, a playful gleam to them. Jungkook could tell he was excited, too, even if he wasn’t exactly smiling, his posture and eyes said everything.

“I’m going to be glad, because then we can have you four do a proper Mating hunt. I guess it would be a bit odd to do a whole ceremony, but we can at least do that.” Namjoon sighed, sitting back into his seat.

“I’m sure none of us are too worried about that,” Seokjin said, eyeing as Yoongi picked off more pineapple off his plate. “Circumstances were what they were.”

“Besides,” Jimin said, grabbing Taehyung’s arm. “I’ll be glad to be going back with the whole pack Mated. That’s pretty amazing, right?”

Taehyung smiled at Jimin, cuddling in closer, his cheeks filled to endearing roundness with pizza.

“And if the sea is warm enough, we can even swim!” Jungkook realized, sitting up a little with a start.

As the dinner continued, rife with plans for their first hunt as a pack in months, Seokjin and Yoongi started a burp-off match, nearly spilling their sodas, which sent Jimin into uncontrollable giggles. Naiara woke up partway through, watching the party with wide, blue eyes brimming with curiosity, and Taehyung cooed over her, leaning in to let her wrap her tiny fingers around his one long one. Things were looking up, and as they shared the table together, their feet carefully not prying into Jungkook’s nest, their food shared and voices loud and boisterous, Jungkook looked around the table with a smile. How could he not be optimistic, with his family around him like this?
The island, coming into view as they crossed the long expanse of bridge over the sea, was even greener than Jungkook remembered. The cabins, he was sure, would be slightly dusty (except for the Main Hall, which had been last used by Jimin and Taehyung several weeks prior), but the comforting smell of pack would still permeate the grounds.

But the camp was utterly torn up. The door to the Main Hall hung on its hinge, smeared blood written across it and the furniture upturned. The mattresses had been drug out into the yard, tossed into damp underbrush until small creatures had eaten their way through them and mold had started to grow.

“It’s a scare tactic,” Namjoon said, surveying the damage. “They wanted to have a last show of power, I suppose.”

“They can’t come back through, can they?” Jimin said quietly, prodding a moldy mattress with one foot and looking worried.

Namjoon offered the younger Alpha a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes. “They’d be stupid to, with all of us here, and with their court date coming up soon.”

Kiara stepped gingerly forward, Seokjin moving ahead of her and holding what was left of the door aside. She looked around the Main Hall, the couches torn and the drapes ripped to long, gnarled strips. When the others followed her inside, she turned, hugging Naiara’s bundled form to her chest.

“It’ll take more than some busted furniture to shake me,” she said firmly. “Jungkook, will you get Naiara’s carrier from the car? We need to get to work cleaning this up.”

A few minutes later Naiara watched on from her car seat carrier in the corner, suckling a tiny pointer finger absentmindedly as the pack moved to replace the salvageable mattresses, moving them to the floor of the Main Hall for the time being. The ripped cushions of the couch were re-stuffed and wrapped up in sheets. Yoongi and Hoseok teamed up on the front door while Seokjin and Jungkook did their best with the remains of the cupboards.

“Will we still be able to go on our hunt later?” Jimin asked, wiping at the counters with Kiara as Taehyung swept.
“Of course,” she said nonchalantly, lifting one delicate shoulder. “I mean, you guys will. I’ll be staying back with the baby today. But there’s no reason you can’t go hunt. We’re not the ones who have done anything wrong, after all. Well, technically some of us have sorta almost trespassed, but they probably can’t prove that.” She laughed, wringing out her rag in the sink.

“I can’t wait to be hunting again,” Jungkook whined, his shoulder drooping as he sat on the (now clean) counter, holding a cupboard door for Seokjin as he tried to hammer the hinge back into a decent shape. Jungkook’s eyes were trained on Seokjin’s arm muscles, pouting a little in jealousy as he saw the little bulge of his biceps, teasing every so often underneath the edge of his short sleeves. “It feels like it’s been forever.”

“It kinda has been. Last time we came as a pack was, what, March? And last time we were all here was your Presenting,” Jimin commented, glancing at Seokjin pointedly.

“Yeah…” Jungkook said quietly, still watching Seokjin, thinking of the last time he had seen the white wolf on the offensive, in the wild and unleashed in a very different sense than Jungkook had grown accustomed to seeing. “I’m looking forward to it.”

Seokjin glanced up from his hammering, arching an eyebrow up at Jungkook in curiosity, then chuckling. “If you’re thirsty, get yourself a drink of water, Kookie. Jeez.”

Jungkook pouted, slapping Seokjin on the shoulder lightly with his bit of cupboard door, earning a laugh from the Alpha.

By the time lunchtime rolled around, it was starting to get hot, and the cabin clean-up was nearing its completion. Jungkook ate his sandwich sitting in Seokjin’s lap, his legs sprawled over Jimin’s knees as the younger Alpha split half his ham sandwich with Taehyung, getting half an egg salad in return. They sat leaned up against the trunks of trees in the cool shade of the camp, soft earth sticking to their pants and the gentle buzz of bees flying in the distance. It was a warm summer day, and Seokjin was solid and comforting at his back. The ground felt all the cooler for the heat of work that had consumed their morning hours, and the sound of the ocean off through the trees echoed up towards them like a distant roar.

*This is one of those moments, isn’t it?* Jungkook realized, closing his eyes, his head tilting back against his Mate’s shoulder as the wind let out a soft exhale, brushing through the trees in a sound like dropping silk. *One of those moments that people never want to end. That make you want to stop time.*
A familiar, soft hand brushed his hair from his face, then tickled beneath his chin lightly, making him smile. His eyes fluttered open to see Seokjin leaning over him, smiling down with the white-gold light spilling through the trees and leaving little patches of crooked diamond-shaped lights across the Alpha’s face. Seokjin leaned down, pressing a kiss to his forehead, then returned to eating, being careful not to drop his crumbs on Jungkook. A little sigh escaped him, lifting Jungkook up a bit with the movement, and Jimin was giggling softly at something Taehyung was telling him animatedly.

“Hey,” Seokjin said quietly, his arm snaking around Jungkook’s waist, pulling him a little closer and making him feel rather small, in the good way.

“Mm?” Jungkook hummed, holding his sandwich to his lips much like a harmonica, nibbling at it slowly with his teeth and savoring the creamy texture of the mayonnaise.

“I’m glad, you know. That Namjoon found you. That you were able to have a proper pack life.”

Jungkook craned his head back up towards Seokjin, the sandwich held momentarily forgotten.

“Y’know,” Seokjin shrugged, “Not just because of me, but...because of you. I’m glad you didn’t have to keep wandering alone.”

The Omega curled his legs together, heels digging gently into the ground as he considered. Namjoon, Hoseok… Taehyung… all of them. They were much like a family but also much more than a family. After all, wasn’t blood just blood? You didn’t choose where you were born or where you came from, but each of them had chosen. As for Jungkook himself, it had been an instinctive knowing, a certain something he had known with every fibre of his being, that he could trust Namjoon. Sure, he’d had his times of doubting, but precisely 0% of him was surprised that Namjoon had risked his neck just for the chance of finding Jungkook his brother, a man neither of them had ever met. He hadn’t been surprised at Namjoon doing it, and he was even less surprised at the casual, matter-of-fact way Namjoon had treated it. Like it wasn’t that big of a deal, that it was the natural choice. Before Bangtan, Jungkook was sure that none of them had had that - a solid foundation, a self-assuredness in the fact that they, as a pack, would always depend on each other, and always be there for each other. It was something that didn’t need to be proven, but was evident, and displayed, all the same. It was as significant and as commonplace as the couch in their living room.

Namjoon had saved him. He had given him a home and given a home to rest of the pack, too. If it hadn’t been for Bangtan pack, wouldn’t he have ended up in the same sort of predicament his brother had? Would Jimin have found familiarity instead of rage? Would Yoongi have found an equal instead of an owner? Would Seokjin and Taehyung have found a place to start over?
“I’m glad, too,” Jungkook murmured, lazily stretching his back and letting out a little groan. “I’m glad we’re all here.”

“Okay, guys, lunch break is over!” Namjoon called out, entering their side of the camp clearing with a broad beam on his face. “Who wants to go on a hunt?”

Taehyung let out an excited whoop, followed quickly by Jimin as they disentangled themselves from each other and started shuffling towards the beach. Namjoon turned slowly, seeing Jungkook and Seokjin still on the ground but collecting themselves in a more leisurely fashion.

“How are you two doing?” Namjoon asked, tucking his hands into the pockets of his jeans.

“Good,” Jungkook chirruped, clambering up to standing on his knees, reaching out and grabbing Namjoon by the thighs and hugging onto him. “I’m ready for a hunt, though.”

“Well, go tear Yoongi away from the baby and tell him you guys are ready to go. I’ll be staying back with Kiara today, and we’ll take a short run tomorrow, once we’ve settled in a bit more.”

“I’ll go on ahead,” Seokjin said, “And go keep an eye on the Elopers.”

“Okay.” Jungkook stood up to his full height, brushing off his jeans before moving around to the far side of the Main Hall, where Yoongi had Naiara in her carrier set up on one of the picnic benches, the thin spotted canopy pulled down even though they were already seated in the shade. Yoongi was kicking his feet lightly underneath the wooden table, one hand rocking the carrier back and forth ever so gently as he hummed at the baby inside. Naiara, for one, looked utterly fascinated by Yoongi’s face, wide eyes blinking up at him and small, uncoordinated hands flailing out in all directions occasionally, as if wanting to capture him. Yoongi leaned forward, smiling broadly, all teeth and gums as he moved within Naiara’s very limited arm span, and got a tiny fist slapping against his face in return. He laughed, shoulders shaking as the sound was more like a deep popping sound than a chuckle. Naiara’s face broke out into a smile, and she flailed harder, excited by the reaction of her current large, humanoid toy.

“Yoongles,” Jungkook teased, stepping up to the picnic bench and surprising Yoongi, who sat up instantly and let the smile drop from his face as if covering up some secretive activity. “You ready for the hunt? The others are headed down to the beach already.”

“Oh, okay,” Yoongi stood up carefully, grabbing the handle on the baby carrier and taking Naiara
back toward the cabin and in turn to her waiting mother. As they went, Jungkook smirked - Naiara was still trying to stare up at Yoongi, kicking her tiny legs against her carrier and her mouth agape.

He didn’t know much about babies, but he knew they were good judges of character. Jungkook chuckled, heading down to the beach where Hoseok was writing cute things in the sand with Jimin and the others. Taehyung was drawing an elaborate something off on his own, an abstract image that Jimin still praised, even as he focused all his energy on a singular emoji he preferred on his phone, taking great care to imitate the details he’d memorized. Seokjin was bent closely over his own sand-art, and Jungkook came over to stand behind him, almost brushing his shoulders when he leaned down and alerted Seokjin to his presence. Suspiciously, Seokjin suddenly leaned forward, landing on his knees and attempting to cover with his hands and brushwood stick the acrostic poem he’d been making out of his Mate’s name. Jungkook guffawed, openly mocking Seokjin as the Alpha slapped his shoulder, and the two of them ended up somehow tumbled into the damp sand.

“Okay, lovebirds,” Hoseok teased, hiccupping with laughter as Yoongi came up to his side. “Let’s gather around this disgusting little flag.” The Alpha gestured down to the dirty-rain-stained little sock of Namjoon’s that hung limply from the makeshift flagpole the lead Alpha had planted so many months ago. “You know the drill. If you get lost or injured, try to stay in groups and signal for help, or of course head back to camp if you’re able to safely. Work together, and most important, happy hunting!”

“Wait!” Jimin said, frowning as Hoseok stopped mid-step, about to turn a 180 and transform. “Aren’t we supposed to do the little slogan thing?”

Hoseok looked at the others, who all shared expressions that bordered on agreement but also on boredom.

Jimin looked back and forth, as though thrown by the lack of response, but then Taehyung stepped forward, putting out his hand palm-down. “Jimin’s right. Namjoon may not be going with us, but this is still a pack hunt, we’ve gotta do it right.”

“Right,” Jungkook agreed, putting out his hand, too. Seokjin laid his hand on top of Jungkook and Taehyung’s, and the others soon followed. Yoongi shook his head as if in disbelief, but then nudged Hoseok’s shoulder.

“Um.... Teamwork makes the dream work?” Hoseok managed through his laughter.

“Teamwork makes the dream work!”
Everyone shouted the phrase, tossing their met hands up into the air and turning to transform.

Overeager and tingling with the thrill of the oncoming hunt, they wasted no time in rushing off the beach and into the woods. As usual, there wasn’t any one particular wolf leading the way, but Jungkook didn’t pay much mind to that, racing through the woods with youthful leaps and bounds, clearing deep dark ditches, creek beds and underbrush alike. Seokjin was at his side, notably closer than he had remained the last time they had hunted together, and the white wolf’s heavy panting echoed in Jungkook’s ears in a rush, in time with his own labored breaths. This time, Seokjin’s Alpha Scent seemed to tinge the very air, red-hot like a spark, and he could not only see the playful gleam in his Mate’s eyes but he could feel it in the way Seokjin brushed up against him, the way he adjusted his pace easily to Jungkook’s.

It took them a long time to find anything. They stopped a few times, sniffing around a clearing or at what looked like a well-used watering hole. Once Taehyung found a hare, and he had hopped after it eagerly, effectively chasing it off when he slipped a bit on some loose rocks and tripped himself up. Seokjin had barked gleefully at him, not holding back in mocking his brother as he watched Taehyung shake some of the creek water out of his fur with a disgruntled air. The Beta’s light fur was already darkened by water and mud dotting its edges, an endearing if unintimidating sight.

That was when Hoseok let out a little sound, high-pitched and brief but nonetheless effective for calling the others to attention. He was sniffing at some feces on the ground, then at a bit of roots of an oak tree, and then they knew it.

A boar.

A big one.

Jungkook’s heart seemed to leap, and he leapt like a clumsy pup over to Hoseok’s side, catching up and running at his side with Seokjin and Taehyung close behind. He wanted to help more this time, wanted to get into more of the action. He felt ready.

The trees opened up into a bit of a steep cliff made out of grass, brush and stone. Angled rocks jutted out off to the side like dislodged scales on a dragon’s back, the lush emerald of the foliage covering up a thick, large mound like a gentle briar. Jungkook raced forward, ahead of the others. His tongue lolled out of his mouth as he happily bound headfirst into the foliage, the green curtain drawing back and revealing the boar’s hiding place. It snuffled, grey and mud-slewn and irritable, when Jungkook interrupted its digging. It buried its ugly, pinkish grey snout deep into the soft, wet, black earth as it hunted for food, hoping the black wolf would leave it alone. Hesitantly, Jungkook edged forward, sniffing at the boar’s smell, thick and sweaty, a mischievous gleam in his eyes. Its fur was grey and black with thick bristly tufts across its back and tucked into the edge of its cheeks. Deep golden-orange eyes were wide and hyper-alert, looking in all directions as it picked its way in the dirt. Taehyung followed soon after, pulling back suddenly in surprise at seeing the boar in such close quarters.
Sensing the danger of being cornered, the boar started to shuffle away, as if by act of pretending that the wolves weren’t in need of food and just happened to cross his path by mere pup-like curiosity. Jungkook jolted forward, sniffing the boar’s leg, and it grunted, suddenly rushing towards him and angrily waving his head - along with its crooked, well-prepared tusks - at the wolf’s face. Shock shooting through his system, Jungkook instinctively shuffled backwards, nearly entangling his feet in the long vines that draped down all around them, like a thick bush resembling a weeping willow, hiding them from the eyes of the others.

Just as Jungkook hopped forward, snapping lightly at the boar’s front leg and causing the large beast to jump furiously towards him again, Taehyung grabbed at the creature’s back leg. Confused at the two-sided attack, the boar grunted, turning on its heel to lunge at Taehyung, only to have Jungkook shove against him, knocking the boar’s back legs off balance and sending his rump clumsily hitting the ground. It squealed throatily, whirling around and shuffling its legs around to rush at Jungkook, who awkwardly backed up until he was just outside the protection of the foliage, taunting the boar until just its nose poked out from between the vines. It snorted, then returned to its hideaway. After a few more tries of circling the beast, building up its anger in the hopes that it would stupidly make more mistakes, Jungkook and Taehyung finally convinced the boar to chase them outside of its little nature-made hovel, where the other pack members were waiting for it.

Jungkook tripped, his paws floundering as the boar fell on top of him, pain shooting through his body as he felt himself being crushed under the great weight. Still gasping for breath, he barely registered when two of the other wolves bit hard into the boar’s side, shaking the creature and effectively tugging him off of the Omega. Shuffling to his feet again, Jungkook jolted forward to encompass the boar’s snout in his jaws, a bold and more risky move.

He wouldn’t have tried it, if not for the fact that he could see the boar tiring, could almost feel the other wolves attacking the boar from all sides, could already taste the blood in the air. The nasty, acrid taste of the bristly fur stung lightly in Jungkook’s mouth, the boar’s snout hissing and snorting wetly in pain as it squealed, immobilized by Jungkook’s hold on its maw.

The boar went down heavily, shocked and bleeding, and Jungkook held on, blinking heavily as he felt the boar’s tusks tearing at his cheek, one scraping up against the roof of his mouth. He only let go once Jimin’s light-colored paw moved into view, pinning the huge, thick neck down to the rock-ridden earth. Jungkook lifted his head, seeing that the others were already wrangling and mauling at the boar’s side with animosity. It still panted and moaned beneath them, until gradually it moved no longer, and Jungkook’s snarling muzzle started to relax.

The high of the hunt abated like the sun that sunk slowly against the sky, lazy and weighted. They stepped back from the fruit of their labors, licking their maws and staring into the dead face of their kill, satisfied. It had been a good hunt. Fair yet cunning, and the boar had put up an honorable fight. Jungkook padded off, sniffing at the blood-stained ground around them, startled for a moment when he felt something nudge up against him. He turned to find Seokjin there, bumping up softly against
him, licking at his face and bumping his nose into the depths of Jungkook’s fur to check for injuries.

*I'm fine, Jin.* Jungkook wanted to laugh, but instead opted to bump his nose up underneath Seokjin’s chin in playful reprimand. *Just some bruises and some scratches.*

Seokjin seemed to calm, his tail wagging back and forth contentedly. It had been their first hunt shared as Mates, with their pack at their side.

The six of them headed back slowly, making their way through the brush. It was dark by the time they arrived home. The lights of the Main Hall flickered, orange and red through the windows, spilling warmth out onto the porch and into Jungkook’s heart. He shifted and reached for the doorknob, feeling Seokjin’s presence rise at his back as he stepped across the hearth.

“Welcome home!” Kiara sang, looking up from her place by the fire, Namjoon kneeling at the hearth and smiling up at them when they walked in. “How did the hunting go?”

Jungkook sighed. It was one of those moments, he thought, as he sat down wearily next to Seokjin on the couch. Hoseok was fussing over Yoongi, who in turn was fussing over Hoseok. Taehyung and Jimin shuffled over to check on the baby, Jimin snapping that Taehyung got to hold her last, so it was his turn.

It was a moment he wanted to hold onto.

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“Jungkook,” called a voice, light and slightly nasal. The Omega groaned, flapping a hand blindly at the voice and not wanting to be woken from his sleep. “Jungkookie, wake up.”

“What is it?” Jungkook mumbled, his eyes suddenly opening as he worried that Seokjin was waking him up for some sort of alarming reason, but the Alpha was smiling down at him, eyes crinkling and looking even warmer than the firelight that glowed across his face. Jungkook looked around, seeing the mattresses spread across the room and currently being occupied by the other wolves. The firelight was the only illumination in the room. “Why did you…?”

“Let’s go for a swim,” Seokjin whispered, a delighted lilt to his voice that sounded like he was stifling giggles. “Right now!”
“Seokjin, it’s the middle of the night…” Jungkook groaned, smacking lightly at Seokjin’s cheek to push him away. But the Alpha just nuzzled in closer, and Jungkook suddenly felt the man’s hands encircling either side of his waist, buried underneath fabric to press in at the soft, hot skin there.

“Come on, it’ll be great! The water is so warm!” He leaned down, twisting his head back and forth against Jungkook’s chest, his hair tickling at Jungkook’s nose and the playful, childish gesture that always made Jungkook erupt in uncontrollable giggles. He slapped a hand across Seokjin’s head.

“G-god stop!” He laughed, trying to keep his voice down and not wake the others. “What is it, like 3 in the fucking morning? Aren’t you tired?”

“Can’t sleep. Too wired,” Seokjin said, muffled against Jungkook’s chest. He buried his mouth in Jungkook’s collar, not to be deterred by something so simple as a late hour - or an early one, rather. “Come swib wif me.”

“Who is the older one here?” Jungkook sighed, rolling his eyes. But Seokjin was painfully digging his hands underneath Jungkook’s back, struggling to lift him up off the mattress, and Jungkook gave out a little half-gasp, half-hiccup, shoving at his hands and hissing, “Shit! Okay, okay, I got it! I’ll go with you, jeez!”

Seokjin giggled with glee, and they snuck out of the cabin, hand in hand. The Alpha didn’t even give him time to put shoes on. The wet, dew-covered grass dampened their feet, soothing it from the rough roots they stepped over. It wasn’t long until Seokjin led them out into the moonlit beach, his steps sure and his hand tugging Jungkook along eager.

The roar of the waves surprised him with its relentless song, less like a thunder and more like the white noise of a speaker that was permanently unable to not cry out, pounding in at his ears.

“Last one in’s a rotten egg?” Seokjin laughed, letting go of Jungkook’s hand and removing the black T-shirt with the yellow Mario star on it that Seokjin loved to sleep in and Jungkook loved to steal; the lingering Scent being more than a little of the motivation. He tossed the T-shirt to the sand, and Jungkook sighed into the night.

“What is this, a rom-com?” Jungkook muttered, but now that he was starting to be properly roused from sleep, he moved to drop his own shirt next to Seokjin’s in the sand. It took him a moment to realize, in his half-asleep state, that they hadn’t brought swim trunks, and wearing them to bed hadn’t exactly been an option, so didn’t that mean….

“Wait, are we go--” Jungkook looked up, finding Seokjin already halfway to the waves, naked and
already diving in as Jungkook’s mouth fell agape.

What the fuck had gotten into Kim Seokjin?

After a solid moment of watching Seokjin’s form bob up and down along the waves, hearing his laughter off in the distance, Jungkook realized he wasn’t exactly opposed to the idea of the spontaneity. Especially when...ahem… an increased appreciation for nature in all her respects was involved. Dropping his boxers to the sand, Jungkook gingerly stepped out of them and made his way toward the water, suddenly hit with a wave of anxiety (or rather, the preamble to an actual wave) suddenly racing forward through the dimness, leaping in and splashing up next to Seokjin, who was smoothing his long, overgrown bangs away from his face with a pleased look.

“What the fuck?” Jungkook gasped. “You said the water was warm, you liar.” The surface was like a tepid and abandoned bath, but from his thighs down the water became increasingly cold, and ended with a distinctive iciness around his toes. He splashed at Seokjin, intending on revenge but only getting unbridled laughter that echoed off into the waves and was swallowed by them whole.

“Well, it was warm at the shore, I guess,” the Alpha defended. “But come on, it’s still pretty nice.”

In form of reply, Jungkook splashed at Seokjin’s face again, making him splutter through his guffaws. The Omega huffily swam off, dog paddling off into the dark waters, one eye out for any debris or unexpected something in the water. Hadn’t some horror movies started out like this? Was this the wolf version of Jaws?

“C’mere, you,” Seokjin’s voice was suddenly right at his ear, an arm snaking around him and yanking him back despite his protests. He kicked and whined, wrestling his way out of the Alpha’s hold and sending him a powerful kick to the stomach through the water, making use of the thick thighs he had once been so self-conscious of.

Seokjin laughed, even as he shivered and groaned at the pain in his gut. “You little shit,” Seokjin gasped.

Waiting for Seokjin to recover, the waves bobbing them along gently and the moonlight illuminating their wet heads and dark eyes, Jungkook worked his bottom lip, feeling the chilliness of the flesh there against the heat in his mouth.

“Why’d we come out here?” Jungkook asked. “Is something wrong?”
Seokjin paused at that, staring at the Omega with an expression hard to read by the limited light they had at their disposal.

“No,” Seokjin said slowly. “Nothing’s wrong. I just felt like coming out, and I did. Then I wanted to come out here with you, so here we are.” Easily, with a couple of practiced strokes, Seokjin closed the distance between them, until he was treading water at Jungkook’s side, breathing hotly against his lips. “Do I need a reason?”

“N-no. But aren’t the others going to worry if they notice we’re missing?” Jungkook glanced toward the shore, where their clothes were a dark blob against the grey-white of the beach. Seokjin took hold of Jungkook’s jaw with one hand, turning his face back towards him, and pressed a kiss to his mouth.

Caught off guard, Jungkook almost forgot to keep treading the water, starting to bob down deeper under the surface but finding Seokjin’s fingers firmly wrapped around his wrist. He refound his balance, still gasping for air when Seokjin’s lips pulled away, agonizingly slow. Jungkook moved back in, determined to deepen the kiss. He felt the slight abrasiveness of their fingertips, skin dried out by the water, a great saltiness on their lips and Seokjin’s hand in his hair. Seokjin’s foot momentarily entangled with his own in their slow, languid movement through the dark abyss of water beneath them. Jungkook was lightheaded, and he forgot how long they had spent floating along the waves of their little cove.

He also wasn’t quite sure when he had ended up on the edge of the water, his back pressed deeply in a Jungkook-shaped impression in the wet sand, pruny fingers groping at his now clammy skin as Seokjin attacked his lips with quiet fervor. Jungkook lifted one knee slightly to slot it between those pale thighs, earning a hot flicker of tongue deep into his mouth that caused his center to flip in nauseated, dizzied delight. There was sand stuck to Seokjin’s forearms and it sprinkled off his skin like salt, falling onto Jungkook’s chest while the Alpha moved to mouth at his jawline, letting Jungkook rise to that invisible surface for air. It was scary. Terrifying, even. Laying on the shore like this, the waves rushing in every few minutes to wash away the sand that collected between their bodies, the saltwater tickling up against his shoulders and the edges of his ears as it slid up around him before pulling away once more - it all felt so exposed and yet so intimate.

Anyone could have come, then. Seen them there and known exactly what was happening.

But no one saw. Just the moonlight, and the waves bellowing around them like a protective biosphere of sound, giving them their own little piece of heaven, a warmth in a cool, clammy-skinned moment of memory Jungkook wanted to carry to his death so profoundly that it made tears sting at his eyes, only adding to the wide expanse of salt water on the beach that night.
Hello lovelies~ KurageCharms here yet again! ♥
I'm sorry this chapter is so late. ;_; It's Labor Day Weekend but still... I won't make excuses. lol
Thanks to Jenni for helping me beta read this not just once (when it was 5k) but TWICE (when it was over 10k).
I can't fucking believe I wrote a 'sex on the beach' scene just shoot me fucking now. I never thought I'd succumb but...IT WAS RIGHT THERE.
Thanks for your patience, sweaties~ I took longer because I wanted to give you something to sink your teeth into. lol
Later, lovelies~♥
“I’ve been fighting to be who I am all my life. What’s the point of being who I am, if I can’t have the person who was worth all the fighting for?”
— Stephanie Lennox, I Don't Remember You

The morning sun was sluggishly rising, preambled by strange, heavy clouds that hovered above the horizon. Seokjin was sitting on the beach, watching the nearly full moon hanging in the sky just above and to the left of the eerie purple that was trying to mingle with the sun’s hazy orange. The clouds would soon roll over, consuming what he could see of the moon, along with the rest of the sky. The wind was tearing at his hair - it was getting long and shaggy. Jungkook liked to run his hands through it.

He wanted to go to Seokjin now, to sit next to him in the sand and comment about the weird sunrise that his Mate was watching, but he found himself firmly planted to the ground, an unspeakable feeling of dread washing over him. After a moment, the gentle rolls of the exhausted undertow washed over him, as well, brushing up against his ankles as he studied Seokjin’s form. Why couldn’t he go to him? It felt like even though the water wasn’t strong or overwhelming, that he was being held back, a feeling he hated the most. The amusing sky was quickly turning, the strong wind that now stung at his eyes was pushing the clouds in faster than he had thought possible. The edges of the moon slid silently behind the clouds, and still the purple-orange and now pink formations moved closer, darkening the beach with their warning colors.

“Seokjin,” he said, the sound hollow and distant as if through a great tunnel. “Seokjin come back to the house.”

It didn’t seem like Seokjin could hear him, still smiling softly out at the waves. He even shut his eyes, sinking into the feeling of the steadily rising wind. Jungkook could see him sigh, could almost feel it
in his own chest. He laid a hand on his heart, and felt Seokjin’s sigh, and felt his own heart racing.

He tried to step forward, but before he could move, another figure appeared on the other side of the beach, walking up to Seokjin’s side with a smooth, practiced nonchalance. He wore simple clothing and it had been months since the one time Jungkook had seen him, but he knew who he was right away.

Jae.

The Alpha sat down next to Jungkook’s Mate, a breezy smile on his face as he said something to the man, a gentle smile gracing his features and emphasizing the handsomeness of his bright smile. Perfect teeth. Sharp jawline. Broad hand on Seokjin’s back. He knew the man’s biggest strength was his familiarity, the posture and tone that filtered through him on the other side of the increasing undertow as he watched, powerless to move.

The worst part, the part that made him want to sink into the sand, was that there was nothing malicious in Jae’s smile. Here, Jungkook thought, was a Jae that Seokjin knew, that Seokjin had fallen in love with, and also an entirely new Jae, as fresh and as strange as the rising sun that illuminated the two men with their broad, muscular backs as they sat close on the sand. Jungkook’s eyes lowered, and he pressed his lips together. Seokjin was turned toward Jae, and Jungkook couldn’t see his expression. All he had was the look of rapture that sparkled in Jae’s eyes.

“Seokjin!’ he called out again, mustering all the strength in his lungs that he could. “Jin!”

This time, both Alphas looked over, as though shocked, and found Jungkook standing there. He felt closer now, as if he had managed to cross some distance, and he gave a strained smile at the small victory. Jungkook opened his mouth to speak again, to make a comment filled with false confidence to his Mate and to the two Alpha’s surprised, unreadable expressions. But the moment his lips parted, there was a high-pitched shriek that filled the air, pounding in on his ears and accompanied by an undeniable shaking of the ground beneath them. It was as though some enormous force had yanked the entire island to and fro, and Jungkook nearly fell over. Paling, with a look of unbridled fear, Seokjin was reaching out for Jungkook, and he could hear his Mate yelling his name, asking if he was okay.

But he wasn’t, because a great black hole had opened up between them, unbelievably wide and deep. He could hear the wind still screaming around them, tugging at his hair, his skin, his clothes, his voice. And Jungkook fell into it, reaching blindly out for his Mate as the darkness swallowed him whole.
Jungkook jolted awake with a little cry, unmoving on the bed and his body tingling with the shock of how hot and heavy he felt. The Omega stared up at the ceiling for a long moment before he recognized the worn, wooden planks as the ceiling of the Main Hall, and knew that the strange, suffocating heat was from having two blankets thrown over him. He pushed the comforters off and instantly felt the itchy abrasiveness of sand that he and Jin had brought back from the beach with them the night before, despite their efforts to clean up before going back to bed. In hindsight, sex on the beach wasn’t quite as picturesque as movies would suggest, but it had been nice, nonetheless. Jungkook flopped one arm over to land on Seokjin and felt his heart drop as the Seokjin-shaped form beside him was missing, his wrist dropping limply to the empty mattress instead. He looked over and frowned when he found himself alone on the bed. When he sat up, the fire in the hearth was dead and the morning sun was spilling in through the rips in the curtains. Namjoon and Kiara’s bed was empty, too, so they must have left for their hunt already. Yoongi and Hoseok’s forms lumped on their beds, and Jungkook craned his neck to see that Naiara had been placed between them protectively, a stiffness to their shoulders as they instinctively refrained from rolling in their shallow sleep. Yoongi had one hand curled around Naiara’s back that nearly covered her like a sort of blanket, and her tiny mouth was parted in sleep. As Jungkook watched, she let out a deep sort of sigh of contentment, and Yoongi’s thumb trailed back and forth a little up and down the delicate, chubby arm. Jungkook could see Jimin and Taehyung’s sleeping forms, but their faces were turned away from him.

Jungkook slowly got up off the mattress, slipping on a hoodie as he went out to the porch to look around. He half expected to see Seokjin out there with Namjoon, the two of them fond of standing against the railing and surveying the rather small and quaint clearing of the camp like it was a silent kingdom. But the porch was empty, and not a bird sang. Jungkook looked up at the sky and was half-surprised to see that the morning sun rose to a clear blue sky, already half-illuminating the woods. He took in a slow breath of air, letting it out slowly. The air was damp and flat, the crisp of the night’s chill having already been melted and smoothed out by the dawn. The door behind him opened, and Taehyung was there, looking at him curiously.

“Hey,” Jungkook said quietly, as Taehyung moved up behind his back, almost pinning his stomach to the railing as the elder curled up against Jungkook’s hoodie, seeking warmth.

“Hey. Do you feel it, too?” the Beta asked.

“Feel what?”

Taehyung hesitated, and Jungkook thought he was gonna brush it off as nothing, but the Beta held out his arm - the one that had been injured - and stared at it for a long moment. “It’s going to storm. The air pressure changes, sometimes hours before, and I can feel it in my bones now.” He slowly let the arm drop, and Jungkook wondered how long it had been aching. “It’s kinda cool, actually. But also kinda weird.”
“Yeah,” Jungkook pressed his lips together, turning to look at the empty clearing. Hearing talk of an oncoming storm, particularly in the summer, was par for the course. But something about it twisted Jungkook’s gut, and he wondered if he had just learned to be paranoid of any obtained moments of happiness. Either way, he would have felt better if he could have seen Seokjin.

“Have you seen Jin?”

“He left just about ten minutes before you got up, actually,” Taehyung said. Jungkook felt a bit of relief set in; he couldn’t have gone far, then. But his relief was shattered like a crack shooting across glass at Taehyung’s next words.

“He went for a walk on the beach.”

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The waves roared, and the little layer of foam that arched up the beach in quiet fervor trailed further and further down, until the water level was visibly lower than when he had gotten there just a few minutes ago. Seokjin sighed, curling up more tightly into his oversized hoodie. It was somehow colder than when he and Jungkook had been out here a few hours before. Exhausted from the exercise (as well as the exercise), Jungkook had drifted off to sleep almost instantly. But Seokjin, just as before he had woken up Jungkook for their nightly swim, hadn’t been able to sleep.

He could have blamed it on being back at the island, but it felt much deeper than that. Seokjin wasn’t feeling afraid exactly. Rather, it was closer to a feeling of being anxious, unsettled. It had kept him up from sleeping and it had compelled him to relax in the warm silliness of Jungkook’s company on the beach. What was it, nagging on the edges of his awareness?

Perhaps it had to do with the fact that he wasn’t sure how to be happy, after everything. His nature was to live in the moment - he had been light-hearted and ridiculous once, unworried about the future and brazenly hunting down simple pleasures, like midnight swims. Life had altered him, the past had altered him, and he hated still feeling the weight of those chains. The long process of healing was a strange one, stripping away the little details which had once compiled an awareness of self-identity, but now the lines were too blurred. Was it strange to feel like going back to the personality he had once had was a return, but also was in a way refusing to look back and be dragged down? It was sort of like pressing in his experiences like an accordion, or closing it between the heavy, deceptively dependable covers of a book. He couldn’t erase the past but he could try to make its effects on his present smaller. Seokjin wanted to keep it simple, wanted to just be happy with Jungkook. But could he truly do that if he didn’t share with Jungkook what those experiences had taught him? Spontaneity was precious to him, but he wanted Jungkook to not see it as a sign of doom but a sign of the old Seokjin (who was simultaneously an altogether new Seokjin) emerging, ready to move forward one sandy footprint at a time.
Seokjin sighed out the complications, smiled gently at the waves and the smell of saltwater which he had increasingly become addicted to. He stood up and decided to go back to the Main Hall. He wanted to sleep a little longer - or rather, he knew he wouldn’t be sleeping but enjoying the warmth of Jungkook’s firm, muscular arms snaked protectively around him. They could grapple with the full truths, the full trust, on another day.

He was halfway back up the beach when there was a shift in the wind, and Seokjin halted abruptly on the spot. A sweet smell permeated the air, familiar in a way that was like striking a match to set aflame old memories. When the dark-furred wolf that reeked of that well-known honeysuckle stumbled and raced out of the wood and onto the beach, Seokjin’s breath caught. Jae looked wounded, and pretty badly, limping forward with one paw lifted and held to his body as if to protect it from even being seen. The wolf panted, slowly as it reached the burdensome sand and moving as if to go down the shoreline, when one ear perked up. Jae lifted his head, whirling around to see Seokjin standing there a few yards away.

Instinctively, Seokjin rushed forward to the wolf, closing the distance. Seokjin could almost see his eyes flash, and then he was transforming, running forward on bare feet with his arm clutched to his chest, fear written on every beautiful feature.

“No!” Jae shouted, holding out his good arm as if to make Seokjin stop. “Why did you come?! You shouldn’t be here!”

Seokjin slowed, confusion whipping through his belly with a strange, chilling after-effect. “We came for our hunt…” he said quietly.

“You have to go!” Jae screamed, shoving at Seokjin in the first physical contact they’d had since the night in the park. “Get the fuck out of here!”

“Jae, what the fuck?” Seokjin shook his head, brushing Jae’s hand off. His wrist felt far too slim and frail under Seokjin’s grip. The Jae he knew was muscular, strong, but slender. Warmed skin and rounded laughter. This Jae was trembling visibly on his legs just from standing, unbelievably thinned, with deep purple bruises across his bare arms. “You’re hurt, what-”

A long, smooth howl rose up in the air, and they both turned, Jae relinquishing a gentle whimper. Amongst the trees they could see glimpses of fur as at least three wolves neared the edge of the treeline. A grey-speckled wolf, exceedingly tall and broad, was the first to touch paw to sand, pausing to meet Seokjin’s eyes. Reflected there, Seokjin could only see murderous intent.
“Oh god..” Jae cried quietly, tears already forming in his eyes. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I thought you weren’t here. I was just trying to get to the bridge…”

Seokjin swallowed, eyes still locked on the wolf. “Get out of here, Jae.”

“No.” His voice shook, strangely childlike in its terror, but he squeezed Seokjin’s fingertips in his hands from where the younger had been holding his wrist. “I can’t.”

“Then get back to the camp and warn the others,” Seokjin growled lowly. When Jae hesitated, he added, “I’m not asking. We have a pup up there.”

He could almost smell the disbelief in Jae’s Scent, and they watched as the wolf was joined by two others, one on each side. The grey-speckled wolf shifted his paws a bit in the sand, preparing to advance. Seokjin released Jae slowly, then shoved him off to the side and toward the path that led to the clearing. “Go, now!” he shouted, rushing forward and transforming into his wolf form as he went, meeting the grey wolf’s maw with his own.

The wolf bit fiercely into Seokjin’s side, mostly gripping at fur instead of skin, and growled so deeply that Seokjin felt it in his bones. Another set of teeth came at him from the opposite side, and Seokjin whipped his head around to meet it, his eyes flashing and teeth bared.

He couldn’t check to see in the rising brawl, a mix of teeth and snarls and bristling fur, whether Jae made it up the beach.

All he could do was fight, and hope.

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“Jungkook?” Taehyung craned his head around the Omega’s shoulder just as Jungkook pushed off Taehyung’s hands.

“I gotta go to him,” Jungkook mumbled, starting off the porch.

“What’s wrong? You smell like you’re worried.”
He couldn’t exactly explain with I just had this dream last night and I haven’t had one that vivid since the one from Jimin’s Presenting, okay? And I just know this one will come true, too. Sorta. Maybe I’m a broken dream oracle. Who knows? So Jungkook opted not to answer the Beta.

He was halfway across the clearing when Jae appeared on the other side, stumbling through with a full-grown wolf leaping at him, gnawing at his calves, tearing at his jeans in jerky, tearing movements. Jae fumbled forward and clung to a nearby tree for balance, trying to kick the wolf off of him. He looked as though he had been dragged through the underbrush for a few days.

“Jae?” Taehyung called out, his voice thinning as concern swept in.

Jungkook stared at Jae, open-mouthed and unsure what to do. He wanted, in all honesty, to run past and go to Seokjin. But seeing Jae attacked by one of his own pack members like that, mercilessly trying to disable him permanently, Jungkook couldn’t help it. He leapt forward, catching the offending wolf off guard and leaping around him as he shifted mid-movement. The wolf turned, trying to get in close enough to reach Jungkook with its bleeding jaw, but Jungkook was much faster, fresh with energy and adrenaline whereas the offending wolf was already tired from its attack on Jae. Jungkook was soon joined by a Taehyung, also in wolf form, the Beta moving in with the same evasive tactics that they had used with the boar only the day before. Jungkook would never have suspected he would be suddenly using those same movements on another wolf.

Taehyung mercilessly bit down on the wolf’s leg, twisting it just as Jungkook was shoving his whole weight against the wolf to throw him against a tree. The wolf let out a high-pitched noise of pain, then crumpled to the ground, laying silently. Taehyung and Jungkook, more surprised than anything, stepped back in confusion. The wolf’s bloodstained fur rose and fell in quick succession with his pained, unconscious breaths.

“Jae? What the fuck is going on?” Yoongi stood in the doorway of the cabin with Hoseok just behind him, eyes bleary and mouth wide in shock.

“The Rising Gods are coming!” Jae called out. “They’ve already found Seokjin on the beach.”

Yoongi somehow moved faster than Jungkook had ever seen him, rushing down the porch before any of them could move and grabbing a hold of the tuft of fur on Jungkook’s nape with a rough and firm hand. “Jungkook, get your ass inside. Now .”

Jungkook looked up at Yoongi, blinking. He needed to go to his Mate. Seokjin was out there and needed him. But Yoongi’s face was crumpled and dark, the blood draining from it fast and his lips
pursed together so hard that they practically vanished.

“If you go out there, you will definitely put his life at more risk than it already was. Get back inside. Okay?”

Waiting a long moment, Jungkook let his head drop. He knew Yoongi was right, and the feeling of powerlessness washed over him and made him sick to his stomach. Hoseok slipped back inside to go get Jimin.

“There’s only a few of them right now but they alerted the others,” Jae managed, gritting his teeth. Jungkook could see from the coloring of his ankles that at least one of them was broken. Taehyung switched back, helping Yoongi carry Jae between them, looping his arms around their shoulders to walk him back toward the cabin as Jungkook slunk between their legs. He cried out a few times, and they moved agonizingly slow. Hoseok collected Jimin, who had been feeding the baby, and the two of them rushed out to go find Seokjin. With his heart racing so quickly the blood pounded into his skull, Jungkook paced around them protectively, keeping his eyes on the path that led to the beach and praying Seokjin would be appearing at any second.

“How many are there?” Taehyung snapped his head up and looked the opposite way, towards the woods.

“At least a dozen, closer to two,” Jae groaned, delicately sat down on one of the torn up couches. “They’re here against Yunho’s orders. He won’t have even known they were gone until this morning.”

Yoongi inspected Jae’s wounds, shaking his head. “Taehyung, you guard the front door. Jungkook, you watch him. I’m going to call the police. This is bullshit, utter bullshit. We have a restraining order.”

“They didn’t know you were here, honestly.” Jae gave a grimace, trying to angle his leg to avoid the worst of the pain. “They came here to finish me off.”

“The fuck? Why would they want to do that?”

Jae hesitated, his eyes flickering over towards Jungkook for the briefest moment, and then he deliberately turned away, shrugging. “Bad blood, I guess. Literally. My bloodline isn’t exactly the mos-”
“It’s because Jae was the one who set Jungkook’s brother free.” Taehyung’s voice came out deep and certain, and they all looked over to see Taehyung stationed at the window, peering out at the front porch. Yoongi blinked, then turned back to Jae in incredulity. Yoongi opened his mouth to speak, then closed it again, shaking his head. Taehyung frowned out the window. “Here they come.”

Jungkook listened, and he expected to hear warning snarls, growls, or even the very soft padding of feet on the porch. But there was only silence. Taehyung stood at the window, shoulders rising and tensing up at whatever it is he was able to see, and then he swore.

“They’re setting fire to the other cabins,” he cursed. “The bastards.”

“How many?” Yoongi clutched Naiara to his chest, moving to grab her blanket and toy Ryan from her carrier as he simultaneously dug across the bed for his phone.

“I see at least five.”

“Fuck.” Yoongi dialed the number, and Jungkook could see his hands were shaking slightly. As a comfort both to the confused and petulant-expressioned Naiara, as well as to himself he bounced her a little in his arms. “We’re all split up and so fucking vulnerable. The others need to get back soon.”

Jungkook could now hear the crackling of the fires, and he wondered if they would set fire to the Main Cabin, too. *We’ll be sitting ducks.*

“We may have to make a run for it to the truck.” Yoongi sighed, looking around. Jungkook already had the keys in his mouth, holding them out for Yoongi. “Thank you.”

It was a bad plan. Between the baby and Jae, they would never make it to the truck. But Yoongi slipped the keys into his pocket nonetheless.

Taehyung backed away from the window, turning to Yoongi with a dark look. “The door is still too busted to hold. Our best bet is if I try to hold them off for a bit until the others get back.”

“Goddamn it, I’ve got no signal!” Yoongi punched at the buttons on his phone again, trying one more time. Then he lifted his eyes to Taehyung, and the look he gave was enough signal. But
nonetheless he uttered a straightforward and heartfelt. “Be careful.”

The Beta gave a grimace. “Our Mates will be back soon, I promise.” He turned to grab the doorhandle, yanking it open with a clatter and slamming it behind him just before shifting. It was less than ten second later, and they could hear the fighting. Yoongi fumbled with his phone again, and Jungkook poised himself facing the door, not surprised when there came a loud thud against it as a wolf body struck it full-force. Jungkook bared his teeth, arcing his back in preparation for the inevitable attack. There were whimpers, and then a crash. A howl rose up in the air, and Jungkook’s fur stood on end. Namjoon was back from his hunt with Kiara. And he sounded pissed.

“Hello, yes!” Yoongi cried into the phone. “I’d like to report a group wolf attack, we’re here on our hunting grounds and they’ve violated a restraining order and everything. We have pups here.”

Jungkook could hear the voice of the woman on the phone, a strange mingling of calm and concerned as she continued to ask him questions.

“We’re just north of--”

BAM.

A wolf Jungkook didn’t recognize clattered through the remnants of the wooden door, snarling as she raced forward. To Jungkook’s surprise, she leapt right around him without even engaging, headed for Yoongi and the baby. Jae and Yoongi cried out at the same moment, wordless in their panic as the she-wolf tackled Yoongi to the ground, biting his shoulder, his arm, his stomach. Jungkook jumped over the mess of couches and landed on top of the wolf, biting roughly right into her neck. The metallic taste of blood oozed into his mouth, and she kicked out of his hold, moving quickly out of his range and across the room to reassess. Jungkook stood between her and the Omega, and he bared his teeth menacingly, trying to warn her off and praying that no other wolves from their pack would rush the door.

“Yes, we’re just north of that, across the bridge.” Yoongi was frantically explaining into the phone. “Tell them to hurry!”

Jungkook could smell blood and fire, could feel the wolf glaring at him with hatred, knowing that she knew exactly who he was. And he knew she was doing this out of revenge, out of spite. He could smell Yoongi’s blood on her.
“Jungkook,” called a voice, and he tilted his ear toward Jae but kept his eyes locked on the she-wolf. “Jungkook, don’t. Think of Seokjin.”

He didn’t have much time to think of anything in that moment. The wolf was rushing towards him, trying to get around and to Yoongi, who was still on the phone directing. Jungkook grabbed her and threw her to the ground, knocking the breath out of her. She was bleeding profusely from a wound just below her neck, and she was gasping for air unevenly, a wheezing noise rising out of her. Jungkook wondered what it had taken for her to get through the doorway. Seeing the confusion and hesitation on his face, the she-wolf threw him off and made a run for it.

Perhaps that moment was what Jae’s warning had meant. For Jungkook raced after her. His blood boiling to think that any wolf could sneak into another’s pack and attack a newborn pup, would set fire to their hunting grounds, and it made him furious. No one was as slow to anger as he was, but in that moment, Jungkook only wanted to make her pay for threatening his family in such a low, pathetic way.

“Jungkook, no!” Yoongi cried out. Jungkook could hear the couch being moved in front of the doorway. He didn’t know how Jae managed it, but Jungkook was grateful. Jungkook raced around the porch and off into the woods after the she-wolf, who was retreating. The clearing was a battlefield, an entanglement of bodies that made it hard for him to distinguish in his fleeting glance who was who, much less who was winning. He saw Namjoon with two smaller wolves pressing in on both sides, trying to trip him so they could tear at any available flesh. The Lead Alpha threw one of them with his mouth so far that they slammed against the base of the tree where Jungkook and Seokjin had eaten their lunch just the day before.

The bastards. All this just for a show of power. Just to be better than everyone else.

The she-wolf was vanishing into the thicker part of the woods, and Jungkook gave chase. If even just one of them, he would make them pay. She clambered messily up a rocky incline, kicking dirt and pebbles into Jungkook’s face as he followed close behind. When she jumped across sudden drop-offs, he followed. Jungkook felt the warning screams in his chest, feeling the tension of fear and exertion gripping tightly at his lungs, but he pressed on.

The she-wolf turned suddenly, threading through a small copse of dying trees, then leapt through a large bush. She vanished, and Jungkook rushed after her, only to find that the ground dropped off into a sudden cliff, sending both of them careening to the bottom of a gorge. Jungkook’s last thought before his head thudded against the sandy, rock-studded ravine was that he still didn’t know if Seokjin had made it up from the beach.

I’m sorry, Jin. I was reckless.
Seokjin threw off yet another wolf, yanking the smaller tawny-colored Omega off his back with a heavy pull of his teeth, then moved back to Hoseok’s side. The younger Alpha’s grey fur was dotted with flecks of blood. Hoseok was barking, a large wolf that he had been chasing down now caught up against the burning embers that signified the remnants of one of the cabins. The wolf’s tail was between his legs, head halfway craned to the side and against the ground as he tried to make himself a smaller target. Hoseok spared no ferocity, leaping in and wrapping his front paws over the wolf’s torso and pinning him to the ground, digging his pointed teeth into the wolf’s neck and tearing at it, shaking his head from side to side as the air was ripped with the sound of the wolf’s cries. Seokjin waited a moment to see if he needed any help, pausing to catch his breath. He had made his way up to the clearing in time to see Namjoon and Kiara rushing back to camp, and between the six of them, they had managed to corner the majority of the wolves. Red stained his fur from the front paws to his hip bone, and he was exhausted. But most of the wolves had been scared off or were left incapacitated on the edge of the clearing, panting into the earth. Taehyung limped up to Seokjin’s side, nudging against him and getting the moment of nuzzling comfort he was seeking. Jimin started padding across the clearing, joining them and watching Hoseok.

Things were starting to calm, and they could hear the police sirens in the distance as they crossed the bridge.

But suddenly, Seokjin felt a stab in his chest, icy and piercing as though an icicle had been thrust right into him. He jerked away from the others, looking towards the woods.

*Where’s Jungkook?*

He hadn’t seen him through the fight, but he hadn’t seen Yoongi or the baby, either. No, this was something else, jolting his very core and telling him in a sickly warning that things were not right. Something had happened.

There was no explanation for the creeping dread, or for the sudden drop of his heart, and he knew then that Jungkook had fell.

Jimin was poking against his side in question, but he ignored the others and raced off into the woods. The sirens behind him got nearer, and voices called out. Hoseok was pulled away from the foreign wolf, still snarling for a moment before he realized that backup had come.
The trees scraped against his cheeks as Seokjin bounded through the woods, the dread only growing bigger, like some great monster fed on its own fear, dizzying him in how overwhelming it was. He could smell Jungkook’s leather smell, and his own soap Scent twisted into it like the twistings of red on a candy cane, once sweet and comforting. At one point he wasn’t sure, though, if he was Scenting or sensing where they had gone. The sky was darkening suddenly, and as he passed through a clearing he saw that the sky had turned an eerie green and orange, a warning of an oncoming storm.

Jungkook’s Scent suddenly ended mysteriously at the top of a cliff, and Seokjin paused in confusion. The wolf his Omega had been chasing just seemed to have vanished without a trace, as well. Seokjin hunted around, whimpering at the sand and gravel that dotted the uneven terrain, snuffling at the roots of a gnarled, dead tree. His frustration and worry only grew with the continued lack of answers.

Then, his heart stopped. He lifted his head to the edge of the cliff, and he prayed. But when Seokjin leaned carefully over the edge of the cliff, he saw exactly what he had been praying he wouldn’t. Two dark forms lay curled at the bottom of the rocky gorge. Seokjin let out a wounded, strangled cry that pierced the air, then raced back down the hillside, going around until he could slide down to the bottom. Dust rose up around him, stinging his eyes, and it started to sprinkle, dotting the sandy gorge with its droplets that turned the ground a dark brown.

Jungkook lay curled up on top of the she-wolf he had fallen with, both of them a tangle of crumpled limbs and fur. The Omega’s black fur was crusted with dried blood, and he lay limp. Seokjin shifted to his human form, slowly stumbling forward until he fell to his knees at Jungkook’s side. The tears were already cascading down his cheeks as he rushed to check for vital signs.

There was a heartbeat, there was breathing. He was alive, but who knew how badly wounded? Seokjin carefully took the giant head into his hands, hugging Jungkook to his bloodstained chest and crying.

“Don’t you fucking die on me, Jungkook,” he managed to choke out. “Don’t you fucking die. Please, please don’t.” He buried his face into Jungkook’s neck, breathing in the smell of saltwater, leather and soap as deeply as he could, clenching his fists full of tufts of soft blackness. The little lightning-bolt like trace of white beneath Jungkook’s eye that showed where his cheek scar lay was traced by one of the Alpha’s fingers, and he wept.

“Please.”

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“Dr. Winslow, we need you to check in on the patient in room 23.”

“Mary, it’ll be fine, the baby will be fine.”

“Can you please tell me where Ryan Brown’s room is?”

Seokjin felt nauseated, which was actually not a feeling he was accustomed to experiencing, even in a busy ER waiting area. He paced back and forth anxiously, while Namjoon, and Kiara spoke to the half a dozen policemen and reporters who were pushing into the tiny alcove with its uncomfortable easy-to-clean couches and its assortment of outdated magazines. Jimin was flipping quietly through the last of these, occasionally looking over at Taehyung, who had minor bandages on his arms and upper chest, and was leaning up against Jimin’s shoulder with his eyes closed and arms crossed. Jimin had offered to drive him home to rest several times, but they hadn’t heard back about Jungkook yet, and he had insisted on staying until then.

“I just think you should get checked out, just to be sure,” Hoseok was whispering to Yoongi. The Omega was growling in his seat, scratches along his face and blood soaked into the shirt he usually wore to bed, his hair mussed and traces of smoke residue having been wiped ineffectively off his cheeks and forehead simply lingering in gentle smears.

“I’m fine, I promise,” Yoongi mumbled. “I just held a baby, you were the one in the middle of like half a dozen brawls, you idiot.” His words were clipped and harsh, but his hand reached out to clutch at Hoseok’s sleeve, fingertips pressing in tightly to hold his Mate there.

“You did more than just protect Naiara, you manage to keep the Main Hall from burning, too. I can’t believe you managed it one-handed.” Hoseok shook his head in disbelief. “Okay, so will you let the nurse take a look at you if I let them take a look at me?”

This argument caused the Omega pause, and he pouted a little, staring off into nothing as if considering it for several long moments. Then, he gave the most brief and slight of nods, and Hoseok smiled, taking his hand and tugging him out of his seat.

“We’ll be right back,” Hoseok promised. Taehyung opened one eye, and Jimin offered a little smile. “Let us know if there’s any news.”

“Will do,” Jimin promised. He reached over to run a hand through Taehyung’s hair, and Taehyung reached over and quietly took Jimin’s other hand in his own, wrapping his long, elegant fingers
around the Alpha’s.

Several long minutes passed, and Seokjin continued to pace. Eventually, Namjoon and Kiara were released from the police’s relentless questions, and they took down his contact information and left. The lead Alpha released a sigh, sitting down next to Taehyung, Kiara taking the seat on his other side. Naiara slept peacefully in her mother’s arms, somehow undisturbed amidst the chaos and noise and new smells around her. Her nose was buried against Kiara’s chest, sniffling quietly in her sleep. Kiara and Namjoon looked at each other, offering quiet, tired smiles, and she dropped her head to rest on his shoulder. Namjoon reached over and laid his large hand gently on top of Naiara, feeling her gentle, relaxed breathing.

“That’s what we get for having a baby in the middle of all this craziness,” Kiara whispered, amused. “She’ll sleep through anything now, she’s heard it all in the womb already.”

“Maybe you’re right. That could definitely be a good or bad thing, depending,” he chuckled, wiping at his face with a small, semi-clean spot on his sleeve.

“He’s going to be fine,” Kiara promised, offering a sad smile to her Mate.

“I hope you’re right.” Namjoon sighed.

“Are you the family of Jeong Jungkook?” called a warm female voice. Seokjin stopped his pacing and everyone looked up. In half an instant, Seokjin was at the doctor’s side, fingers itching to snatch away the clipboard she was casually tucking under one arm.

“Yes, how is he?” Namjoon stood, Kiara’s hand slipping into his and squeezing tightly.

The doctor’s lips upturned quietly, in what Seokjin couldn’t determine was a smile or a grimace.

“It looks like he’s going to be just fine,” she said soothingly. Everyone took a breath, but most of all Seokjin, who felt like he was going to sink to the floor and collapse right then.

“He had some moderate lacerations and a considerable amount of bruising, but fortunately, other than that, he’s going to be fine. He seems to have suffered some head trauma during the fall, so we were worried he’d had a concussion. We performed a CT and everything seems to be fine, but we’d like to keep him for a day or two to observe him, just in case.”
“C-can we see him?” Seokjin breathed, not realizing until after he spoke with the wet-sounding voice that he had started crying again. He wiped at his eyes with the back of his hand.

The doctor smiled, touching a hand to his shoulder in comfort. “Certainly. He’s not quite awake yet, but I’m sure he’ll be happy if his family is here when he wakes up. Just give the nurses about 15-30 minutes to finish, and I’ll walk you to his room, okay?”

She went over to the front desk, handing over her clipboard and quietly murmuring some instructions to the receptionist, and as her back was turned, Seokjin felt Namjoon come up and embrace him from behind, his warm, familial Mated smell of woodsmoke and coffee washing over Seokjin, who sighed.

“He’s gonna be fine,” Namjoon reassured, burying his mouth against Seokjin’s shoulder and squeezing him until it was hard for Seokjin to breathe. The achiness of the brawl still lingered in his ribs, but it was comforting nonetheless, as though Namjoon was squeezing out all the built up anxiety and premature mourning that had been developing in the pit of Seokjin’s stomach since that morning.

“Seokjin?”

The Alpha turned, a man in a wheelchair being pushed past. Jae’s legs were now cleaned and heavily bandaged, but he still looked frail and sickly in the chair, despite the spark in his eyes. Yunho stood behind him, hands on the handlebar to the wheelchair and his face pale. Jae was reaching out his hands, one behind him to tell Yunho to stop, the other to reach out for Seokjin.

Reluctantly, Namjoon loosened his hold on his brother, and Seokjin stepped forward, his fingertips entwining with those of the injured Alpha’s. Jae’s eyes questioned, his mouth parted in worry.

“Is he…?”

Seokjin sniffed heavily, taking his free hand to wipe away more of the tears, and then tried to smile, but his muscles felt tight and wrong. “He’s gonna be okay.”

Jae’s lips then curved into an unbelievably bright smile, one that lit up his face as he sighed in relief, sitting back a little into his wheelchair. “Oh, thank god. Thank god.”
He reached out his hand, pulling Seokjin to him, hugging the Alpha’s slim waist and burying his face in Seokjin’s stomach. It was a strangely intimate gesture, after everything, and Seokjin felt Yunho’s eyes locked on him in concern. But after a moment, Seokjin reached out and buried his hands in Jae’s hair, brushing the thick locks back and sighing. Jae even felt different in his arms, thin but more whole.

“I’m so sorry,” he murmured into Seokjin’s shirt. “I really didn’t mean to. I was trying to leave the island and tell Yunho what they were planning. It was a small rebel group, they wouldn’t listen to reason, even after the restraining order.”

Yunho looked up, meeting Namjoon’s eyes. The two lead Alphas frowned at each other, then Yunho lowered his head and looked away.

“I don’t think words can properly express my apologies, Namjoon,” Yunho said quietly. “But you should know that as of today, the Rising Gods is disbanding.”

“You’d have to do that anyways,” Jimin snapped from where he was protectively holding onto Taehyung. “The courts wouldn’t let you to continue after all of this. We have you on pointed attack towards our pack members, arson, kidnapping, and undue aggressive action.”

“But Yunho wasn’t even--” Jae started, pulling back from Seokjin to defend the Alpha. But Yunho touched a hand to his shoulder, squeezing it firmly and shaking his head.

“It’s fine, Jae.” Yunho smiled down at him softly. “I have no excuses. It never should have gone this far, and it was my responsibility as the lead Alpha.”

Seokjin just looked down at Jae, an emotion fluttering through his chest that he couldn’t name. It wasn’t the same feeling he had once had whenever he was in Jae’s presence, this was a smaller, weaker emotion, blooming small and fragile. “Where will you go?” he asked.

Jae shrugged. “Somewhere. I may have to just go lone wolf. Seuk has family near the mountains he’s being summoned to, and we expect word from Yunho’s father any moment now. I can’t go home, it’s already too much on my sisters.”

Seokjin pursed his lips together, unsure how to phrase the question that lingered on his lips. “Well, I can’t speak for our lead Alpha, but if you needed a place to go to feel safe, I think--”
That was when Jae’s face crumpled, a sloppily thrown together mess of fondness and melancholy. He shook his head. “No, Seokjin. You know I can’t.”

“It could be different now,” Namjoon said quietly, leaning in to grip Seokjin’s shoulder. “Maybe.”

Jae’s smile warmed, and he simply beamed up at Namjoon. “No. It took me this long to wake back up. But I don’t know if I would relapse into that person again…” he looked up pointedly at Seokjin. “It’s too tempting, despite everything. And I don’t want to go backwards, I want to go forwards.” With tears lingering in his eyes, he sniffed in sharply, then let out a little burst of laughter that sounded like it used to, rounded and wheezy and like a balloon letting out its air. “Besides, I don’t think your cute little Omega would appreciate my company. This isn’t some sitcom with a redeeming story arc.”

“That’s fair,” Namjoon murmured. “But if you need assistance, let me know. We’re purebloods, after all, our family can vouch for you, maybe help you get into a pack. You fought on our side, even wounded. I saw you protecting Yoongi, and our pup. It’s not forgotten.”

“She’s a cutie,” Jae said lightly, looking over at the baby in Kiara’s arms. “And I’ve always been weak to kids anyways. I always wanted some of my own.” Jae paused, staring after the sleeping pup for a long moment, then letting out a sigh, squeezing Seokjin’s hands one last time. “I wish you luck, Seokjin. And thank you. For all of it.”

“Well, maybe not all of it,” Seokjin mumbled uncertainly.

“Maybe not,” Jae shrugged. “Don’t worry, I’ll be fine. If worst comes to worst, my eldest sister can give me a hand. I’m the baby and the only son out of eight girls, and I’m not afraid to use it. I have nieces now, you know. So I should go see them anyways.”

“Jae,” the Alpha quietly murmured, holding onto the hand of his first love, his worst love. And yet somehow still a precious one.”Be happy.”

“Of course.”

Yunho wheeled him away, about to turn the corner when Seokjin called out a quiet, “And Jae?” They paused, Jae looking over his shoulder. Seokjin hesitated, his ears burning with the reminder of the emotions that had brought them here. “I did love you. I’m sorry for saying I didn’t.”
There was a pause, and then a warm smirk crept across his face. “I know.”

And they turned around the corner. It was a strangely quiet, still moment amongst everything that had happened. The doctor slowly tiptoed back over, leaning into Seokjin’s view and offering him a comforting smile.

“Shall we go?”

“Please,” Seokjin sniffed, wiping his sleeve. Nonetheless, he had a sneaking suspicion he would be crying again in a few moments. They followed the doctor down the hall, and Jimin and Taehyung were soon at his sides, holding onto his arms and leaning into him, making the walk a little more wobbly and awkward than necessary.

Meanwhile, in one of the other hospital rooms, Yoongi was seated on one of those uncomfortable observation beds with the crinkly paper stretched across it, his legs dangling limply down, at least a foot from the floor. Hoseok sat taking his turn in the ‘guest’ chair, one knee tucked over the other as he tried not to pick at one of the looser bandages on the back of his forearm.

“There’s nothing even wrong with me,” Yoongi sighed, “And we’ve been waiting in here forever.”

“I’m sure as soon as we go to leave they’d walk in,” Hoseok mused, smiling up at his Mate. “That’s how it always goes.”

“Naturally,” he sighed. He kicked his feet a little more off the edge of the bed. Just as he moved to slip off and go check outside to see if they had been forgotten, the door opened.

“Yoongi, right?” the doctor said in a chipper voice, stepping into the room.

“Yes, that’s me.”

“Well, it looks like you’re much better than expected, other than a few bumps and bruises. Nothing too serious. But just in case, we ran some general tests,” she smiled, sending Hoseok a reassuring look as she reached out and patted Yoongi’s shoulder. “But looks like you and the baby are doing just fine.”

The doctor’s smile fell, unsure of what she had said. Yoongi looked over and met eyes with Hoseok, whose mouth was open in the most beautiful expression of shock, eyes wide as tennisballs.

“Um…? You and the baby are just fine? Is there something wrong?”

Hoseok stood up, moving to Yoongi’s side and meeting his hands with his own, gripping so hard his fingers ached. “B-baby…” Hoseok breathed, a beam breaking out across his face that was brighter than a thousand suns, tears forming in his eyes as he moved in to press his lips to Yoongi’s. He had, in all honesty, expected Hoseok would cry when the day came. He didn’t expect himself to cry, however. He sniffed hard and wiped at his tears furiously with his sleeve, then moved forward and wrapped his arms around Hoseok, burying his face in the Alpha’s shoulder as a fresh onset of tears wracked firstly through his chest, then throat, before spilling over.

“Baby,” Yoongi managed, feeling Hoseok greedily touch his hand to the Omega’s stomach, making him laugh. “You won’t be able to feel it now, dumbass.” But he placed his hand over Hoseok’s graceful one anyways.

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“Jungkook?” Seokjin whispered, stepping into the hospital room with Taehyung and Jimin pressed in closely. The nurses were just moving back, having checked his vital signs one last time, and they offered a brief, automated smile as they left.

The Omega was laying in the bed, his eyes closed, hands down at his sides. The bandages on his chest and head looked more grim and dramatic than expected, and Seokjin felt Jimin grip him tighter as they moved into the room. With all of them milling around the bed, the room felt very full and stuffy, pressed in close. Seokjin hesitated, staring down at his sleeping Mate.

“Jungkook, are you awake? Everyone’s here.” He reached out tentatively, encircling Jungkook’s wrist with his bony, crooked fingers and tightening his hold just slightly, feeling the little pulse of his heartbeat.

“Figures,” Namjoon teased gently, “Jungkook’s always been the hardest one to wake up.”

Seokjin smiled a little at that, despite himself. Perhaps it was all the nervous energy in the room.
“God, Seokjin,” Taehyung nudged his brother with his shoulder, hitting a bruise unknowingly. “Just kiss him and wake him up, Sleeping Beauty Style.”

Jimin giggled, one hand flailing up to land lightly on Seokjin’s chest. “Sleeping Beauty Style?”

“What, should I demonstrate?” Taehyung wiped his mouth on his sleeve, only for Seokjin to laughingly place a hand on his shoulder, separating Taehyung, Jimin and Jungkook. With a smirk on his face that quickly faded the closer he moved to the very small and frail looking Jungkook, he reached out and brushed the Omega’s hair from his face.

“Kookie,” he murmured into the man’s ear, and he could have sworn he saw his eyelashes flutter, the lips parting just a little more to reveal the signature teeth. “Wake up.” He leaned in, flushing from the sensation of everyone watching them, and touched his lips to Jungkook’s.

The lips were cooler than they should have been, dryer than usual, but there was no mistaking the hand that suddenly, greedily clutched around the back of Seokjin’s neck, pinning him to the bed and, in effect, Jungkook’s mouth. The teasing Omega slipped his tongue into Seokjin’s mouth with all the vivacity of a youthful love, and Seokjin only blushed deeper when everyone started laughing.

Once released, Seokjin was able to appreciate fully the way Jungkook’s eyes crinkled deeply at the corners as he laughed heartily, loud and unrestrained, nose scrunched as if all the muscles in his face were trying to conjoin together in a smile-filled swirl. “You little shit, you were awake the whole time.”

“Maybe, maybe not,” Jungkook teased. But despite it all, Seokjin felt like his voice sounded a bit crackly and worn. The Omega lifted one shoulder in a weak little shrug. “A man with a concussion has a little trouble focusing, maybe some memory problems. I can’t remember what I had for breakfast.”

“You were a little busy, sweetie,” Kiara giggled, reaching out to touch Jungkook’s leg through the blanket, smiling warmly down at him. “You’re safe now, you know. The police have already taken in all the wolves who were involved.”

“That’s a relief,” Jungkook sighed, laying back against the sheets and staring up at the ceiling. He looked utterly relaxed, even closing his eyes for a moment, brow crinkled as he let it set in. Then, he paused a moment and added, “No, really, I’m fucking starving. Feed me.”
Seokjin blinked, then hiccuped with laughter, prodding Jungkook with one finger on a visibly safe spot, earning him a little smack from Jungkook’s hand. Before the Omega could withdraw it, Seokjin caught Jungkook’s hand in his own, and squeezed it so tightly he could feel the man’s fingers folding in together.

“You scared the piss out of me,” Seokjin mumbled accusingly.

Jungkook smiled, “I missed you, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello, lovelies~ KurageCharms here yet again~♥

Holy shebeezles, this chapter contained a lot for its word count. lol There was a lot to do and resolve, but I'm pretty happy with this chapter! Can you believe we're almost at the end?? There's only one chapter left, guys! D8 And it's probably gonna be a rather short one, in all honesty.

This story has been in the works since around January, and I started posting it around April. So it's really been a big undertaking to update every single week. ;_; Thank you to everyone for your support! Especially to the Sin Squad, who eagerly awaited updates and gave me love, Sabby, who messages me like every day with soft moments and Jinkook headcanons, and especially to JenniJen, my Beta and partner in crime. You really deserve credit for this creation, truly. ♥ Because you helped shape every chapter. Thank you so much, my sweets.

Thanks for reading, my lovelies~ I hope you've enjoyed my little story. ♥♥

P.S. You should all know that both Jenni and I were VERY tempted to end the chapter right after Jungkook fell down the cliff. SO. TEMPTED. But you're lucky that we're both weirdos who wanna end the story on an even chapter number. lmaooo
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Hello, my lovelies~

As you may have realized, the first "epilogue" I posted was, indeed, a total troll. Of COURSE I wouldn't leave you guys with a tragic-ass ending after 210k. *blows kisses* LOVE YOU, SWEATIES. ENJOY THE FLUFF.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Love is not possession. It is not ‘being completed.’ It is two people walking along the path of life and saying, ‘I want to hold your hand along the way.’ It’s the silent ‘I love you’s and it’s compromise and pain, but it is feeling like you belong. Having someone at your side that you trust in, and for whom you want to become your best self.”

Six Months Later

Jungkook sat beneath his table in the kitchen, knees drawn up to his chest and the hems of his oversized tan sweater pulled down over his legs. On the underside of the table was hung a thin strand of cheap pumpkin decorative lights, their exaggerated grins offering orange light in his special space. They had been hanging there for two, almost three months now, but instead of taking them down Jin had just brought Jungkook a strand of pure white snowflake lights to entangle around them, over-illuminating the nest until one could see the glow from the outside despite the heavy black curtains Jungkook had sewn together with Yoongi’s help.

He fell back against the arrangement of pillows and blankets that curled around the edge of the table, keeping as much heat in the little shelter as possible, and he looked up at the underside of the wood. About two months after their Mating, Jin had had the gall to carve their names into the table, and Namjoon, Seokjin and Yoongi had had a shouting match about it for hours. Now, it was generally accepted that the Bonded couple had laid their mark on it, carving or not, and Jungkook had been delighted to get a polaroid camera from Seokjin for his birthday that September. Instantly, the collection had started.
A veritable collage of photos had been stuck to the underside of the table, visible in the dim glow of the decorative lights. Photos of Taehyung chasing Jimin around the house, whipped frosting on their faces and in their hair. Yoongi proudly displaying the baby mobile he had repaired, and then one of the mobile hanging above Naiara’s crib, the tiny hands reaching for the collection of Scented items, a sparkle in her eyes. Jimin playing Monopoly with Taehyung and looking frustrated (he lost by a long shot). Yoongi on the couch, arm wrapped absentmindedly around his swollen, pregnant belly as he read, Taehyung curled up next to him, napping with his mouth hanging open. Seokjin sitting in his truck, laughing and blurry as he tried to shove the camera away from Jungkook while keeping his eyes on the road. Namjoon carrying Kiara and dumping her playfully on the couch. Hoseok making Yoongi’s morning coffee, his tanned back in its white tank top turned towards the camera. At least half a dozen selfies Jungkook had taken in different spots in the house which seemed random, but which Seokjin knew were a playful reminder of the memories from their Mating weekend in the pack house. Taehyung and Seokjin in wolf form, teaming up on Namjoon as he tried to carry briquettes across the camp on the island, tackling him to the ground and him beating them with the bits of messy charcoal. Seokjin by firelight.

Seokjin getting ready in the morning, shaving in the reflection of the mirror and looking bleary-eyed. Seokjin sleeping in his bed, shirtless and underneath a thin layer of sheets. Seokjin when Jungkook had convinced him to dye his hair pink, looking aggravatingly ethereal. Pictures of them together, out on a picnic. Seokjin on the beach, laughing and red to the tips of his ears as he sat shame-facedly besides a recreation of his acrostic poem of Jungkook’s name written in the sand. Seokjin playing guitar in the living room, his lips pursed in concentration.

There were a lot of memories, a lot of struggles. The pack house had gone through a rough summer financially, after all the court meetings, the money compensated to them was almost entirely used to recreate the camp on the island, repairing it to livable conditions. But now that Seokjin was working on applying for residency, and Hoseok was working on opening his own repair shop closer to the pack house, things were starting to calm down.

And today, they were all together, and safe. Jungkook couldn’t ask for more. He pulled aside the curtain to his nest, and the smell of Christmas turkey wafted through the air. Seokjin turned on the spot, glancing over at Jungkook, and sent him a smile.

“Have a good nap, sleepyhead?” he chuckled. Jungkook sent him a playful grin, tilting his head back before crawling out from under the table. “The turkey still has at least an hour on it, so you should go tell the others that we might as well take the family photo now.”

“Okay.”

“And Jungkookie,” he reached out and hooked one arm around Jungkook’s waist, halting his exit of the kitchen. Jungkook looked over his shoulder at his Alpha, who was nuzzling into his neck already.
“You’re under the mistletoe.”

“Oh my fucking god,” Jungkook rolled his eyes. “We don’t have any—” But out of instinct, he looked up, and taped to the ceiling was a couple of sad-looking green leaves and some white, round berries attached. “What the…?”

“It’s tradition!” Seokjin declared, wriggling around his hold on the Omega and kissing him deeply, his hands in Jungkook’s hair and his skin heated from hovering over the stove. When he pulled back, he chuckled, patting him and pushing Jungkook toward the door. “Okay, we’re done now, don’t loiter.”

Jungkook, still a little dazed, grumbled about selective traditionalism as he walked into the living room. Naiara had been set out in the middle of the floor on one of her blankets, but she had recently acquired the ability to roll and adored using it to her advantage for the sake of exploring. Jungkook watched as she slowly curled her little body over, making her way towards the foot of the chair her mother was sitting in. Kiara, her red hair grown down to her shoulders, leaned down past her knees to smile down at her daughter, inciting the infant to squeal with happiness and wave her arms frantically. Namjoon had specifically bought his ‘little princess’ a lovely red dress with white frills on the end, and the little knitted booties that went with it had practically caused the adult wolves in the house to collectively melt. For the time being, Taehyung was sitting nearby, leaning back on one palm and proudly watching as Jimin laid on the floor parallel to Naiara’s journey, tickling at her back and trying to regain her attention.

“Naiara, Naiara sweetie,” Jimin cooed, pouting when the baby didn't instantly turn around. “Hey, you!” Still no response. Jimin hunched up his shoulders a little, trailing one finger down her back and trying with a quiet, “Princess…”

Naiara craned her head to look, all wide eyes and soft edges, and beamed a two-toothed smile, reaching an arm out for him. Jimin broke off into giggles, falling forward and burying his face into the carpet as Kiara giggled.

“You can blame Joonie for that,” she remarked with amusement sparkling in her eyes. “Speaking of which, I need to go wake him up from his nap. He takes them even more than she does. Jimin, make sure she doesn't eat the Christmas tree for me?”

“Absolutely,” Jimin promised.
“Actually,” Jungkook interrupted from where he had been fiddling with the Christmas presents next to Jimin, “Seokjin says the food will be ready in an hour, so we should get ready for the photo.”

“Ahh,” Kiara sighed, holding an arm out to call Jungkook to hold her hand. “Then you need to come with me, you have bed-head anyways and I want to show you something.”

Taehyung waited until Kiara and Jungkook had left, then he rolled over closer to Jimin and the baby, touching its tiny foot with a long, slender finger. Jimin looked across to his Mate, offering him a smile that made his eyes crinkle up.

“Hey,” he murmured.

“Hey,” Taehyung replied, smiling softly.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t make it to your appointment this morning,” Jimin sighed. He had tried to be at every single one, blood tests, the check-ups, the ultrasounds, the countless ‘Sorry, but not this time’ s, all of them. “How did it go?”

Taehyung lifted one shoulder in an awkward half-prone shrug. He reached out and petted Naiara’s soft head, where little brown curls were already growing, curling around her ears. Jimin frowned, guessing the answer had been the same as the previous times - that a Beta pregnancy was risky, was hard to achieve. They’d had some false alarms, some weak hopes, and he worried that Taehyung was getting strung out, so he didn’t want to press for details. That was one good reason to go to every appointment, if not to be there for Taehyung himself.

“Don’t worry, baby, it’ll happen.” He reached out and entangled his fingers with Taehyung’s, the contrast between them a lovely one that he had come to adore, his fingers decorated with silver rings and Taehyung’s slim wrists with little black and brown leather cords. One for each try. He held Taehyung’s knuckles to his lips, kissing them. “I promise.”

Taehyung just stared wide-eyed at Jimin, transfixed on his face before a smile blossomed across his face. “I love you.”

Jimin laughed at the sudden directness of the confession, a typical Taehyung sort of move. Naiara kicked her feet in her booties and cooed, sniffing at the foot of the chair that she knew by Scent was her mother’s favorite.
“In the meantime,” Jimin smiled deeper, until the vision of Tae with his cheek pressed the carpet vanished between his crinkled eyes, “We have babies to play with and we get to watch them make all the mistakes first.”

Taehyung chuckled deeply, reaching out to pat Naiara’s diapered bottom. “She’s gonna be crawling soon enough, and then we’ll never be able to keep track of her.”

“Even if she couldn’t crawl, she has everyone under her command, the bossy little princess.” He reached over and gently sat Naiara up, leaning in to nuzzle at her face and making her blow a delighted raspberry at him. He giggled, wiping the bit of baby-moisture left on his nose away.

“Has anyone seen Kwangie’s pacifier?” Hoseok asked, coming down the steps with his newborn son curled up in his lean arms. Yoongi followed close behind, a cloth still thrown over his shoulder from burping the baby.

“Oh, it’s here,” Jimin offered helpfully, indicating the coffee table, the sharp legs and edges of which had been covered in a grotesque arrangement of old towels and single socks, all taped on in a protective preparation to Naiara’s to-be adventures. Also to save the wood from being nibbled on by sharp growing pup-teeth in the upcoming months.

“I’m telling you, if you hold him constantly, he’s going to stay overly attached to you,” Yoongi teased, even as he moved in protectively to rearrange the blankets on their son with a sigh. “Kwang-min, you’re not even in the world for a full moon and you’ve already got a mess of particulars.”

“He is not a mess,” Hoseok pouted back, “He’s just sensitive.”

“Yes, his stomach is sensitive, his chest is sensitive, his eyes are sensitive, his everything.”

“It could be worse…” Hoseok tilted the baby, who was laying in his arms and blinking slowly with wide eyes and a worried frown as he stared up at his parents. “He could be a fussy baby, but he’s so quiet!” Hoseok pouted his lips, leaning in and speaking in a playful voice. “Isn’t he? You’re such a good baby~” To Yoongi and in his normal voice he added, “And there’s nothing wrong with a sensitive, quiet sort of man!”

“No,” Yoongi rolled his eyes, leaning up on tiptoe to press a kiss to Hoseok’s jaw. “There’s not.”
“Can I hold him?” Taehyung chirruped, halfway sitting up from the ground where Jimin was turning Naiara so she could roll a new direction.

“I already have dibs.” Jungkook popped his head around the corner, setting the camera in his hand onto the coffee table before holding out his arms.

Yoongi frowned, looking fretful as he hovered nearby. “Jungkook, maybe you should sit on the couch, y’know…”

“I’m not a 4 year old,” Jungkook laughed, careful as he took the infant from Hoseok’s arms, hugging the baby to his chest. Quietly, he leaned in and whispered, “Hi there, Kwang-min. You look so awake today.”

In response, the baby sniffed up at him, and Jungkook dropped lower to let the boy learn his Scent. Kwang-min had Yoongi’s little mouth, all angular and unbelievably soft as it turned into a confused pout. But the eyes were more like Hoseok’s, already slightly puffy with the baby-sized eye bags underneath to accompany and curved downward as if in an eternally sleepy expression.

While Jungkook’s guard was down, inspecting the tiny being and his softness, Kwang-min flailed one hand upwards and caught hold of one of Jungkook’s many hoop earrings, grabbing firm hold and yanking on his ear painfully. Jungkook let out a cry of surprise, making Kwangie jump, and Hoseok laughed.

“Do you like Uncle Kookie’s earrings?” Hoseok guffawed, leaning in to whine endearingly at the baby. Kwangie looked over at his father with wide, enthralled eyes, not releasing his hold until Yoongi came over with a broad, gum-lined smile and disentangled the tiny fist from the Omega’s ear.

“Okay, are we ready?” Seokjin called out, stepping into the living room and undoing the apron from around his waist, revealing the soft gray sweater he wore that matched Jungkook’s. “Where’s Kiara?”

“She’s upstairs waking Namjoon up and getting him ready,” Jungkook bounced Kwangie a little in his arms, looking up at Seokjin with a soft smile.

He hadn’t said anything. Not for months. But Seokjin knew what the look meant. He smiled back, walking forward and rubbing a soft fingertip across the still velvety crown, kissing Kwangie’s dark
forehead. He looked up at Jungkook and smirked.

“Where should we set up, then?” Yoongi queried, looking around the room and inspecting the angles of the overhead light and the tree.

“Probably the couch would be easiest,” Jimin suggested, “Then the babies can all be in someone’s laps.”

“Sounds reasonable enough,” the Omega agreed with a nod. They started the shuffle toward the couch, putting Kwangie back into Hoseok’s arms as Yoongi curled up next to him. Taehyung sat on the floor just in front of them where he would be with Jimin, and Taehyung insisted several times that he wanted to do a ‘cool pose’ while half-holding Kwangie, to which Hoseok agreed with a roll of his eyes and a pat on the Beta’s head. Jungkook and Seokjin took their place on the arm of the couch, Seokjin leaning in while Jungkook sat perched on the edge, the Alpha’s hand on his shoulder as he beamed. The house smelled warm and lovely today, and it was permeated with the unforgettable pup smell that seemed to soak into the walls and carpets, giving everything a domestic feeling. Namjoon came down, still slightly bleary-eyed but with his hair parted too-perfectly off to one side. Kiara sat down with Naiara in her lap, Namjoon curled over their couch arm with a proud, wide-lipped grin on his face as he tilted his chin slightly forward.

Jimin angled the camera on the tripod, peering through the viewer to make sure everyone was in the frame. “Okay, ready? Everyone say cheese!”

Petulantly, no one but Taehyung said cheese, but he did so loudly to make up for everyone else half-giggling, half-quietly smiling. As soon as the light flashed, their eyes flashing weird blobs of green and purple from the flash, Jimin bolted up and lined up to check the photo.

“I want to get lots of photos of all of you,” Kiara demanded in a motherly tone, “Of Kwangie with his parents, then one with all his uncles.”

Jungkook felt Seokjin squeeze his shoulder a bit, and he looked up to see Seokjin nuzzling in on his neck. “I’m sorry your brother couldn’t be here with us.”

To that, the Omega gave a light smile, taking Seokjin’s hand in his own. “Maybe next Christmas we’ll have found him, and we can all be together. As a family.”

Seokjin swallowed, tightening his hold around Jungkook’s fingers. Jimin called out that they would
take one more, and he set the timer.

“I think I’m ready, too,” Seokjin whispered, in a voice only Jungkook could hear. “For that conversation we’ve been putting off. Let’s talk after dinner.”

Jungkook beamed up at him, his chest swelling with eagerness and nervous energy. He already knew he wanted to have a spring baby, so they would have to wait awhile even after their decision had been made. But it would be nice to have that conversation, to add to the warmth and youthful energy of the pack house. Things had been noisier lately, bustling with movement and chatter, cries both small and loud, infant and adult. It was a rare day one of them didn’t end up asleep on the couch.

But in a strange way, things felt the most right that they ever had in Jungkook’s life. He hadn’t expected things to take quite this turn, when Namjoo had announced his two brothers would be moving in, but the development felt natural and inevitable, from the first moment his skin had tingled at the sight of Seokjin walking up the driveway, to now, when they leaned in together for their first official family photo.

Loving the pack, loving Seokjin, hadn’t always been easy, and it had come with its own frustrations and complications, its calls to action and calls for patience. But he wouldn’t have taken a single moment of it back, as Seokjin kissed the back of his neck and whispered a gentle, “I belong with you” that had come to replace their “I love you”s.

Jimin waved his signal, then slid back down on the floor next to Taehyung, smiling up at the camera as Taehyung wrapped his arm around his Alpha’s waist.

“Okay, smile everyone!” Jimin cried out, and Kiara shuffled her hold so her daughter was a bit more visible.

“Everyone,” Taehyung called out loudly, puffing up his chest with pride as the timer’s light grew faster and faster, indicating it was about to go off. “Jimin and I are pregnant!”

The camera flashed on all their surprised faces, not the least of which was none other than Park Jimin himself.

Chapter End Notes
Hello, my lovelies~ KurageCharms here. :>

Now that I sufficiently scared some of you, I have some announcements~!

1) THANK YOU JENNIJEN FOR SUFFERING THROUGH THE BIRTH OF THIS LITERARY MONSTER BABY. I couldn't have done it without you! <3

2) Thanks to everyone for all the support, I love-love-love hearing about your experience reading this humble fic of mine. :">

3) Those of you who follow me on Twitter know that I was planning a Big Announcement at the end of LINP. It wasn't the fake epilogue, it wasn't even Vmin's pregnancy.

The announcement is that, after a bit of a much-needed break, I'm going to be writing a sequel to Love Is Not Possession. It'll be a separate story, focused on Jinkook having their first pup and also will hopefully resolve the Jeon Brother business once and for all. It will also have toddler pups and much hella cuteness. I wanted to add it in the epilogue but there was just too much to say, and it didn't really suit my original plans for this story, so it's a separate entity altogether. :> I hope you look forward to it and enjoy it! I won't be doing the hardass scheduled updates but I'm planning to work just as hard on making it a quality work I can be proud of. Please look forward to it! ♥

Thanks, and later lovelies~ ♥ It's finally over.

EDIT:
Here it is, the LINP Q&A podcast I've just made, answering questions and talking about making LINP. :> Be warned, I never shut up so this goddamn thing is an hour and a half. WTF.

Anyways, thanks for all the support and love, sweets.

https://soundcloud.com/user-148271591/love-is-not-possession-fanfic-qa

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!