Written in the stars: the science, the history and the magic of mating

by brujadelmar

Summary

“During a long time, different societies tried to find reasons to explain the gender dynamics in human beings. Some believed it was a natural law, some believed it was a punishment, some believed it was a destiny, and some believed it was just a detail. I ask you, why not all of them? We are hormonal creatures, no doubt, and we can’t run away from our biology, but we can evolve and change, we can dream. If there are religions explaining gender “hierarchy” and omegarism as a plan of god, there are ones dedicated to the mother omega and the equal participation in the sacred aspects. Science can explain our behavior based on our anatomy, history can explain based on our antecessor needs, but there’s a lot more to be discovered yet. Why the concept of soul mates is considered antiquated, for example? Who decided that mating should be only a physical response to smells? Why, we, as a society, can’t get rid of old prejudices even after fighting for equal rights to every gender?”

Chanyeol is a hired mate. Kyungsoo hates the moon.

Notes

multiship, multifandom, many references to sexism, religion and social issues, not revised
See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

The sound of the pen breaking in his hand draws the attention of the entire room. There isn’t many people, really. With the exception of the scary man sitting at the table, Chanyeol only sees an angelic guy reading a football magazine.

“Sorry,” Chanyeol gives them his best smile. He has been informed that his “best smile” makes him look like a maniac, but the damn pen is broken in two pieces and he is very sorry.

“No problem,” the scary man says in a threatening way. The tag in his chest said “Kris”, which doesn’t match his face or the fact he is two meters tall. Chanyeol feels very weird whenever he meets someone taller than him.

“You can use mine, if you want to,” says the angelic guy, offering a glitter pen. Chanyeol smiles and holds the glitter pen as gently as he could, before focusing again on his form. He doesn’t think it’s hard to explain his medical history (again) or to write a small biography – since he loves to talk about his passions –, but he was still unsure about his decision. During every minute of the selection Chanyeol asks himself the same questions: Why is he so desperate to do this? Is it worth? What if someone find out? What kind of people would hire him?

To be honest, he is a bit proud of being selected as a hired mate. His life is a succession of failures, and after a long process (four months of exams, interviews and so many, so many papers!) it was at least rewarding to be chosen. Now, all he has to do is complete the formulary, sign the contract and wait.

“Do you want some help?” angelic guy asks, whispering. “You seem confused.”

Chanyeol glances to check if “Kris” is listening.

“Oh, no. I am just nervous.”

“Yeah, I can see. You are going to break another pen if keep doing that,” he points. “My name is Luhan. I filled the form… a long time ago, but I can help you.”

“Do you work here?!” Chanyeol asks, a bit louder than intended. He covers his mouth, not only because of the noise, but also because he doesn’t want to sound judgmental. It’s nothing to be shocked, after all, he is in the same place.

“I do,” Luhan giggles. “It’s my second year. I’m changing mates. It’s been hard, but it’s a nice job.”

“Hummm,” Chanyeol scratch his neck. He feels uncomfortable discussing it. “Are… are you an alpha?”

“Yes,” Luhan nods, “I’m here to renew my contract.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods back. Luhan doesn’t look like an alpha, but who is Chanyeol to judge? He feels less threatened when he knows he is not going to discuss knotting with an omega – that would be uncomfortable. “Was it okay… with your mate?”

“It was really nice. Min… Minnie is a good man,” Luhan smiles, his expression going soft with affection. “He treated me well. I hope my next partner is also nice to me.”

“You…” Chanyeol lowers his voice, getting close to the man next to him. “Don’t you think it is
weird? You don’t feel like you… you are selling your body or anything?”

Luhan laughs. Kris glares at them.

“Of course! But this is a service that helps people in need,” he explains, obviously amused. He is not as angelic as he looks, Chanyeol thinks.

Chanyeol tries to find an argument against it, but Kris interrupts the conversation.

“Yixing is waiting for you, Mr. Park. Will you finish today?”

“Oh, yes,” he looks at the paper. My name is Chanyeol, I’m a musician, I love eating and playing videogames! He takes a long breath. The biography sounds like something a five-years-old would write. But, well, fuck it. “I’m done.”

“End of the corridor, room 7,” Kris points, plucking the form from Chanyeol’s hand. “No need to knock.”

His palms are sweating, and his legs, usually rushing to places, are walking small steps. If he wants to give up, the moment is now. Chanyeol buries his hands in his sweater’s sleeves and looks at the door as if it is his principal’s office. He opens it. Too bright, too clean. A man is sitting in one of the big bean bags in the ground; he’s reading a book. He looks up, smiling.

“You must be Chanyeol,” he says, standing up. He is beautiful and slim, his smell distinctive but charming. An alpha.

“Nice to meet you, Dr.” Chanyeol greets him awkwardly, unsure of what to do next.

“You can call me Yixing. You’re not my patient. Yet,” he points to the beanbag next to him. “Sit, please. Let’s talk.”

Chanyeol sinks in the bean bag, holding his long legs to his chest in a fetal position. There are coffee and cookies next to him. It’s like a trap.

“First, I want to congratulate you. The selection though is tough and only few pass the tests. It’s a shame, really. I’m trying to expand, but…” Yixing smiles, and his dimples shows, making him look younger, more carefree. “Second, I want to ask if you have any complaint. I know it’s a long process and I can’t control the group who does the testing. Was everything all right?”

“Yes…”

“Really? No invasion of privacy? No inappropriate touching? No prejudiced comments?”

“No, Dr- I mean, no, Yixing. It was okay. No complaints,” Chanyeol assures him. Yixing soft, quiet voice that makes Chanyeol feels like he’s a child again.

“I’m glad to know. So, I guess it’s business time,” he crosses his legs as a part of his statement. It’s an elegant gesture and Chanyeol fails to imitate, almost hitting his face with his knee. “I imagine you already know all the steps that follow your contract, right?”

“Yes. I think so. I read everything you guys sent me.”

“That’s good. But I think you don’t know much about our history. Perhaps the person that recommended us said something?”

“No… I guess. My friend Tao… He said he was your friend, he told me… about… about… not the
“What we do, Chanyeol. You’re one of us, now,” Yixing smiles. “Zitao, you say? He is a close friend of mine. He worked for us for three years, but unfortunately, he had to leave CHOOSE. He witnessed the foundation of our mating services. We were called L.A.Y. at the time, but Kris pointed out to me it was… suggestive. I’m naïve about such things, I must admit.”

Chanyeol laughs, he can’t help himself.

“I suppose you know we aren’t much different from the government service.”

Chanyeol doesn’t know much about it, but he can imagine. He hears occasionally about the projects to keep homeless omegas safe, to give suppressants to the ones who couldn’t afford their own, and also, to provide mating agents to omegas who can’t take these suppressants for health reasons. He nods.

“We are, of course, a private business,” Yixing continues. “I worked in the public service and it was… difficult. As a doctor, I am against the indiscriminate use of suppressants. In some cases, it’s necessary, but the pharmaceutical industry incentive the doctors to prescribe suppressants in every situation. Sometimes, without any exams. Hormones are a serious subject, Chanyeol. Not everyone can take a hormonal bomb that easily.”

Chanyeol gulps, guilt creeping in, his eyes focused in the floor.

“But I can’t change this situation. And, of course, it’s a matter of safety for some omegas. When I was working for the government, I noticed that many suppressants had a short-term effect. Every person has a different reaction to it and some people don’t react at all,” Yixing tone was suddenly hard. “I was raised by omegas, and I know how difficult it’s for them to have a normal life when there’s so much violence and discrimination. Our society doesn’t take well unmated omegas, no matter how much we say we are, or wish we could be different, we are never far from our roots.”

“Yes,” he says, but he feels uncomfortable. Chanyeol barely knows any omegas (only his mother, and he would never discuss these things with her). He is not ignorant about omegas’ discrimination, of course. In high school, as they started to present their genders, he noticed the separation, the jokes. Chanyeol works at night, and all the omegas he sees are always with alphas and betas and marks on their skin to shoo away alphas. Chanyeol even worked in a place where the owner stated they wouldn’t hire omegas because of heats and pregnancies. He was an old man, and Chanyeol knew old people were more conservative. Still, it was a shock.

“I won’t lie to you, my friend. We are new in the business and our services are not cheap. We guarantee client discretion and safety, something almost impossible to happen in the public service. So, the people who hire us are… different. They wouldn’t hire us if they weren’t in need. Some of our clients are famous, public figures. Some of them aren’t out of the gender closet. And all of them had been selected like you were. There’s no inequality in our contracts. Every restriction you have, your mate will have too.”

That doesn’t calm Chanyeol, but he does think it’s fair. For his contract, he has to stop dating, having sex, talking about his job, travelling without warning his mate, using injectable drugs (he’s not worried about that), talking about his mate (!!!) and, of course, he has to be ready to attend his mate at the time of their heat. Any fucking time.

“Do you have a mate already?”
“No,” he says, biting his lips.

“No, of course, of course. Pardon me. You have to yet to sign your contract,” Yixing shakes his head shyly. “Are you sure you want to commit to this, Chanyeol? It’s a hard job.”

Chanyeol, being the immature kid he is, laughs.

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Is there any particular reason why you decided to join us?”

Because I am a loser. I have no money, no partner, no perspective and no success in anything I do.

“Hum… I need the money. I want to record an album. And I’m not… into relationships. I’m more… a friend’s type of person, I think. Not the series. Did you get it? It wasn’t the best way to explain, but-”

“I think I understand,” Yixing smiles. “I’m just asking. I don’t think you endured a four month wait to be unsure of your choices. I’m just… curious. You’re young and attractive. It’s a difficult life, you know, to be a hired mate. You have to accept the intimacy, but you cannot get attached.”

Chanyeol bites his tongue. He knows, he just knows it’s not the right job for him – but he is the right person for the job. He is a healthy alpha, he is lonely, he has no established routine, he’s easy to adapt to people’s needs and he is… kind of reckless. But he’s also a caring, nurturing person and he is, Chanyeol knows himself, starving for affection.

Chanyeol picks one cookie and bites it, trying to stop his big mouth from exposing himself.

Yixing seems to sense it, smiling again. They drink coffee together while revisiting the contract. Chanyeol signs it three times and gets one copy, a trill of anxiousness shooting up his spine.

“Don’t worry about anything,” Yixing says, reading his thoughts. “We are going to call you and explain everything when the time comes. Just relax for now.”

Eleven days. It takes them eleven days to call. Chanyeol is going home, alone, when the phone rings. He usually comes home with Jongdae, but now it’s… different.

Chanyeol grew up with his best friends. They made a promise to start a band and to be together forever. Of course, they changed, but it was hard to accept when Chanyeol is the one being lonely. It’s not their fault. Baekhyun and Jongdae didn’t actually plan to get different careers or to date each other. Jongdae gave up singing because he loved writing better. Jongdae was curious, smart and Chanyeol wasn’t surprised when he decided to be a journalist. Baekhyun kept singing, but not with Chanyeol or a band. He joined an orchestra as a solo vocalist, and then started teaching for kids – and being a teacher become more interesting than just singing.

Chanyeol kept chasing his dream. He wanted to work with music, to create songs and maybe start a band. Unfortunately, he has to pay his bills; he’s used to working in pretty much anything. He works in bars, bands, marriages, partys, anything to get paid. He knows he is delaying his actual “dream” by making this choice, but he was happy while doing it.

Now, he is not sure he is happy.

He remembers being in Sehun’s party – the only relationship he’s ever had, two years after high
school, - drinking in silence and thinking about how his friends had interesting lives. Jongdae lived with a boyfriend in another country during college, Baekhyun worked as backing vocal for different singers, Sehun went to the Paris Fashion Week. Now Jongdae is a news reporter, Baekhyun is a surprisingly good teacher and Sehun is a talented stylist. And, of course, they have mates.

He is happy for them.

Baekhyun and Jongdae were perfect to each other. It was a matter of time before Baekhyun stopped dating every cute beta in his way (he had a preference). It did not take long before Jongdae missed home. Nothing would make Chanyeol happier than seeing his best mates in love. He and Sehun weren’t exactly the most perfect couple, but they were friends and lovers. Sehun ignored Chanyeol’s dumbness and terrible taste in clothes; Chanyeol accepted Sehun’s moods and constant sassiness. But after some time, they fell into the classic alpha-beta relationship problem: what’s the point of this relationship?

Chanyeol hates himself for breaking up with a cliché excuse. It’s not you, it’s me would be better. Well, Sehun did get his revenge by dating another alpha and making the relationship work. Chanyeol wasn’t even mad. Tao is a sweet, respectful alpha. It’s good to make new friends, and, after all, he’s the one who broke up. And he has no idea why. Maybe some people don’t know how to be in a relationship. Chanyeol wants attention, love, intimacy, but it’s never enough, and as the times goes by, people keep focusing solely in their mates. To have only one person to share everything is so… confining. He wants more, he wants so much love he could barely breathe, he wants excitement. Relationships are boring.

And his life is also boring, he thinks, as he picks the phone.

“Hello?”

“PCY? Park Chanyeol?”

“Yeah?”

“It’s Kris, from CHOOSE mating services,” Chanyeol remembers his voice. Kris has an accent and CHOOSE comes out as xoos. “You have a mate.”

“What?” Chanyeol almost screams, waking up the old lady sitting next to him. “What?!?”

“A client chose you,” Kris says slowly. “We are sending you his files. Check your mail. You have one week to answer it.”

“What,” he lost his capacity to construct actual phrases, apparently. His heart is beating weirdly fast.

“What’s your—listen,” Kris takes a long breath. “A client chose your profile. I will send his profile to your email. You will read and then you are going to answer the email, telling us if you accept his terms or not. If you accept, then we are going to provide your communication and give you a possible date of meeting. When I say meeting, I am saying mating. You understand?”

“Yes, I do,” he answers quickly.

“Good. Send me an email if you have any doubt. Not just “what”, I want real questions.”

Chanyeol hears the click, and he opens his email box.

From: kriswu@choosems.net
To: pcy@choosems.net
Dear PCY,
We are happy to inform you have been CHOOSEn! Your mate sent you his terms and you have seven days to give us an answer as agreed upon. Read carefully!

D.O
28 years old, male, blood type A, no birthing history, first heat (16), no suppressants, no veneer disease history, no chronic disease, no allergies, has astigmatism, 1.70m, no weight informed, suggested heat length 2-3 days, requires alpha in suppressants, does not require personal vehicle, does not require personal communication line.

Biography: My sun sign is Capricorn. I’m a chef.

*This email is protected and can only be sent to @choosems.net accounts.
**See clauses of violation of privacy in the section “Non-Disclosure Agreement” of your contract.

Best wishes,
CHOOSE m.s.

Chanyeol stares at the email for so longs he almost misses his station. He also forgets to stop and buy some food, he’s lethargic for that. He comes home and passes by Baekhyun playing videogame. Chanyeol ignore his noises, going straight to his room; he sits in his bed and stays there, fully dressed, bag in one hand, cellphone in another.

That’s it. He is going to mate for money. How exactly Tao convinced him to do it?

“He’s breathing,” Jongdae’s voice wakes him up from his thoughts. “Zombies don’t breathe.”

“What? Zombies do breathe!”

“They’re dead.”

“Well, they walk. Dead people don’t walk, or see, or eat. They breathe!”

Chanyeol turns his head slowly. Jongdae seems sleepy, dressed only in his underwear. Baekhyun still has his earphones hanging around his neck.

“Are you ok, pal?” Jongdae asks, as Baekhyun hides behind him. “Something happened?”

“No,” he rubs his eyes. “I… want to sleep.”

“Okay, okay,” Jongdae nods. “Don’t pass out with your shoes on. And try to close your eyes.”

“He’s lying. He’s been bitten, he’s infected and he’s going to eat your brains in few hours,” Baekhyun says, only the tip of his head showing behind Jongdae’s shoulder. “I’m gonna sleep in Sehun’s.”

“Chill. You’re going to sleep in our bed. I won’t let you watch zombieland again. He’s just… Are you sure you ok, yeollie? You look pale.”

“Yeah, yeah,” he glances at his phone, standing up. “I’m tired. Sorry to wake you up.”

Jongdae doesn’t look convinced, but shrugs and leaves the room. Baekhyun runs after him.
Chanyeol closes and locks his door. He promises himself he is going to sleep all night, he is going to relax, he has a week to answer it. He takes a long bath, lies in bed and close his eyes.

After less than one hour, he gives up.

From: pcy@choosems.net  
To: kriswu@choosems.net  
Subject: RE: MATE PROFILE: (Ω) D.O

Hello,
I don’t know how to answer it, but I got no problem with his profile. I am in suppressants already.
Can you explain the “does not require personal vehicle, does not require personal communication line”?? I don’t remember these questions!
PCY

Chanyeol turns off his phone. It’s a late Monday night, he’s supposed to enjoy one of the few free nights he has. He couldn’t stop thinking about the D.O’s profile. He’s Chanyeol’s age and he actually made a small biography (smaller than Chanyeol’s one!). He takes a mental note to research what means to be a Capricorn.

The first thing he does in the morning is to check his email. He’s brushing his teeth and waiting the wi-fi to connect, listening to Baekhyun singing in the kitchen.

From: kriswu@choosems.net  
To: pcy@choosems.net  
Subject: RE: RE: MATE PROFILE: (Ω) D.O

Dear PCY,
On the omega formulary, we ask them about the details of meeting; that means how you’re going to meet them (personal vehicle) and how you’re going to talk to them (the line). D.O is going to pick you up and he dismissed a direct line between you two. If you accept his profile, we (CHOOSE m.s.) will mediate the conversation. We ask you to pay attention to the heat length before answering it.
CHOOSE m.s.

Chanyeol eats with one hand and types with another.

From: pcy@choosems.net
So, you’re telling me he doesn’t want to talk to me? How is he going to pick me up? (I’m ok with 2-3 days, I think it’s short? right?)

PCY

Chanyeol picks his old ‘sexual fantasies’ jumper and puts on the first pants he finds. He needs to do laundry, but today he will barely have time to think. He’s carrying his guitar, his bag and some books when the phone buzz.

Dear PCY,

Most omegas prefer these options for safety and privacy reasons. D.O informed us that he is going to send our car. Two to three days is considered medium length. Please answer with “I accept” or “I don’t accept”. I got things to do.

Kris.

Chanyeol snorts, stopping in the middle of the street. He runs to the sidewalk to reply the mail.

I accept!!! (you know, I think it’s a dumb question, but… if he’s asking about my suppressants’ use… that means he doesn’t want to use… protection? >///< )

PCY

Yes. (How old are you?)

Kris.
Chanyeol’s favorite part about music is the power to change the context. A song can offer a different perspective in a situation and tell all the answers just with its sound. Nothing can possibly too horrible in life if you listen to happy songs. With some instruments, anyone can lift someone’s mood or make them think about life, love, death. His guitar helps him to feel better, to express himself better. He is never wrong when he’s playing, and he gets people attention by doing something beautiful. He does like words, but sometimes, he is better with sounds.

While Chanyeol plays in the corner of the café, he smells the drinks, he looks at the people in the room, talking, touching; he tastes the chocolate still in his mouth – all these things would be uninterestingly ordinary without music. Music makes any place looks like a movie scene, and Chanyeol knows his slow songs encourages the couples to get closer unconsciously, makes them want to talk more intently and stare at each other longer than usual. He closes his eyes, humming to an inexistent song.

He tells himself he is content.

After leaving the café, he runs to the library. It’s still early, today he played only during the sunset, but he wants time to choose his books. He’s going to visit the “ABO dynamics” section for the first time. He’s glad the library is empty, because he feels like a teenager again. His classes about reproduction and evolution taught him very little, and it was an awkward subject, after all. Most of the people in his class wasn’t presented yet, and Chanyeol only saw his knot when he was almost eighteen.

He was a late bloomer, which wasn’t a problem, but his puberty was complicated. Until seventeen, he grew taller than his family and friends, getting bigger and bigger, his shoes and clothes barely fitting him anymore. Every time his mother took him to a doctor, his tests came inconclusive. Then, one night, he woke up hard and aching (and honestly, very confused and disoriented). The erections became recurrent, obligating him to use really big clothes and to avoid all physical exercises to cover them. His sister – a perfect presented alpha since fifteen – used to mock him, telling him he was going to outgrow the house as Alice did in the book, but Chanyeol was actually worried about looking like a pervert. His mother, worried about his puberty disaster, took him to a specialized clinic. The doctor assured both of them:

“The tests shows no problem at all. He is an alpha. He just have a hormonal disequilibrium,” she said undisturbedly. “I recommend the use of suppressants to control his erections, if it’s making him uncomfortable.”

“It is,” he said with no hesitation, but he did not say he never had a rut. His life was already a mess; having random hard-ons during math tests and bus rides. He couldn’t imagine what would be if he had an entire day of that.

He reads the titles:
THE BIG BOOK OF GENDER DYNAMICS

ABO FOR DUMMIES

THE EFFECTS OF SUPPRESSANTS IN MODERN SOCIETY

HISTORY OF PRE-ABO SOCIETIES

It’s going to take a lot of time if he looks every book, so he lowers himself to look at the other sub-sections:
“Nine-two-eight,” he says to no one in particular, his eyes searching the numbers. His fingers touch the books, the news and the old ones. He looks around, just to check if there’s someone looking. He finally finds the books marked as ‘928’.

(C928.5) MATING RITUALS IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

(FC928.7) ‘NO ALPHA, NO PROBLEM’: THE MODERN UNMATED OMEGA

(G928.5) ALL BY MYSELF: ABANDONMENT IN ALPHA-OMEGA MATED RELATIONSHIPS

(H928.8) OMEGAS ARE FROM NEPTUNE, ALPHAS ARE FROM URANUS

(H928.9) HISTORY OF THE MOON CULTS

(L928) HOW TO LOSE AN ALPHA IN THREE HEAT DAYS

(M928.3) WE MATED, AND NOW? A GUIDE TO OMEGAS

(O928.8) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ALPHA-OMEGA MATED RELATIONSHIPS

(P928.4) IF YOU LIKED YOU SHOULD HAVE PUT A BITE ON IT: A CONSERVATIVE OMEGA GUIDE

(P928.9) THE DISSOLOUCION OF THE ALPHA/OMEGA FAMILY

(R928) TEENAGE MATE: HOW TO DEAL WITH MATING ON THE FIRST HEAT AND RUT

(R928.1) REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE OMEGA RIGHTS

(R928.6) SINGLE PARENT OMEGA, SINGLE PARENT ALPHA

(S928) WRITTEN IN THE STARS: THE SCIENCE, THE HISTORY AND THE MAGIC OF MATING
He stops reading. Maybe… He considers before picking the book, but the cover art is so beautiful –
the image of a galaxy, - and whom is he trying to fool? Obviously, he is going to pick the cheesiest
book. That’s probably a book aimed for omegas, but he doesn’t care. He reads the back of the cover,
after looking around (again).

“Suho does a great job talking about polemic subjects and explaining alpha-omega interactions in a
positive way. Despite the current movement to break ties between genders, he reaffirms ABO
identities based in facts, without creating any type of hierarchy. A great reading for the modern
world.”
Kim Minseok M.D., obstetrician.

“Every omega should read it! It’s a nice perspective into alpha-omega relationships and a very
romantic way to re-read history and science. I would recommend to any alpha, beta and omega who
is very afraid to ask about mating. I loved how Suho explains things, but also creates some fantasy to
keep our hearts warm!”
Tiffany, redactor of the Omegazine.

He decides to read the book. The librarian, an old woman, suppresses a laugh, and Chanyeol feels
the embarrassment flushing in his face. He hides the book in his guitar case, just in case. He passes
by Baekhyun’s work in the way home. Baekhyun is not afraid of Chanyeol’s zombieness today, but
he’s angry with his cellphone, smacking it in Chanyeol’s arm twice.

“I hate that thing!”

“Buy a new one,” Chanyeol complains, rubbing his own arm. “You can use mine if it’s urgent.”

“I just need to call Jongdae to check if he’s going home early. I think he will work all night today,
but I can’t remember,” Baekhyun pouts. “I don’t want to be a terrible boyfriend.”

“Too late for that. Stop being dramatic… Today is a Tuesday… I think so? Last week we went out
with Sehun and Tao, right?”

Chanyeol doesn’t want to be bitter, but he can only spend time with his friends when their mates
aren’t around. Which is even worse, because two of them are dating each other. He hates his third
wheeling status. He needs new friends.

“I guess,” Baekhyun puts his hand in Chanyeol’s pocket. “Gimme your phone.”

“All yours,” he says, baffling away Baekhyun’s hand to give him the phone. The name
JONGBEAGLE flashes in the screen before any of them can do anything.

“Oh, he knew, he always knows!” Baekhyun says, excited, answering it. “Hello! It’s me, the love of
your life!”

Chanyeol laughs, because he can’t be bitter, even if he tries hard. It’s cute how Baekhyun and
Jongdae sometimes read each other’s mind, how they keep getting more and more similar, like
they’re synchronizing.

“… I know! I will fix it. Okay… Milk? Okay… I will remember! Bye. Love you,” Baekhyun makes
a pathetic kissy sound, staring at the screen. “He is not going home tonight. We should play
something.”
“Not overwatch, please.”

“Why not?”

“You’re obsessed.”

“I’m not,” Baekhyun argues. “Who is Kriswu?”

“What?” Chanyeol almost trips, his guitar case falling from his shoulder.

“K-R-I-S-W-U. You received an email from a Kriswu,” Baekhyun narrows his eyes. “I don’t know a Kriswu.”

“It’s a job thing,” he says, fast, pulling the phone out of his friend’s hand. “You don’t have to know everyone I talk to.”

“I don’t have to, but I do.”

Chanyeol does his best to check his phone silently until he gets home. He knows for a fact that Baekhyun will forget him as soon the game starts. Chanyeol pretends he is drinking some hot chocolate, his phone between his legs.

____________________________________________________

From: kriswu@choosems.net
To: pcy@choosems.net
Subject: Meeting date

____________________________________________________

Dear PCY,
D.O’s probable date of heat is set to the end of the week. You have been warned to be ready for his call.
D.O asked for your dress size and if there are any food or drink you dislike.
CHOOSE m.s.

____________________________________________________

“Chanyeooool,” Baekhyun screams. “I’m going to play castlevania!”

“Start without me! I’m eating!”

“Your loss!”

____________________________________________________

From: pcy@choosems.net
To: kriswu@choosems.net
Subject: RE: Meeting date

____________________________________________________

Dear Kris,
I’m very picky with food! But if I’m hungry I will eat anything. So it’s probably better not to make a list, right? Tell him I don’t like fast food. Also my size is the biggest you can find. I’m not kidding, it’s always like that. My mom started making me clothes, once, because it was so hard to find a comfortable jumper for me:( So you can tell him it’s the biggest. I know it’s not the “right” way of say, but it’s the truth. But should I bring anything (not condoms, I know!!!)? Do you know this D.O guy? Don’t ask him!!! Just tell me what you know!!! >////<

PCY
Dear PCY,
I’m going to inform him about your preferences. I am not authorized to give information about our clients, but I guarantee you I will be surprised if he doesn’t put a sock in your big mouth to stop this uncoordinated incessant talking of yours.
Kris.

Kris!!!
I’m not asking about anything classified! Just your impression of him!! Is he cute? >////<
(does he hates people who talks too much?! Should I talk less??) Help me here!!!!
PCY

Dear PCY,
He is very cute. I’m personally offended he chose your profile and not mine. He is a private person. I don’t know if he hates talkative people, but he seems quiet. Try not to scare him. Now, excuse me, I have to work.
Kris.

Chanyeol prepares himself for the meeting – eye of the tiger blasting in his ipod.

First, he starts running in the morning, getting himself used to long duration physical activity – he doesn’t want to embarrass himself in front of his mate. Jongdae sometimes comes home in the same hour he is leaving, and Chanyeol endures the mocking.

“Fitness lifestyle, huh,” Jongdae slaps his arm playfully. “Maybe in few years you can have an abs.”

It’s easy for Jongdae to say that, because he is the only one in their cursed house who works out. However, Jongdae is some sort of a superman who works, studies, goes to gym, has a social life and
still manages to look hot during the entire day. Baekhyun and Chanyeol have the energy, not the discipline. Chanyeol only could do that in music-related areas, and Baekhyun is just unfocused, really.

Second, he starts studying about mating. The internet helps him, even if Chanyeol feels like he is a complete moron while reading all you want to know about mating but were too afraid to ask in some online magazine for teenagers. The best article he reads comes from a conservative ABO site he can’t help but feel horrible to read: How To Be A Real Alpha In Bed: Five Steps To The Perfect Knotting (summing up: 1. Take control of the situation because the omega can’t; 2. Prepare “your” omega before doing anything; 3. Take pauses for rehydrating the omega; 4. Naps and snacks are important; 5. Aftercare is essential). Chanyeol takes notes of everything, trying to absorb as much as he can – it’s not like he can read those notes during the meeting.

He even watches knotting porn. He is not proud and he knows is not a real thing (once his sister made a long rant about the depiction of mating and the omegas in the pornography industry), but he’s getting desperate. The porn is really horrible. They show how big is the knot of the alpha in the first minutes, which is unnecessary and makes Chanyeol feel self-conscious about his own reproductive part’s size. He hopes, he just hopes his mate won’t be like the “omegas” in the video: screaming, clinging and tearing clothes apart while screaming FILL ME UP, MAKE ME PREGNANT, DOMINATE ME. Is that supposed to be hot? He is scared.

Finally yet importantly, he reads the book.

The book is amazing. Chanyeol reads every day in bed, when Baekhyun and Jongdae are sleeping or anywhere else but home. He always closes the door, even if he is alone.

“During a long time, different societies tried to find reasons to explain the gender dynamics in human beings. Some believed it was a natural law, some believed it was a punishment, some believed it was a destiny, and some believed it was just a detail. I ask you, why not all of them? We are hormonal creatures, no doubt, and we can’t run away from our biology, but we can evolve and change, we can dream. If there are religions explaining gender “hierarchy” and omegarism as a plan of god, there are ones dedicated to the mother omega and the equal participation in the sacred aspects. Science can explain our behavior based on our anatomy, history can explain based on our antecessor needs, but there’s a lot more to be discovered yet. Why the concept of soul mates is considered antiquated, for example? Who decided that mating should be only a physical response to smells? Why, we, as a society, can’t get rid of old prejudices even after fighting for equal rights to every gender? Conservatives do not rule us anymore, but we can’t give complete freedom for omegas and betas to live their lives. There’s rationality in the laws, but our social rules are as much emotional as the old beliefs. Why conservative people can talk about how omegas, betas and alphas should be, but progressive people can’t even believe in fate?”

As the end of the week approaches, Sehun asks him to help with “closet cleaning”. Chanyeol always helps him because a) he’s tall and Sehun has a pile of clothes taller than the empire state; b) he can get some old clothes Sehun doesn’t want anymore; c) Sehun really needs help cleaning anything.

“Don’t be scared by the mess,” Sehun warns him, as Chanyeol stares at the room occupied only by clothes and shoes. “It’s not… It looks like this because I don’t fold anything.”

“I can see that,” he says, sighing. “How to proceed?”
“Pick one, show me, then I tell you if it belongs in the box ‘stay’ or in the box ‘burn’.”

“You won’t burn the clothes, will you?”

“Maybe, if they deserve to be burned,” Sehun picks an army pants and makes a face. “Burn. Do you have work today?”

“Not really,” Chanyeol picks a pink t-shirt. Sehun thumbs up. “Only next week.”

“Stay! Why? Are you having a bad month?”

“No, no. Just… doing some other things.”

“Jongdae told me you are working out.”

“I’m just running,” Chanyeol picks a giant flowery sweater.

“Oh, Moon. It’s yours. Fits you.”

Probably, Chanyeol thinks, because they’re about the same height. But maybe Sehun is mocking him.

“Thanks,” he says, throwing it over his shoulder. “Do you think I should dye my hair again?”

“No,” Sehun says, dryly. “And never go back to that red, please. I accept the silver, but not the red.”

“It was my favorite color!”

“Yes, and it was terrible. Looks good when you let your hair be natural,” Sehun picks some shoes, analyzing them. “Are you dating someone?”

Chanyeol coughs, looking around. There are boots with shining heels in the corner of the room.

“No. What makes you think so?”

Sehun just laughs. He always has a way to make Chanyeol feels dumb. Ex superpower, probably. Chanyeol ignores his sarcastic laugh, and when he leaves Sehun’s apartment (with four new sweaters and two questionably tight pants), he decides to get a haircut. Nothing much, just an undercut. He knows Baekhyun and Jongdae are going on a date after work, so he comes home ready to read his book.

“An indigenous group in South America believes that heats and ruts are creative moments, when two people can transform energy in matter. This could be an explanation for pregnancy, but also a signal of fertility in the entire body, including the mind. A study by the Berkeley lab shows an increase of artistic productivity during the “periods” of the employees of the MoMA. This is a new perspective, since studies tend to link heats to basic survival needs. Is there an intersection between heats, ruts and inspiration? Or perhaps is the feeling of wanting to be complete, something recurrent in the artistic creation?”

Chanyeol falls asleep quickly with the book over his face. He wakes up few hours later and he is hungry. With no friends and no food in home, he decides to buy something in the grocery story. Maybe some wine, so he can get drunk and forget he is alone on a Friday Night. When he is picking some candies, his phone rings.

“Hello!”
“Chanyeol,” says the familiar voice. “Send me your location. A driver is going to pick you up.”

“Kris?”

“Yes,” he says, surprisingly calm.

“He… is he going… now?!”

“Yes.”

“Do you think there’s time for me to take a quick shower before…?”

“No.”

“I’m close to my house. I can easily walk home!”

“Chanyeol, send me your location right now. And don’t move.”

Chanyeol wants to complain, but Kris sounds weirdly like an angry father, so he sends the location of the grocery store. Since he can’t go home, he buys water and snacks. He silently hates himself for leaving home in his sleeping pants. Oh, he thinks, as he slaps himself in the face, he is also using his rilakkuma underwear. Amazing.

The driver comes when Chanyeol lifts his arm up enough in an attempt to smell his armpit.

“PCY?” the man asks. It’s a black, long car, only the driver’s window down.

“Yeah?” Chanyeol says, standing in the front of the store, one arm still up high.

“I’m the CHOOSE driver. Can you get in the car, please?”

Chanyeol inhales deeply. He hopes no one can see him in a strange car, in the middle of the night. He double checks the man before entering, but he is sure that no one wants to kidnap him – he’s too poor for this type of thing. Inside the car, he asks:

“Where are we going exactly? I mean, it's going to be a long ride?”

“It’s just twenty minutes from here.”

“Oh,” he says, and messages Baekhyun, I won’t be in home tonight!! Or tomorrow!! Have fun!. He plays with the bags while waiting, too distracted to pay attention to where he was going. He can feel his hands sweating, and the song playing on the radio is too sad to help him relax.

“Sorry,” he says shyly. “Could you please change the radio station?”

The man nods and changes the frequency. His favorite Taemin’s song start playing. Chanyeol keep saying random things about the weather, the song, the car, but the man only nods. After some minutes, the car next to a building.

“Ask for Do, 1401-B,” the man instructs him.

“Do?”

“Do.”

The door attendant barely looks at him, probably already expecting someone. Chanyeol looks at his
reflex in the elevator’s mirror, worried. He’s not really sure if he seems to be a hired mate. He’s not horribly ugly or disgusting… but… all he heard about his appearance was mockery. He wants to run, but he presses the 14 button anyway. It’s a nice building, he thinks. Fancy, but not too extravagant. Not too much. The door opens and he notices only two doors. One of them is the 1401. He stops in the front of it and knocks – there’s a doorbell, but, being as nervous as he is, he thinks he couldn’t handle the sound of it.

The door opens.

A man looks up – he’s short, - with big, round eyes behind old fashioned glasses. He’s pale or maybe is the effect of the black shirt he’s wearing, but he has nice, plump red lips and some thick eyebrows, slightly furrowed, as if he’s judging Chanyeol.

“Hi,” Chanyeol manages to say.

“You must be PCY,” he says, his voice deep in contrast with his narrow figure.

“Yeah. You’re D.O?”

The man opens the door completely, but instead of offering space for Chanyeol to enter the house, he gives a step forward, checking the hall.

“Yes, I am,” he says, finally. “Come in.”

Chanyeol looks around. The walls are painted in a creamy tone, there’s a grey, rectangular couch, and a small coffee table next to him. Paintings hanging in the walls, grey carpet in the floor, bookshelves and magazines perfectly piled in different corners of the room.

“You can call me Kyungsoo,” he says, looking at Chanyeol’s bag. “Do you want me to keep this for you?”

“Oh, thank you,” Chanyeol beams, giving him the bags. “Kyungsoo. That’s your name or…?”

“That’s my name. I’m a public figure, you would find out anyway.” He picks the bags and stare at Chanyeol, waiting for something. It takes some time for Chanyeol to understand what he was supposed to do next.

“Oh! My name is Chanyeol, nice to meet you!”

“Nice to meet you,” Kyungsoo says, and his expression is unreadable. Kyungsoo turns and leaves the room with no more words, his long cotton black pants covering half of his slippers while he walks. Chanyeol takes advantage of being alone to push his shirt down. The entire place smells like omega’s scent and his body is reacting. He sighs. He’s used to this shit happening.

Chanyeol is trying to decide if he’s going to be standing or if he sits when he realizes he’s not alone anymore. Kyungsoo is back in the room, staring blankly at him. He freezes. Kyungsoo sighs, walks to Chanyeol and holds his wrist, guiding him to another room. Chanyeol is amazed by the sight of the tiny hand on his – he can barely hold Chanyeol’s entire wrist!!! –, so he lets himself be taken away. Kyungsoo takes them to the kitchen and offers Chanyeol a chair.

“I made Takoyaki and spaguetti,” Kyungsoo says, giving him a plate. “Do you prefer orange juice, soda or beer?”

Chanyeol opens his mouth and closes it. He knows it’s only polite to refuse, but he is starving and Kyungsoo doesn’t look like he will consider no for an answer. Chanyeol stares at his host’s
questioning face. Kyungsoo looks young, so young, but he has an old man aura. Kris wasn’t lying, he is very cute. Chanyeol is dying to give Kyungsoo a hug, but he also suspects it’s the hormones pushing him.

“Juice…?”

“Why are you asking?” Kyungsoo frowns. “Is this a question?”

“No, I’m sure. Juice,” Chanyeol smiles to prove his point. Kyungsoo immediately puts the food over the table. It’s hard to smell it because of the intense omega scent, but he just knows it’s delicious. Chanyeol is already eating when Kyungsoo serves the juice.

“Good— fucking—holy shit—” he hums, happily, between bites. “This is the best takoyaki I ever tasted!”

Kyungsoo gives him a small smile and sits down at the other side of the table.

“Thank you,” Kyungsoo says, picking one takoyaki (instead of putting two in his mouth, like Chanyeol did). They eat in silence, for a while, until Chanyeol finishes his meal in a record time.

“You can eat more, if you want to,” Kyungsoo says, pointing at the bowl. Chanyeol puts more food in his plate, but he tries to be more elegant this time, eating the spaghetti with a fork and spoon, twirling the pasta like his mother taught him. He wishes he could take a picture for his instagram just to make his friends jealous. Chanyeol compliments Kyungsoo’s kitchen (it looks like something out of a future-based scy-fy house) and the spaghetti, he tells Kyungsoo his mother is also a chef, but Kyungsoo only nods and stare, eating slowly. Chanyeol finishes the entire bowl and he is mortified, because Kyungsoo is still eating, half of his plate untouched.

“You eat a lot,” Kyungsoo says, serious.

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol looks down, his shoulders shrinking by reflex.

“You said you were the biggest dressing size. I should have known,” he says, standing up. He opens the fridge casually, but suddenly, he closes his eyes, his entire body shaking. Chanyeol stands up immediately, ready to catch him in case he falls, but the scent gets stronger, and then, well. It’s the heat.

Kyungsoo makes a painful noise while opening his eyes. Chanyeol decides to close the fridge, careful not to touch any other part of his body while doing this. Kyungsoo supports himself in the sink behind him.

“I’m going to… my room… it’s the second door after the bathroom,” he warns, and Chanyeol nods. Chanyeol wants to help Kyungsoo, but he manages to leave the kitchen only shaking a bit. Chanyeol takes some time to focus, since his pants are getting tighter and tighter, but he finally concentrates enough to find the water bottles in his bag. He follows Kyungsoo’s scent. The door of the room is open, Kyungsoo is taking off his pants, his bare back showing. He isn’t skinny as he looks, but he is very pale. He is not using any underwear and Chanyeol holds the bottles tighter against his chest.

The noise startles Kyungsoo. He turns, frowning:

“Take off your clothes,” he demands, but his voice comes out weak. Chanyeol nods, putting the bottles in the nightstand. Kyungsoo’s room is neat and clean, no television, no decoration, beige walls, black sheets. Chanyeol undresses quickly, putting his clothes together in the floor (and his underwear under them, just in case). Kyungsoo barely glances at him and goes to the bed in his elbows and knees, his face almost touching the sheets.
He is waiting, Chanyeol realizes, gulping.

You can do this. You read about this. Also, you’re not a virgin. It wasn’t going to be too different from regular sex, right? He has to be more careful, because Kyungsoo is probably half of Sehun. He takes a long breath and lowers himself to touch the small, rosy dripping hole. The scent is making him feel dizzy, and the sight of Kyungsoo’s hard cock makes something in his stomach feel bubbly. Even his dick is cute.

Chanyeol touches with both hands Kyungsoo’s ass, balls, his cock, every part he can, before putting one finger inside of him. Kyungsoo makes some muffled noises, his face now pressed against the bed. Chanyeol tries another finger, because the lubrication allows him to, but he waits more this time before putting a third one. When he feels Kyungsoo relaxing, Chanyeol starts to fuck him slowly. He can see Kyungsoo gripping the blankets, and he starts getting faster, curving his fingers, pressing inside intently.

Kyungsoo moans, loud and needy, his hips moving. Chanyeol takes a deep breath and touches him, a wet hand around his dick until he comes. His small body shakes, but he stays in the same position.

“You can do it now,” Kyungsoo whispers and he sounds wrecked. Chanyeol nods, even if no one will see it, getting closer. He lifts his body and take off his wet fingers of Kyungsoo, rubbing them in his own cock. He rubs the tip against the humid hole and pushes it a bit, but Kyungsoo makes a weird noise and he stops.

“You can do it now,” he repeats, noticing Chanyeol’s hesitation. “I’m fine.”

Chanyeol pushes his dick against him, Kyungsoo wetly closing around him, the scent thick in the air. Chanyeol feels about to faint, but he grips Kyungsoo waist, and waits until he relaxes. Chanyeol is using every fiber of his body to stay still, because he is salivating and he never felt this way. Kyungsoo pushes back, stuttering something out, and that’s it, Chanyeol starts to move.

He barely register what happens in the next hours.

Chanyeol knows they’re fucking because he can feel Kyungsoo’s wetness, Kyungsoo’s moans, the way Kyungsoo clenches around him. Kyungsoo keeps touching himself and pushing against Chanyeol as if he is possessed, even if he’s obliviously trying hard to contain his noises. After coming for the third time, Chanyeol’s legs hurt from standing in the same position for hours, and he thinks Kyungsoo’s back and knees must be aching too, so he stops, giving time to his knot softens – because since it caught in Kyungsoo’s rim for the first time, they haven’t actually stopped.

Kyungsoo makes a complaining noise. He is completely covered by sweat, and the back of his thighs are pure lubrication.

“We have to change the position,” Chanyeol says softly. “And you need water.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t answer. After some minutes, Chanyeol removes himself off him carefully. Kyungsoo lays down, now on his back, and he looks exhausted and in pain. Chanyeol opens a water bottle and gives to him, sitting in the bed. Kyungsoo drinks it and throws some water in his own face. Chanyeol laughs weakly.

“Do you need a break?” Kyungsoo asks, taking deep breaths. His face is red and his hair is glued to his forehead.

“No, not really,” Chanyeol assures him, touching his arm slightly. “Do you?”

“No. Come here,” he points, parting his legs open. Chanyeol doesn’t need a second call, and he
kneels in bed between Kyungsoo’s legs. Kyungsoo can’t stop being hard because of his heat, but Chanyeol could use a minute, so he strokes Kyungsoo’s cock while they wait.

It’s a bit weird to fuck this way, Chanyeol thinks as he lifts one of Kyungsoo’s legs to get a better angle. Kyungsoo is staring into his soul, and now they both have to remember they are strangers. The hormones do a lot for them, and when they mate again, Chanyeol does not feel afraid of Kyungsoo’s eyes. They get closer to each other, and Kyungsoo grips Chanyeol’s shoulders when the pace intensifies, Chanyeol bending over him, pressing Kyungsoo’s bent legs down.

It feels amazing. The smell, the sounds, the touching-- and suddenly he wants to taste, but he glances at Kyungsoo’s lips and does nothing. A random song starts playing in his head, an instrumental song, and he hopes he remembers the name later.

They nap a bit while waiting for Chanyeol’s knot deflates again. He wakes up with his face in Kyungsoo’s chest and before he can take his dick off his mate, Kyungsoo wakes up and grabs him.

“No,” he says, “do it again.”

Chanyeol is exhausted, sore, hungry and thirsty, but no way is he going to say no.

He can finally (!!) stop knotting when Kyungsoo falls asleep, face against the mattress, his body giving up, and a pool of saliva tainting the sheet under him. Chanyeol watches, hypnotized, his semen flowing out of Kyungsoo’s – now a bright tone of red – hole. He blinks, tired and he’s still hard, but he falls asleep next to his mate anyway.

He wakes up to the sound of his phone ringing. He jumps off the bed and answer it.

“Hello?”

“He is not dead,” Jongdae screams. “I told you. Calm down.”

“Guys?” he asks, looking around. Kyungsoo is not in the bed anymore. Chanyeol’s clothes are folded on the nightstand, next to few towels and a note. He picks it.

“We thought you were dead, man. Baekhyun was ready to go to the police,” Jongdae says, but he does not sound worried. “Where are you? We called you, like, a hundred times. I bumped into your sister at the office this morning and she asked me about you. I had to lie, Chanyeol. I had to lie to her about her missing brother.”

“Get used to it,” he says. “Office? Today is not Sunday?”

“No. Today is Monday,” Jongdae laughs. “Are you in drugs? Where are you?”

“No! I’m not in drugs. I was working and… I overslept… I’m at some friend’s house,” he says, distracted, trying to read the note.

CHANYEOL,
I WENT TO WORK. THERE’S FOOD IN THE FRIDGE. I LEFT SOME TOWELS AND CLOTHES, I HOPE IT FITS YOU (IT’S THE BIGGEST SIZE I FOUND). WHEN YOU’RE DONE, CALL KRIS, HE WILL SEND A CAR TO TAKE YOU HOME.
PS: I PLACED YOUR PHONE NEXT TO THE BED. IT WAS IN THE FLOOR UNDER
YOUR TEDDY BEAR UNDERWEAR.
KYUNGSOO.

“Chanyeol?! Are you there?”

“Oh god,” he sighs. “I can’t stop doing embarrassing things.”


“No, thank you. I will be home soon. Sorry for not answering your calls.”

Kyungsoo’s bathroom is nice, but Chanyeol is disappointed when he starts smelling like soap. Maybe it was disgusting, being all covered in body fluids, but he liked the way he smelled after mating. He puts the clothes Kyungsoo left him on, and miraculously, they fit. He never thought he would look good in all black (maybe he would look like a walking pencil), but he feels comfortable when he sees his reflection. He eats like he is never going to see another meal in his life, because he is starving, and this time Kyungsoo left him an absurd amount of food (his favorite type of kimchi!!!). He does the dishes, and calls Kris. Is not him who answers it. While waiting, pays more attention in Kyungsoo’s stuff. He does feels like a creep, but there’s a book about cupcakes (!!!) over the table. Chanyeol imagines Kyungsoo tiny cute hands decorating tiny cupcakes and he makes a strangled noise.

The ride home is quieter than he expects, and Chanyeol hums the same music in his mind. What the name of this song?

He feels exhausted. He sleeps, but as soon as he is up, he gets ready to visit his sister (she called him several times and he knows she only does it when it’s something important). He takes a picture of the rain on the window to inform Baekhyun and Jongdae he went home.

Yura opens the door, looks at him from head to toe, and says:

“You smell weird.”

“Nice to see you too,” he grunts. “I took a shower.”

“Maybe it is that,” she lets him in. “What happened to you? Jongdae almost fainted today when I asked about you.”

“Nothing. You know how my friends are.”


He laughs. His sister is his big sister all the time, and she can’t stop taking care of him. She’s mated, she has a nice job (news reporter in the same channel Jongdae works) and she still finds time to help him. Chanyeol agrees in playing some songs in her friend’s engagement, eats all her food and takes a nap in her couch. She isn’t much different, and she ends splayed on the floor and snoring loud.

“Damn,” he complains to no one, since she is sleeping. “How does your mate sleeps every night?”

He checks his phone and his heart starts beating fast as he notices Kris’ email.
From: kriswu@choosems.net
To: pcy@choosems.net
Subject: Payment and Evaluation

Dear PCY,
Your payment has been deposited in your account. Please take some time to share your thoughts with us. How was your experience? In a scale from zero to five, where zero means no compatibility and five means total compatibility, how would you rate your mate? Do you have any complaints about the meeting?

Best wishes,
Choose m.s.

From: pcy@choosems.net
To: kriswu@choosems.net
Subject: RE: Payment and Evaluation

Dear Kris (It’s you, right…?)

It was really nice!!! He cooked a lot of nice stuff for me!!! And you know… the mating was okay too >///< I would rate 5! I don’t know if we’re compatible, but it was nice, so… I have no complaints. I mean, I could have took a bath!!! But everything was ok.
P: he is so cute!!!!!!!!!!
P:2: DID HE TALK ABOUT ME?????? >///<
PCY

From: kriswu@choosems.net
To: pcy@choosems.net
Subject: RE: RE: Payment and Evaluation

Dear PCY,
I can see you keep talking like a teenager omega on his first heat. He answered the same questions, but I can’t tell you what he said. I can tell you just one thing: he answered in three words and a number. See? That’s someone who can express his mind like an adult.
We appreciate your feedback,
Choose m.s. (Kris.)

Chanyeol laughed, staring at the ceiling. He was glad his sister found him more things to do, because he thinks it’s going to be hard to forget what happened in the weekend. He remembers the book, and he still in the page 23, after reading about basic biology and reproduction, pre-history and chemicals. It’s not a bad reading because the author keeps making funny commentaries and nice addendums.
That book is really making Chanyeol think. He smells himself, and he still smells like Kyungsou’s soap.

“What are you smiling about?” Yura asks, her face so close that he can feel her breathing. Chanyeol jumps off the couch.

“What the…!”

“Why did you smell yourself?” she smiles knowingly, and Chanyeol has no idea of how long she’s been awake.

“Nothing,” he clutches his chest. “You need to stop doing that.”

“You look like a dog sometimes, you know that?”

“You look like me, so I guess you look like a dog too.”

“You look like me. I’m older.”

“I’m leaving!”

“Answer my calls next time! You ungrateful brother.”

Baekhyun jumps on him in the exact moment he opens the door.

“Chanyeooool,” Baekhyun whines. “If you die, who’s going to get your drums?!?”

“What?” he asks, trying to disentangle his friend from his neck. “What kind of question is that?”

“I made a bet with Jongdae,” he explains.

“Sehun,” Chanyeol says, finally coming home.

“That’s not right,” Jongdae says, sitting in the couch. “He doesn’t like playing. He’s not even in the music business.”

“He barely noticed you have disappeared,” Baekhyun argues, “And I’m your best friend!”

“I didn’t disappear. I was working, that’s all. I sent you a message!”

“It could be the person who kidnapped you. Send pictures next time,” Jongdae offers him a beer. “Drunk Just Dance?”

“Nah, I’ll pass,” he says, already heading to his room. “I’m sleepy.”

It’s a lie.

“A new study from the United States Government shows the increase of bond dissolution rate between mated young couples (age 21-35). Bauman, in his book Liquid Dynamics, affirms that ABO society is ending as we know it, giving more space to a fluid society, where genders won’t be an important trait. Of course, relationships between same genders are a taboo in some countries, but there’s no law against same gender mating – even if the conservatives claim “mating” as an exclusive alpha-omega term. We have specific laws for omegas, but only about their heats and pregnancies; no mention of the microaggressions they suffer in everyday life. Many omegas have to live in the “gender
“closet” in order to be respected or just to be treated as a human being. A study shows that more than 50% Japanese Omegas declares no interest in mating, since they believed mating would mean the loss of their freedom to work and independent lives. Alphas don’t seem to face the same problem – many studies shows that the bond is less problematic to alphas in social, professional and sexual areas, - but they tend to present psychological disturbs if they’re not mated or if the bond is break. Conservatives believes that the alphas tend to suicide (50% more than the other genders) because of the dissolution of the “mating values”. Betas, despite not being included in the gender laws of mating for more than hundred years, also suffer discrimination, being the gender with the higher tendency to be abandoned. A study from UNAM shows an alarming situation of homelessness in the beta gender (80% of the homeless in Mexico City are betas). As much ABO society have been evolving, genders can still be prisons to human beings and the prejudiced views are not neutralized by the new forms of relationship. We are missing something."

Chanyeol is having one of the busiest weeks of his life. The café wants him to work in the morning shift for few days, he has band rehearsals, he decides to do the laundry (finally), Baekhyun needs his helps in the school and Sehun can’t be away from his boyfriend anymore, so Chanyeol has to take care of his dog, Vivi, while he’s away. When Chanyeol is allowed to rest (for few hours), Jongdae ask him to buy meds to Baekhyun. Chanyeol takes Vivi with him, carrying her in his arm.

“You know why this is a problem, my friend?” he tells her. “If Baekhyun gets sick, then it’s a matter of time until Jongdae gets sick, and who’s going to take care of them? Me.”

The cashier gives him a curious look. His phone rings.

“Hello?” he tries to hold Vivi, the meds and the phone at the same time.

“Chanyeol?”

“Oh,” Chanyeol freezes. “I haven’t been checking my inbox recently. Sorry, it’s been crazy.”

“Sorry, it’s been crazy? You have to ans—You know, just wait, I will record this conversation,” the phone makes a noise. “There is. Now, you just have to answer, okay?”

“Okay?”

“It’s been a week since I asked if you agree with meeting with D.O. You have to be quick, because his heat will probably be in two weeks and he needs a mate.”

“He chose me? Again?” Vivi almost jumps from Chanyeol’s embrace after he screams.

“Yes. Most clients want a long time mate, of course. He’s asking us to book you for the next six heats,” Kris says, casually. “The maximum time with the same mate is twelve meetings.”

“Next six heats?! ” his voice breaks. The cashier is definitely glaring at him.
“Yes. You have to say I accept or I don’t accept.”

“Right now?!”

“If you had checked you email box, you would have seven days to think. But you didn’t,” he can hear Kris smiling. “I guess if you’re not ready, then you should let him choose another alpha. I may know someone who would say yes.”

“You’d love that, wouldn’t you?” Chanyeol laughs, but he is still nervous. Six months? Or even more?

“I believe a smart person like D.O just need a second chance to see things better.”

“Over my dead body! He likes me!” he screams again, and now Vivi is resigned. Not the cashier. “I accept, bitch. You’re not going to lay one finger on him!”

“Great. We will call you to be examined again. Bye.”


Chanyeol enters home wearing his best smile. He’s feeling dizzy again, and he doesn’t even complain when he finds Baekhyun naked and throwing up in the bathroom. Jongdae is already getting sick, Chanyeol knew it was going to happen. Fuck the people who says betas can’t mate.

“I brought enough things for you two,” he warns Jongdae. “I will make a soup, or something.”

He cooks happily, tucks his friends in, kiss their foreheads and takes a long shower. He’s ready, he thinks. He can do that again. He’s trying to avoid thinking too much about Kyungsoo – he can get casual erections about takoyakis anytime now –, but he can’t contain his happiness in being Kyungsoo’s mate again.

He’s anticipating when he is playing in the engagement. He’s thinking so much about mating, looking at the couples sitting together at the tables. That’s when Chanyeol remembers.

The song.

It’s Beirut’s The Concubine. He keeps listening to it. Anytime, anywhere, at work, at home, while he’s walking in the street; he plays to Vivi, to Baekhyun, to his sister. When he gets tired of the song, he start writing songs again. He writes and plays so much he forgets to read for days.

On the day he decides to read the book, Kris calls.

“Hello?”

“Send me your location.”

Chanyeol sits in bed. It’s early? No, its about time. He gulps.

“I’m home.”

“Oh, in this case I already have you location,” Kris says. “Take a shower then.”
Chanyeol laughs, but he hurries up. He takes a bath, picks a nice underwear, grabs the water bottles, and checks himself out in the mirror. He hides his book and his notebook under the bed and sends a picture of himself to Baekhyun: I have not been kidnapped, I just left home for few days, DO NOT CALL THE POLICE (if my sister calls, I’m working!!), love you guys!

It’s not the regular driver, it’s Kris himself. Chanyeol stares.

“Come on,” he says, holding the steering wheel. “I haven’t got all day.”

“Why are you driving?” Chanyeol sits in the passenger’s seat. “What’s happening?”

“I hate being in the office all the time. Sometimes I drive,” he explains. “I’m a multitask guy.”

“I can see,” Chanyeol laughs. “Well, I like seeing you again. Do you like Taemin?”

“That’s my favorite album. And he’s blasting on the radio these days,” Kris hums the song.

“You could listen to my stuff.”

“No, thanks.”

Chanyeol feels more comfortable chatting with Kris and almost forgets he’s about to mate. When Kris stops the car, he warns:

“No need to talk to anyone. They know your face. Fourteen floor, doorbell.”

Chanyeol obeys, his heart hammering in his chest. He hold his bag, hand sweating, and stops by Kyungsoo’s door. He rings the doorbell this time. Kyungsoo opens the door, looks up unsurprised. Chanyeol thinks he looks adorable in a beige sweater. Kyungsoo is not wearing glasses, and he has an undercut now. He holds the door, checks the hall briefly and grabs Chanyeol’s wrist, dragging him inside.

“I made mexican food,” he says, without looking at Chanyeol. “Fajitas, tacos and nachos. I hope you like spicy food. There’s grape fruit, too. No beer, but tequila.”

Chanyeol sits at the kitchen’s table and puts his bag on the floor.

“I like it,” he says sincerely. Kyungsoo starts serving him, looking a bit impatient, but he smells just fine. His heat is not that close, Chanyeol thinks. “Tequila? Full mexican night?”

Kyungsoo smiles. Chanyeol smiles too, because it’s a beautiful sight.

“It was a mexican night in my restaurant yesterday,” he says, placing the tequila over the table. “Do you want a shot?”

“No,” Chanyeol laughs, waving his hands. “I get weird when I drink.”

“Only when you drink?” Kyungsoo smiles. Chanyeol blinks. Is Kyungsoo… teasing him?

“Hey, I’m not weir—” he starts talking, but he pauses when he sees Kyungsoo taking a shot of tequila in few seconds. Then another. “Ow… go easy on this. Tequila is no joke. Are you okay?”

Kyungsoo takes a long breath, putting the small glass in the table.

“Yes. Sorry. I thought my heat would—I made the wrong calculation. It came a day earlier.”
“Oh,” he says. Kyungsoo sits, not in the other side of the table, but in the chair next to Chanyeol. His scent is getting stronger and there’s a trail of sweat over his upper lip. Chanyeol eats a bite of his fajita to avoid staring. “It’s good.”

“Thank you,” Kyungsoo says, as he takes a sip of the juice. Chanyeol notices there’s only one cup. They’re sharing? Kyungsoo places the cup next to Chanyeol’s plate. They’re sharing. “You said in your biography that you’re a musician. What do you do exactly?”

“A lot of things… I play guitar the most. But I play some instruments. I make songs, sometimes,” he says. Kyungsoo nods.

“But there’s something specific you enjoy doing?”

“I don’t know. I love everything about music. I used to be more into old stuff, but right now I listen to everything, even pop,” he shrugs, eat a nacho and says, “I tend to do a lot of things at the same time.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t answer, doesn’t move, just stares at Chanyeol. It’s suffocating.

“Do you know anything about music?”

“I used to sing in a choir. That counts?”

The image of Kyungsoo singing in a choir makes Chanyeol spit his nacho. Kyungsoo glares.

“That’s funny?”


“I liked the choir a lot,” Kyungsoo says dryly. “I was very dedicated to it.”

“Sorry, sorry,” Chanyeol does his best to control his face. “That’s nice. I sing too. But why did you stop?”

“No time for hobbies,” Kyungsoo sighs. He’s not upset with Chanyeol, but he sounds upset with something. Chanyeol eats in silence for a while, and Kyungsoo doesn’t eat, his eyes focused on the phone over the table. Chanyeol, of course, ends his meal in few minutes, drinking his juice to help swallowing the rest of the fajitas. Kyungsoo barely touches his nachos. His scent is strong, but he is not in heat yet.


“I need to answer an important call,” he says. “I couldn’t meet someone today because—I need to talk to them.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods. Of course. Kyungsoo doesn’t need to say why. If it’s an inconvenience to Chanyeol to drop everything he is doing and be ready to mate, he can’t even imagine how difficult it is for Kyungsoo. He looks like a focused person, someone who works hard. Chanyeol suddenly feels guilty. He wanted so badly to see Kyungsoo again; he didn’t think about what it would mean to Kyungsoo to be in heat. He hired Chanyeol for a reason, probably not a good one. Kyungsoo looks like a catch—it’s not that hard to get an alpha to mate you. Chanyeol has to admit his gender deserves the bad name.

“Kyungsoo…” he asks uneasy. “Can I ask you a question?”
“You’re already asking,” Kyungsoo answers, his eyes still on the phone. “But yes, go on.”

“Why do you need to hire a mate?”

Kyungsoo lifts his eyes, his expression unreadable. He’s good at this.

“Because I have no time for dating,” he says. “And suppressants don’t work on me anymore.”

“You were on suppressants?”

“Yes. Since my first heat,” he says, pressing his lips tightly together. Chanyeol wants to ask if he couldn’t spend his heats alone, but Chanyeol saw Kyungsoo’s heat himself. It looked painful, almost unbearable. He remembers his sister’s rant about the knotting porn. Surely the omegas on it made it look like a sexy and soft thing; Chanyeol doubts they were on heat – are they even omegas? That overlubrication does not look natural.

“I am in suppressants since my first rut too. I mean, since before. I never had a rut,” Chanyeol confesses. “Most people don’t even know I’m an alpha.”

Kyungsoo narrows his eyes, lips pressed in a line, a threatening straight posture.

“Most people can’t know I’m an omega,” he says, and his voice is suddenly hard. Chanyeol feels small, and he doesn’t know what he did wrong. When he looks down as a reflex, he feels a hand in his shoulder.

“I’m sorry. That’s… not your fault,” Kyungsoo says quietly, and his hands travels to Chanyeol’s neck, brushing it slightly. Chanyeol closes his eyes. It’s really good. When he opens his eyes, Kyungsoo’s breathing is ragged and his scent is too strong.

“I need… I… need…” Kyungsoo stutters, reaching the phone. His body starts to shiver visibly.

“Let’s put it on the nightstand,” Chanyeol says slowly, touching his hand. “In case this person calls you.”

Kyungsoo nods, standing up. They undress quickly in Kyungsoo’s room, Chanyeol throwing his clothes on the floor, while Kyungsoo folds his two pieces of clothing. He sits in the bed, waiting. Chanyeol stares at him.

“What… What do you want me to do?”

“Anything,” Kyungsoo murmurs, a streak of sweat runs downs his neck. It’s the heat talking. Chanyeol has a full-body shiver.

Chanyeol lays Kyungsoo face down on the bed and lifts his hips, smelling it. Kyungsoo is gripping the sheets, skin burning, eyes closed. Chanyeol gets closer and gives a tentative lick in the wetness. Kyungsoo moans loudly, his thighs trembling while Chanyeol kisses them. Finally, Chanyeol uses his tongue to fuck him. Kyungsoo’s wrap a hand in his own dick, coming fast and loud.

Chanyeol opens him, fuck him with his fingers before entering him. Kyungsoo is a whimpering mess, lifting his hips higher, moaning against the sheets. They change positions sooner than usual. Kyungsoo wraps his arms around Chanyeol’s neck, legs around Chanyeol’s waist. They’re on the same rhythm, already mating, when the phone rings. Chanyeol stops, startled by the sound. Kyungsoo stares at him with a surprised face.

“Can you… I can’t reach the nightstand,” he points. Chanyeol gives him the phone, letting
Kyungsoo rest his back on the bed. “Hello?”

Chanyeol closes his eyes, doing his best to stay still. His knot swells in Kyungsoo’s ass. He pants heavily.

“Yes, Do Kyungsoo. Yes, it’s me. Yes,” Kyungsoo manages to get his voice steady, but his face is showing his agony. “I heard about it. This was fixed a week ago. I hope so. I’m honored. I would love that. Yes, thank you. I hope you have a nice meal. I apologize for not meeting you in person. This… will not happen again.”

Chanyeol is focusing in the creepiest and most disgusting things he can think of. Slender man. Baekhyun’s vomit. That Annabelle doll. That time when Jongdae accidentally burned his own leg. Vivi’s poop.

“I’m happy to hear that. Thank you,” Kyungsoo finally turns off the phone. “Sorry.”

“That’s okay,” Chanyeol smiles, squeezing Kyungsoo’s thigh. “Everything is fine?”

Kyungsoo stares at him for a second before answering:

“Yes. Move,” he demands, grabbing Chanyeol’s arms to get closer.

They stop hours later. Chanyeol brings water and protein bars, and Kyungsoo eats in silence, eyes closed. He looks relaxed now, his body less tense. Chanyeol thinks Kyungsoo doesn’t relax much.

“Do you need a break?” he asks, giving the water bottle back.

“No,” Chanyeol puts it on the floor.

“Great, I want to ride you this time.”

Chanyeol isn’t ready for that, he thinks, watching Kyungsoo straddles his lap. Kyungsoo opens himself, already lining up his hole with Chanyeol’s cock, and Chanyeol realizes it’s the first time Kyungsoo actually touches it. He pants, and his hands twitches, wanting to touch any part of his mate. When Kyungsoo sinks in his dick, Chanyeol whimpers, loud and embarrassing.

Kyungsoo’s thick thighs, his hard dick, his lips, his expression. It’s just too much. It’s beautiful.

Chanyeol sleeps with Kyungsoo’s weight over him. They wake up a bit later, mate again, sleep, eat, and sleep again. The next time he opens his eyes, he is alone. His clothes are folded next to the towels and his phone in the nightstand. He sits in the bed, there isn’t a note. He takes a shower, eats some nachos, and he calls Kris. The CHOOSE driver comes to pick him. Taemin is playing on the radio again, but the only thing Chanyeol can think about is how much time he will have to wait to see Kyungsoo again.

Baekhyun’s home, sitting on the couch with Vivi in his lap. Sehun is in the kitchen.

“See, I told you,” Baekhyun says, playing with the remote control. “He disappears and then appears again. He’s not Yoda. He’s Gandalf.”

“Wet hair, humm?” Sehun laughs. “Classic.”
“I don’t have time for you two,” he lies, but then he smells chocolate. “What’s that?”


“Why?”

“We watched three episodes already,” Baekhyun says, yawning. “You look like shit, go to bed.”

Chanyeol wants to laugh, because he’s been in bed the last three days. He goes to bed, though, and sleeps more. There’s a new song in his head, but he is sure he never heard it before.

He tries to keep himself busy. It’s not hard, because he takes any job he can get, Sehun is back in town, he has a book to read.

“The first myths involving mating and soul, contrary to popular belief, weren’t about soulmates, or something already defined by destiny. They were about soul searching. ABO anthropology proved there wasn’t monogamy in the beginning of the abo cycle – the entire beta evolution demonstrates a divergence between the behavior of humans, wolves and penguins, for example. The search for the right partner, “the one who fits”, is the current biological explanation for knot/heat, leading to the survival of the most adaptable. The ones with knot could guarantee the fertilization by its attachment, the ones with a heat had more fertile days, making it easier to keep the reproductive fluid inside. However, the tales already tell us the stories of omegas and alphas who could “fit”, in metaphors like Cinderella shoes, Rapunzel’s hair, Sleeping Beauty “finger cut”. The right physical structure meets the right physical attribute. But some tales tell us about the abrupt separation of the omega and alpha, and their unbreakable bond, generally symbolized by an object of the mate or by the smell. The concept of soulmates is a bit more complicated, because it supposes a predestined trajectory, clashing with the free will. Of course, as everything non-scientific, there’s a big rejection of anything beyond the body. But what else can explain the consequences of mating? There’s a list of things science can’t explain: memory loss caused by the death of mate; physical diseases and death rates caused by the dissolution of bonds; acquisition of the mate’s foreign languages and traits; convergence of thoughts, feelings and in rare cases, pain.”

He almost forgets it’s September already, but Baekhyun can’t let him forget Jongdae’s birthday.

“It’s going to be a surprise this year,” he says, eyes glued on tv, hand on the console. “It’s going to work.”

“Maybe if we did not have a surprise party every year, he wouldn’t expect it,” Chanyeol says, staring at the ceiling. The couch is dirty, but he doesn’t mind that. He is thinking too much lately. He should just play videogames like he always do.

“Well, yes,” Baekhyun says. “But I don’t want him to worry about a party. You know he freaks out about details. He can’t stop being a virgo.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol sits, dropping the bag of fries Baekhyun strategically put over Chanyeol’s stomach in order to eat while sitting on the floor. “Do you know about this astrology thing?”

“What?”

“Like… he’s a virgo. What this means?”
“Ahn…” Baekhyun moves the console up and down. “Humm… he’s a practical, organized person? Virgo is about communication too. Like… hardworking. It’s an earth sign, like mine. We match!”

“Oh!” Chanyeol nods, shocked with this new information. “Which signs are a match?”

“It’s not a… exactly… a match. It’s like… they work good together,” Baekhyun says, distracted by the game. “Some combinations fight more than the rest, I think. It’s like Avatar, you know? There are different nations and some of them fight. I would live in Earth Kingdom and be rich, probably.”

“Isn’t Sagittarius a fire sign? Fire Nation is evil,” Chanyeol is worried.

“What? You could be a firebender!”

“Fuck, didn’t the Fire nation kill all the airbenders? Shit, is Capricorn an air sign?”

“Capricorn?” Baekhyun actually pauses his game to look at his friend better. “No… It’s an earth sign. Capricorn, Taurus and Virgo. Why are you asking that all of a sudden?”

“Do earth and fire signs are… friends… or…?”

“I don’t know. I mean… Sehun and Tao are a couple and they have a good relationship, right? And Sehun is Aries and Tao is a Taurus like me,” Baekhyun narrows his eyes. “Do you have a crush in some Capricorn? Do I know them?”

Chanyeol panics. He can’t say he’s just curious. Baekhyun will know. Maybe if he—

“I swear for the Moon,” Jongdae opens the door, saving the day. “Why alpha politicians can’t keep their knots in their pants? Why do they hire omega assistants? Every time there’s a scandal and every time we have to suffer waiting for them to leave their homes. I should have stayed in sports’ news.”

“Chanyeol has a Capricorn crush,” Baekhyun sings, pointing at him.

“No, I don’t,” he tries. Jongdae has a box in his hands, and he looks tired, but he has his snarky smile in his face.

“Ohhh, that’s sad. Capricorn is a terrible sign. Do we know this poor person?”

“I don’t have a crush,” he kicks Baekhyun. “I was just asking about the sign. That’s why I don’t ask you guys stuff.”

“Ah, why don’t you google it?” Jongdae tries. “I brought donuts.”

“Moon, I was thinking about these donuts all day,” Baekhyun stands up at the speed of light. “Vanilla and strawberry?”

“Yup, and cocoa for Chanyeol,” Jongdae gives his mate a small kiss in the cheek. It’s a cute and innocent gesture, but Chanyeol covers his eyes.

“I’m going to eat mine in my room,” he says. “I can only take too much sugar in one night.”

“He’s bitter about his crush,” Jongdae laughs.

Chanyeol is not bitter, but he is curious. He writes “do capricorn and sagittarius get along”, and clicks in A-BO-STROLOGY dot com.
SAGITTARIUS/PARTNER CAPRICORN
50% of compatibility. The Sagittarius partner likes to go out and socialize, while the Capricorn generally is a lot more reclusive and unsociable. The biggest problem for Capricorn and Sagittarius compatibility is getting the couple together in the first place. Capricorn will turn up their snobbish nose at Sagittarius' behavior, while Sagittarius will take one look at Capricorn and think “boring”. Sagittarius loves to do things just to satisfy their enthusiasm, while Capricorn’s actions are always directed towards accomplishing their goals. The most remarkable aspect of a relationship between a Sagittarius and a Capricorn is their complementary character, and their capacity to learn from each other.

“Well,” he says, closing his notebook.

When Chanyeol goes to the library to renew the book (again), he decides to look for one of astrology too. The librarian recognizes him, smiling at his ID.

“You don’t look like an astrology guy,” she says, kindly. “Does kids of your age still believe in fate? I thought the young people today were into breaking norms and bonds.”

“Some of them,” he smiles too, but not embarrassed. He likes the idea of having freedom to choose his destiny, but fate is not a horrible idea.

“Do you really like this book, don’t you?”

“Oh…” he nods. “I like the language. The writer is nice, he gives you facts, but he’s not boring. And he doesn’t treat you like you’re not educated enough to understand. It’s a good read!”

“I see,” she says, and Chanyeol can see she discreetly smells him with no success – the suppressants hides his natural scent. “When you return the book, I will read it.”

The episode makes Chanyeol remember it’s about time to take his suppressant dose. He thinks about calling his sister to get her doctor’s number, because he doesn’t remember, but suddenly Kris comes to his mind.

“CHOOSE mating services,” Kris says, with a sleepy tone.

“I guess the tables have turned,” Chanyeol mocks. “It’s me surprising you now!”

“Oh, Moon, what do you want? I hope it’s urgent.”

“I just called to say I love you,” Chanyeol sings. “I’m kidding. Where do you get your suppressants? I need to take my dose.”

“How often is your dose? Six months?”

“Nah, too strong, mine is four months. Three times a year.”


“Minos.”

“Isn’t Minos too strong for you? That’s why you smell like a beta?”

“Fuck you.”
“Maybe not, you’re still aggressive,” Kris laughs. “Come here. Yixing has alpha suppressants. You can get them free. That’s what Luhan does.”

“Really? I’m coming!”

“I will regret this, but yeah. I’m waiting. Me and Yixing shift ends in one hour, so be quick.”

Chanyeol feels weird every time he enters the building. CHOOSE m.s. is on the last floor, full windows, but no advertising, no name. It took only thirty minutes to get there, but the man in the door checks his ID, his digital, his face. He runs into the elevator, enters the room startling Kris.

“… Is the doctor still here?” he says, not too loud. There’s just one guy besides Kris. The guy smiles to Chanyeol.

“Calm down,” Kris says, his face doing his “angry resting” expression, but he sounds tired. “You’re the next.”

“Oh,” he nods. “Good to know. Are you okay?”

“Yes,” Kris yawns. “Too much work.”

“Really? You look relaxed all the time. A mix of relaxed and angry. I don’t know how to explain things.”

“Yes, I’ve read your emails. I noticed this flaw,” Kris points. “Talking about that, do you know you have a meeting in two weeks, right?”

“Yup,” Chanyeol says, glancing at the man sitting next to them. “I’m ready.”

“Don’t give me mental images,” Kris looks disgusted, but he chuckles anyway. Chanyeol slaps him, and Yixing comes out of his room to the reception. He’s holding some papers.

“Oh, Namjoon, here’s your copy,” Yixing says, in his soft tone. He notices the presence of another person, and he seems surprised. “Oh, it’s you, Chanyeol. Is there a problem?”

“Oh no,” Kris explains before Chanyeol can open his mouth. “He’s just here because he actually read the contract and he knows we provide suppressants for free in case his mate demands it.”

Chanyeol looks at Kris, blinks, then looks at Yixing:

“Of course,” he nods eagerly.

“Oh,” Yixing smiles, a bit shy, his dimples showing. “I’m glad you trust me! Most alphas prefer their regular doctor. Come with me.”

Chanyeol thumbs up to Kris, following Yixing down the hall. He really should read the contract again (but… 70 pages!!!). Yixing guide him to a cute, small infirmary. Chanyeol happily sits in the bed.

“What’s your dose?”

“Minos, four months,” He explains, looking around. There are some pictures on the wall, notes and books. Yixing turns at him, putting his gloves on.
“Minos? Isn’t that too strong for you?”

“Oh, no, not you too,” Chanyeol sighs. “Do I look fragile?”

“No, no,” Yaxing laughs, picking some cotton. “Minos is given to boys with strong hormonal imbalances. You’re almost thirty. There’s no need to control your hormonal level, because your body is doing that naturally now.”

“Oh… I started taking Minos when I was seventeen, and I never changed,” he scratches his neck, “Do I think I should?”

“Hummm…” Yixing disappears behind a hospital cubicle curtain, reappears with a syringe. “Suppressants change isn’t a joke. It takes time. You would have to stop taking them for a while before testing another one. I don’t recommend doing it now. Take off your shirt.”

“Oh, okay,” Chanyeol says, his words coming out muffled by the shirt he pulled over his head.

“Talking about that,” he says casually, rubbing an alcohol wetted cotton in Chanyeol’s arm. “You know you will experience some pain and nausea after the dose, right? Do you need me to get you a sick note?”

“Nah, I’m used to it. I’m going to have a hard night, but tomorrow I’ll be fine. I will only work in the afternoon, anyway.”

“Good,” Yixing smiles. “Now stand still.”

Chanyeol closes his eyes. The injection hurts, but it’s only three times in the year. He can survive this. Yixing presses another cotton after removing the needle.

“You’ve been a good boy,” Yixing smiles, and offers him a rainbow lollipop. “You deserve it.”

Chanyeol swings his legs happily.

“Thank you,” he puts the lollipop in the corner of his mouth, and says, “Doctor, can you give me a painkiller, just for tonight?”

“I don’t recommend more chemicals in your body today, Chanyeol,” he says, worried, discarding the syringe. “But I think I can give you something more natural. See if Kris ended his shift, then bring him to my office and I can help you.”

Chanyeol laughs so much he falls into Kris’ lap. Half of his body is on the cold ground and not into Yixing’s fluffy beanbag, but he doesn’t care. It’s so funny, Kris can’t stop making weird noises and Yixing is almost sleeping in his beanbag. The office is too bright, Chanyeol thinks, covering his eyes. Smells like some good hamburger – oh, it’s burned meat. His burned meat.

“I think I burned my finger with the joint,” he says, lifting his hand over his face. The light passes through them and he can see half of Kris’ head. “Once my friend burned his entire leg… I guess I’m smarter. I miss my friends. They’re good friends.”

“You know who’s not?” Kris says, blowing some smoke in Chanyeol’s face. “That Dr. Zhang over there.”

“Oooooh,” Chanyeol makes a dramatic noise. “Fight!”
“I’m a great friend, Yifan,” Yixing says. “I don’t tell anyone about that long purple hair phase of yours.”

“Oh my god,” Chanyeol laughs loud, then covers his mouth. Someone is in the waiting room in Kris’ place. Wait. “Who’s Yifan?”

“I’m Yifan.”

“You’re Kris.”

“No, I’m Yifan. Kris is my work name.”

“Holy shit. I knew it! You don’t look like a Kris!”

“Why do I look like?”

“Yifan. It fits you.”

“Thank you.”

“Why Dr. Zhang is a bad friend? He’s cute.”

“Too cute,” Kris--- Yifan spits. “He stole my man.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol tries to get up to look at Yixing better. “He’s sleeping. He’s cute. I understand your man. I mean, his man?”

“He’s not your man, nor mine;” Yixing says, eyes closed. “I’m not dating him yet. And he’s your ex? So he’s not yours.”

“You can’t date your friend’s ex, Doctor,” Chanyeol clarifies. “Didn’t you guys watch mean girls?”

“No,” both of them say.

“Uncultured people, I see. Who’s he, Yifan?”

“He’s a nice writer. He’s an omega. His name is Junmyeon,” Yixing says, curling into the beanbag. “That’s all you need to know. Now I’m going to take a nap. Shhhhh!”

“Typical,” Kris nudges Chanyeol with his elbow. “Come on, aren’t you hungry? Let’s eat.”

“What? Where?” Chanyeol gets up, slow, but surprisingly precise. He’s not nauseous, but his muscles hurt. “This suppressant will kill me someday.”

“I doubt,” Yifan says, getting up too. “But you know, it’s not going to work forever. You hardly smells, that can’t be healthy, buddy.”

“Buddy,” Chanyeol repeats as they leave the office. “Are we friends? Are we?”

“Yeah, I think so. You know my name and everything.”

They walk together off the building, and Yifan tells him about some place near that sells good kimbap.

“So, who’s this guy who broke you heart?”

“My heart is intact. We dated in high school, but then--” Yifan takes a long breath, looks up. It’s cold
today, but not raining. “We were presented as alpha and omega. It was bad, you know? He had a lot of alphaness, he was a better leader than me, always in control. He didn’t want to mate and look, I understand that, but he decided not to date me too. He wanted to be successful.”

“Wow,” Chanyeol says, surprised. “You talk a lot when you want to.”

“You’re really dumb.”

“So are you,” Chanyeol sticks his tongue out. “But isn’t Yixing an alpha too?”

“Yeah, that’s the thing,” Yifan keeps guiding them, his expression is soft, but sad, “He changed. Now he believes in soulmates and even write about destined mates. He met Yixing and they’re… seeing each other. I don’t know why I care. It was a long time ago.”

“Did you two meet after the break-up?”

“No,” he says, and he grabs Chanyeol’s arm. “It’s here.”

The place is small, even smaller when Chanyeol and Yifan come in. But it’s cozy and Chanyeol is craving closeness. Taemin is playing on the soundbox and they exchange a look, laughing for almost a minute before ordering the food.

“It’s funny for me to think you’re suffering because of your teenage boyfriend’s relationship,” Chanyeol elbows him. “You look scary, but you’re a sweet guy, aren’t you?”

“Shut up,” Kris smiles, shyly. “I’m not suffering. I’m frustrated. I understood him, I know how hard it’s for omegas to be acknowledged for their work. This is the main reason I work with Yixing. I do understand. I wouldn’t mind if we had to hide our relationship or, you know, never knotting. I was there for his success. I would take care of him, too, if it was the case.”

“You mean… mating?”

“If he needed me to, yes. Do you think our clients pay us to be knotted because they like it? You’ve seen how heats are. I don’t think most omegas like being painfully horny, or stopping their works for days. Of course, they hire us because they want discretion. But in the end, I am working doing what I could’ve have done for my mate. It would not have bothered me being in the closet. I’m not into exhibitionism of bonds. I’m not that alpha.”

Chanyeol gulps, but not because he’s hungry. His mind is wandering to Kyungsoo. He’s hiring Chanyeol because he has no choice, suppressants doesn’t work in him, people can’t know he’s an omega, he has no time to date, it’s painful to spend his heat alone.

“Yeah, I never had mated before, I don’t have omega friends,” he nods. “I guess I was just your local ignorant alpha who doesn’t think about abo problems.”

“Oh, Chanyeol,” Yifan laughs. “Did you believe in that omega who sings in my heat? Flawless?”

Chanyeol could pay attention to Yifan’s nice voice, but he is mostly shocked:

“Are you calling Beyoncé, the current ruler of the world, that omega?! Who are you?”

“Hey, chill! I like her. She has cute children too,” Yifan picks their chopsticks, as the waitress serves them. “But I’m not into pop songs.”

“Why not??!”
“I don’t know. Too superficial, I think. But I do like that hot blonde… Moon, her name, it’s… that lady who sings about broken bonds.”

“Be more specific,” he counts in his fingers. “If she’s an omega and the song makes you cry, it’s Adele. If she’s not presented, Lady Gaga or Katy Perry, she’s blonde now. If she’s a beta who complains about betas being called promiscuous, it’s Taylor Swift. If she’s—”

“It’s Adele,” Yifan nods. “We could’ve had it aaaaaall—”

“Rolling in the deeeeep,” Chanyeol keeps singing. “She’s really good. I could’ve say you have a nice taste, but you’re into Taemin, so…”

“Taemin is good, okay? I’m into rap. He’s the exception.”

“Rap? Are you fucking kidding me—” Chanyeol laughs. “You came to the right guy.”

Chanyeol and Yifan scares at least half of the clients during their discussion (one or two rolling eyes about alphas being alphas), but Chanyeol laughs a lot and he still feeling good – and slightly nauseous, - when he gets home. Jongdae is outside, watering the garden, and looks up at him.

“Good lord, what happened? Your eyes are red,” he says, rubbing his hands in his light tshirt. “There’s rice in the corner of your mouth.”

“I took my suppressants’ dose,” Chanyeol explains, but he knows it’s only half-truth. “But I feel fine, don’t worry. What are you doing outside?”

“Baekhyun and Sehun are watching that culinary show again and you know how much my mate screams when he sees his celebrity crush in the television,” Jongdae sighs and cleans the corner of Chanyeol’s mouth with his index finger.

“Thanks for warning me. I’ll stay outside with you,” Chanyeol opens the small gate. “How’s the plants doing? Need help?”

“Good,” he says, softly. Jongdae touches one of them – there’s flowers on it, but Chanyeol doesn’t remember any name -, and rubs it with immense delicacy. Chanyeol loves to see this side of his friends, their weird hobbies, their secret obsessions. He’s feeling inspired, probably because of the weed, but there’s a new song in his mind. Soft, relaxing, endearing.

“Can I sleep with your guys tonight? I need cuddles.”

“Why don’t you cuddle your plushies?”

“They’re not warm.”

“Okay, but if I feel your knot in my back, I’ll cut it out.”

“I don’t get hard every night, you know that, right?”

Jongdae laughs. He probably doesn’t, because he only dated a omega and a beta.

“Okay,” he nods. “So… I know Baekhyun is trying to throw me a party.”

“I don’t know about that,” Chanyeol tries, avoiding his eyes, but it’s futile.

“Oh, of course,” Jongdae smiles. He’s a troll. “I’m just saying in case he accidentally decides to be in home with a cake, then I will be home by nine and I don’t want to see any co-workers.”
“Alright.”

Sehun opens the front door, waving at them.

“The show is over. You can come in now.”

“The science of the scent is mostly based in hormonal reaction, which explains some things which would otherwise be unintelligible involving reproductive functions and sexual behavior. For example, a classic study from the University of Córdoba demonstrates the omega’s hormone influence over his mate hormonal tax. In short, the omega’s scent induces his alpha partner to keep producing hormones even with ageing. Unbounded alphas’ hormonal tax decrease twice compared to mated ones, especially after the 40’s. As much the scent perfumery industry grows—specializing in the modern omega’s hiding scent—, studies shows that the artificial scent does not have the same effect than the mate’s one. ABO aromatherapy defends the benefits of the mate’s scent in the treatment of diseases, conservatives believe that the mating mixing scent is a form of ‘spiritual compromise’, and modern science admits there’s a form of communication between the mate’s scents. But none of them can explain, for example, how a person’s scent can disappear after the loss of a mate, or how the scents can synchronize the mates emotional response to traumatic events. Some people today still believe in the recognition of the ‘right mate’ by scents, maybe influenced by movies, magazines and romances. A funny fact about scents: Although many people believe that biting is ‘the’ moment of mating, it’s scientifically proven that the need for marking happens after the mating, when the scents are mixed and the body recognizes the mate’s hormones as his own. Of course, biting and marking in general are associated with conservatives, but the progressives don’t deny its importance in ABO culture. Today, however, the youth prefers the scent’s “spell” and not the mark’s exposition. Hollywood did a great job in convincing the world about how love and smelling are more important than the biting. Coincidentally, famous perfumes are very expensive and desired all over the world.”

His phone vibrates. Chanyeol takes the book away from his face. He wants to throw up.

baekhyun: I need you to leave your fucking room
baekhyun: we need to buy beer, soda and heavy things
chanyeol: I’m not a pack mule
baekhyun: yes, you are
chanyeol: it’s too early for that
baekhyun: I work in the mornings, you in the afternoon and jongdae is home at night
baekhyun: it’s tomorrow!!!
chanyeol: is he sleeping?
baekhyun: yes, we have two hours until he wakes up, get up!!!

Chanyeol gets up, and before he leaves his room, he checks his mail. Yifan sent a warning about the meeting in a week. He and Baekhyun go to the only 24h supermarket near their house. Chanyeol can’t stop yawning, but Baekhyun looks like the energizer bunny. As they carry the drinks in the street, the beta can’t stop talking,

“I called the bakery down street, but they don’t have lava cake. I just saw the episode of UltimateChef with strawberry lava cake and I want that shit,” he is walking too fast, swinging the bag of sodas. “The chef who did it has a bakery in the other side of the town. I will ask Sehun to buy for me. I don’t have any time because of the school excursion tomorrow—Are you listening?”
“My brain is fuzzy,” he says. Maybe this is how people feel when he’s talking too much, too. Maybe it’s karma. “Can’t pay much attention.”

“Is it the dose? It’s been days, is that normal?”

“Hey, why is everyone suddenly interested in my hormones?”

“I wish I wasn’t.” Baekhyun narrows his eyes, keeping his pace. “But I had to see your pants looking like a fucking tent very recently.”

“Well, I’m sorry,” he blushes, readjusting his grip in the bags to distract himself. “I was sleeping in the middle of you guys and I can’t control that.”

“You were making some weird noises.”

“Shut up.”

It isn’t a great idea for them to have a play fight in the street so early, but Baekhyun and Chanyeol weren’t exactly the definition of intelligence. Half of the sodas fall in the ground and they rush home to get there before Jongdae’s ring alarm goes off. On the way home, Chanyeol thinks he sees Luhan in a car, but it could be his dizziness, or the running. He falls asleep still thinking about the alpha.

He’s half way of his way to the café, carrying his guitar case and bag, when the phone rings. He think’s it’s Baekhyun, probably asking him to carry stuff, but it’s Yifan.

“Chanyeol?”

“Hey, buddy. What’s-”

“Send me your location,” he says, rushed. “The CHOOSE driver will pick you up. He has the keys to D.O’s apartment, so you can wait for him inside.”

“What?!” Chanyeol stops walking. “But it’s too so—“

“I know, I can’t explain now. I need you to be there,” Yifan says, eerily soft for his normal self. “Be discreet. Sorry for the inconvenience.”

Chanyeol gulps. He calls the café, apologizes, see if there’s someone to substitutes him. He barely notices who’s driving the car, but it’s not Yifan. He sends to Baekhyun: Sorry I won’t be home today, or tomorrow and maybe not in jongdae’s bday?? I don’t know, plz don’t get mad. Also, don’t invite his co-workers!! His friend Choa answers his message and says she can play in his place, but it’s Yifan.

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Chanyeol is alone in Kyungsoo’s home.

Fuck, he thinks, and he drops his bag close to the door. He puts the guitar case gently next to it. Chanyeol takes his shoes off and walks around the room with socks on. Now he has time to look at the paintings – one, he recognizes, is a copy of Renoir -, his culinary books, and the pictures. There aren’t many portraits: one with his family, probably, since it’s a classic family photo, parents-sons (or cousin?); one with his coworkers (it’s kitchen, Chanyeol isn’t that dumb); and one with some guys, all three of them holding him. In every picture Kyungsoo is smiling big, eyes crinkled, looking at least ten years younger – maybe because he’s smiling. Chanyeol holds the portrait with the unidentified men, because it seems to be the most recent photo.
He feels sad. He never sees Kyungsoo smiling like this. He places the portrait in the same spot it was before, and goes back to the couch. Why would Chanyeol look at Kyungsoo’s things, anyway? To punish himself? In some months, they will be strangers again. He almost never sees (or talks to) Kyungsoo and they’re (contractual) mates. Chanyeol takes a deep breath and checks his phone. The amazing owner of the café doesn’t get mad at him, but Chanyeol assured her someone would replace him in the next day. Baekhyun sends him about ten messages of offensive content; Chanyeol decides not to read the rest of them.

He bends over the armrest to see the pile of magazines next to the couch. Mostly about food and… mangas? Chanyeol picks one: he doesn’t understand much in the first five pages, so he gives up. He sees a different cover between the magazines, and, wide-eyed, notices it’s a Rolling Stone. He grabs it, almost dropping the others in the ground. It’s an old one, Harry Styles cover’s issue, and Chanyeol laughs out loud. Kyungsoo and boybands? In which universe he could even imagine that? He opens it (apparently Harry’s tshirt omegas are smarter is about a domestic violence awareness campaign, not the obvious statement), and checks what was so interesting to Kyungsoo. Politics, interviews, sports, whatever, he shrugs. He flip the pages until he finds a marker in the ‘Long Reads’ section: “Musical Mind & Musical Intelligence: new perspectives into Howard Gardner's theory of multiples intelligences can change the way we consume music?”. Chanyeol takes a long breath. That sounds like a good read (he’s pretty sure that Baekhyun said something about this guy, but he can’t remember anything but “the importance for teaching and education”).

Chanyeol is completely absorbed in the reading, especially when he reads about the criteria to find an musical mind: “shows sensitivity to patterns and regularities of rhythm, melody, and sound”; “learns best if concepts are sung or tapped out”; “may acquire information best with music in the background”; “notices non-verbal sounds in the environment”; “plays an instrument”. He needs to pay more attention in Baekhyun’s babbling about the school, he makes a mental note.

The scent.

Chanyeol feels the scent in his skin, he’s shivering. It’s Kyungsoo scent, and it’s strong, too strong. Chanyeol stands up, puts the magazine on the top of the pile and before he can open the door, Yifan opens it first.

“What—“ he starts, but he notices Kyungsoo, using Yifan’s arm to support himself. His face is red, he’s completely wet and he’s obviously in heat already. The sight of Kyungsoo trembling and sweating while holding Yifan leaves a bad taste in his mouth.

“Are we…” Kyungsoo says with a small voice.

“What the hell are you doing to him?” Chanyeol glares at Yifan, more confused than angry.

“Chill, Romeo,” he answers, still holding the door. “I had to escort him; otherwise his scent would draw the attention of everyone on the way here.”

Kyungsoo looks up, seeming to recognize his own house. He turns to Chanyeol, and literally falls over him. Chanyeol catches his mate as fast as he can, and Kyungsoo presses his face against Chanyeol’s chest, wetting the shirt.

“What happened?” Chanyeol asks Yifan, but his eyes are in Kyungsoo’s desperate expression. The scent is filling his lungs, but he’s hardly reacting.

“Apparently a co-work’s heat triggered his. You know these television people put omegas to work when the heat is about to start, don’t you? Well, they had two omegas in heat and their great idea to fix the problem was to lock them there. He’s in heat for hours,” Kris sound frustrated and worried, his threatening side erupting. “He called us. I hope you understand this is not a regular heat and he
needs to be taken care.”

“I do,” he gulps, and his face is like a tomato soup when Kyungsoo, impatient, grabs his neck and makes an angry sound against his skin. Yifan rolls his eyes and leaves, closing the door as silently as he can. Chanyeol sighs, relieved they aren’t being watched anymore, and tries to push Kyungsoo enough to take his wet clothes off. He fails. Kyungsoo has this strong grip, his arms around Chanyeol’s neck, bodies pressed close.


This is one strong tiny man, he thinks, trying to manhandle him without success. Chanyeol doesn’t want to use physical force on Kyungsoo when he’s in a delicate moment like this.

“Kyungsoo,” he sighs heavily. “Stop ignoring me. I need… some space… literally.”

A whine is not the answer he is waiting for.

“I’m not going anywhere, trust me,” he says as softly as he can, rubbing his mate’s back. “I’ll be right here, okay? You need to take these clothes, don’t you? We both have to.”

Kyungsoo lets his arms fall, but keep his eyes closed – seems to be too painful to keep them open. Chanyeol guides Kyungsoo to the couch, helps him to sit and kneels to the ground to take his shoes off. Kyungsoo is using some fancy clothes, black-and-white button up shirt, black pants, and oxfords shoes. He looks good, but he seems to feel better as he’s being undressed. His underwear glues to his body, wet by semen and lubrication; removing it makes the air thick with scent. Chanyeol is hard, but he’s not exactly excited about the mating, his chest heavy with some feeling he can’t name. He undresses himself fast, throwing his clothes on the ground, while his mate’s ones are over the magazine pile. He just finishes taking his socks off when Kyungsoo grips his wrist, staring at him. Chanyeol freezes. Kyungsoo pulls him down and presses their foreheads together, making a strangled sound.

“I know, I know,” Chanyeol says, slowly. “Lay down.”

Kyungsoo obeys so fast that Chanyeol just stands there for a minute, not knowing what to do with himself. Chanyeol kneels in the couch between his legs, touches the skin of his thighs – the skin is burning -, holds his dick carefully. Kyungsoo moans, eyes closed, and Chanyeol licks it, from the balls to the leaking tip, before sucking fast, messily. Kyungsoo puts a hand in Chanyeol’s hair, gripping it hard, and Chanyeol almost forgets to slip a finger inside of him. Kyungsoo is making nice sounds, seeming to be less distressed, so both are relaxing slowly. Kyungsoo comes fast and Chanyeol keeps sucking him, swallowing it, fucking him with two fingers. Chanyeol is feeling Kyungsoo’s anxiety in his bones and when he’s deep inside of his mate, he’s not sure of which one is actually in heat. Kyungsoo presses their foreheads together again, gripping Chanyeol’s shoulders.

Chanyeol watches the couch get dirtier with fluids wetting its surface, as they change positions with short breaks. For some reason, they don’t speak. Chanyeol just moves Kyungsoo, and he accepts easily. They end in the floor, a better place for hands-and-knees, and Chanyeol feels the strength leaving him as he comes deep inside of Kyungsoo. He stops for a moment. Kyungsoo pushes back against his knot and whines.

“I need…” he pants, rubbing Kyungsoo’s waist with both hands. “I need a break, a real break.”

Kyungsoo stays silent as ever. Chanyeol feels an urge to kiss his back, but he contains himself.

“Are you okay?”
“Do I look okay?” Kyungsoo says weakly.

“Well… I can’t see your face right now,” Chanyeol tries the most horrible joke of all time. “But let’s say no.”

Kyungsoo keeps quiet for some long, painful seconds.

“A person who works with me was close to her heat and triggered mine,” he says, dropping his body down to support himself using his elbow, instead of his hands. The movement sends a wave of pleasure to Chanyeol’s trapped knot and he shivers. “It happened like this when my suppressants ceased working.”

“When…? How long are you in heat?”

“A day, probably,” Kyungsoo points to the watch on the coffee table. “I was recording in the morning. I came here in the afternoon. They locked us in a room because of the scent. I’m afraid she’s still there. Her mate is out of the town.”

“What?!”

“It’s safer,” he sighs, and he sounds infinitely tired.

Chanyeol have no idea why his eyes are burning. He patiently waits for his knot to deflate, exhausted, tired, when his stomach rumble loudly.

It’s just… really loud.

He freezes. He wasn’t feeling hungry because he was blinded by hormones, doing intense physical work to try to calm down a very demanding person. Kyungsoo makes a noise that sounds like a laugh.

“Is that… you?”

“Hmmm… yes?” Chanyeol says, embarrassed.

“Do you have another person living inside of your stomach or…?” Kyungsoo is definitely laughing. Chanyeol laughs too, wishing he could see Kyungsoo’s face.

“Are you in a position to talk about people getting inside of people?”

“I’m in the perfect position, if you haven’t noticed,” Kyungsoo says and it’s unexpected to Chanyeol’s ears to hear him joking around, but it’s nice.

“Sorry, you’re right, as ever,” he says, chuckling. He wants to touch the moles in Kyungsoo’s neck and back, instead he just casually slips off him. Kyungsoo stands up before him, walking away, and Chanyeol takes a long, shaky breath when he sees white trail running down his mate’s leg.

Chanyeol just falls in the ground. He stares at the ceiling, feeling dirty, sticky and itchy. He hears Kyungsoo walking again, looks up and sees his mate walking into the kitchen in a white robe. Feels like some sort of a wet dream, and Chanyeol stays there for a while, until he smells something good. He follows the smell, his aching body only stopping with the vision of Kyungsoo next to the stove.

“What are you doing?” he asks, weak. He can see the redness in Kyungsoo’s exposed skin, his body shivering.

“Sit down,” Kyungsoo orders him, checking a frying pan. He doesn’t spare Chanyeol a look.
“You should be taking a nap and drinking water,” Chanyeol tries. “Also, I’m disgustingly dirty. You have nice chairs—”

“Sit down,” Kyungsoo says again, his voice hard as steel. Chanyeol sighs, sits and waits. Kyungsoo puts a generous plate on the table with a bottle of water and pushes a chair next to Chanyeol’s one. There’s rice, vegetables and some mushrooms and Chanyeol only notices he is staring open-mouthed, when Kyungsoo stuffs a broccoli in his mouth.

“Uhnnf,” he says, munching.

“I’m sorry,” Kyungsoo says, serious. Chanyeol wants to ask why, but he knows Kyungsoo is speaking with his eyes – Chanyeol isn’t oblivious, he’s just not fluent in this language. He keeps eating, watching Kyungsoo drinking water and eventually eating from the plate, their arms touching. Chanyeol wants to compliment Kyungsoo’s food, but it’s so good he can’t stop eating. When he finishes, he is seriously considering licking the plate clean. He feels Kyungsoo’s nose touches his arm, pressing his face against Chanyeol’s skin, and he blushes.

“I’m stinking!”

“No, you’re not,” Kyungsoo looks up at him gravely. “There’s a cake in the fridge. A friend gave to me, it’s still in the box.”

“Oh… would it be strawberry lava cake?” Chanyeol says smiling, but he’s honestly thinking about crying. Baekhyun is going to eat his brains, zombie style, and Jongdae will do that thing where he smiles and says it’s okay, it wasn’t important, but his eyes are sad.


“That’s close enough,” Chanyeol nods, “My friend’s birthday is tomorrow… I mean… today. Who knows? Well, his mate wants a strawberry lava cake. I was just asking, I won’t need to bring the cake. Maybe my other friend will, it wasn’t my job, anyway.”

Kyungsoo stares at him blankly, his hand touching Chanyeol’s.

“Do you need more food?” he almost whispers.

“No really,” Chanyeol answers, because he’s more tired than anything. He just wants to lay down and possibly take a nap. Kyungsoo nods and guides him to the bedroom, hands sweating, and scent strong and sweet.

“Can we do that in a way I don’t have to move… at all?” Chanyeol pleads, sitting in bed. It’s futile to resist Kyungsoo’s scent, anyway – Chanyeol is already hard. Kyungsoo nods, pushing him down. Chanyeol holds his breath, because he knows Kyungsoo is about to ride him until both pass out. He is no longer sleepy, but he feels the familiar dizziness that makes his mouth dry, his eyes trained on Kyungsoo’s perfect lips.

Time is slippery when they’re mating and sometimes Chanyeol can barely feel he’s coming, everything is painfully pleasure, overloading his senses. After some time (hours, but how many?) he props himself in his elbows, he wants to see better, to feel closer; Kyungsoo seems to notice him and presses their foreheads together. Chanyeol wishes he understood Kyungsoo’s action, but his perceptions are altered, he’s exhausted and he knows he wouldn’t last a second without the hormonal boost.

Kyungsoo comes again, tightening around him, milking his orgasm. He’s suffocating with the scent. He closes his eyes for a minute. Chanyeol opens his eyes, Kyungsoo is right there, his gaze focused
on Chanyeol’s lips. Oh, Chanyeol finally gets it; he’s asking permission for a kiss.

Chanyeol considers it. He wants to kiss Kyungsoo – not just taste him, but kiss, as a lover’s caress. But they’re not lovers. Kyungsoo wants to kiss Chanyeol because he’s in heat, his body craving touch and closeness. On his normal behavior, he wouldn’t give Chanyeol the time of his day, for sure. They’re very, very different, and Chanyeol is painfully aware he’s not Kyungsoo’s type of… anything. Chanyeol is being hired for his knot. That’s all.

Chanyeol sighs, drops his head back to the bed. Kyungsoo stays there motionless, then closes his eyes. It’s the last thing Chanyeol sees before falling asleep.

He wakes up feeling sore and tired, incredibly tired. He stares at the ceiling and stretches his arms, whining in pain. He looks to the nightstand and there’s nothing on it. Weird. He looks to the other side and, to his surprise, Kyungsoo is there, sleeping next to him. He’s used to wake up to Kyungsoo over him or already gone.

“What time is it?” Chanyeol asks to no one. He feels too lazy to get up, listening to the rain outside. He stares at Kyungsoo sleeping, instead. Kyungsoo has a pretty face. A real pretty face, like people who does movies and dramas - he has some pimples, but he’s still more beautiful than some of the actors Chanyeol sees with tons of make-up in their faces. Chanyeol touches Kyungsoo’s nose as a reflex and Kyungsoo opens his eyes immediately. It surprises Chanyeol, making him jump in the bed.

“Holy… shit,” he sighs, slapping his own chest. “You’re awake?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo answers. “My heat is over.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol widens his eyes. “Is it? Isn’t that kind of fast?”

“It’s not a regular heat,” Kyungsoo’s voice is hoarse, his eyes a bit swollen. He doesn’t move, just stares at Chanyeol – he does that a lot. Chanyeol feels weird under his gaze.

“Oh! What time is it?” he remembers. “Where did I--?”

“Alarm clock under the bed,” Kyungsoo says, sitting up. Chanyeol puts his hand under the bed and hits the alarm clock before picking it. It’s almost eight. He makes a happy sound.

“Oh my god, there’s still time. I can still make it,” he says, so happy he holds the clock as if it’s a prize. “I have to call—“

“No,” Kyungsoo gets up. “The driver will linger around, I will drive you. Go take a bath."

“Huh?” he asks, confused.

“I said I will drive to your friend’s party,” Kyungsoo says, opening his closet, not facing Chanyeol. “Go take a bath.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods, before running to the bathroom. As he gets in the shower, he is not sure which soap use, so he picks the first one he sees, and rubs against his body as fast as he can. He can’t stop worrying about Jongdae’s birthday, since his hormones can’t fool him anymore.

The shower curtain opens and Chanyeol can’t hold a startled noise. Kyungsoo enters the shower – big enough for two people -, and shots him a funny look.
“Does my nudity offends you?” Kyungsoo lifts his eyebrows, his eyes impossibly wide. “I left your towel and your clothes next to the sink.”

Chanyeol was (such a rare moment) truly speechless. No, Kyungsoo’s nudity doesn’t offends him. It’s just… awkwardly intimate for them to bath together. It shouldn’t be, he thinks, but it is. They’re not mating or touching, just sharing a bath. Chanyeol may have a very intimate relationship with his friends, but they don’t bath together.

Kyungsoo lets out a deep sigh, takes the handheld shower into his hands, and, in a precise move, aims at Chanyeol. “You have to hurry,” he says, washing the lather away with the water jet. Chanyeol tries to hide his face, but he gets water on his mouth and coughs. “See, you’re done.” “That was mean,” Chanyeol pouts, leaving the shower. He sees their clothes next to each other, his chest contracts – Kyungsoo’s towel is small next to his and Chanyeol just doesn’t know what to do with himself. He looks for his phone in the pocket of the folded pants, takes a picture. He just wants to look at it later. He dresses himself quickly, which is good, because he spends some time staring at Kyungsoo drying off and dressing up.


Oh, Chanyeol thinks, as he leaves the bathroom, so this is a scent hiding perfume. He moves his hands around, wiping the scent away. He almost cries when he sees the cake beautifully wrapped in a transparent plastic box. It’s big and colorful, Jongdae will love it. He hears Kyungsoo opening the door and runs after him. Kyungsoo looks good, black everything (shirt-denim-sneakers).

“Oh, I forgot to return the clothes you left me,” Chanyeol would slap himself if he had free hands to use. “I’m stealing clothes, now cakes.”

Kyungsoo shakes his head:

“Those are yours. The clothes are too big for me and the cake is definitely too sweet.”

Chanyeol looks at him, surprised, but he says nothing because the elevator door opens and there are people staring at them. He glances at Kyungsoo, serious as ever. Chanyeol enters the elevator with a shy goodnight to a woman who keeps eyeing them. She greets Kyungsoo formally and gets the same treatment. Chanyeol looks down until she leaves.

Kyungsoo’s car is compact, all black and clean. Chanyeol feels compressed on it with his big body, guitar case, bag and the cake in his hands.

“Say the destination to the GPS,” Kyungsoo demands, his wet hair glued to his face, his hands in the steering wheel. Chanyeol says it aloud and a voice repeats, giving Kyungsoo the directions to follow the shorter way to his home. It’s raining and the sound of it makes Chanyeol feel calmer – looking at his mate and silently realizing there’s nothing different in what he does during their meetings. Kyungsoo is focused, quiet and handsome as always.

Taemin is playing on the radio: that horrible song about mirroring his mate.

“Not you too,” he cries. Is this a conspiracy?

“You don’t like Taemin?” Kyungsoo seems amused.

“I didn’t mean to offend. I’m just tired to hear him all the time, everywhere.”
“I can… imagine. I’ve been hearing him sing way before he became famous.”

Chanyeol furrows his eyebrows, confused.

“What do you mean?”

Kyungsoo just smiles. Ignoring Chanyeol it’s quickly becoming an habit.

“We’re close,” Chanyeol warns before the GPS says the same thing. “You can stop here, if you want.”

“No,” Kyungsoo shakes his head. “It’s raining, I can drop you closer to your house. Just tell me where the place is.”

“The house with the garden. It’s a yellow one, hard to miss,” he points a finger and Kyungsoo bats it away.

“I’m seeing,” Kyungsoo stops the car and stares at Chanyeol.

“Oh,” he gulps. It’s weird. He never gets to see Kyungsoo leaving. What should he do? Chanyeol feels the need to explain, “That’s my house. I live with my friends. The one who’s having the party. And his mate—his mate too. We are childhood friends. They’re a couple of betas. They’re nice, but they’re very, very loud. It’s okay, I like it. I… don’t think you would like them very much. Maybe… Jongdae…”

Is he talking too much? Kyungsoo doesn’t say a word, his face as blank as always. Chanyeol’s hands are sweating – the silence is killing him. He unfasten his seat belt with shaky hands.

“Thanks for the cake… and the ride,” he panics, and in an impulse, gives Kyungsoo a little peck in the lips before opening the door and literally running away. The rain falls in his face, but it still feels like it’s burning. Chanyeol tries to protect his things as he opens the gate, but Sehun comes to rescue him.

“Baekhyun told me you weren’t coming,” Sehun told him, hugging Chanyeol in an attempt to fit them both under his umbrella.

“Jongdae is here?!”

“Not yet,” Sehun calmed him.

“I brought cake. I need to put it in the fridge, ’cause it’s ice cream.”

“Nice. I tried to buy the lava cake, but the entire city wants one after that episode,” he looked over their shoulders. “Who’s in the car?”

“No one,” Chanyeol hopes the rain and the umbrella cover his face. “Is… is the car still there?”

“Yes,” Sehun says with that naughty smile of his. “I can wave at them if you want to.”

“Stop!”

Chanyeol wants to turn back and give a last look, but as soon as the door opens, he feels a pain in his ear.

“Ouch, ouch, ouch,” he screams. He can see some of Jongdae’s friends and even Tao. How’s Tao back in the city? Maybe he’s so tired he’s hallucinating.
“You son of… I won’t call your mother bad names,” Baekhyun says, pulling Chanyeol’s ear. “How dare you? I can’t believe you decided to disappear a day before Jongdae’s birthday. And you call yourself my best friend?”

“Sorry, sorry,” he cries. “I brought cake! Please let me go! I’m too tired to fight.”

Baekhyun lets him go, takes the cake off his hands and shows him the middle finger.

“You’ll have to explain yourself later,” he warns.

“Yessir,” Chanyeol bows, scared. Sehun pats his shoulder empathetically. He only have time to drop his things in his room before Jongdae comes home. It’s cute how Jongdae pretends to be surprised, smiling at his cakes (there are two! he laughs), hugging his friends. It’s a nice party, there’s enough alcohol to forget any problem. Baekhyun is so devoted to make something cool that he even invites Jongdae’s celebrity crush (and friend), Liyin. Chanyeol hugs Jongdae tightly, gives his birthday gift (it’s a nice album from Studiokillers), but as soon as his friend goes to talk to Jonghyun (wow! You’re here), Tao grabs Chanyeol’s arm.

“Hey, cutie,” he says, punching Chanyeol’s shoulder softly and Chanyeol pulls him to a tight hug. His friends would complain, but Tao doesn’t mind.

“I missed you! What are you doing here?” Chanyeol says, letting him go.

“I escaped from work,” he smiles. Tao is still a gift for the senses: he’s beautiful, nice, smells good and he has this cute aura – no one ever guesses he’s an alpha. Maybe it’s because of his habit of dressing his micro dog, Candy, up in sunglasses; maybe it’s because he loves glitter and soft things; maybe it’s because he hides the fact he can actually kill a man without breaking a sweat.

“That’s good! Or maybe not…” Chanyeol smile dies in his face. “Today is birthday sex day, and if you’re here I can’t hide in Sehun’s apartment.”

Tao laughs. He’s blonde now, it fits him.

“Go out for drinking or something,” he shrugs. “I have something I want to talk to you.”

“Oh, okay, let’s go to my room,” Chanyeol points. Taeyeon’s new song is playing loudly from the speakers. Chanyeol guides him and remembers it’s probably the first time Tao’s there. The room is a mess, but when he closes the door, they can hear each other a lot better.

“What it is?” Chanyeol guesses, nervous. He wipes the palm of his hands in his jeans. “Work stuff?”

“Yes,” Tao nods, pulling a business card from the pocket of his coat. “I was going to give to Baekhyun, in case you couldn’t be here today.”

“Don’t,” Chanyeol warns, taking the card in his hands. “No one can know what I do.”

“What? What do you mean?” Tao blinks, confused, shaking his head.

“Well, there’s this contract which says—”

“You already signed a contract? Which record label?”

“Record label…?” Chanyeol looks at the card between his fingers. There’s a name and a number.

“Yes, record label. You just said something about a contract,” Tao lifts his hands, Chanyeol stare at him for a moment.
“Oh…! Not this type of contract,” he chuckles. “Who’s this person?”

“A friend of mine. He’s working in television now. He accidentally heard your song when Sehun sent to me… he liked it, he kept asking me about it. I think he wants to use the song for something… but you have to talk to him. I don’t understand these things.”

“Which song?”

“The instrumental one. There’s no name, I think. Sounds… very soft… kind of childish.”

“Oh, yeah, yes. I know which one, thanks,” Chanyeol nods, looks around for a safe place where he can keep it, ends up tucking it in the guitar case. “What do I tell him?”

“Say you’re my friend, he will know what it is,” Tao shrugs. “Now, explain. What contract were you talking about?”

“Ah.” Chanyeol breathes out, checks if the door is really closed. Tao crosses his arms. “Remember Sehun’s party when we were very drunk?”

“Vaguely.”

“I was… possibly crying.”

“Humm… that I remember.”

“We were having a moment.”

“Forget it, I don’t remember that.”

“Tao!”

“Oh, I do. You were whining because you’re lonely and your feet stinks.”

“That’s not true,” Chanyeol pouts. “I use socks.”

“Yeah, two of them and you rarely do laundry,” Tao sighs. “Get to the point, please.”

“You told me you worked with single, unmated alphas,” Chanyeol almost whispers and Tao gets closer to listen him better. “You said it was good money. And you gave me the number with no further explanation.”

Tao looks at Chanyeol, mouth open.

“I can’t believe…” he says, shocked. “I gave you the CHOOSE number?”

“Yes.”

“And you called it?”

“Yes.”

“And you… you signed the contract?”

“Yes.”

Tao covers his mouth with his both hands. Chanyeol is just lost.
“Why are you so surprised?”

“I… I just don’t believe you’re doing this to yourself,” he drops one hand, the other covering his mouth. “Chanyeol, why?”

“I don’t understand,” Chanyeol crosses his arms and lowers his voice suspiciously. “Didn’t you work there too?”

“Yes,” Tao says, now looking less shocked, amused by the situation. “On the administration. When I left, Yifan took my place.”

“What?” Chanyeol walks slowly to his bed and sits down. “What?”

“I helped Yixing with everything, but I never mated there,” he is laughing now, looking down at Chanyeol. “I couldn’t do it, anyway. Yifan and I… we dated. He wasn’t even on the alpha profiles when I left. Before joining CHOOSE he was just an actor.”

“An actor?” Chanyeol has no idea why this information is important. His brain isn’t working right. “I mean. I thought… you… God, I’m so, so dumb.”

Tao ducks down and places his hands gently over Chanyeol’s shoulder.

“Working in mating services is not a bad thing,” he says. “Are you mating?”

Chanyeol nods.

“Look, there’s a reason why I left, I’m a romantic,” he sighs, lifts his right shoulder in a slight shrug. “It was hard for me to see mates breaking bonds. I’m not the naïve alpha I was and I know it’s an important job, you know. Discrimination, bad suppressants and blah blah blah. Some omegas need hired mates, I’m not judging them. Yixing has this good heart, but he’s a doctor and an alpha who never mated. He doesn’t understand what feels like to have a mate and… then, lose them.”

“Why are you telling me this?” Chanyeol frowns.

“Because I want you to take care of yourself,” he raises his voice. “I’ve seen how the alphas suffer after changing mates. I used to believe omegas would be worse, but I was just prejudiced, I have to confess. They are strong and resilient; after all, most of them didn’t want to mate, in the first place. But the alphas… You need to be careful. You’re… a bit clingy.”

“I’m not.”

“Yes, you are. Do not interrupt me.”

“Okay.”

“Just… think of this as a temporary thing, okay? I know it’s hard, but try to focus on other activities. And Yifan is a nice person. I mean… he’s as dumber as you are, but if you open up to him, he will tell you what you should do.”

“I know,” Chanyeol stands up again, Tao gets up next to him. “He’s my friend now. By the way, I’m still shocked you guys dated. He doesn’t seem to be the same gender dating type.”

“He’s just a dork, don’t believe his ‘bad boy’ behavior,” Tao says fondly; he’s cute when he’s embarrassed. “I can’t believe you made me worry about your inconsequent ass. Don’t listen to me when I’m drinking!”
“You don’t have to worry about me. I’m a big boy,” he’s not sure of who he’s trying to convince.
“I… will call your friend and… talk to him… then?”

“Do it. But you know—”

A loud knock on the door grabs their attention – it's not Baekhyun or Jongdae, because they don’t
knock normally. Sehun opens the door, a beer in his free hand.

“They’re going to sing happy birthday,” he warns. “What are you guys talking about?”

“I just gave him my friend’s card,” Tao says, smiling like an angel. No one in the world would doubt
his world. He takes Chanyeol by the hand, “We’re going!”

Jongdae is already eating the Chantilly cake Baekhyun bought him – he knows better than wait for
happy birthday to you. They sing for him before the cake war starts, and Chanyeol sprays an entire
beer bottle over his friends while they’re smashing cake in each other’s face, even if he knows he’s
going to be the one cleaning it the next day. Chanyeol calls Choa to check if everything went okay
and promises her to do whatever she asks him (it’s the basis of their friendship, he notices). He’s
feeling tired, but he’s so happy to be around his friends.

When everyone’s leaving, Chanyeol calls his sister. He picks his book and goes to her house,
accepting his destiny to sleep on her couch. She picks him up, but he’s still so exhausted he can’t
sleep. He checks his mailbox, and the “payment and evaluation” email is already there. He ponders
about what happened, answer with an “okay! 5, no problem!”. Five minutes later, his phone rings.


“Where’s the long text with unsolicited details? The horrible emoticons? The insecurity-driven
questions?”

“I’m too tired for that. It’s been a long day,” he yawns.

“I see,” Yifan says in a suggestive voice. “Maybe you’re not built for this job.”

“If you’re trying to hurt my alpha pride, you better know I have none and I just found out you’ve
dated another alpha.”

“I’m not ashamed of that. Also, if you try to tell anyone they won’t believe you,” Yifan mocks. “if
you ignore the terrible scent, dating another alpha isn’t much different than dating a beta.”

“Trying to ask me out? I can’t and you know that.”

“Maybe I’m trying to set you up with another alpha,” Yifan sighs. “Luhan broke his contract and he
needs a friend he can talk to.”

“Oh…” Chanyeol zones out, thinking about how they met.

“Are you free tomorrow?”

“I will probably get up late… But I will play on the Wolf Café. He can meet me there and we talk
after I finish my shift?”
“Okay,” Yifan says softly, but suddenly adds, in his playful tone: “Get some rest. If you get sick, another alpha will have to substitute you—”

“God, you’re so thirsty,” Chanyeol says, too loud, then covers his mouth. “Do you call Kyungsoo too? Are you harassing him?”

“Kyungsoo? So you are in the first name basis,” Yifan laughs, loudly. “No, because he causes me zero problems. No embarrassing emoticons, ever. He doesn’t gossip about my personal life. He reads the contract. He’s a blessing. Too good for you.”

“Shut up, you’re just jealous,” Chanyeol laughs. “Don’t you put your dirty hands on him ever again! I’m going to rest, you pervert.”

“Good night.”

“Stanford research shows that the younger users of the most used dating app (scentfinder) for ABO-presented prefer the term ‘dating’, even in alpha-omega sexual-romantic interactions. Most users don’t think their genders can define them; they don’t tend to be deterministic about the partner’s gender, but they have preferences; the most common profiles are single unmated alphas; having children is an important aspect to choose the profile, but they don’t seem to mind the partner’s dating/mating history. The most popular conservative dating app (searchbound) shows a different perspective, because it only accepts alpha and omega “unmated” profiles. The most popular gender-neutral dating app (datemate), after making an anonymous poll, have divulged their results: 80% of their users are omegas and betas; and 60% have been previously “mated”. Talking about their past brings stigma for people with bonding history, especially the most marginalized groups. Now people can date how many times they want, but this scenario doesn’t eliminate the prejudice. Nevertheless, despite what the fairy tales tell us, is it important to find our mate on the first try? When both are young? Does the perfect mate has a defined gender? Are we living in children’s stories, where the mates are each other’s first and last love? Or are we still reproducing conservative values? Did we ever stopped? Last year ONU announced there are almost a billion people under strict ABO hierarchy, but two hundred years ago, the majority of the countries had rules restricting gender’s free will. Italy and Spain, for example, regulated their ABO laws only 80 years ago. Before that, unmated omegas couldn’t work, and alphas had to go through hormonal tests to be teachers in omega classes. Even betas, the least regulated gender in history, had some restriction in few countries, most of them involving being legally recognized as mates.”

Chanyeol is completely lost in his own room, trying to find the bills he has to pay. He finds so much trash that he fills three supermarket bags only with it. Unfortunately, he spends his entire morning cleaning the house (he smell something in his friends’ room, but he was scared to see what it was) and listening to the discography of Ringo Shiina. His phone clock alarm was ringing while he was showering, so he was already late when he arrives at the café. Chanyeol apologizes for about five minutes (he missed two days of work!), but he is not reprimanded, and the nice lady who does croissants asks if he’s free to work on her daughter’s birthday (Chanyeol says yes because it’s a one-year birthday party full of cute babies).

When he’s warming up, sitting under the pinky light, Luhan comes in. Chanyeol normally watches the rain – today is a light drizzle – but his eyes follow the man sitting in the table next to him. He’s so early, Chanyeol thinks as he waves. It’s a bit cold, there are two ladies holding hands sitting by the corner, the smell of coffee is strong – he’s in the mood for a jazz. He wishes he could play the piano, like he does in the restaurant. He starts with I’d rather go blind, Etta James, just to get the music out
of his head. He hums, his English or his voice not exactly suits the song, but he closes his eyes and follows his set list, all feet on the guitar pedals, taking little breaks to fix the amplifier or writing down some things on his old notebook.

He pauses when Yeri brings him a coffee. She smiles politely, gets closer to him, and asks:

“I’m not trying to tell you what to sing,” she says, pointing discreetly. “But maybe you could lighten up the set list a little? That man over there is going to cry about any minute now.”

Chanyeol looks over, but deep down in his guts he already knew whom she was talking about – Luhan, with his big teary eyes shining while eating a giant piece of cake.

“I don’t think the music is the problem,” he says. “But I suppose I can play happy songs.”

He plays some nice Ayumi songs. Luhan doesn’t cry, but he seems sad, so Chanyeol barely tucks his things before sitting next to him.

“Hello, I’m Chanyeol, Yifan’s friend,” he says, placing the case and the bag next to his chair. “You look hungry.”

“I’m not,” Luhan smiles. “Chan-yeol. I remember you.”

“Sweet tooth?”

“No.”

“So… Yifan… Kris, I mean Kris, he told me you need someone to talk about your… You quit?”

“I did,” he nods, licking his lips, eyes down. “But I’m fine. I’m okay.”

“You look,” Chanyeol scratches his temple, moving in his chair. “You look like you’re not? You’re literally crying right now.”

“I’m not,” he sniffs. Chanyeol’s heart breaks a little.

Do you want a hug?”

Luhan spits something like I’m an alpha, before bursting into tears. Chanyeol gets up and hugs Luhan like a kid, soothing him. People are staring, and Yeri must be worried.

“That’s okay… There’s no problem in crying, you know? You’re not less alpha for feeling pain.”

“Easy for you to say,” Luhan protests, rubbing his puffy eyes. “I bet no one says you look like an omega like… ten times a day.”

“No, I don’t, you’re right,” Chanyeol nods, talking softly. “And I cry a lot. Today I cried because I listened to a good sad song. Last week I cried because I had to say goodbye to a friend of mine. And he may be a stuffed bear.”

Luhan smiles, but there are tears in his face. It’s a sad sight.

“Drink the iced coffee,” Chanyeol suggests. “My favorite is the cappuccino.”

“It’s my favorite too,” Luhan chuckles. He is cute, Chanyeol thinks, keeping this to himself, and talking about his favorite croissant instead. Luhan pays attention, making small comments. Chanyeol casually gets closer, then pats Luhan’s knee affectionately.
“I thought I saw you the other day, it was early in the morning. You were in a car. I guess.”

Luhan blinks, makes a movement as if he’s going to eat a piece of the cake and suddenly stops.

“I was seeing Minnie,” he confesses. “The omega I mated in the last contract.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol reclines himself in the chair. “Should… you…?”

“No,” he sniffs. “I was seeing him because I can’t mate my new omega. She’s… great. I just can’t.”

“Have you talked with Yi—Kris?”

“I did,” he nods effusively. “I talked with the therapist, too, but… I don’t think talking about will fix anything. I’m just attached to him, I guess. Maybe… Maybe I’m love?”

“That’s not a bad thing, is it?”

“I guess not,” he agrees. “But he’s not in love with me. You know, he just needs me. He will be another’s alpha’s mate soon.”

Isn’t that an Amy Winehouse song? Chanyeol shakes his head. He’s so distracted lately. It’s like he can only think about… art? Emotional things? Feelings?

“I know it’s… we were supposed to be aware of this… possibility,” Luhan continues. “I quit, I don’t care about my work anymore. Honestly, I think I just signed again to prove myself I could. And I failed.”

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol sighs, because what else he could say?

“Why did you decide to work there?” Luhan asks suddenly. Chanyeol is trying to drink the rest of the coffee Yeri gave him. It’s too sweet. It’s weird; she always does the perfect coffee for Chanyeol’s taste.

“Because… I needed the money? Also, I’m single.”

“Humm, that’s simple,” Luhan goes back to eating his cake and shrugs. “It was supposed to be easy for me too. I studied Business and I wanted to open my own mating service. The market is almost empty. CHOOSE is only one MS in the city, for example. I mean, besides the public service.”

“Does Yixing knows it?”

“Yes! Yixing is always happy to help. He’s not an executive, he’s a doctor. He’s sincerely worried about the omegas; Zitao was the one who talked money. Do you think he’s rich by accident? Gucci queen is a pro. He has a knack for it, a natural enterpriser, I must say.”

“I’ve noticed,” Chanyeol chuckles. Tao’s instagram is just famous trends and Candy. He makes sure everyone knows he has money.

“Well, I’ve decided to do a fieldwork, to research. Like Yifan, I’m an actor. We both thought mating a stranger was about… acting. I had never ever mated an omega in my life before Minnie. I’m shy,” he smiles. “It was great and exciting in the beginning. I never thought it would end like this. I should just have become an Idol. I would be somewhere else now…”

“I wanted to be an Idol too,” Chanyeol confesses. “Sometimes I still think about that, but I guess it wasn’t meant to be. There’s no use in looking past.”
“Do you believe in fate?” Luhan is finally amused.

Chanyeol does not know the answer yet.

Chanyeol is looking through his photos to upload the one he took of Luhan eating cake. Luhan was cute and happy; the picture makes Chanyeol happy too. He finds the picture of the towels next to Kyungsoo’s bathroom sink. His heart beats faster, his fingers dance over the screen – should he post it? No, no one will understand, he can’t explain anyway. He chooses the picture with Luhan, ‘Isn’t he cute when he’s happy?’. He’s bored in the train, so he picks the book in his bag. It’s the astrology one. Chanyeol doesn’t pretend to be interested in theory, so he looks the summary.

ABO ASTROLOGY FOR BEGGINERS
1. Why believe in ABO astrology in modern days?………………………………………………5
2. Astrology: an introduction……………………………………………………………………11
3. ABO and fate………………………………………………………………………………………36
4. ABO sinastry……………………………………………………………………………………….45
5. ABO signs and combinations…………………………………………………………………47
6. Love, destiny and signs………………………………………………………………………163
7. Recommended books…………………………………………………………………………189

He goes to the fifth chapter. It shows the possible combinations between signs and genders. Chanyeol takes some good minutes to find his and Kyungsoo’s, because it’s only based in the omega’s perspective. Chanyeol says “sorry!” aloud, just in case there are omegas outside who would be offended by his actions.

OMEGA CAPRICORN/ALPHA SAGGITARIUS
Oh, no! If this is your case, my omega friend, you better watch out! As we know, capricorns are serious, dedicated family-oriented people, they like stability and compromise. The alpha sagittarius is a flirting, volatile person – they will try to run away from the pressure of bonding! They just wanna have fun (we know the original song is about betas, but it’s true)! Be sure your mate understood the importance of mating! Sagittarius people are more focused in fun and games. If you want to settle down, that may be not the best choice of partner. If you just want to have a casual fling, they’re the right ones! They are masters in cheering up and making people laugh!

Chanyeol goes to the library, instead of home. He comes inside of the building, throws the book over the librarian’s table and points, furious,

“This book is full of shit!”

A young man looks up from the chair he’s sitting. It’s not the old lady.

“Hello,” he smiles, waving. “My name is Jin. What’s the problem?”


“It’s lying about me,” Chanyeol argues, almost whispering.
“Nah, it’s just an astrology book. Cannot say much things about everyone. Did you read it right?”

“No…?”

“You can return, if you want it,” Jin says, spinning in his chair slowly. “Which fire sign are you?”

“What?” Chanyeol crosses his arms, “I’m not—“

“You’re trying to fight a book you haven’t read,” he chuckles. “Aries?”

“I’m… I’m returning the book,” Chanyeol declares, turning around to leave. “Fuck fate!”

Chanyeol not even opens the gate yet, and he hears the screams of Jongdae. He’s singing – he must be in the kitchen. Chanyeol enters home and Sehun and Baekhyun, both, welcome him eating the ice cream cake. Baekhyun is holding his old Taeyeon plushie doll; Sehun has Vivi in his lap. She barks to Chanyeol.

“Hello, baby,” he answers her. “What’s happening?”

“We are watching the reprise of last week UltimateChef,” Baekhyun informs him, mouth full of ice cream. “In thirteen minutes there’s the new one.”

“I wasn’t talking to you,” Chanyeol says dryly.

“Come watch with us,” Sehun says, serious. “You’ve been spending too much time apart from us. Tao already left and you barely saw him.”

“Sorry,” he apologizes sincerely. It’s good to know his friends miss him. Jongdae, singing and dancing PSY’s gangnam style, hits Chanyeol in the arm.

“Who’s the guy in your instagram? Your boyfriend?” he pinches Chanyeol too, just because.

“No, Luhan’s my friend,” Chanyeol defends himself, slapping him back.

“You say you have new friends,” Sehun smiles, snarky. “But you never introduce them.”

“That’s the reason his ears are so big,” Baekhyun says. “It’s full of secrets.”

“You know what, I’ll be in my room,” he pouts, but he goes to his room despite the protests. He puts his things in the bed, thinks about sleeping, but he knows he won’t. His mind is still processing Luhan words, the book, the astrology book, the mating…

Chanyeol touches his mouth, smiling. He kissed Kyungsoo. He really kissed Kyungsoo. God, Chanyeol already misses his blank expression and the constant ignoring… Mating made Chanyeol a masochist, clearly. He can even hear Kyungsoo’s voice.

Wait. He is hearing Kyungsoo’s voice. It’s coming from the living room.

Chanyeol gets in the living room so suddenly Vivi starts barking at him. Kyungsoo, of course, is not there.

“What’s your problem?” Jongdae asks, sitting next to Baekhyun in the couch. “Do you smell the fries? They’re not ready yet.”
Chanyeol looks around. Only the four of them. He must be crazy. Maybe mating causes telepathy or delirium.

“Are you sure he’s not in drugs?” Sehun asks, looking up from the floor.

“Shut up you guys,” Baekhyun complains. “They’re judging the guy I hate.”

“We watched it last week. He was eliminated—” Sehun tries.

“Shhhhhhhhhhh,” Baekhyun presses his index finger against his mouth. Chanyeol is about to make an obvious joke about the fact Baekhyun is asking Sehun for silence, when he hears a beautiful girl on the television says:

“… What the jury think? Seulgi? Kyungsoo? Taehyung?”

The camera set on a girl, SEULGI – RED VELVET, flashes in the screen.

“I think the dish looks really good, it’s a great visual for a risotto, very Italian,” she nods, looking at the other juries, but the camera only shows her face. “However, I can’t smell… I think it could be spicier.”

“She’s my favorite in the entire show,” Sehun tells Vivi.

“She’s hot,” Baekhyun whispers.

“This is not mexican food,” says a man standing over next to the MC. She laughs softly, and looks at the jury’s table.

“Boy, Tiffany loves when there’s a fight,” Jongdae stands up. As he goes to the kitchen, Baekhyun whispers again:

“She’s not that bad.”

“Stop being jealous,” Jongdae screams back.

The camera focus on the person sitting next to Seulgi and Chanyeol has to sit down, because his legs aren’t working. It’s Kyungsoo, looking insanely handsome in a black coat and turtle neck, staring straight into the man’s eyes through his glasses. Chanyeol shivers, memories erupting in his mind.

“I can understand you doubting my friend Seulgi’s analysis, because she works with pastry, and she gives a lot of attention to the presentation,” he says, voice like iron. “But I can’t understand how you call yourself a chef if you don’t know how to harmonize the flavors in a dish. Or how to use condiments. I would rather die than serve this trash to someone to eat.”

Chanyeol gulps. Jongdae runs to the room to see what’s happening on the show.

“Oh no!” Tiffany smiles, looking like she’s having the time of her life. “As always, Kyungsoo is hard to please. Maybe this is the end of the line for our lovely contestant.”

The man – he’s in his fifties, bald and chubby, - trembles like he’s crying. Chanyeol feels a wave of empathy – he would have cried too.

“If you’re going to cry, do it over the plate,” Kyungsoo spits, a slight look of disgust in his face. “At least it gets some salt.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol hugs himself. Jongdae runs back to the kitchen, screaming:
“The mean chef is my favorite! We should take shots every time he makes someone cry.”

“He’s so hot. I would let him slap the hell out of me,” Baekhyun sighs like a teenager in love, hugging his plushie tightly. “He looks like the dominating type.”

Chanyeol is so, so shocked – everything is out of control, what is happening??? - he makes a strangled noise while coughing. Jongdae is back in the room, holding a sack of fries, and laughs at Chanyeol’s redness.

“Still not used to my flirting mate sharing his adulterous sexual fantasies?” he winks. Baekhyun protests:

“That’s because I bang you every night,” he wiggles his eyebrows, slaps his own thigh noisily. “And I will bang you later.”

Sehun covers Vivi’s ears. “There’s a minor here!”

Jongdae sits in the couch to share the fries as the episodes continues, but Chanyeol is just… confused. Kyungsoo’s face appears on the screen again; he nods and doesn’t say much. Chanyeol picks his phone and searches on google: ultimate chef kyungsoo. And, to his shock, Kyungsoo not only appears in the search results, but he also has a fucking Wikipedia page for him. There are links to his restaurant, twelve, articles about him (!!!) and interviews (!!!!). Chanyeol keeps staring at his phone, feeling like the biggest idiot in the world: reading astrology (LIARS!) books while there’s a sea of information on the internet.

Baekhyun screeches. Chanyeol blinks, looks at the screen: THE ULTIMATECHEF, it shows brightly.

“Another one?” Chanyeol looks around. He’s not complaining, he’s just seeking answers.

“It’s the new one,” Sehun says, trying to calm Vivi after the noise. “I hope they don’t eliminate Yoona, she’s my favorite contestant.”

“Who cares about Yoona,” Baekhyun says, hugging his plushie. “I waited for this for too long! Today is the best episode! I don’t even care who will win. I mean, not today.”


“Taeyeon will be in the show again,” Sehun explains, holding the remote control limply in his hand. “It’s a special episode in which the contestants must create a dish based on the jury’s mates. Taeyeon is Tiffany’s mate… so…”

“Only because she never met me before,” Baekhyun says defiantly.

“She’s an alpha, don’t forget,” Jongdae laughs. “The tiniest alpha ever. I thought you didn’t like them.”

“Well, I’d go alpha for her. She’s not a horny orangutan like Chanyeol.”

Chanyeol is feeling lethargic because of the all brand new information about Kyungsoo – he doesn’t even mind being insulted like that.

“Tao is not a horny orangutan,” Sehun fake pouts. “He’s sweet.”
“Stop this not all alpha shit,” Baekhyun sighs. “I want to see my crush, okay? I let Jongdae see his celebrity crush in real life all the time; I deserve at least to watch the show in peace.”

The show starts with Tiffany, next to Taeyeon, telling the contestants about the day’s challenge. After that, the two of them go to a table where the jury waits. Seulgi explains the favorite dish of her mate, Jimin, and says, sounding like she’s exhausted, he doesn’t hate anything. Tiffany tells her that Taeyeon loves omelet (Baekhyun tells them he already knew), and hates too much sugar.

“She’s really cute, though,” Sehun says.

“Shut up,” Baekhyun complains. “Your crush is right there! Don’t steal mine!”

“Who’s Sehun’s crush?” Jongdae asks.

“Don’t you remember? That hot model who won the Don’t you think you should dance?” Baekhyun puts a handful of fries in his mate’s mouth. “We rooted for him! Chanyeol wetted his pants when the guy did that body roll.”

“It’s Kai,” Sehun explains. “He’s the cutest. I’m just afraid of his mate.”

They laugh, but Chanyeol doesn’t understand what’s so funny.

“Who’s Kai?” he asks, and the camera finally focuses on Kyungsoo.

“It’s Kyungsoo’s mate,” Baekhyun informs him. “Believe it or not.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol says, staring at the attractive man resting his arm protectively over Kyungsoo’s shoulders.

“He hates coffee and strong smells,” Kyungsoo says. “And his favorite dish is chicken.”

“What type?” Tiffany asks.

“Any type,” Kai responds, while Kyungsoo rolls his eyes fondly. “He fights with me because I like them all, good or not.”

“I want you to eat tasty, nutritious food.”

“Ow, that’s cute! It’s nice to see this cute side of yours, Kyungsoo,” Tiffany points, laughing. Chanyeol nods. Kyungsoo does looks cute next to his mate.

His mate.

“This guy is really hot,” Jongdae says, nodding. “I remember him now!”

His mate.

“Hey,” Sehun protests. “He’s my crush! You can’t have two crushes. He’s mine.”

His mate?

“Why are we talking like Tao?” Baekhyun sounds reflexive. “What’s next? Are we going to answer soul mate’s compatibility tests? Are we going to hang posters on the wall and paint each other’s nails?”

His mate?
Chanyeol only stops screaming after Jongdae slaps him in the face.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

“An old song in yorubá sings about the ‘dust came from the heaven/dust that makes the earth/dust we smell in our skin/tells where our pieces are’ during the mate searching ritual. Old greek myths about “the person with two heads, four arms and four legs” tells us about the gods’ envy over human’s completeness. Some Moon Cult communities in Latin America still have old “fate” rites, where a person is hidden and the one who finds them is the “right mate”. There are still many traditional techniques to find the “right mate”, spells and divinatory ways to know if the person you desire is “the one”. But what’s the function of this in a post-gender society? Today people have different forms of bonding, multiple partners, free love, no mating pacts… hormones, hierarchy and violence no longer guide us. But what guides us, then?”

Chapter Notes

unbeated

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s three am.

Chanyeol goes to the kitchen, opens the fridge and gets the ice cream while he keeps the blanket around him. He walks back to his room slowly, sighing, wishing he could sleep. It’s been days since he found out about Kyungsoo’s mate. Days of no sleeping, constant painful noises and the saddest soundtrack ever. He tries to read and keeps zoning out; he can’t compose anything but heartbreak ballads – two lines, an horrible chord progression and sad, sad melody.

He sits in his bed and opens his notebook. He’s been torturing himself with articles about Kyungsoo. Chanyeol already knows his Wikipedia page by heart, even with the “Mate(s) KIM JONGIN” (apparently Kyungsoo has dated another guy before, but Chanyeol thinks he’s suffering enough, thank you). Chanyeol finds out that Kyungsoo appears on the list of most successful chefs under 30; he also reads gives some interviews about Kyungsoo’s restaurant and culinary shows. Kyungsoo, no doubt, has a successful career at such young age.

And he has one hell of a hot mate.

Chanyeol googles “Kai” (artistic name) and submits himself at hours of suffering. Kai is a model with a huge fan base (two million followers on instagram!!!), he dances like a pro, and he’s just casually gorgeous in paparazzi pictures. And if this isn’t enough to make Chanyeol feel like Quasimodo must have felt seeing the Esmeralda’s Prince, the internet also gives Chanyeol tons of pictures of them together. Kai and Kyungsoo doing groceries, travelling together, holding hands,
having dinner together, and, of course, the videos on Kai’s Instagram (Chanyeol is following because he has no self-respect) of Kyungsoo sleepily cooking in the morning, swimming in a pool, watching anime and laughing.

Chanyeol eats the ice cream while watching his favorite video: Kyungsoo climbing the sink to get something over the kitchen cabinet (Kai is laughing loudly behind the camera).

kimkai he said he didn’t need my help (≧хи≦) /
yoooooona askosaoksok help him!!!
kaiballs kaisoo <3
taenysbaby I’m dying ahaahahaha @tiffbaby
babykai let him fall, be my mate instead :DD
paopao you’re cuteeeeee!!!
tiffbaby oh noooo @taenysbaby
omega'scelebs save him! >D
mandyha @cute__doggos isn’t that the mean chef from UC???? lol
cute__doggos satansoo will fall back to the hell he came from @mandyha

Chanyeol laughs, but it sounds like a cry for help and he eats the rest of the ice cream in the mug to pretend he’s not sounding so depressed. He opens the last picture from @kimkai, the one with the chefs and their mates in the show, posing together.

Chanyeol has to face the fact he’s a paid side chick. He tried to think about other hypotheses, but as soon as he found out Kai was a public presented omega, he understood what was happening. Kyungsoo needs to fix his ‘heat’ problem, he needs some random guy with a knot, that’s all. Chanyeol isn’t just jealous, he’s envious of all these small things he will never have, the closeness, the casual touching and even the relationship status.

There’s a knock in the door. Chanyeol groans loudly. It’s late. Jongdae opens the door, fully dressed in work clothes.

“Hey,” he says softly. “Can we talk?”

“No,” Chanyeol grunts, hitting the spoon against the mug. “I’m busy.”

“Yeah, I can see that,” Jongdae sighs, waking inside. “Give me space in the bed.”

Chanyeol wants to say no, but he needs some cuddles. Jongdae sits next to him, pets his hair.

“I’m thinking about dying my hair blonde,” Jongdae smiles. “Baekhyun wants to get mullets. What
“Do you want to do with yours?”

“What do you want?” Chanyeol knows when he’s being manipulated.

“Remember when we were sixteen and Baekhyun found out Taeyeon had a mate?”

“Yes.”

“He cried for a day and we called him dramatic.”

“Yes.”

“But look at you now,” Jongdae shakes his head. “Freaks me out when you’re sad! It’s like the rules of gravity reversed or something.”

“That would be nice. We would die,” Chanyeol pouts, but he can see Jongdae’s point. “I’m not… sad, sad. It’s just a bad mood.”

“That’s arguable, but I have to confess something first.”

“What…?”

“When you disappeared the first time, Baekhyun was freaking out,” Jongdae’s face does a weird thing. “I… saw your internet history.”

“What?!” Chanyeol unleash himself from Jongdae’s arms, “That’s…! Wrong!”

“I know. I’m sorry, but we needed to know what you were doing,” he shrugs. “Baekhyun haven’t found anything in your room. It was a mess, like always.”

“This is not an excuse! I don’t have any priva—”

“We also were worried about your… behavior. You were acting a little weird,” Jongdae hugs him again. “Look, I understand you feel lonely, but knotting porn? Do you mother knows you’re objectifying omegas on the internet?”

“Oh my god,” Chanyeol wants to cry. His suffering is endless.

“I always introduced you as ‘the okay alpha’,” Jongdae mocks. “I got stabbed in the back. I guess we can’t trust people with a knot.”

“Please, stop,” Chanyeol pleads. “I’m miserable enough.”

“No, I’m having the talk with you,” Jongdae gives him a kiss in the cheek. “If you’re feeling lonely, why you don’t go outside and date? You’re cute and you have a guitar. People are into that.”

“I don’t want to date anyone,” he rolls his eyes. “Mating does not solve problems, only creates more. Mating is an evil thing.”

“Who hurt you?” Jongdae laughs, rubbing his nose in Chanyeol’s cheek. “If you can’t find a mate for you, we can have a poly arrangement. No knotting, though.”

“I know, I already dated a beta,” Chanyeol sighs. “I love you guys, but no, thanks.”

“Are you going to be forever crying about your celebrity crush?” Jongdae looks at the notebook, shaking his head. “I mean, this guy is hot, but let’s face it, he’s not the one for you.”

“He’s too hot, he’s the center of the attention and your attention whore ass can’t compete with him,” Jongdae says, serious. “You need someone who is more discreet, quieter. That’s why you’ve dated Sehun and not Baekhyun or me.”

“Well, that makes sense,” Chanyeol nods. “But… wait. Who are you talking about?”

“Hum… This Kai dude?” Jongdae points. “Baekhyun googled him. He’s your capricorn crush, right?”

Chanyeol blinks.

“Oh… you mean… Kai? Of… of course… It is obvious. I’m a Kai fan. He got me… with… his moves? And his dogs are… cute. He’s my… dream mate.”

“Look at you,” Jongdae laughs, pinching Chanyeol’s nose. “I saw you were searching the right way to mate him. He would be a lucky omega if he dated you.”

Chanyeol is having a full body blush, probably. He hides his face behind the mug.

“Get out! This is more embarrassing than discussing my hormones with my mom.”

“I will leave because I work in the morning news today,” Jongdae gets up, dusting off his pants. “But this conversation is not over. You have to tell me who’s Kriswu and Luhan, I don’t like you having new secret friends!”

“Goodbye, mom,” Chanyeol mocks, waving off his friend. Chanyeol closes his notebook, falls back in the bed, and glances at the book. Jongdae is right. If Kyungsoo can have a mate, why Chanyeol doesn’t? He should go out for drinking.

He sleeps too much, wakes up at the time to work in the café. In the way, he stops to pay some bills. Chanyeol almost has a heart attack when he checks his bank account.

“Holy shit,” he breathes out, freezes. He haven’t checked it in the last months (he was just taking enough money to pay what he needed, not much), and he never noticed the money CHOOSE put in. It was… a lot. He stands there for a while, trying to figure out what to do; he finally pays his bills, goes to the café, and plays his happiest setlist. He’s feeling his BoA cover when a man pokes him in the shoulder. Chanyeol looks up, smiles. It’s Luhan. When Chanyeol ends his shift, he leaves the café with the other alpha.

“You look happier today,” Chanyeol says, happy too. “Does Minnie loves you back now?”

“Not really,” Luhan shrugs, his eyes shining in a childish way. “But I cried enough. I’ve decided to repay you.”

“Oh, I did nothing,” Chanyeol explains sincerely. “I like making new friends, I’m here for you when you need someone to talk to.”

“Well, in this case, I’m just take my friend out,” Luhan put an arm around him. “Seohyun have a nice place to watch today’s game. There’s booze! Come with me.”

“Ooh, I would like that, but I’m not a sports guy,” he smiles sheepily. “I won’t understand what’s
“An old song in yoruba sings about the ‘dust came from the heaven/dust that makes the earth/dust we smell in our skin/tells where our pieces are’ during the mate searching ritual. Old greek myths about ‘the person with two heads, four arms and four legs’ tells us about the gods’ envy over human’s completeness. Some Moon Cult communities in Latin America still have old ‘fate’ rites, where a person is hidden and the one who finds them is the ‘right mate’. There are still many traditional techniques to find the ‘right mate’, spells and divinatory ways to know if the person you desire is ‘the one’. But what’s the function of this in a post-gender society? Today people have different forms of bonding, multiple partners, free love, no mating pacts... hormones, hierarchy and violence no longer guide us. But what guides us, then?”

Baekhyun kicks Chanyeol in the ankle. Chanyeol whines. Jongdae can’t be still.

“I’m going to hit you all if you don’t keep quiet,” Sehun says, bringing the mirror. “Five more minutes before washing it off.”

“I’m first, right?” Jongdae asks, scratching his hair. Sehun bats his hands away.

“Yes,” Sehun nods. “Because you’re not going to color it. Shut up, Chanyeol!”

“Baekhyun is kicking me!” he defends himself.

“My head is itching!”

“And you kick me because of it?”

“I can’t scratch,” Baekhyun argues. “I have to keep myself distracted.”

“Stop hitting him,” Sehun sighs. “I honestly can’t believe I’m the youngest here.”

“Are you really going to dye you hair red, babe?” Jongdae asks, seeming to be a bit afraid.

“Well, you already forbid me to do the mullets,” Baekhyun complains. “At least let me keep the color.”

“That’s okay,” Jongdae smiles. “You’re going to look good anyway.”

“If I get bald, will you still love me?”

“Forever.”
“Oh, Moon, stop, you two,” Sehun pleads. “Chanyeol, if you’re going to dye it silver, wait more ten minutes.”

“I want pink,” Chanyeol says. “Or maybe that rainbow hair you had like… five years ago?”

“… No way,” Jongdae makes a face. “Why everybody is going to do crazy shit?”

“Because none of us have to look pretty for a camera,” Sehun says. “Also, the orange I chose it’s not crazy.”

Chanyeol’s phone vibrates, and he’s almost sure it’s Luhan. They hang out almost every day now, because Luhan is enjoying his last month before leaving the country. Yifan even joins them one day, with sleepy eyes and calming words. Luhan seems happier, but sometimes he has this look in his face that makes Chanyeol wonder.

_________________________________________

From: yuuuri@choosems.net

To: pcy@choosems.net

Subject: Meeting date

_________________________________________

Dear PCY,

The date indicated of your meeting is on next week. Be ready for our call. D.O asked if you can be available to meet him a day before, just in case he needs you sooner.

CHOOSE m.s. (it’s Yuri, Kris’ substitute, we talked before, he asked me to tell you he was chosen.)

_________________________________________

Chanyeol answers the email, then goes to wash his hair. He gives up dying it rainbow (no patience), and sticks with pink. Jongdae is unsurprisingly beautiful with the blonde hair, Baekhyun looks okay with red, and Sehun’s orange might be shocking, but looks good. They decide to commemorate their new hair going out for lunch. They fight during twenty minutes before deciding to go to a cheesecake house. Chanyeol complains, Sehun complains, even Baekhyun complains, but Jongdae just drive, ignoring them.

“I will show you guys there’s more than cake here,” he says, as they park. “I was addicted to this thing.”

“That’s because milk products can be addictive,” Sehun adds, leaving the car. “You’re no better than me and my sugar thing.”
“Sehun, that’s impossible,” Baekhyun almost closes the door in Chanyeol’s face. “I’ve seen you spending an entire day only drinking frappuccinos.”

“I was nervous! It was a rough day!”

Chanyeol sighs. Every time they go out, it’s the same; he’s not participating today because he’s tired and even if he’s trying to keep himself distracted, he keeps remembering Kyungsoo. He waits until his friends agree to stop fighting and go to the restaurant in peace. Baekhyun runs into the place and sits by the window.

“I’m so hungry,” he cries. Some people stare and the waitress shots them a funny look until they all sit. Sehun warns her they will take a “long time to order” and she leaves chuckling.

“We look like rockstars, don’t we?” Jongdae asks. “I think she liked us. Chanyeol, you’re the only single here, pay attention.”

“Maybe she’s mocking us,” Sehun stares at the menu. “I will look like an old man if I order soup?”

“Who the fuck order soup in a cheesecake house?” Baekhyun slaps Sehun’s menu away. “We have fans, look.”

There is a man standing next to their table, probably waiting.

“Hi,” he smiles at them. Jongdae looks back to see who’s talking and his face turns pale as paper. Sehun and Chanyeol exchange worried looks.

“… Hi?” Baekhyun says, looking between his mate and the man next to him.

“Minseok?” Jongdae asks, his voice a bit shaken. There is a foreign sparkle in his eyes, Chanyeol thinks, something new.

“Hello, daedae;” The man, Minseok, smiles widely, encouragingly. Jongdae stands up to hug him. No one left in the table understands what’s going on.

“Long time no see,” Jongdae says, still hugging ‘Minseok’. “I thought you were away… I… didn’t knew you come back home. Are you… visiting?”

“No, I came back a year ago, I’m working here now,” Minseok says as they let go. “I’m sorry, I should’ve called you. You look good blonde, cutie.”

Baekhyun narrows his eyes in silence when the man says “daedae”, but the “cutie” pet name makes him stand up immediately. He throws his arm around his mate’s shoulder and says, in the most fake smile Chanyeol has ever seen:

“Mind to introduce us, my love, reason of my breathing, my partner, my mate, my best friend, my strawberry cake, my—”

“I think everyone already understood,” Jongdae sighs. “Minseok, this is Baekhyun, my mate. Baekhyun, this is Minseok… he’s… my xiumin… I mean… he’s the mate I lived with, remember?”

“Unfortunately,” Baekhyun says, still fake smiling. “Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you,” the man, Minseok, looks amused. “Also nice hair color! Are you doing a cosplay or something?”

Sehun covers his laugh by pressing his face into Chanyeol’s shoulder. Baekhyun looks like he’s
going to react, but Jongdae hugs him first.

“Hey, hey, hey,” he soothes his mate. Baekhyun’s face is almost matching his hair. “He’s just joking. Why you don’t seat down and order something for us, babe?”

“This little shit,” Baekhyun mutters to himself, sitting down reluctantly. Sehun is still laughing. Chanyeol analyses the man. He’s short, has this beautiful, young and mischievous face. Minseok is dressed neatly, black wavy hair falling over his temples. He looks at Chanyeol and makes a surprised face.

“Aren’t you… Luhan’s friend?” Minseok asks suddenly. All eyes are on Chanyeol.

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods. “Yes, I am. Are you his… friend too?”

Minseok measures him in silence for some long, confusing seconds. Then, he turns to Jongdae and smile.

“It’s good to see you again, Jongdae. I hope we can talk, someday, when you’re not…” he glances at Baekhyun. “I will leave you now, I hope you have a nice dinner. Can I borrow your friend here for a moment? My table is right there.”

“You mean… Chanyeol?” Jongdae asks, confused.

“Yes, this tall one with pink hair,” Minseok chuckles. “I guess he could make me a… favor. It’s about our mutual friend.”

Everybody looks at Chanyeol again. He gulps, looks around, stands up.

“Yeah, I guess… we can talk. I’ll be right back, guys. You can start eating without me.”

Chanyeol follows Minseok to his table. Minseok asks the waitress for an empty glass – he’s drinking wine and a very red cheesecake.

“No, you don’t need to—”

“Actually, I do,” Minseok interrupts him. “I’m afraid this will be a long conversation… Not really long, but I’m already bothering you by stealing you away from your friends. Accept my wine, please. Chanyeol, right?”

“Yes. Minseok?”

“You can call me Minnie,” he smiles. Chanyeol widens his eyes, jaw dropping. No way. No fucking way.

“Are… Are you…?” Chanyeol slaps his own face lightly. “No.”

“Oh… so he talked about me?”

“A lot,” Chanyeol confesses. “God… how…? That’s some crazy coincidence. So, Luhan’s Minnie is Jongdae’s Xiumin? Are you fucking kidding me?”

Minseok laughs, throwing his back and slapping his own knees. He looks so young, Chanyeol thinks, but he knows Minseok is even older than Luhan.

“A close friend of mine does not believe in coincidences, he would be thrilled by this,” he says when he stops laughing. “I, myself, am not a fan of fate.”
“Tell me about it,” Chanyeol pouts. The waitress laughs.

“Oh, really,” Minseok pours wine in the glass the waitress brought. “Why? A broken heart?”

“No…” Chanyeol lies, ignoring the “Kyungsoo has a mate” screaming in his head. “I just like being in control of my destiny.”

“Humm, that’s nice. But you see, my friend is a writer, he has a poetic excuse, I think. He even believes in parallel universes,” Minseok drinks half of his glass in one big gulp. Chanyeol is impressed. “If we are all meeting in this ‘universe’, then we would meet in another one. Like, we all could be astronauts together.”

“Well, that’s cool,” he nods. He would be a firefighter with Kyungsoo? Or dancing in a boyband? “I mean, crazy, but cool.”

“It is, but that’s not what I wanted to talk with you,” Minseok pushes the glass towards Chanyeol. “Drink. Well, I wanted to talk about Luhan? He doesn’t talk to me anymore. Is he mad at me?”

Chanyeol drinks while thinking about how he would answer this complicated question.

“He’s… not mad,” he smells the wine, just to find a distraction. “He’s just trying to get over you, I think.”

“Yeah, I’ve seen his instagram posts, that’s how I recognized you,” Minseok winks. “He’s partying a lot, isn’t? That’s good for him.”

“You…” Chanyeol lets out a long breath. “Do you have feelings for him?”

“Oh, I do, of course I do. I worry about him,” Minseok nods, serious. “I just think alphas… you, alphas keep confusing attraction and hormones, you know, basic biology, with something deeper. I don’t think he’s in love with me, and that’s okay. He doesn’t have to love everyone he mates.”

Chanyeol drinks the rest of his wine. He wants to argue, he wants it so bad, but it’s not about him. Minseok stares, quiet. He is, no doubt, a beautiful sight.

“You look like you disagree.”

“I do.”

“Why?”

“Because I’ve been listening to him,” Chanyeol says and he can’t hide he’s angry. “He looks pretty hurt.”

“Humm, I see,” he nods thoughtfully. “Time will tell.”

“You don’t mind he’s leaving the country?”

“Oh, yes. I miss him. He was a good friend of mine, after all,” Minseok pours wine in both glasses again. “You’re a signed mate too, aren’t you, Chanyeol?”

“…maybe.”

“You know, I can smell an alpha, even in suppressants, from miles,” he drinks, takes his time tasting the wine. “I’m also a doctor and Jun—my friend says I tend to be quite skeptical. No, he uses the word cold, but he means in a practical way. I’m not really cold.”
“You’re a doctor like Yixing?”

“No, Yixing is an endocrinologist. I work with pregnant omegas,” he smiles, softly, his chubby cheeks rising. “I read his recent work. Very interesting, beta hormones, intergenders… We are both enemies of suppressants. I never used them myself, I always had mates to help me. But since my last break up…” he glances over at the table where Chanyeol’s friends are. “I had to hire one.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, so I met Luhan. I like him, I do… but I want to be free. I just… don’t want him to think I’m rejecting him. We were never supposed to be this close, after all.”

“Yes,” Chanyeol says. Tao’s words haunts him, sometimes.

“Could you tell him that? I understand… he doesn’t want me around.”

“I can,” Chanyeol assures him. “I’m sorry, but I have to ask. Do you… have another mate…?”

“Yes,” Minseok says.

Chanyeol sighs.

“I will go back to my friends, if you don’t mind.”

“No, I don’t. It was nice to meet you.”

“It was nice to meet you too.”

Chanyeol spends the rest of the meal thinking about Minseok’s words. Jongdae asks about what happened, but Chanyeol dismisses him. Baekhyun easily forgets about the previously misunderstanding and Sehun just observes, quiet. Chanyeol gives his best smile when they take a picture to post on Instagram. When they get home, Chanyeol calls Tao’s friend. It’s weekend, but it’s still early, but he doesn’t answer Chanyeol’s calls. Chanyeol decides to return the book, instead of reading it. The old librarian is not there, but the Jin guy again, so Chanyeol gets embarrassed and just nods when Jin asks if the reading was good.

He listens to sad songs before falling asleep. He wakes up with loud noises and realizes Jongdae and Baekhyun are fighting – a serious discussion, something rare in their relationship. It’s early in the morning, they are supposed to go to work soon, so Chanyeol waits until they leave, he put his things in a bag and goes to his sister’s house. He sends Baekhyun a message to warn he won’t be in home, and spends the rest of the week with his family. Chanyeol can’t stand being around his friends when they’re fighting, not only because he can’t pick a side, but also because it hurts him to see them suffer. He can’t do anything to make them feel better, so he gives them some space. He comes back home a day before the meeting, after receiving Yuri’s call, and, just to be helpful, he cleans the house. He’s using a duster in his performance to Rihanna’s Work when the phone rings.

“Hello?” he says, angry. If it’s Yifan trying to remind him of the meeting, he’s going to sue.

“Hello! You called me! Who are you?”

“Huh? Who are you?”

“I asked first!”

“Okay, fair enough. I’m Park Chanyeol. And you are…?”
“My name is Yoo Jaesuk, but you should have known that! You’ve called me!”

“I didn’t—Wait. Are you Tao’s friend?”

“Humm I do have a friend called Zitao. Does your “Tao” eats like he’s possessed by a hungry demon?”

“Yes. It’s him,” Chanyeol laughs. “He told me to call you, he said you want to use a music I’ve done, an instrumental song.”

“Oh, I guess… I know which one… I think so… not sure. Park Chanyeol, you say? Can you come here so we can talk? I barely use my phone. Did he gave you my card? The address is there. I don’t remember anything. My memory is gone…”

Jaesuk talks for more thirty minutes about his problems, and by the time he’s done, Chanyeol already cleaned the rooms. Chanyeol packs his things (should he bring extra pants? sandals? His plushies?), calls CHOOSE:

“CHOOSE mating services,” the sleepy voice says. It’s a girl.

“Oh… Yifan? I mean, Kris?”

“Yuri,” she says. “The number here says it’s PCY. Correct?”

“Yes. Where is Kris? He’s okay?”

“Yes, he is. But ’s his free day. Do you need a car, PCY?”

“Hum… yeah, yeah. I do. I’m home. Do I need to send you my location?”

“No. It’s here. Just wait by the door. The driver will be here in thirty minutes.”

“Okay,” he sighs. He wishes he could talk to Yifan. The way to Kyungsoo’s home is silent. Chanyeol sends his habitual message to Baekhyun; he already told the café owner and the restaurant manager, he just sit and waits. He can get in Kyungsoo’s home with no problem, now he’s recognized immediately. Chanyeol walks out of the elevator looking at the hall, inspecting it. He forgets to ring the doorbell, and when he tries to knock, the door opens by itself. Chanyeol freezes. Did he open the door? Chanyeol waits, nothing happens. He enters, take his shoes off, and drops his bag on the couch. He’s listening to a sound coming from the kitchen.

He sneaks his head into the kitchen, resting on the door. Kyungsoo is humming a song while he cuts some dough. What song is this? It’s a famous song, Chanyeol is sure. He tries to remember it, but the name keeps slipping from his mind.

“Did you close the door?” Kyungsoo asks suddenly, startling Chanyeol.

“…Oh… I didn’t.”

“Close it,” he keeps cutting the dough carefully and he doesn’t look at Chanyeol.

“Okay,” Chanyeol nods, goes back to close and lock the door. He sniffs; Kyungsoo’s house smells like him, but his scent is not that strong. Chanyeol goes back to the kitchen and waits, moving his arms. Kyungsoo doesn’t say a word and Chanyeol doesn’t know what to do.

“Kyungsoo,” he tries. “Kyungsoo.”
Kyungsoo presses the dough into a pan. He meticulously places small chocolate drops over it.

“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol pleads, glancing at his mate. He looks good today in a huge pink sweater and soft, white shorts. “Kyungsoo… Kyungsoo… Kyungsoo.”

“What do you want?” Kyungsoo sighs deeply, turning on the oven.

“I don’t know what to do.”

“Go watch TV, read magazines, take a nap,” Kyungsoo says, tired. “I need to finish this. Do you need something?”

“No…” Chanyeol pouts. He waits so much to see his mate, he doesn’t want to do things he could do at home. “Can I seat here and watch you?”

Kyungsoo turns, stares at him for a while before nodding. Chanyeol happily seats, keeps hitting his fingers against the table, trying to make a nice beat. Kyungsoo starts cleaning the sink, measures something with a pan, watches the oven now and then. It’s like one of those videos from Kai’s Instagram, he realizes. Oh. Chanyeol’s smile dies in his face. He remembers it.

“What’s wrong?” Kyungsoo’s voice calls his attention. Kyungsoo is standing next to him, a hand in his hip, studying Chanyeol.

“Oh, nothing,” he says, scratching his neck. Kyungsoo picks a dirty pan and scrape some dough off with his index finger. He offers it to Chanyeol, who hesitates a little before biting. It’s cookie dough, it’s really good. Kyungsoo licks the rest.

“Your face. It looks sad.”

“Maybe I’m just ugly,” Chanyeol tries to joke. It sounds sad.

“I’m already used to your ugliness,” Kyungsoo smirks. “What do you want?”

“Nothing, I told you. I’m fine.”

Kyungsoo rolls his eyes, sighing. He turns back to do what he was doing, and Chanyeol tries to keep his big mouth closed.

It’s fruitless to ask, he thinks.

“Kyungsoo,” he calls in a sheepish way. “Kyungsoo.”

Kyungsoo turns, but he doesn’t seem angry or tired. He shoots Chanyeol an inquiring look.

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Go ahead.”

“How come you can date and I can’t?” He shoots, fast enough to avoid embarrassment.

“I can’t,” Kyungsoo frowns. “I signed a contract, the same contract you signed.”

“But… you do date, don’t you?”

“No, I don’t,” he comes closer, crosses his arms. “What are you talking about?”

“Don’t you have a mate?” Chanyeol says, fidgeting, closing his legs together. He feels small. “A guy who you… hang out with?”
“I don’t—oh, you mean Jongin?” Kyungsoo relaxes his shoulders and his expression softens. “He’s not my mate—only in public. He’s not… He’s my friend. He’s mated since his first heat, but his mate… His mate is an idol and you know idols can’t have mates. At least they have to pretend to be single. Also, Jongin is a public presented omega, so it’s better for him to be seen as mated, for… many reasons. I am perfectly okay with helping him. It helps me too—to date an omega. No one thinks I’m an omega if I’m dating one.”

Chanyeol is impressed – he thinks he never heard Kyungsoo talking this much, It takes some time to absorb what was said.

“Oh… you two act… very intimate? I thought…” Chanyeol can feel his ears burning. “I’m sorry I assumed…”

“I suppose we do look like mates,” Kyungsoo says softly. “He’s my best friend since I’m fifteen. We spend a lot of time together.”

“I saw it,” Chanyeol hears himself – bitter. “I mean… I’ve seen the tv show. I’m sorry? I’m not sure if I should.”

“There’s no problem on watching tv,” Kyungsoo chuckles, letting his arms fall. “It’s not invasion of privacy.”

Chanyeol smiles, feeling the weight in his shoulders disappears. Kyungsoo doesn’t have a mate.

“I’m sorry for asking, then. I know your personal life isn’t my business.”

“In fact, it is. It’s on the contract,” Kyungsoo goes to the oven, opens it. “I just thought you knew. Most omegas in the closet have a public partner to help cover their gender.”

“I didn’t,” Chanyeol is definitely ashamed of himself. “I thought… I had many theories. Not this one. I just saw the show and— I’m dumb, just forget it. I shouldn’t have been nosing in your business. I was just curious because… well, I’m here.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t say anything. Somehow, Chanyeol is more comfortable with him back to his usual self. Chanyeol has to admit Kyungsoo is intimidating, sometimes.

“So, Kris is mating,” Chanyeol says, because he needs to fill the silence. Kyungsoo doesn’t pay much attention to him. “I was thinking… he’s… a good-looking guy. And he’s like… nice? So why wouldn’t you choose him?”

Kyungsoo faces him with a smile.

“Is that a rhetorical question?”

“I… don’t… know,” Chanyeol says, gulping.

“Why are you trying to ask?” Kyungsoo narrows his eyes, but the corners of his mouth are still up in a smile.

“Hum… I was just curious… just… I don’t know… why wouldn’t you… I mean,” Chanyeol makes hands movements to improve his argument. He fails.

“I already met him before the exams. He’s more like… a paternal figure,” Kyungsoo says, simply, shrugging. “If you trying to ask why I picked yours, it’s because I found your instagram. It’s literally PCY underline real. You’re not very good at hiding.”
“You found my instagram…?” Chanyeol is shocked. “You saw it… You read the… the things? How… Ok, now I see. I wasn’t… I wasn’t very smart.”

Kyungsoo laughs at his confusion. He looks like a little kid when he’s smiling widely. Chanyeol melts in his chair.

“It was easy to see it was you, based in your profile,” Kyungsoo smiles, puts a glass in the table.

“I’m glad my friends’ pictures didn’t scare you. Or… the videos of street cats. I never harmed them. I can’t even touch them. And god… I have so much to explain. You must think I’m the dumbest person in the earth—”

“Maybe,” Kyungsoo glances at something in the sink. Chanyeol thought it was empty. “But I thought we could have been friends, in other… situation.”

Chanyeol’s heart skips a beat. He swallows, looks at his hands.

I thought we could have been friends.

Chanyeol wants to cry – Kyungsoo thought they could be friends; Kyungsoo liked him. Just him. A person, not a knot. The idea—the bare idea of being friends makes his stomach flutter.

“I would like that,” he whispers. His body can’t stay quiet in the chair. Kyungsoo pours some liquid in the glass, it’s pink, but smells like alcohol.

“Strawberry drink. Low-alcohol,” Kyungsoo offers him. “It’s the same color of your hair.”

Chanyeol sips it, wipes his mouth.

“It’s good! You made it?”

“Yes.”

“Did… did you like my hair?”

Kyungsoo only smiles before leaving the kitchen. Chanyeol resist the urge of following him by scent – it’s still weak, but Chanyeol thinks he could recognize it by miles. He examines the equipment in the kitchen, drinks the rest of the drink and lays his head on the table. Where’s him?

Kyungsoo comes back with a towel, drops it in Chanyeol’s head, before taking the cookies out of oven.

“Go take a shower,” he says. “Put your pajamas. Do you need one?”

“I brought mine,” Chanyeol holds the towel, lifting his head. “Are we going to sleep?”

“If we can,” Kyungsoo sighs. “My heat will probably come during dawn. Or maybe tomorrow, I’m not sure.”

“I work late, I don’t think I will fall sleep soon.”

“I certainly won’t,” Kyungsoo starts moving around the kitchen, distracted. “I will make chamomile tea for us.”

Chanyeol picks his bag, goes to Kyungsoo’s bathroom, and sees he left soap and sandals (bigger than Chanyeol’s feet, surprisingly). Again, he takes a picture. It just makes him happy to capture this
little moments. He’s feeling so light now he knows Kyungsoo doesn’t have a mate – even if just feeds his illusion of having him, of being his actual mate. When Chanyeol leaves the bathroom, drying his hair with a towel, he notices a small wood table next to the bed. Kyungsoo comes into the room briefly, leaves two mugs over the table. Chanyeol sits in the bed and holds his knees, waiting. Kyungsoo comes back with a bowl of cookies – there’s caramel over it and Chaneyol starts salivating. Kyungsoo takes his clothes off as he picks a towel on his closet and Chanyeol can’t help but stare. Nothing new, it’s true, Chanyeol has seen his mate naked in every possible angle, but it’s nice to see his body when they’re not being driven by hormones. He watches Kyungsoo disappearing in the bathroom, thinking about moles and scars.

Chanyeol can’t stand waiting and he eats the cookie with most caramel over it. It’s still warm and it’s so good. Horribly sweet like a Colbie Caillat song, but maybe it’s just what he needs. Chanyeol licks his lips to hide the evidence of his crime before Kyungsoo comes back.

Kyungsoo is only using a baggy, long, long shirt – he must be getting hotter, – when he sits next to Chanyeol. He picks the bowl and puts it between them.

“Eat it,” Kyungsoo says, putting his glasses on. He holds a mug in one hand and a book in another.


Chanyeol calls his name at least twenty times before Kyungsoo answers.

“What do you want?”

“What are you reading?” Chanyeol reaches to touch the book. Kyungsoo slaps his hand away.

“My friend’s new book. Keep your caramel hands away from it.”

“What the book is about?” Chanyeol licks his fingers again, making popping noises. “Who is your friend?”

“It’s about the impact of new conservative politics on the world and the implications on the abo common law,” Kyungsoo says, never taking his eyes off the book. “The author is Suho.”

“Ohh,” Chanyeol sits up, fast, and the bed creaks. “I’ve read… I mean– I heard about him. It’s not like… I’ve read anything… he’s just… famous?”

Kyungsoo stares at Chanyeol for what seems an eternity, and finally says, “Yes.”

“Can… can you read for me? I can’t sleep,” he asks, timid. Kyungsoo is probably going to ignore him, but…

“I’m in the middle of the book.”

“I don’t mind.” I just want to hear your voice. “Can I put my head in your lap?”

Kyungsoo nods slowly. Chanyeol rest his cheek in Kyungsoo’s bare thigh, bends his legs and holds them to his chest.

“I’m in chapter five, ‘what the past says about the future’,” Kyungsoo says, after sipping the tea. “The classical history books considers as ‘history’ everything the alpha leaders have done: build nations, wars, agreement and the theories based on their own perspective of the world, teaching us the world was made by…”
Chanyeol closes his eyes. *God,* he loves his mate’s voice. He wishes Kyungsoo could sing for him. He sniffs Kyungsoo’s skin, rubbing his face against the pale thigh. He wakes up after a quick nap when Kyungsoo pulls his ear.

“Hey,” he says, moving away from Chanyeol. “If you’re going to sleep, do it in a better position.”

“Huh?” Chanyeol complains in a sleepy haze.

“Put your head on the pillow. Stretch your legs,” he can feel Kyungsoo’s small hands on his arm. Chanyeol opens his eyes, reaches Kyungsoo’s waist and pulls him down to the bed. Kyungsoo makes a surprised noise as he is pressed against Chanyeol’s body.

“What are you doing?”

“Cuddling,” Chanyeol noses Kyungsoo’s neck – so warm, he thinks, - and falls asleep again. He wakes up feeling warmer. Kyungsoo is shivering, not in heat yet, but close. Chanyeol presses Kyungsoo tightly against his chest, sending shivers down his groin.

“Sorry,” he says quickly. Kyungsoo makes a noise.

“Why?”

“I’m not horny or anything,” his voice is sleepy, muffled in Kyungsoo’s nape. “It just happens. I can’t control—”

“Why would I care about that?” Kyungsoo chuckles weakly. *Oh.* That’s true, Chanyeol’s hazy mind process his mate’s words, *they’ve been in worse situations.* “Go to sleep.”

“Okay,” Chanyeol says. Next time he wakes up, he’s alone. He feels cold, sits up, and spots Kyungsoo under a big blanket, talking on the phone next to the window.

“Amber, there’s no negotiation. *You need* to follow today’s menu,” Kyungsoo closes his eyes, impatient. “Substitute him, you have the entire day. He can’t be the only person who can make—I know he’s the specialist, I know I’m not there, but everyone there is a cook like us. I’m pretty sure you can do it—I’m serious. No, I’m not crazy. It’s not the heat. I’m serious. Just--”

Chanyeol sits up in bed. Kyungsoo scent is too strong; Chanyeol takes off his pants because they’re too tight.

“I can’t—check the reservations? Reserve the blueberries—” Chanyeol hears as he falls asleep again.

When he wakes up, again, he smells Kyungsoo’s heat before opening the eyes. Kyungsoo is still talking on the phone, his face resting against the window; he is sweating and shivering.

“Kyungsoo,” he pleads, sitting up. “Come here.”

“Sorry—I have to go. Don’t worry about me. Yes, I love you too,” Kyungsoo says in a low voice. He drops the blanket on the floor and the phone over it, careful. His eyes are focused in his mate as he straddles Chanyeol’s lap. Chanyeol kisses Kyungsoo’s neck, little pecks, before taking his shirt off. Kyungsoo grinds against Chanyeol’s cock in response. Chanyeol holds him by the waist, carefully lays him down, kissing his chest lightly. Kyungsoo makes an impatient noise, grabs Chanyeol’s hair and pulls him up to kiss him.

Chanyeol can’t react at first.
Lips crash and he feels Kyungsoo’s sweaty hand pressing the back of his head. Chanyeol groans, frustrated, and Kyungsoo kiss him deeper, tongue licking the inside of his mouth. It’s messy and arousing, Chanyeol breaks any distance between their bodies, sinking Kyungsoo on the bed. When Chanyeol breaks the kiss – to breathe –, completely intoxicated by the scent, Kyungsoo bites his lip hard, stopping him from distancing himself.

While Chanyeol is confused, he’s also enjoying it too much. He puts a hand between them, struggling to create enough space to touch Kyungsoo, and takes his mate’s cock in his hands. Chanyeol knows Kyungsoo is more difficult to handle on the first moment of heat. Kyungsoo only stops kissing when he comes in Chanyeol’s hand, saying something unintelligible.

The kiss is an excuse to touch, and while they knot in the bed, Chanyeol rubs all the skin he can touch, squeezes Kyungsoo’s ass, and touches his nipples. Kyungsoo is particularly sensible there, so Chanyeol makes sure he can kiss, lick and bite them every time they have a small break. Kyungsoo has a thing for Chanyeol’s neck, and if before the kiss he only pressed his face against it, now he uses his tongue and teeth – sucking, biting, and marking.

Chanyeol has to hold Kyungsoo’s hips in place when he’s too exhausted, or else Kyungsoo would fuck himself again.

“Time out! Time out!” Chanyeol begs. “I swear my dick is about to fall! How long are we…?”

“More than six hours, for sure,” Kyungsoo points to the window, the clarity of morning. “I’m actually a bit sleepy. The pre-heat kept me awake all night.”

“Do you want to take a nap? God! You need…” Chanyeol tries to move, and both of them moan when the knot moved inside. “Sorry. I forgot!— But you need water. Do you know that fifty percent of omegas in the world develop health problems due to dehydration?”

“In fact, I do,” Kyungsoo says, shooting him a funny look. Kyungsoo smooths Chanyeol’s hair back from his face. “I need a nap, but I will hardly get any sleep like this.”

“Oh… Okay,” he nods. Chanyeol feels cold now they stop touching. He wants to kiss Kyungsoo again, but he knows it would only make things more difficult. Kyungsoo seems to be thinking the same thing, because he touches Chanyeol’s lips gently.

“I may have hurt you. Sorry,” Kyungsoo says. He doesn’t look like he’s sorry.

“Ohh… I don’t feel much pain. It’s visible?” Kyungsoo nods in answer. “I guess I’ll finally use the lipstick my friend gave to me. It’s cherry pink, from Chanel. He thinks I would care about that, you see.”

Kyungsoo chuckles, still rubbing the sore spot.

“I’m sorry if causes you any problem,” he says, suddenly serious.

“Oh, no, it won’t.” Chanyeol smiles, rubs his nose against this mates’ hand. “I don’t mind, really. I kind of… like it? I mean, you can bite me as much as you want.”

Kyungsoo only stares at him. Chanyeol feels the blood leaving his dick and coming straight to his face. He thinks he must think twice before saying things like this.

“That came out… wrong. I said… you can kiss me. I thought you didn’t want to. But if you do, you can. I don’t mind getting hurt… not exactly— I’m just saying I like being kissed, that’s all. And I like you did it now. Because you haven’t—I don’t know why.”
“I’m just a guy paying for you to knot me,” Kyungsoo says, face blank. “Of course, I thought you didn’t want any intimacy.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol breathes out. A bullet on his chest would hurt less. His dick is practically dead, so he takes it out of Kyungsoo – it makes a wet sound, he shivers -, and sits up. He avoids looking down; the vision of sperm coming out of Kyungsoo’s rim is always too strong for his nerves. Kyungsoo leaves the bed, cleans himself with a small towel, gives it to Chanyeol.

“Come to the kitchen when you’re done,” he says, leaving the room. Chanyeol cleans himself slowly. He sits in bed, looks around. He may know Kyungsoo doesn’t have a mate, but he is still feeling like a paid sidechick – well, because he is. He looks for his phone, checks his Instagram. Sehun posted a pic in his work, hugging a model and smiling for the camera. Baekhyun is eating an ice cream as red as his hair. Jongdae rarely posts.

galaxy_fanfan is following you

xiaolu left a comment in your photo: Hyeri in this pic is looking like that Sophia Vergara pic with the dead fighters, but they’re us

hyeriili left a comment in your photo: I think they r dead

taozi tagged you in a post

chenchen liked your photo

Chanyeol decides to post the picture of their towels – it’s the only thing he will have, anyway. He makes his Instagram account private first, and then post the picture with the caption Something’s Got a Hold on Me, because the song is playing in his head nonstop. He wants to play it on the piano, suddenly, and his fingers move unconsciously, searching from something to touch. His nose finally smells something other than Kyungsoo’s scent, and it’s delicious. Chanyeol runs to the kitchen, where Kyungsoo is holding a pizza pan with cooking gloves. He sits at the table, holds his plate like a kid. Kyungsoo laughs while serving him.

“Oh god, I love pizza, I love pizza so much,” Chanyeol says, half singing. “What’s the flavor?”

“I thought you didn’t like fast food,” Kyungsoo asks, amused. “Snow crab, ricotta, shishito peppers and wasabi aioli.”

“That’s… fancy. Wait… It’s pizza a fast food?”

“You order it because it’s fast. Most delivery pizza I’ve eaten tasted like trash,” Kyungsoo makes his classic face of distaste.

“Oh, I like ordering pizza. I thought it was a complex food, like— It does have hundreds of flavors,” he lifts his hands defensively. “Please don’t be mean to me. I’m ignorant on this subject.”

Kyungsoo only laughs. Chanyeol loves the sound of it. It’s a deep ‘ha ha ha’.

“Are you going to make me cry like you did with that guy on the show?” Chanyeol pokes Kyungsoo
in the belly. They're still naked, Chanyeol realizes.

“He cried because he can’t hear the truth,” Kyungsoo says, deadpan.

“Well, remember me to never ask for your honest opinion,” Chanyeol mocks, eating half slice of pizza in one bite. Kyungsoo slaps him in the shoulder, smiling, and sits next to him. Chanyeol lifts one of Kyungsoo legs and puts it over his lap. “Do you know people call you the mean chef, though?”

“I don’t mind,” Kyungsoo says, stealing the rest of Chanyeol’s slice. “Most of participants in the show are restaurant owners and they don’t get to hear how their food taste. They are very arrogant, especially with the younger cooks or people who don’t have a business yet.”

Chanyeol eats another slice, chewing loudly and zoning out. Kyungsoo pokes him.

“What?” he asks, his mouth full of pizza.

“You don’t look like you watch tv,” Kyungsoo says, staring at the glass of water in his hands. “How did you find out about the show?”

“My friends. I told you a live with a pair of betas, right? One of them is a big fan. He watches it with another friend of mine.”

Kyungsoo nods, drinks water and licks his lips. Chanyeol watches, hypnotized. Kyungsoo’s leg is warm against his skin. Burning ricotta falls in his lip and he cries. Kyungsoo visibly shivers.

“I’m really sleepy,” he complains.

“You can take a nap,” Chanyeol says.

“Can we… do it again…?” Kyungsoo lays his head on Chanyeol’s shoulder. “I think I can sleep a bit after…”

*He looks so tired*, Chanyeol thinks. He nudges Kyungsoo’s head with his nose.

“Okay,” Chanyeol nods. “But let me eat more because this is delicious. When you said crabs and ricotta I thought it was going to suck, but, boy…”

Kyungsoo pinches him in the ribs. Chanyeol spits some of the pizza while crying out.

“I’m complimenting you,” he cries. “You’re really mean.”

Kyungsoo laughs in his face, stands up and leaves the kitchen with no more words. Chanyeol eats automatically, watching how his mate’s thighs are wet. The chair he was sitting is also wet with lubrication, and Chanyeol has to cover his nose to eat in peace.

He goes to the room quietly; Kyungsoo is lying in bed, sleepy, but his body is sweating as if he’s just run a marathon. Chanyeol caresses his leg gently.

“Hey,” he asks, soft and careful. “Can I eat you out?”

Kyungsoo doesn’t answer with words, just gets on his knees. Chanyeol holds his hips and pulls him closer. He licks the wetness in his thighs, enjoying the way Kyungsoo shivers, trembles, and moans. Tasting him is one of Chanyeol’s favorite parts: it’s like drinking the scent. It’s even better when he pushes the tongue inside and Kyungsoo pushes back, too horny to wait. Chanyeol stops, sometimes, licks around the rim, bites his thighs, watches the way Kyungsoo touches himself. It’s a pity
Chanyeol can’t see his face when he’s coming, but the sound – the sound is something else, a breathy *aaaah* that should be recorded. Chanyeol would listen to it all day.

Chanyeol knots Kyungsoo after, but not because he needs to get off. At this point, he only wants to please his mate, his body guided by hormones, not his own desires. Both are exhausted. Chanyeol is sure Kyungsoo fell asleep while they waited for the knot to soften. He turns his mate gently, but Kyungsoo opens his eyes.

“Lay over me,” he asks.

“How?”

“Just—In a way— so I can smell your neck,” Kyungsoo says, struggling to keep his eyes open.

“I’m heavy!”

“I don’t mind.”

Chanyeol put his body over Kyungsoo’s own carefully, facing the pillow, chests touching. It’s not uncomfortable, it’s different. Kyungsoo sleeps easily, Chanyeol takes some time.

Kyungsoo wakes him up with a loud moan. Chanyeol can’t even say a word before the kiss. His lip is hurting, but it’s a good kind of pain. The blanket under them is stank, wet, sticking in their skins. None of them cares, and they can’t stop touching, rushing quietly. Chanyeol is about to cry when Kyungsoo decides he’s tired of being under him, because the abstract image of Kyungsoo moving up and down on him is suddenly very real when Chanyeol grabs him, his thighs, his hips, pulling him down.

Chanyeol passes out before Kyungsoo does, too tired to do anything but sleep, his body too warm. He wakes up missing something – he’s cold. He groans, sad, it sounds like a howl. Chanyeol rubs his eyes; the light is hurting his eyes.

“Sorry,” he hears Kyungsoo saying. Chanyeol turns to look at him. He’s fully dressed, standing next to the bed. “I’m going to turn off the light.”

“Where… where are you going?” Chanyeol complains, extend his arm in a futile effort to grab his mate.

“To work. I left towels and clothes in the bathroom. There’s food on the fridge, a green bowl. Your clothes—”

“No,” he says, too loud, too sleepy to understand what he means. A hand touches his face gently, reassuring.

“Sorry,” Kyungsoo says, almost a whisper. “Sleep.”

Chanyeol buys the biggest Rilakkuma he can find on the way home. The driver waits until he tries his best to fit the giant bear in the backseat. He tries to pretend there’s nothing wrong with taking two
hours to leave Kyungsoo’s house; or keeping the package of the soap he used; no, nothing weird about eating the last slice of pizza with tears in his eyes.

He’s fine, really, he says to himself, as he crawls in his friends’ bed. Jongdae and Baekhyun seems to be back together, sleeping on each other like puppies. They don’t kick him out of the bed, but Chanyeol wakes up alone again, and somehow that hurts even more.

I am fine, he thinks, as he plays the piano in the restaurant, a cover of Besame mucho that makes the lady eating alone cries on her lobster. He plays the same cover on the guitar when he’s working at the café, and someone leaves a note: it touched my soul.

I’m perfectly fine, he repeats, coming home after a good day. Jaesuk is a nice, a really funny guy who works on television, and he wants to put Chanyeol’s song on a commercial for a flower shop. Chanyeol should be thrilled, should be happier than he is, but he can’t stop feeling like there’s something missing. He laughs, he tells his friends about it, but coming home is oddly painful.

luhan: don’t forget about friday!

chanyeol: I won’t

luhan: yifan is coming too!!!

chanyeol: oh, cool!

Chanyeol sleeps with the human sized rilakkuma, he rates “the experience” as ‘5, good, no problem’, even if he wants to lie and say something like ‘4, could be better, I’m not attached or anything.’ He’s examined again, answers some questions, then eats an ice-cream, alone on a bench next to his house.

It’s like the sensation of ‘future holds nothing for me’ has been amplified. Before, he could shake his head and kill it with positivity. Now, he is sure. Chanyeol may be a horny orangutan sometimes, because he looks at people and see how attractive, nice, different and full of possibilities they are, but now it’s hard to think about wanting anyone but Kyungsoo. Chanyeol just wants to be around him, really. He wants to hear about Kyungsoo’s work, cupcakes, animes, the show, anything. To watch him cook, or read, see his small hands doing anything perfectly.

He avoids being in home when the show is on TV. He sits with Jongdae in the garden, guitar in his hands. Jongdae has a sweet voice, trained; Chanyeol will never forgive him for dropping his music dream.

“Can’t we sing something happier?” Jongdae complains. There’s a flower in his hair and he looks incredibly soft dressed in one of Baekhyun’s oddly large shirts.


“It’s a sad song!”

“No, it’s not. There’s a happy rhythm!”
“Good lord,” Jongdae sighs, throwing his head back. “Look, I asked Baekhyun to not talk about it, because I know we invaded your privacy before, but if you come home looking like someone tried to eat you alive, I expect you to be at least on a better mood.”

Chanyeol holds his guitar tighter against his chest.

“Ohh, about that… It wasn’t like someone—”

“Shut up,” he holds his hand up. “I don’t want to know about your sex life. I’m not asking about that, I’m asking why are you’re acting so nostalgic. You’re not that old.”

“I don’t want to talk about… anything.”

“Ooooh, that’s new. I once heard you talking for like… what? Three hours? About why san-x is better than the sanrio family. And then I had to hear the counter argument from Tao.”


“Oh, yeah. That’s why you keep talking to my plants? Or why are you suddenly interested in Baekhyun’s work?”

“First, the plants grow more and better when we talk to them, so you should be thanking me. Second, I don’t care about Baekhyun’s work. I mean, I do care, but I was asking about some theory, okay? I just want to learn, that’s all.”

“Yes, I can see you reading books, but you don’t let us see them,” Jongdae pokes him in the cheek. “You’re acting like we are married and you have a mistress.”

Chanyeol laughs; a sad, sarcastic laugh.

“Boy, I wish it was like that,” he smiles. “I guess I’m the mistress.”

Jongdae stops smiling, stares at Chanyeol for a moment.

“You don’t want to talk or you can’t talk?”

“Both.”

“That’s okay. If you don’t talk with Sehun too. Equal rights,” Jongdae winks. “He doesn’t get any privileges just because he sucked your dick.”

“If you say so,” Chanyeol laughs and starts playing the song.

Baekhyun is home early. He’s sitting in the window, one leg out, one leg in. He’s been like that for an hour. Chanyeol is taking out the trash from his room and every time he looks, Baekhyun is there, licking a lollipop, focused in something outside.

“Are you okay, bud?” Chanyeol says carefully, rubbing his sweaty hands on his cotton pants.
“There’s a car stopped next to the gate. There’s a hot guy inside,” he answers, swinging his legs, not looking at Chanyeol. “He’s waiting.”

“Do you think he’s a kidnapper? Or maybe an investigator?” Chanyeol mocks. “Did he try to ring the doorbell?”

“He is very tall and intimidating, but in a sexy way,” Baekhyun narrows his eyes. “But he’s not moving or talking. I think he’s listening to Taemin, thought. I can hear the song.”

Chanyeol stops walking.

“Oh… I think I may know who he is,” he rushes, opens the door. “Wait here!”

Chanyeol passes through the garden and before he even opens the gate, he recognizes Yifan in the driver’s seat. Chanyeol knocks on the window, Yifan rolls down the window slowly.

“Hello,” Yifan says, turning off the sound.

“Hello,” Chanyeol bends down to talk to him. “What are you doing, man? You look like a creep, sitting there and saying nothing.”

“I like being quiet, you would like it too, give it a try,” Yifan smiles. “I was waiting for you.”

“You could give me a call. How the hell I would know you were waiting here?”

“You would see me when you had to leave the house? Luhan is waiting for us.”

“Fuck,” Chanyeol screams. “Today is Friday?”

“Yes. I do have the Rebecca Black’s song in my phone so we can play in the way.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol laughs. “I have to get back just to take a shower. I will be back soon, I promise.”

“Wait,” Yifan opens the glove compartment. “I got something for you. It’s a secret.”

He holds two pieces of paper and gives them to Chanyeol.

“What’s it?”

“Twelve’s guest dinner. They have a new menu, so they’re making a dinner to show it off. Most guests are journalists, critics and other cooks, but Kyungsoo asked me to give this to you— for your friends.”

“He… he asked you to give to me?” Chanyeol voice is breaking. He is a fool.

“Yes, but hear me: it’s for your friends! A romantic dinner out,” Yifan says dryly. “You have some mated friends, don’t you?”

“Yes, yes I do,” Chanyeol nods, gulping. “But I can’t go?”

Yifan sighs.

“You can, but if you stay on the kitchen,” Yifan warns. “You can’t be seen around him in public.”

“Listen, keep your mouth shut. I shouldn’t be helping you. I only did it because Kyungsoo asked me and I have a soft spot for him.”

“Well, since you mentioned that,” Chanyeol says, defiantly. “I should tell you that I asked Kyungsoo why he haven’t chose your profile and he said it was because you’re more like a parental figure.”

“So,” Yifan smiles, a naughty and snarky smile. “You’re telling me he wants to call me daddy? Because of course he can--”

“Listen here, you little shit,” Chanyeol bends his body to fit in the window. “If you ever touch him, I swear I’ll--”

“Uuhhh,” Yifan laughs, easily grabbing Chanyeol’s wrist. “Look at this possessive alpha! He’s so scary!”

“Shut up, you dork,” Chanyeol tries to make a serious face, but fails, laughing too. “I don’t know why I’m your friend. You like to see me suffer.”

“Maybe. Now go clean your ass. We have a party to attend.”

Chanyeol takes a quick shower, dresses in the living room under the confused eyes of his friend. Jongdae comes home and the first thing he sees is Chanyeol’s bare ass.

“… This gives me a new perspective,” he points. “Now I know there are worst things than stay late at work.”

“Where are you going?” Baekhyun asks, helping Chanyeol to put his jumper on.

“To Luhan’s house,” Chanyeol says from inside of the jumper, and it comes out like a whisper.

“Oh, so it’s him outside?”

“No.”

“What’s this?” Jongdae points at the small papers in the table.

“That’s for you guys,” Chanyeol is going without socks. Maybe Tao will never find out. “Two tickets… entries? Who knows? There will be a guest dinner in Kyung-- the chef… the mean chef’s restaurant.”

Jongdae reads it, and Baekhyun drops one of Chanyeol’s shoes on the floor.

“Holy shit,” Baekhyun whispers, plucking the ticket out of Jongdae’s hand. “I called this place and they told me you have to make a reservation two fucking months in advance? How possibly could you--”

“A friend gave to me. He… can’t go,” Chanyeol says, glancing at his reflection in the window. “I can’t either… I will be busy tomorrow… so…”

Baekhyun faces Chanyeol, holds his chin and pulls him down to kiss his mouth. It’s just a peck on the lips, but Chanyeol makes a scene of spitting and wiping his mouth. Jongdae laughs and do the same. Chanyeol gives up.

“I will go, I’m don’t want to be sexually harassed here,” he complains.

“I love you,” Baekhyun says, taking deep breaths. “What if Taeyeon is there? I mean—guest dinner?
“I’ll bring everything I own so she can sign!”

“Probably,” Jongdae is smiling his special ‘I’m in love’ smile. “My colleagues of food review have been invited. It’s a presentation of menu for invited guests, Baekhyun. We need to get you better clothes if you want to make a good first impression.”

Chanyeol looks at them and smiles. The tenderness of them surprises him sometimes. It’s a good feeling, seeing them like this, but the sensation of being alone strikes him right after. He leaves home thinking about how they seem satisfied with these small things – Chanyeol used to be like this, maybe, when he was young. He is excited about little things, but they never fulfill him. He knows his friends will have the perfect night together, in a fancy dinner like this or eating ramen at home, because it’s not about the excitement, but it’s about being together. Maybe if Chanyeol didn’t live with mated people he wouldn’t think about it, but… he is very aware of their bond, and the fact many people look for, crave this.

He remembers the day of the kitchen accident, when the house smelled like fire and burned meat; Baekhyun screaming while Chanyeol drove like a maniac. Chanyeol remembers waiting for Jongdae in the hospital, when Baekhyun digged his nails in the same leg his mate burned as if he wanted to feel the same pain. He remembers them sitting at the door, quiet, Jongdae’s leg wrapped and safe over a chair, singing songs and holding hands, the smell of cocoa and the soft rain. Baekhyun said ‘I will love you even if you’re deformed’, half mocking, but his eyes were full of tears, a memory of his worried night. Chanyeol understood, in silence, that they loved each other and that was enough, being there, together, even in pain – it was enough. They wouldn’t change their current lives for the ones they dreamed when they were kids, famous and travelling around the world. They are happy enough being alive and well because they have each other. That hit him like a brick.

Yifan notices his silence.

“If you don’t talk I’m going to play Taemin’s new cd,” he threatens, driving surprisingly slow. He’s not in a hurry this time. “What’s wrong?”


“Humm… trying to drown your thoughts?”

“Maybe,” he shrugs. “I told you my song will be in a commercial?”

“Oh really? Why would you think I care?”

Chanyeol hits him in the arm. Yifan doesn’t move a millimeter, but he smiles.

“Maybe because you’re an actor? Ah! You thought I didn’t knew, right?”

“I made movies, Chanyeol. There were posters everywhere,” he says, slowly.

“Really? That’s a surprise,” Chanyeol laughs. “Are you famous?”

“Not in this country, but yes, I think so.”

“Holy shit! I’ve been friends with a celebrity all this time! Fuck, I can’t even tell you’re my friend. That sucks,” he picks his phone to take a picture when he remembers. “Hey, why aren’t you working on movies anymore?”

“It wasn’t what I wanted.”
“Aaaaand?”

“My friends needed my help.”

“And?”

“That’s all.”

“Bullshit.”

“I’m going to park the car and I need focus. Stop asking me shit.”

“Listen, I can ask you all night. We both know I can. You can’t be monosyllabic forever.”

“Okay,” he sighs heavily. “I wasn’t feeling happy with it.”

“How you can’t be happy doing movies? Oh… it was some bad shit? Like B movies? Or for kids? Oh… I know, bad scy-fy. Bad scy-fy it’s the worst! Did you dress like a lizard mutant or—“

“Shut up,” Kris slapped his own thigh. “Nothing, Chanyeol. I wasn’t into acting anymore. I wanted peace, no fans, you know. Taking naps, resting, eating right. I have bad health.”

“And mating nonstop for, like, three days is better for your health?”

“Yes? I’m a fucking alpha. I was born to do that. Also, my mate had me for four days. Some good shit, I gotta tell you.”

“You’re a pervert,” Chanyeol fakes disgust.

“What can I say? I’m the perfect alpha, I’ve been told that.”

Chanyeol laughs genuinely. He pokes Yifan while they walk to Luhan’s place, trying to get a reaction from him. Sometimes Yifan hits back, but he mostly ignores Chanyeol’s antics.

Luhan’s house is crowded as ever. Luhan is popular, maybe because of his looks, maybe because he has money, but definitely, because he is too gentle to refuse guests. Chanyeol drinks almost anything that falls in his hands. He prefers the sweeter drinks, and he talks to everyone on his way. Yifan stops him after Chanyeol spends twenty minutes trying to climb up the stairs. Yifan pulls Chanyeol’s arm over his shoulders to help him stand.

“He looks terrible,” Luhan says, sitting prettily on his balcony. “The party is downstairs for a reason.”

Everything on Luhan’s room is expensive, white and clean. It looks like some instagram post from the rich kids in their apartment in Paris. Yifan drops Chanyeol on the bed, and climbs next to him. Luhan sits in the other side, pouring champagne in a glass.

“Why do you throw parties if you don’t want to be in them?” Chanyeol asks, the alcohol making him reflexive.

“To pretend he’s fine,” Yifan answers simply and puts his hands over his head.

“I’m fine,” Luhan says before drinking vigorously from the glass. Somehow, it looks charming. “But I’m not in the mood of having fun with my friends. I’m leaving, remember?”
“You’re so beautiful,” Chanyeol says. The night lights are passing through the glass door and making Luhan look like he’s a picture, not a person. Luhan looks delicate in this atmosphere; Chanyeol is envy of how natural, effortlessly artistic is the entire scene. He feels ugly, too big and disgruntled, like he felt during his hormonal nightmare’s days. Maybe some people are art and the others appreciate and create art because they cannot be that beautiful.

“Yes, you are. So why don’t you go downstairs and enjoy the time you have here?” Yifan spits.

“You’re not my therapist,” Luhan says, sad smile and empty glass.

“Guys,” Chanyeol lifts his hands. “Do—don’t fight. Let’s cuddle the problems away.”

A sound of glass breaking downstairs is so loud they can hear in the room. Luhan sighs.

“I have the right of being sad, Yifan. I’m getting tired of repressing my feelings. I hope one day you will do the same, before this thing eat you up.”

Yifan keeps quiet, staring at the ceiling. Chanyeol can’t stop thinking about how nice their voices sound. They argue in low tones like some French song—oh, the beginning of Je t’aime moi non plus.

“You guys should sing,” he confides them.

“Minnie called me today,” Luhan confesses. “I let the phone ring… I hope he can take a hint. I’m leaving, I’m sure, but… I love him, you know? It’s really love, no matter what he says.”

“He cares about you,” Chanyeol nods. “He told me himself.”

“Catching feelings it’s part of the job, how many times I told you that? If the people don’t bond emotionally, then, they don’t bond at all,” Yifan licks his lips. “If they don’t think they want to protect and nurture the partner, then there’s no scent mixing, just plain sex. Then, what happens next? I get the email requesting another partner. Again and again, until… they start sighing and singing love songs.”

“He dated Jongdae,” Chanyeol frowns. “Minnie lived with Jongdae. But in the end they mated other people. That’s—”

“For the Moon, you’re just like him,” Luhan pours another glass of champagne. “Maybe we’re not just a bunch of hormones? Maybe we are emotional, complex, evolved people who don’t take our mates by force and breed them? Maybe things can’t be fixed with just ‘accepting nature’.”

“Luhan, you can’t be that naïve—”

“Shut up! Shut the fuck up,” Chanyeol sits up, his body like a line between them. “I’m so fucking done with everyone ignoring me!”

Both Yifan and Luhan look at him slightly shocked, quiet.

“I like Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol confesses abruptly, feeling his throat closing up. “I like him so much. And it sucks, you know? Because he’s great? Like, the greatest? I can work my ass everyday and not even in a million years I will be that great. And it’s not just because he’s hot, or something, he is, I think he’s very handsome if you’re into small people and I am, but also… he’s… good at everything? And he’s nice? That type of nice people who doesn’t even care if other people think they’re not nice or… because he’s not interested in looking nice? He’s just… very careful with his cute hands. He’s lowkey a genius? I don’t know. He smells so good and his kiss… god, he’s such a
good kisser. I could kiss him all day—"

Chanyeol has to stop, because he need some air. He’s going to cry. Luhan drops the glass in the floor and holds him. Chanyeol cries, some good, ugly cry, making nosey sounds, shoulders shaking. Luhan is warm, his embrace is soothing, so he wipes his eyes:

“And I can’t. I can’t. When the contract ends, I won’t even see him during his heat. And my life already sucks right now, when I lose him—what I’m saying? He’s not even mine. Who I’m kidding? He’s just fixing some problem. I’m probably a bad memory, a reminder that he can’t live his life like he used to. Kyungsoo is so… Independent, I think. If I met him in real life, you know, outside, he would hate me. He would think I’m a dumbass alpha. Am I? I am. I can’t stop being happy with anything he gives me, any drop of attention. I just want to hold hands and hug, do any shit like… grocery shopping? Petting cats. Fighting over some dumb shit. Watching anime. He has mangas, maybe it’s not even his. I have no idea. Maybe… this is hormonal. I understand I don’t know him long enough to—I only know him since… I barely know him but… it’s really just some hormones? Because it’s wrecking me, man.”

Luhan places Chanyeol’s face in his shoulder gently, rocking his body slowly, as if he’s putting Chanyeol to sleep.

“How long have you been feeling like this?”

“I don’t know,” Chanyeol says against his neck, feeling like a little kid. “Can’t remember.”

“I understand you,” Luhan says, pressing his chin against Chanyeol’s cheek. “I feel the same.”

They stay in the same position, hearing the echo of the people beneath them. Chanyeol sees everything moving fast, his body seems to be weightless and his mind is hazy. It’s late, he thinks, a bit late to complain about his fears, and he hates to be the one dragging them down. He searches in his mind for a joke, any funny commentary and finds nothing.

“I think,” Yifan begins to say. It’s so sudden they don’t even react at first. “Sometimes. I think… I can’t really stay in a place, or a job, or in a relationship because I lost my reference when Junmyeon and I broke up. And we never… never physically mated. So I guess it’s not just hormones. It’s a psychological thing too. I guess… that’s why we have therapists, after all.”

“Is this your way of telling us you have feelings?” Luhan asks.

“I’m trying to open up,” Yifan says impatiently.

“That… was okay…” Chanyeol mocks. “Not bad for a first try, I mean.”

“About Kyungsoo,” Yifan says casually, staring at the ceiling. “I shouldn’t tell you this, but on that day I brought him home, he was asking for you.”

“What?” Chanyeol let go of Luhan so fast that he falls back in the bed.

“He was asking for you when he was locked—in heat, I don’t think he was aware. Not a surprise, since he had tried… to mate before and it didn’t—”

“He tried to mate before?” Chanyeol grabs Yifan’s arm in an attempt to ground himself.

“Yes,” Yifan sighs. “I wasn’t supposed to say this, but… the reason I know him it’s because we dated the same person… not at the same time, but…”
Chanyeol opened his mouth. Chanyeol closed his mouth.

“Hum, that’s interesting,” Luhan said, picking the glass on the floor. “He’s opening up and telling secrets, two rabbits in one cage. A productive night.”

“Why everyone dated everyone? What’s next?” Chanyeol complains, regaining his voice. “Baekhyun and Dr. Yixing?”

“I was just saying you’re mated,” Yifan says, sounding tired. “I mean, you smell like him.”

“So we won’t share a bed tonight,” Chanyeol mocks, pretending that something in his stomach isn’t moving. “I’m afraid I may wake up with you trying to knot me.”


“I’ll miss you two,” Luhan whispers, lying in bed, an empty glass in his hand. “I’ll miss this place.”

“We’ll miss you too,” Chanyeol turns to him in a drunk attempt to cuddle. “Don’t think you can’t find love again, okay? Minnie may not want to be your mate, but someone will. You’re too cute to be single.”

“So are you!”

“Please don’t make out while I’m in bed with you,” Yifan asks, but it’s hard to tell if he’s mocking or just worried.

Chanyeol wakes up with a hungover, but it doesn’t stop him to go with Yifan to drive Luhan to the airport. On the way back home, Chanyeol makes Yifan stop at the mall, where he buys his friends some gifts and, very silently, he grabs a copy of *Written in the stars*. He buys Suho’s book while Yifan is too busy looking for some astronomy (and astrology, even if he’s pretending he’s not reading them) books. Chanyeol hides it between the ‘Guide to garden – edible plants edition’, ‘1999-2004: the reign of the chaotic fashion’ and ‘Learn English While Playing Videogames’. When he gets home, Baekhyun is freaking out about his clothes, so he barely sees Chanyeol coming, but Jongdae finds Chanyeol in bed playing guitar.

“Oh… great, you’re home. I thought you disappeared again,” he sighs. “Please tell Baekhyun he looks good. I can’t take his screams anymore.”

If *Jongdae* is saying that, you know it’s serious, Chanyeol thinks.

“You look good too,” he points. Jongdae smiles, rubbing his hands on his pearl-white button shirt.

“Thanks!”

“Stop flirting you two,” Baekhyun enters the room like a hurricane. He’s holding a pink and a green shirt. “Which one?”

“Pink,” Chanyeol says.
“Green,” Jongdae says.

“This is how the sleeping beauty felt,” Baekhyun drops the shirts on the floor. “I wish I could sleep this anxiety away.”

“Why you don’t use your suit?” Chanyeol yawns.

“Because I don’t want to be overdressed?”

“Tao says you can’t never be overdressed.”

“Chanyeol. Tao goes to his work using an oversized Hello Kitty bag. He sleeps in leopard stamp sheets. His “serious” suit is blue sky with red roses. Once he—”

“Okay, okay. I get it,” Chanyeol lifts his hands. “But you’re looking good! Don’t worry about the color.”

“I’m starting to get jealous about your excitement,” Jongdae says and Chanyeol knows it’s a lie. Once Baekhyun was actually hitting on his “hot dimples” doctor, and Jongdae never complained about it, even knowing his mate’s visits involved some eventual nakedness.

“Oh,” Baekhyun pouts. “I’m going to use the green one, then, because I love you.”

“Thanks,” Jongdae hugs him tightly and winks to Chanyeol. When Baekhyun leaves, Jongdae sits on bed, screeching.

“The night haven’t even started yet,” Chanyeol pats him in the back.

“Fuck, I know. Where are you going tonight?”

“Hummm… to a friend’s house.”

“Is it the Luhan guy? I thought he left.”

“Yeah, he did. It’s… another friend.”

“Your birthday is this month. Are you going to introduce us to these people or…?”

“I don’t know. Are you guys going to throw me a surprise party?”

“What kind of question is that?”

“Jongdae! Where’s my lucky pants?” Baekhyun’s voice comes from outside of the room.

“Gotta go,” he takes a long, long breath before screaming. “You’re not going to use that ancient thing! There’s a giant hole the back!”

Chanyeol enjoys the rest of the fighting routine of his friends before they left. He thinks about reading the book and sleeping. He’s not sure if he should go to the dinner – after all, he’s probably going to be a burden in Kyungsoo’s kitchen. But Chanyeol would die to see him just a bit; would he dress like a chef? He would look so cute with that white hat.

Chanyeol makes faces at the ceiling. Maybe he should go and just watch Kyungsoo a little and then come back home. Yeah.

He decides. He’s going.
Chanyeol picks the all-black clothes Kyungsoo gave him, dresses himself in less than five minutes and hails a cab. The restaurant is not that far, but waiting in the car seems like an eternity. Chanyeol asks the driver to stop in the next street; he can see the cars parked around the place, the name TWELVE big in white luminous letters. It’s not big as he imagined it, but Chanyeol could only see the front of it.

He feels like a creep, walking around the place at night, trying not to be seen. Chanyeol always sees in the movies a side or back door to the kitchen and he searches for it, but he can’t find anything. The security guy at the door eyes him and Chanyeol thinks about leaving when the man puts one finger close to his ear and mutters something. Chanyeol can’t even get closer to the door, because someone would take him as a crazy fan or a papparazi. Maybe a criminal? Who knows.

Chanyeol stays next to the place for a while. It’s a windy night, he has no coat, but at least he feels closer to Kyungsoo. Baekhyun and Jongdae are already inside too, probably eating.

“Geez,” he hears a voice. He looks around and sees nothing. “Down there, slender man.”

“What?” he looks down, scared at the possibility of slender man being around him. A girl in a kitchen apron is staring at him. She has short hair and a funny, cute face (and honestly she looks like a kid).

“Are you Chanyeol?” She crosses her arms. “Because if you are who I think you are… You and Kyungsoo together must look like a modern version of Pinky and the Brain, really.”

“… What?”

“See! You’re the perfect Pinky,” she laughs, pointing at him. “And Kyungsoo it’s just too Brain, man. That’s hilarious!”

Chanyeol smiles, confused. What?

“How do you know my name?”

“Well, I’m in charge of taking care of you, just in case you decided to come,” she makes a salute. “My name’s Amber. I’m Kyungsoo’s right hand.”

“Nice… to meet you?” Chanyeol repeats her gesture unconsciously.

“Nice to meet you, too! Don’t worry, no one else knows who you are. I just know because I’m the second in command when Kyungsoo… has… to leave.”

“Ohh,” Chanyeol says, sounding like he’s understanding, but he’s not. “And… who am I?”

“Kyungsoo’s mate, man. Everybody here knows he has a mate. That’s not a secret.”

“Everybody—”

“But some people here thinks he has a trophy mate,” She puts a hand close to her mouth. “I always knew about his sugar daddy potential, but, you know, he’s my boss and I shouldn’t talk about that.”

Chanyeol feels the heat spreading in his face. Trophy mate?

“I… I guess—”

“Don’t worry about that! It’s just gossip, you know. Kyungsoo is very private, people think what they want,” She shrugs. “So, wanna come in or not? I was counting on you to calm him down, you
“Yes,” Chanyeol nods and Amber starts walking immediately. He follows her after one second of hesitation. “Why is he—”

“The critics,” She says, nodding to the security. The man barely looks at Chanyeol again. “He wasn’t here last time they went. And there’s one, a terrible one…”

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods, even if Amber can’t see him doing it. This critic must be the one Kyungsoo was waiting to talk when he was in heat, Chanyeol remembers. “And… well, how… did Kyungsoo talk about… hum… what we… never mind.”

Are we entering by the front door?

When Amber opens, Chanyeol sees two well-dressed people standing by long table. There’s another entry inside, he realizes. Amber talks to one of them, a girl, and instead of coming in – Chanyeol can see through a glass door, some tables and people passing - she turns to a lateral hall.

“Come with me, boy, we don’t have all day,” she complains, walking in the dark hall. “Kyungsoo doesn’t talk, you see. He used to come here in the middle of his damn heat, to be locked in a room, can you believe? I’m a beta, I don’t get much of what was going on, but that thing looked painful! But I knew he was mating before he could even tell me.”

“Did you?” Chanyeol was following her by voice. It was dark and everything smelled like seafood.

“Yeah, because he was singing again. You know, he stopped after the suppressants affected his voice. You… oh, yeah, you probably never heard him sing when he was a teenager, right? You guys met recently, I know. He sounded like an angel. Yeah… It was beautiful, man. Beautiful. But suppressants change a lot of shit, you see. He dropped the choir like… ten years ago? I never heard him singing again. Until some months ago, of course. I thought… this boy is getting some. He’s very relaxed… sometimes. For a Kyungsoo’s normal behavior, I mean.”

So much information. Chanyeol was trying to concentrate to keep them on his mind, but the noise was getting louder. People talking, people running, metallic sounds. Amber opens a door, and the light is now intense. It is the kitchen. A few people dressed in white are walking, running with pans, screaming things. Chanyeol is an obvious outsider, all black, standing there, frozen.

“Where’s the penguin?” Amber screams. All eyes are on them. Chanyeol shrinks in size, rubs his hands on his pants.

“Don’t know!”

“No idea!”

“Maybe in the back?”

“He’s at the tables, llama,” A man in the corner says. He’s not in white or using an apron and he’s licking chantilly off his fingers. He stares at Chanyeol; Chanyeol stares back. Oh, fuck. It’s the Kai guy.

“Jongin, what the hell are you doing here,” Amber points at the door. “Stop stealing food! Go back to your table!”

“I just wanted some candy,” he pouts to her, but his eyes are still focused in Chanyeol’s.
“Wait for dessert like everyone else,” she grabs Chanyeol wrist suddenly. Chanyeol almost jumps. “Go back to your table, Nini. Kyungsoo is going to kill us if he finds you here.”

Amber is small, but strong, and she pulls Chanyeol towards the back. They passes by the people cooking, the smell strong and the smoke in their faces. She opens a door, turns the lights on.

“This is the dry food store,” she says carefully. “There’s no table or a chair, but you can sit anywhere in the ground. Kyungsoo eats here, too. I will come back with food, so don’t worry. Stay here. He warned me you eat like a Viking, so I’ll bring a lot!”

Chanyeol gives up being embarrassed. Kyungsoo must think he’s some cave man at this point. Amber leaves, and he looks around, measuring the shelves of sacks and packages. When’s tired of inspecting, he sits on the floor and picks his phone. The first picture he sees on instagram is a beautiful plate of food: small salad at the corner, some cakes adorned with creamy red sauce and a spring roll.

byunbyun_baek this is Jongdae’s, I ate mine in 0.5 seconds ✨(*´∀｀*)ﾉ/ #instafood #romanticnight #howtoembarrassyourmateinpublic #twelveguestdinner #ICANSEETAJEYONFROMMYTABLE #feelingfamous

taozi oh my moon!!!! looks delicious!!!! <3 <3 <3 <3 what’s the name of this dish?

ohsehun can you bring something home? I’m hungry :(  

Amber comes in when Chanyeol is trying to understand the cryptic video Luhan posted, some lights out in the car with a sad song (the video was posted before a picture with his family and friends). She gives him a giant bowl of rolls, drops it in Chanyeol’s hand with a glass full of sauce.

“Shrimps, gorgonzola cheese, rice and salmon inside,” she warns. “Eat with sauce, it’s delicious.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol counts the rolls. “Can I eat everything?”

“If you don’t, I will pack for you,” she sighs. “We’ve been cooking rolls for hours, we prefer to eat some mcdonald’s shitty hamburger than these, believe me.”

“Ohay,” he chuckles. “Why do you guys hate fast food so much?”

“That’s obvious,” Amber thumbs up and leave. Chanyeol keeps watching some cats fail videos while dipping rolls in the sauce and eating. When she returns with some fancy pasta, he decides to check his instagram again.

xiuminnie wants to follow you

ohsehun left a comment in your photo: fake deep towels

galaxy_fanfan liked your photo
There’s a new pic in the restaurant. This time is not from the dishes, but two people sitting at the table, smiling for the camera.

kimkai amber is being mean to me so I stole @krystaljung from her (ﾉ◕ヮ◕)ﾉ*:・✧ #twelve #twelveguestdinner

kaisgirl are u 2 dating now?????

tiffandtac they look so good!!! @taeenny @taetae

bunnymom she’s going to kill you, Jongin!

omegascelebs my two faves <3 #blessed

anna56 @krystalarmy @jungies @kaistal

babykai where’s satansoo? Is he seeing this thing ashuhdshsu lol

kimkai @bunnymom she was the one taking the picture :D missed you here today :(  

Chanyeol likes the picture and clicks on the hashtag #twelveguestdinner. There are many famous people in the restaurant, some idols, critics and journalists. It’s crazy to think Chanyeol is just few meters from them. He’s eating a soup Amber brought with a giant spoon when Baekhyun’s picture pops up in the tag. It’s him hugging Taeyeon, both smiling next to a table.

byunbyun_baek AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA  
#TWELVEGUESTDINNER #BOY #SHEWASABOUTTOLEAVE #BUTI WASFASTER  
#SHESMELLS SOGOOD #GODDESS #OWNSMYASS  
#MYMATEISTHREAT ININGTO LEAVE ME # HES Hiding UNDER T H E T A B LE # IMETH ER  
#CHANYEOLCATCHTHIS #FEELS #KIMTAEYEON @kimtaeyeon @chenchen @ohseahun @pcy_real

ohseahun !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

chenchen never been so embarrassed in my life

pcy_real (*^-ω´-)_launcher(*^-ω´-)

byunbeom oh my god you must be freaking out ahhaha

taefans cute!

taozi :O

tiffany @kimtaeyeon
Chanyeol laughs to himself, thinking about how his friends must be reacting. He stares at the picture for some minutes, feeling full and satisfied. He’s even more happy because he’s in black today and no one will see the soup stains on his clothes. He wishes he could share online how much food he ate, but he knows better than exposing himself. The door opens and he’s ready for another round – he freezes when he sees Kyungsoo.

Kyungsoo is using a big white chef costume – it doesn’t look like an uniform, but instead he looks like a kid pretending to be a chef -, and he’s holding a small, cute blue-and-pink cake inside of a vintage mug. Chanyeol sits up straight at the sight of him; Kyungsoo frowns.

“Hi,” Chanyeol says, fast, looking up to his mate. Kyungsoo makes an expression of distaste and closes the door behind him. Chanyeol checks his clothes and rubs his hands in his face, just in case. Kyungsoo walks to him and offers the mug. When Chanyeol holds it, Kyungsoo sits on the ground, pressing his back against his mate’s chest as if Chanyeol was a chair.

“Oh,” Chanyeol says, spreading his legs open around Kyungsoo. “What’s this?”

“The dessert,” Kyungsoo finally speaks, lifting a spoon. “A better version of the lava cake: blueberries, strawberries and Chantilly cream.”

“Fuck, it looks good,” Chanyeol says, but he barely smells the cake because of Kyungsoo’s proximity. He comes closer to Kyungsoo’s neck and inhales his scent.

“Prove it,” Kyungsoo orders. Chanyeol hugs him accidentally while trying to take a bite of the cake. He eats a piece of it and he can feel the tears in his eyes.

“This is so, so, so, so, so good,” he sings, happy, arms around Kyungsoo. “This is what heaven tastes like! Why is it so small?”

Kyungsoo chuckles.

“Because it’s the dessert,” he rest his head on Chanyeol’s left shoulder, in an attempt to look up. “People ate the entry and two principal dishes before it.”

“So did I,” Chanyeol eats more of the cake and licks the spoon. “And much, much more.”

“You’re not a parameter. You have a black hole in your stomach.”

“Probably.”

“Was it good?”

“Delicious! Everything! The rolls were sooooo good! I don’t know what the pasta was, but god! I licked the plate clean! I love the soup? I’m not a fan of soup, or broccoli, but it was creamy and the right spicy and--”

“And the cake?”

“I just said it’s good…?” Chanyeol tilts his head to side, to face him.

“Yeah, but you asked me for a strawberry lava cake. I realized it was Seulgi’s one,” Kyungsoo lets his body rest in Chanyeol. “But she doesn’t use real strawberries in the filling, because everything Red Velvet does is sugary. She uses strawberry flavoring, some milky thing, I couldn’t use it,
honestly. So I put blueberries and chantilly to take the focus away from the strawberries and made it hot, instead of cold.”

Chanyeol blinks while his brain is trying to process the information.

“Oh…” he looks at Kyungsoo, who is staring at him expectantly. “I never ate her cake. My friend asked for it… I… don’t know if yours are better…”

“Oh,” Kyungsoo says and looks down. His cheeks are pink. Chanyeol hugs Kyungsoo tighter, placing his chin in his mate’s shoulder. The scent calms him.

“Is the critic guy here today?”

“Humm, you mean the critic from the Art Culinaire?”

“I don’t know. It’s that the person you have to impress?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo chuckles. “I guess it’s her. She’s here.”

“Don’t be nervous,” Chanyeol rubs his nose in Kyungsoo’s cheek. “There’s no way she won’t love the dinner. You’re the best, you know.”

Kyungsoo places his hand on Chanyeol’s tight grip in his clothes.

“I have to go,” he says suddenly. “I’ll ask Amber to bring more cake for you.”

Chanyeol reluctantly sets him free and watches Kyungsoo leave the room. He sighs, eats the rest of the cake, licks the burnt sugar in the bottom of the mug (or try to, because his tongue is not that long). After that, he looks for the tag #twelvегuestdinner again. He ends up liking every post on the tag, and he finally spots Kyungsoo in one of them: him, an idol guy, Kai and two girls.

keyshinee my favorite cook @dyodoro, the handsome @kimki, my second favorite cook @ireene and my bias @krystaljung

shawelsss I would sell my kidney to be in this dinner @shawelarmy @shinees

keywife FIST ME DADDY

minhoshinee TRAITORS

taenys @krystalarmy @kaishal

tiffandtac cutieessss!!!!

betascelebs our faves together @omegascelebs

kimkai @minhoshinee control @keyshinee he ate three cakes and stole @ireene’s one!!!!

kaibaby @kaisgirl look at this comment I’m dying!!!!
Chanyeol laughs and even goes looking for Tiffany’s next photo in the timeline when he realizes Key tagged Kyungsoo. Key. Tagged. Kyungsoo. Kyungsoo has an Instagram account. Chanyeol clicks on the name so fast the screen almost breaks with the force of it. The @dyodoro profile is private, and he only follows 21 accounts (and he has 32 followers). Chanyeol makes a painful sound and throws his head back, hitting the shelf.

“Danm,” he caresses the sore area. “What about now?”

Amber comes in with a plastic container full of cake. The burn sugar is melted, and Chanyeol forgets easily about the Instagram.

“The dinner is over?”

“I guess,” she shrugs. “Most people left. Some wanted more dessert and wine.”

“Oh,” he nods. “I have to go?”

“No…?” Amber narrows her eyes. “We are going to clean up. Kyungsoo is always the last one to leave the kitchen. Wait for him.”

“Oh, okay.”

“I will drop Nini home so he won’t cockblock you two,” She winks before going back to the kitchen.

Chanyeol is too confused to ask anything.

He waits. He watches cat videos. Sometimes he hears people talking. One hour later Kyungsoo opens the door, dressed in his casual black clothes. Chanyeol tries to get up, but Kyungsoo stops him, sitting between Chanyeol’s legs, but this time he presses his side against Chanyeol’s chest.

“You look tired,” Chanyeol says, carefully hugging him. It’s just a remark, because Kyungsoo always looks tired.

“I’m sorry,” Kyungsoo says, looking down to Chanyeol’s hands.

“What? What for?”

“You shouldn’t be eating here,” Kyungsoo almost whispers. “On the floor, locked. I’m really sorry.”

“There’s no problem,” Chanyeol bends and closes his legs, locks Kyungsoo between them. “I’m happy because you invited my friends… and me! I wish I could’ve help you, though.”

“You did,” Kyungsoo closes his eyes. Chanyeol waits for some explanation. After some minutes, he realizes Kyungsoo is sleeping. Unsure of what to do, he rest his head in the shelf and closes his eyes too.

He wakes up with a huge neck pain. He makes painful noises and wakes Kyungsoo up in the process of moving his neck. Kyungsoo blinks and looks around, startled.

“Oh,” he says. “What time is it?”

“Two in the morning,” Chanyeol answers, checking his phone. The battery is about to die. “You have to close the restaurant, right?”
“Yes,” Kyungsoo gets up. “I’m sorry for keeping you here. I will drive you home.”

“What? No,” Chanyeol tries to look up, fails. His neck is pulsing. “You can’t drive like that.”

“I have to,” Kyungsoo argues.

“You are too tired,” Chanyeol gets up slowly. “You could fall sleep while driving. No way. I will drive you home.”

“And how are you going to get home?”

“I’ll hail a cab.”

“No.”

“Yes.”

They stare at each other. Kyungsoo crosses his arms, but he’s so sleepy he can’t glare. Chanyeol tries his best to not laugh.

“What if…” Chanyeol tries. “What if I drive you to my house?”

Kyungsoo seems to consider that.

“There’s no problem?” he asks, looking to their feet.

“Nope,” Chanyeol smiles. “My friends are probably mating or sleeping right now. And my room has a window to the garden. You can jump it tomorrow morning.”

Kyungsoo chuckles softly.

“Okay,” he smiles. “I will turn off the lights and close the doors. I parked on the other side of the street.”

Chanyeol picks the keys and finds Kyungsoo’s tiny car. He drives it after adjusting the seat – he has to push it back completely to fit his legs - , and stops in the front of the restaurant. Kyungsoo gets in the car with many white paper boxes in his hands.

“Leftovers,” he explains, adjusting the seatbelt. “Do you have a driver’s license or…?”

“I do,” Chanyeol laughs. “I used to drive a lot. My friends and I have a shared car. But I’m working near home and Jongdae works on the other side of the city, so…”

“Ah, that’s good,” Kyungsoo says and stays quiet for so long before talking again that Chanyeol almost believes he’s asleep. “You do a lot of things with your friends.”

“Yeah,” Chanyeol nods slowly. “We are friends since kids! They used to call us the beagles. We made a blood pact to be friends forever and everything.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t say anything else, just close his eyes. It’s easy to come home without making much noise because it’s a Saturday night and most people are out, partying. No neighbors are around to talk to Chanyeol.

“It’s the first room, to the left,” he points the hall to Kyungsoo. Baekhyun and Jongdae must be sleeping. Chanyeol closes the door carefully, and when he turns, Kyungsoo is sitting on his bed, taking the shoes off.
“Oh,” Chanyeol says, blinking. “Do you want to take a bath or…?”

“I just want another shirt,” he asks, now taking off his pants. “This one is oily.”

“Oh, okay,” Chanyeol gulps, turning around. Only now, he realizes that Kyungsoo is going to sleep in his bed. He picks one of his old big shirts, a black one with “Total Darkness” written on it, and gives it to Kyungsoo. Chanyeol avoids looking at his mate’s thighs, since Kyungsoo is only in underwear. The shirt is too big on Kyungsoo, the collar is so long it almost shows his both shoulders. Chanyeol braces himself in his closet. If this was an anime, he thinks, he would have a nosebleed.

“Are you okay?” Kyungsoo asks, frowning.

“Yeah, yeah,” he answers weakly. *Control your hormones, Park Chanyeol, you’re not a horny orangutan.* “I’m going to wash my er… face… err… go sleep, don’t worry.”

Chanyeol needs a cold shower.

“Next incarnation I will be a beta,” he says under the cold water. He almost chooses his Rilakkuma pajamas, but then he remembers Kyungsoo *will see him when they wake up*, so he just put his underwear and a big sweater. He carefully sets himself next to Kyungsoo and closes his eyes.

*Go to sleep. Go to sleep. Go to sleep.*

He does. He wakes up with Baekhyun’s usual happy singing. Today is Shakira’s *Loca*. Kyungsoo seems to wake up too, lifting his head, muffled hair and puffy eyes.

“What the…?” he looks around, probably notices he’s not in home. “Oh.”

“Sorry,” Chanyeol says, rubbing his cold feet in Kyungsoo’s hot ones. “My friend… he’s a singer. A music teacher.”

“He has a nice voice,” Kyungsoo nods, rubbing his eyes. “What time is it?”

“Eight…” Chanyeol says, but he’s not sure. Normally Baekhyun and Jongdae sleep until eight in Sundays.

“Oh, that’s early,” Kyungsoo falls back in the pillow, his arm touching Chanyeol’s. “Can I sleep more?”

“Of course,” Chanyeol says fondly. He wants so bad to hug Kyungsoo. He looks so cozy in Chanyeol’s shirt, sleepy and soft.

“You have a lot of these bears,” Kyungsoo says, pointing to the ground, where the giant rilakkuma is. “It’s the same of your underwear, right?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol answers sheepily. His room is a mess, there are clothes everywhere, his guitar, the books he bought, his notebook…

“You have a nice house,” Kyungsoo says quietly. He’s close enough for Chanyeol cuddle him, so Chanyeol takes the opportunity and presses Kyungsoo against his chest. “A nice garden.”

“Jongdae likes gardening. He chose the house,” Chanyeol says, feeling Kyungsoo inhaling his skin. He does that a lot. “I love living here. I used to sleep on the room they sleep now, but it was before they mated. When they decided to share the bed, I gave my room to them. So I sleep in Jongdae’s old one, and Baekhyun’s old room is my studio now.”
Kyungsoo puts an arm around him. Chanyeol’s heart does this crazy thing in his chest.

“I’m… really hungry,” Kyungsoo confesses. “I couldn’t eat anything yesterday. I was too anxious.”

Chanyeol laughs loudly, smells Kyungsoo’s head. It’s a soft smell, now he’s not in heat.

“Everything went okay...?”

“I guess,” Kyungsoo says against Chanyeol shirt. “I will only know when they publish the articles and the reviews.”

“Wow, seems like a torture to wait for that.”

“It is,” Kyungsoo sighs.

“Are you going to work today?”

“Yes and no,” he says. “The restaurant will be closed today to present the new menu tomorrow, but I have many things to do.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol pouts. Kyungsoo pushes him down to look at his face.

“What did you want to do?”

“Huh, nothing, really,” he lays down, tries to fix Kyungsoo’s hair passing his fingers through it. “Just… you know… stay in bed.”

Kyungsoo pinches him in the rib, Chanyeol screams.

“Do you want to mate?!” Kyungsoo glares. “I can’t take your big dick when I’m not in heat, I have to walk in work, you know that?!”

“No!” he pouts again, this time he does unconsciously. “Just stay in bed watching anime and eating pizza! I don’t want to mate!”

“You better don’t,” Kyungsoo slaps him. “Three days are enough. I spend all month trying to recover from the physical effort.”

“Tell me about it!” Chanyeol complains. “You’re the one who don’t give me a break! Does someone ever told you how bossy you are in heat?”

Kyungsoo chuckles.

“All the time.”

Chanyeol sits up. “What?!”

“I mean, people tell me I’m bossy all the time,” Kyungsoo explains. “Not when I’m in heat.”

“Oh, good,” Chanyeol relaxes slowly. “For a minute I thought…”

Someone tries to open the door and they both freeze. Loud knocks comes in sequence.

“Chanyeeeeeeeooool,” Baekhyun sings. “Since you’re the best, the hotter, smarter, cuter, the most-super-duper-amazing-best-friend, I made you breakfast!”

“There’s banana bread,” Jongdae screams, probably from the kitchen, but his voice is loud enough to
be heard in the room.

“Oh, oh,” Chanyeol panics, whispering to Kyungsoo. “You have to change your clothes and jump the window like… now. I will distract them!”

“Why?” Kyungsoo frowns. “Can’t I meet them?”

Chanyeol is truly speechless. Kyungsoo is still staring, serious. Is this how the contestants from *UltimateChef* feel?

“I… I think so? I thought you…” Chanyeol scratches his head. “…Can we? How I’m going to introduce you?”

“Your friend,” Kyungsoo says, but he’s doesn’t look happy. “Since you can’t say you’re my mate.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol blinks. “But… you… you’re in my bed. This… this looks like a one-night stand or something like that. I never bring people home…”

“Chanyeexaaaa, I know you’re there!”

“And?” Kyungsoo asks defiantly. Chanyeol is sweating. He has no idea of what’s going on.

“You… you have a mate? In… public? We watched the show…”

“Tell them is a non-monogamy arrangement,” Kyungsoo says, sitting up in bed. “Jongin tells that when people catch him with his mate.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol says, sitting up too. “Well… okay, then.”

“Chanyeexooooool—”

“Shut up,” Chanyeol screams back. “I’m going! I have someone over, you asshole.”

“Ooooh!” Baekhyun says on the other side of the door. “Listen, Jongdae! Cover your dick! Chanyeol has some ‘visit’.”

“Holy shit!”

Kyungsoo puts his pants on calmly, and Chanyeol waits for him. He’s nervous.

“Can I keep your shirt?” Kyungsoo asks. “The other one stinks.”

“No problem,” he says, anxious. He opens the door and walks to the kitchen right after Kyungsoo. Jongdae is sitting at the table, eating some toast with jelly; he has no shirt on. Baekhyun is using the toaster, singing and dancing. When they see Kyungsoo, undisturbedly sitting at the table, both make surprised noises. Jongdae lets the toast falls back in the plate.

“Good morning,” Kyungsoo says, staring peacefully at them. “Nice to meet you. I’m Do Kyungsoo, Chanyeol’s friend.”

An entire egg could be easily placed on Baekhyun’s open mouth. Jongdae rubs his eyes. Chanyeol picks a chair and sits next to his mate, in silence.

“Fuck,” Baekhyun gulps.

“Nice to meet you,” Jongdae reacts first. “I’m Kim Jongdae, I work for the Channel One! This is
Byun Baekhyun, my mate. He talks a lot normally. He’s a teacher.”

“Nice to meet you,” Baekhyun shouts. Chanyeol gives his mug to Kyungsoo.

“Do you want coffee or something?” Jongdae smiles to the visit. “I hope Chanyeol is treating you well.”

“He is,” Kyungsoo says, placing his hand in Chanyeol’s thigh. Both Jongdae and Baekhyun look at it, shocked.

“We have some cake, fruits, juice, toast, jelly…” Baekhyun grabs a plate and extends it to Kyungsoo, then, suddenly, takes it back and hugs the plate. “Err… if the food it’s not like… very good… are you going to be mean to me?”

“No,” Kyungsoo smiles. “I’m a visit, so I will pretend it’s not horrible.”

Jongdae spits his toast, laughing. Chanyeol chuckles, and Baekhyun gives Kyungsoo the plate with shaking hands.

“Moon… this is… too much pressure…” he says, sitting in his chair. “This must be karma.”

If it’s bad or good, Chanyeol can’t decipher by Kyungsoo’s expression. He eats slowly, drinks juice and answers everything Jongdae asks him.

“It was a nice dinner yesterday,” Jongdae compliments him. “I enjoyed a lot.”

“I’m glad,” Kyungsoo bows. “Do you work in the same place than Irene?”

“I do,” Jongdae smiles. “But she works at the home&kitchen. I work in the news, the world politics journalism.”

“It must be interesting,” Kyungsoo says. Chanyeol is astonished with Kyungsoo’s ability to keep a conversation. Apparently, he just enjoys ignoring Chanyeol, not everyone else.

“Tiring,” Jongdae confesses. “I work with Chanyeol’s sister, actually. She’s one of my bosses.”

“Oh,” Kyungsoo blushes. Chanyeol thinks it’s because they never talked about their families.

“Are you going to come back here often?” Baekhyun asks and Chanyeol steps on his feet. “Ow! I was just asking because I want to be prepared! And we both know you can’t keep a ma— Fuck!”

This time Chanyeol kicks his balls under the table.

“I don’t know,” Kyungsoo says, staring at his plate. Jongdae looks at Chanyeol, waiting.

“Don’t listen to him,” Chanyeol warns Kyungsoo. “Just… ignore Baekhyun, okay? Pretend he’s a talking statue.”

“His birthday is at the end of this month,” Jongdae says casually. “27 November. It’s going to be a Hogwarts themed party, probably. We do that every year. You should come.”

Chanyeol’s heart skips a beat. Kyungsoo keeps quiet, playing with his toast.

“I… have to go, sorry,” he says. “It was nice to meet you two. Chanyeol talks a lot about his friends—you.”
Chanyeol stands up before Kyungsoo. “I will take you to your car,” he says.

“You’re in your underwear,” Kyungsoo points out.

“Ah,” Chanyeol looks down. “To the door, then.”

“Okay,” Kyungsoo nods and they walk to the door. He can hear Baekhyun and Jongdae leaving the table to watch them. Chanyeol opens the door and waves, but Kyungsoo puts a hand in his shoulder and pushes him down to kiss him.

It’s one of his breathtaking kisses, tongue and teeth, holding tight. Chanyeol stays in the same position for a minute before realizing Kyungsoo left already.

“Holy shit,” Baekhyun says. “You’re banging the mean chef.”

“I thought he had a mate,” Jongdae says, narrowing his eyes.

“It’s a non-monogamy arrangement,” Chanyeol repeats, nodding. “He’s my friend.”

“Hum,” Jongdae says, implying he’s not really satisfied with the answer. “Curious…”

“I have to… go to my room… to read,” Chanyeol panics. “I… bought you guys gifts! I just remember that. Books! Isn’t it great?”

They’re still in the same position, staring at him.

“You’re banging the mean chef!” Baekhyun screams. “That’s a plot twist!”

“Most people ask what the difference between mating and dating is. Many people date, but mating it’s widely recognized as the scent mixing. But how to mate? Yeah, I guess we all learn that in ABO biology, but… does sex means mating? Two people dating can have sex, but not mix their scents. Some people can have short sexual relationships, casual flings, and call this “mating”? Which detail makes the couple become “mates”? The simple denomination? Certainly, in some places, Betas defend the concept of mating is just the old concept between alpha-omega couples for reproduction. But we do know today the gender dynamics are more complex than that – some “betas” are just alphas or omegas with hormonal dysfunction, some “alphas” can fertilize and be fertilized. If the reproduction can be tied to a specific arrangement, can we say mating are just having children? Does being pregnant makes the omega “mated” – many say no. Today, we have more omegas that have children with different parents than ever before; are they tied to the first mate forever, as the conservatives like to promulgate? No, I say, as an omega and a scholar. Omegas aren’t belongings of “one mate.” Omegas, like betas and alphas, are much more than their reproductive functions. But this doesn’t mean mating does not exist as something concrete. There’s the magic of it. Mating requires loving, being loved. Mating is about recognizing yourself in another. But most of all, mating is about commitment, trust, belonging. And some will say, a bit of fate.”
Sehun lifts the biggest bottle of vodka Chanyeol have ever seen in his almost 29 years of life.

“Are we going to set the house on fire?” he asks, letting his friend in.

“Maybe,” Sehun said. “There’s more where that came from. You have to help me. I have to pick Baekhyun and Jongdae after work and the car is full of booze.”

“God,” he whined. “How many people confirmed?”

“Baekhyun said 43, but we both know he doesn’t know how to count,” Sehun sits on the couch, despite of what he just said. “I expected you to be happier.”

“Why?”

“Well,” he shrugs. “It’s your birthday. And you love being around your friends.”

True, but the problem is: Chanyeol is sad again. He is an emotional roller-coaster since he met Kyungsoo.

After the guest dinner, Chanyeol is walking on sunshine, kissing his friends, singing Ed Sheeran while cleaning the house (Baekhyun actually records a video of Chanyeol, in his Rillakuma pants, mopping the floor and singing: PEOPLE FALL IN LOOOOVE IN MYSTERIOOOOUUS WAAAAAYS, MAYBE IT’S A PAAART OF AA PLAAAAAN). He’s making people dance at the café with his cover of Beyoncé’s Love On top, he’s happy.

He is happy when his friends starting planning his birthday, as always: Jongdae, the head of Ravenclaw, organizes; Baekhyun, the head of Hufflepuff, invites the friends; Sehun, the head of Slytherin, brings the booze; and Chanyeol, the head of Gryffindor, brings the cake and the candles.

He starts being sad on the birthday of the son of the café’s owner. She is married, and her husband, a sympathetic pregnant omega, touched by Chanyeol’s easiness around kids, asks Chanyeol if he wants a family. Chanyeol say yes, of course, but he has no plans. Chanyeol finally understands that Kyungsoo can have a family after all, if he wants it. One day, Kyungsoo can say, oh, I want to date, and he can easily find a nice alpha and get pregnant. Chanyeol comes home, curls in a fetal position and listens to Utada Hikari sad songs all night.

He definitely is sad when he doesn’t get the email warning him about Kyungsoo’s heat. Chanyeol knows math, and he knows Kyungsoo’s heat is around the end of the month, but day 20 comes, then 22, then 25… and nothing. No seven days warning. No email. He calls Kris, but he’s mating too. Yuri, his substitute, knows nothing about “D.O”. He refresh his email box every hour… and nothing.

Maybe Kyungsoo decided to choose another alpha. The idea makes Chanyeol want to cry, but it’s a possibility. Another possibility may be Kyungsoo taking suppressants again, after all, if they stop working suddenly, the opposite can happen too, right?

“I’m happy,” he lies.

“You’re not,” Sehun says, peaceful as always. “But maybe you can be if I tell you good news.”
“Tell me, then.”

“Do you remember Dara?”

Oh, boy. He remembers Dara. The only alpha Chanyeol positively tried to date. She wasn’t much interested in him, of course. Most alphas aren’t into same gender dating, even if they pretend to be open minded about it. Some of them don’t even go for betas, and once, when Chaneyol told a conservative alpha co-work he was dating a beta, the man said with distaste:

“I would never mate someone if I had to use lube.”

Chanyeol smiled slowly at him.

“Oh, you see, if I don’t use, my ass hurts.”

The man never talked to him again. Good, Chanyeol thought, this is the fucking reason omegas avoid us.

“I remember her, of course!”

“She’s coming.”

“Oh! To see me?”

“I don’t know. It’s your birthday, after all.”

“Hum, that’s great!”

Sehun sighs and stands up, shaking his head.

“You can pretend better, you know?”

Chanyeol picks the drinks in the car and put in his room. He buys at least seven different food magazines looking for articles about the guest dinner, and he follows the tag on instagram daily. On the way home, when Baekhyun is telling them how one of his students could play piano with his feet; they stop at the red light and Chanyeol – bless his googly eagle eyes, - almost passes out. The new issue of Art Culinaire is on the news-stand.

“… Mozart who? The boy has more talent in his left foot, literally, than—”

“Stop the car,” he screams. “Stop the fucking car!”

“What happened?” Jongdae asks, looking at the rearview mirror. “Someone died?!?”

“I will be back in a minute,” he opens the car in the middle of the street, runs like a crazy person, scaring two customers. The magazine is incredible expensive for a bunch of paper (he buys shoes for with the same price), but Chanyeol holds it expectantly when he gets back to his friends.

“Did you gave me a heart attack because of a magazine?” Jongdae asks him, serious.

“Sorry,” Chanyeol says, sitting in the passenger’s seat.
“Since when Chanyeol is interested in gastronomy?” Sehun asks, but, in a declaration of love and friendship, none of his friends say a thing.

He reads when he comes home.

Twelve Guest Dinner, a night to remember,

By Choi Sooyoung

Twelve, one of the most popular restaurants in the town, is finally changing the menu. The place is mostly known for “special” nights, when the customer is presented with food from different countries; but in this night, the chef, the young and talented Mr. Do Kyungsoo, demonstrates the best trait of his food: its simplicity. Kyungsoo may be famous in television for his hard criticism, but between food lovers, his trademark is his “less is more” style. The dinner had very traditional dishes – we all know Twelve is not the place for creativity, but for perfect execution - in beautiful shapes and colors, and delicious tastes. My favorite part, believe it or not, was the dessert: a strawberry and blueberry cake served on a mug (yes, my friends, a vintage-looking mug), which was weirdly romantic and homelike compared to the practical approach Twelve usually presents. My criticism of the menu was always the desserts, or, better speaking, the lack of sweetness – I must say the chef looks anything but sweet on the famous television show UltimateChef, which I have to admit I do watch every week. However, the new menu dessert was the highest point, besides, of course, the view of the stars, not literally, but the many celebrities taking selfies during the guest dinner. I recommend the visit! Don’t forget to make a reservation. It is not easy to eat in the same place that idols like Taeyeon and Taemin regularly eat.

RATING: FIVE STARS

Chanyeol smiles to himself, picturing Kyungsoo reading the review. Chanyeol misses him so much (17 days without seeing his mate… he’s counting) he can imagine Kyungsoo’s living room perfectly, his cute tiny hands holding the magazine, or the shape of his lips when he smiles, relieved – Chanyeol thinks his lips look like a heart, but he knows he may be too cheesy when the subject is Kyungsoo.

He’s happy, but he’s sad. He wasn’t that complex before mating, or maybe he hasn’t noticed. Something hurt in his chest, and, at this point, he just wants to see Kyungsoo, but he doesn’t have his mate’s number – that’s how pathetic Chanyeol’s life is.
He forgets his own birthday. That never happened before.

He picks his guitar, goes to the café and the owner, very confused, asks him:

“Today is you day out, right? Isn’t today your birthday?”

I guess it is, he thinks, after spending the week keeping beer and vodka on his room; Tao is fleeing back to see him with his best Hufflepuff costume; his friends from school are confirmed to come; there are birthday candles on the kitchen table. He comes home to an over excited Baekhyun; he dresses his costume with a sight, and when Taeyeon’s new music start playing, he drinks a bottle of beer just to smile to the people who came to see him.

Dara comes in a beauxbatons costume and actually hugs him. Two years ago he would be crying of happiness. She looks lovely.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t come last year,” she smiles. Chanyeol smiles back.

“That’s okay,” he points to her clothes. “I thought only betas and omegas were accepted in Beauxbatons.”

“They made an exception for me,” she laughs. Holy shit, she’s that great, and yet Chanyeol wants to listen to Adele and cry. “I thought you were a Slytherin, honestly.”

“I did the same thing Harry did,” he confesses. “I wanted to be in the best house.”


“I guess I am,” he nods. “Haven’t drink enough yet.”

“Go drink, then. I won’t keep you,” she winks. He goes to talk to Yeri, dressed in a Durmstrang uniform. Tao brings sake and Baekhyun drinks at least five cups before trying to lift the bottle with a wingardium leviosa. Chanyeol is dancing with Choa when Jongdae pokes him.

“You have like, a thousand missed calls from the same person,” he gives Chanyeol the phone. “That may be your mother, don’t leave your phone in the bathroom!”

It’s not his mother, he knows, because he talked to her in the morning. He checks, it’s Yifan.

“It’s my friend ‘Kriswu’,” he laughs. “He must be confused about the dress code.”

Chanyeol leaves the house – too crowded: more than fifty people inside, - and he goes to the garden to call Yifan.

“Hey, what happened?” Chanyeol says when he hears Yifan angry hello. “You don’t know what Harry Potter is?”

“For your information, I actually have been selected to be on Harry Potter’s cast,” he answers dryly. “My parent’s didn’t want me to move to London when I was ten.”
“That’s rough, buddy. You would be a great Cho Chang.”

“Shut up, I don’t have to listen to this while I’m standing, by the way, in my Slytherin costume, watching your omega wetting his entire couch,” Yifan says impatiently. “Do you know Kyungsoo is in heat?”

“What?” Chanyeol smile dies on his face. “No, I don’t…? I got no email warning me of… I thought…”

“I knew it. I leave one week—” Yifan sighs. “He didn’t want to warn you and Yuri doesn’t know the clients like I do. It’s not her fault that an omega who hires us to get a mate don’t want to bother his mate with his actual job.”

Yifan says the last part in a paternal, angry way, and Chanyeol thinks he’s not the one being lectured.

“Is he okay? What are you doing with him? Are you alone with him?!”

“Oh, Moon. I don’t have time for this, Chanyeol. I’m a mated alpha, he’s a mated omega,” Yifan seems tired. “I found out about his lack of emails and I decided to pass by his house before going to your party. Turns out, he’s in heat. Considering how much he’s lubricating and sweating, probably for a day.”

“Are you looking at his…? Yifan!” Chanyeol’s almost breaks his phone. “Get the fu—”

“As a mated alpha, I have to say, I hate mated alphas. I’m not going to touch your mate,” Yifan takes a long, long breath. “Are you coming here—Shut up, Kyungsoo. Moon helps me, you’re so stubborn. It’s his job! He has to come.”

“I’m coming,” Chanyeol says quickly. “Put a blanket over him, give him water and some food. I’m coming.”

Chanyeol hangs up and runs home to find his least drunk friend. It’s hard, because half of their drinks are gone, but Chanyeol knows at least Jongdae will be sober, watching out if some drunk is going to piss on his beloved plants. He finds Jongdae cleaning the bathroom.

“You know,” he says, barely looking at Chanyeol. “I wasn’t this cleaning freak before living with Xiumin. He was so—”

“Jongdae,” Chanyeol says in such worried tone that his friend freezes immediately. “I need you to drive me to a place.”

“Right now? What happened?” He lets the sponge fall from his hands.

“I’ll explain everything on the way,” Chanyeol gestures to Jongdae follow him. “Come on!”

Jongdae waits until the car is in movement to ask; this helps Chanyeol to contain his anxiety.

“Okay, now tell me who’s dying,” Jongdae asks, looking at the road. “I think the last time I saw you this pale was when I burned my leg.”

“No, it was when my dog died,” Chanyeol says, gulping. “Jongdae, remember our pact of silence?”

“Shit,” he mutters. They made a pact when Jongdae accidentally broke Baekhyun’s Taeyeon Collector’s Album.
“I’m going to leave home today and I won’t be back home until... well, I don’t know.”

“Oh, no. Are you going to disappear again? In the middle of your party?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol took a deep breath. “Because I lied to you. Kyungsoo is not my friend. He’s my mate.”

“That I knew. I’m not stupid,” he looks at Chanyeol briefly before making a curve where the GPS warned him about. “There’s a reason why an alpha disappears few days every month... Also, you two smell the same? It was obvious.”

“Well, now it’s going to get a bit complicated,” he nods to himself. “He actually hired me to be his mate. I’m... working as a hired mate. He’s in the gender closet... he just needs me to take care of him during heats.”

Jongdae doesn’t say a word, but almost hits a car. In the first red light, he pulls Chanyeol’s ear.

“This is the most irresponsible thing you have ever done in your life, Park Chanyeol,” he says, angry. “What in the moon were you thinking?”

“Aww, awww! Let me go!” he complains. The green light saves him. “I don’t know, okay? I was lonely and sad. I don’t know.”

“Is he in heat now?”

“Yes, he’s in heat and he... he hasn’t told me... I just found out because a friend went to check on him.”

“He likes you,” Jongdae shakes his head, clearly judging them. “And you like him, don’t you? Look at you. You’re a mess right now.”

“I do,” Chanyeol confesses. “I do like him a lot. I think I may love him.”

“This— This is horrible. This is... I don’t know, you’re an adult. Fix your life,” Jongdae says. “I will help you this time, because I dated an omega and I know how painful it is to spend a heat alone. But listen... you have to fix this.”

“I will, I promise I will,” Chanyeol says feverously. “Thank you. Don’t tell the guys. I love you.”

“I love you too,” Jongdae sighs. Is there... a Slytherin?

Yifan is waiting for them. He gives Chanyeol the keys.

“Go to the party,” Chanyeol screams, running inside the front door. “Have fun!”

Chanyeol runs to the elevator, runs into the hall, and almost breaks the door trying to open it. The scent is so strong he gets dizzy when the door opens. Kyungsoo is on the couch, curled in a ball, shaking. He’s only using Chanyeol’s shirt: his thighs are wet, his hair is plastered in his forehead, his face is red. The blanket is on the floor. Chanyeol steps in carefully, sits next to him on the couch.
“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol turns him by the shoulder, gentle and slow. “Kyungsoo.”

Kyungsoo looks at him and enlaces his neck with one arm. He inhales Chanyeol’s neck and says weakly:

“Go away.”

“You’re sending me some mixed signals,” Chanyeol mocks, but his chest is hurting again. Kyungsoo looks so small, so fragile – it’s so different from his normal self: the impenetrable, invincible supervillain. “Do you really want me to go?”

“No,” he hugs Chanyeol even tighter. “But you shouldn’t have come.”

“Yeah? Do you think I should leave my mate alone in his heat?” Chanyeol feels suddenly angry. “Are you even hearing yourself?”

Kyungsoo doesn’t answer. He lets his arms fall and lies in the couch.

“Don’t ignore me,” Chanyeol warns.

“I’m sorry,” Kyungsoo whispers.

“For what?” Chanyeol stands up, puts a hand under Kyungsoo's back, other hand under his thights, and lifts him up. “Okay, there you are.”

“No,” Kyungsoo whispers again, eyes closed.

“You’re like a pudding in my arms and you’re still complaining. How can you fit so much stubbornness on a tiny body like yours,” Chanyeol carries him, holding him tight. “I will take you to bed, okay? Stop being dumb for a minute.”

“I can walk,” he says, quietly. Chanyeol ignores him, walking slowly. Kyungsoo puts an arm around his neck. “You can— put me… bed … leave. The… worst part… is over. I—I can take the rest by myself.”

“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol licks his lips, holds his mate tighter while walking. “It’s okay, you know, being in pain. I… can understand it’s hard— but with me you can tell you’re not okay, right? I’m your mate. If you can let me knot you for days, I guess you can relax around me… just for a while. I won’t leave you. I will be right by your side until your heat is over. And after that too, if you need me.”

Chanyeol places him on the bed and picks a blanket. Kyungsoo stops him, holds him by the arm and pulls him down. His small body is shaking, but the violence of it denounces it’s not because of the heat. Kyungsoo is hiding his face on Chanyeol’s neck – he’s crying.

Chanyeol holds Kyungsoo tight until he can talk again. He’s not aroused, even if he’s immersed in Kyungsoo’s scent.

“I hate this,” Kyungsoo says, pressing his face against Chanyeol’s neck. “I hate this so much.”

“How long have you been in heat?”

“Since yesterday,” he hiccups, sniffs, then looks up to his mate. “I’m—I’m really sorry. Are you party over?”

“Is that what you are worried about?” Chanyeol laughs, but he’s still angry. “Have you been in pain
all day because of a dumb party? You’re smarter than that.”

“It’s not a dumb party,” Kyungsoo frowns. He seems a bit better. “Did I interrupted—”

“It doesn’t matter. It’s my job. It’s not your business if I have a party or—”

“It matters to me,” Kyungsoo says harshly. “My life is already a hell because of this heat, I can’t make yours too. It’s your birthday. At least today—”

“Yeah, and I would love to spend the day with you,” Chanyeol kisses him fastly to prove the point. “Even if I don’t, it's not your decision—”

“It is,” Kyungsoo says. “If I don’t want to spend my heat with you—“

“You don’t…?“ Chanyeol sits up. “You don’t… want to spend your heat with me?”

“That’s… not what I’m saying, let me finish,” Kyungsoo grabs his wrist. “I do. I do… But I… I don’t want to ruin your fun.”

“How?! How possibly would you ruin my fun?”

“I know it’s your job, but… you have so many friends and… a fun, different life. I don’t want you to sacrifice your happiness… because… of— That’s what—”

Chanyeol looks down at him and touches his face, caressing the underside of his jaw. Kyungsoo looks calmer now, barely shaking. They should be mating, not arguing. Chanyeol carefully lays over him, kiss him in the mouth, than kiss his neck. Kyungsoo whimpers and Chanyeol lifts his head to press their foreheads together.

“You’re not ruining anything,” he says, eye to eye. “I want you. I want to spend time with you. I want you to need me— when you say you can take it by yourself…? I’m here for that. To make you feel better. And you make me feel better too. My friends will be there after your heat is over—friends understand. And this is my place now, right next to you.”

Kyungsoo kisses him, but not for too long.

“I missed you,” he says shakily. Chanyeol smiles until his face hurts.

“I missed you too. We should be mating…”

“We are mating,” Kyungsoo grins, slapping him weakly. “Mating it’s not about your knot, you uneducated alpha. Also, I won’t let you touch me using this uniform.”

“You’re a Ravenclaw, aren’t you?” Chanyeol laughs. “That’s why you treat me like I’m stupid.”

“Like you’re stupid?”

“Shut up,” Chanyeol tries to kiss him again, but he’s smiling too much. “Promise me you’re not going to do this again.”

“No.”

“Promise me, Kyungsoo!”

“No.”
“I will leave this bed.”

“Okay, okay. I won’t. Don’t be cruel.”

“Ah, I see. I’m the bad guy now. That’s rich coming from you.”

“Are you going to do something… or…” Chanyeol kisses him suddenly. They stop for a while to get the clothes off, and then go back to kissing again. Chanyeol only breaks the contact when he feels Kyungsoo’s hand on his dick.

“Holy shit,” he says, putting some distance between their bodies.

“Can I suck you?” Kyungsoo asks, serious.

“What?!”

“Can—I—Suck—You?” Kyungsoo repeats.

“Why?” Chanyeol sits up, shrinks his shoulders, embarrassed.

“Because I want to.”

“I… don’t know…”

“I need your full consent,” Kyungsoo sits too. He’s not in a hurry anymore. “If you don’t want to, I understand.”

“It’s not that I don’t want to,” he has no idea why he’s being shy. He was never this shy. “… My knot… also… we’re not supposed to do something more useful?”

“You’re uncomfortable with me,” Kyungsoo affirms and his face does the thing that seems disappointment, but Chanyeol isn’t sure.

“No, it’s just…” Chanyeol gulps, his hand moving unconsciously to cover his crotch. “I don’t want you to do that. I should be taking care of you, not the contrary.”

“Did someone already performed oral sex on you?”

“Why are you talking like a doctor, Kyungsoo?” Chanyeol scratches his head. “Yes…? I mean…sometimes.”

Kyungsoo is making a displeased face. “I understand,” he says, but he sounds like he’s not.

“Why do I feel like we aren’t going to do anything today?” Chanyeol sighs deeply. “You sound so calm. Are you still in heat?”

“I am,” Kyungsoo pushes his body against Chanyeol. They kiss and knot, but it still feels like a fight. Kyungsoo bites his mouth while they’re kissing until it draws blood; when they’re mating, he repeats ‘harder’, even if Chanyeol is sure their hips are going to break; Kyungsoo is loud during orgasm, but avoids Chanyeol’s eyes after it.

“Kyungsoo,” he asks. “Kyungsoo.”

No answer.

“You can’t pretend you’re not listening. I’m literally inside of you,” Chanyeol moves his hips up,
“Talk to me.”

“Why are you mad at me?” Chanyeol wishes his voice sounded manlier, but it comes out like a needy kid. “Don’t be mad at me… What did I do wrong? I’m sorry.”

“It’s just…” he makes this angry, impatient sound. “You say you want me to be relaxed around you, but you’re not relaxed around me.”

“Oh…” Chanyeol blinks. “I’m not…?”

“No, sometimes… you look like you’re afraid of me. And… that’s how…”

“Hum,” Chanyeol lets the words sink in. “Maybe you’re right. What can I do then?”

“I don’t know,” Kyungsoo pouts. He pouts. Chanyeol rubs his own eyes – he must be seeing things. “Can we take a bath? I feel really dirty. And you need a bath.”

“Do I look dirty?”

“No, but your feet stink sometimes.”

Chanyeol makes a strangled sound. “Not you too!”

“What?”

“Don’t roast me! What’s next? My ears?”

“They’re weird, but I don’t care,” Kyungsoo seems curiously amused. “Why are you saying that? That’s just how you are. I don’t mind. I like how you are.”

*I like how you are.* Chanyeol is going to tattoo this on his ass. That must be Kyungsoo’s superpower: to make everything seems effortless and simple.


Kyungsoo chuckles at Chanyeol’s exaggerated reaction. It’s a lovely sound. They take a bath, and Chanyeol wraps Kyungsoo in three towels when they finish. He’s shaking, but asks:

“Are you going to walk around naked and wet?”

“I’m not the one who’s burning! I’m scared of you having a thermal shock,” Chanyeol complains, and puts another towel over Kyungsoo’s head.

“I’m feeling like an egg,” he says, looking at his reflection on the mirror. The doorbell rings, and they exchange a look.

“Maybe it’s Yifan? It’s already morning,” Chanyeol checks the window. “The party must be over now.”

Kyungsoo goes to the door. He’s walking funny, wrapped in towels. When he sees who’s ringing the doorbell, he sighs, resting his forehead at the door.

“Do Kyungsoo!” a voice behind the door screams, scaring Chanyeol. “Open this door! I know you’re in there! I can smell your heat scent! I won’t leave until you open this goddamn door and talk to me, you little liar!”
“Holy shit,” Chanyeol says, and Kyungsoo turns to him.

“If I were you, I would hide in the room,” he says, expressionless, and opens the door. Chanyeol is too curious for his own good; he waits.

Oh-Oh, Chanyeol thinks. The Kai guy is in the door, with arms crossed and a glare. Jongin. A pair of eyes peeks from behind his shoulder.

“Hello,” a familiar voice says. “Just for the record, I tried to stop him.”

“Shut up, Taemin,” Jongin spits. “Sit on the couch and keep your mouth shut.”

“I wouldn’t sit there,” Chanyeol says before he thinks. Jongin seems to notice him and points:

“Holy shit, I knew it! I knew it!” Jongin says, turning to talk with the man behind him. “I told you it was the big ears guy!”

“Always the ears,” Chanyeol sighs.

“He also has a big dick,” the man gets out from behind Jongin, smiling. “Hello! Sorry for interrupting your mating! We won’t stay long, I promise.”

It’s Taemin. It’s fucking Lee Taemin, in flesh, talking about Chanyeol’s dick.

“Hello,” he says, face red. He discreetly picks a pillow and covers his crotch. “I will leave—“

“No, no! Stay there, you are the evidence of his lies,” Jongin spits angrily, and turns to Kyungsoo. “So, tell me, when you’re going to tell me you’re mating… this… person? Because I know you told Amber and you lied to me!”

Kyungsoo is so peacefully serious that Chanyeol is confused about being confused.

“I lied because I knew you would react like this,” Kyungsoo says simply. “Also, because this is my life, and maybe you shouldn’t be nosing around. Did you invade my mail box again?”

“I have the password? It’s not like I invaded,” Jongin pouts. “Also, you know I know when you’re lying.”

“Oh boy, this again,” Taemin sighs, weirdly smiling. “There’s food in the fridge, Soo?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods. “Make yourself comfortable.”

“I love you,” Taemin sings and walks to the kitchen as if nothing is happening. Chanyeol wants to leave too, but he’s afraid of leaving them alone.

“Don’t think you’re running away from this,” Jongin says, narrowing his eyes. Chanyeol thinks he looks cute when he’s trying to be scary. “Kyungsoo! Explain yourself!”

“Can’t we do this another time? I’m in heat,” Kyungsoo presses his temples in exasperation. “I won’t apologize to you, if this is what you want.”

“How—What—” Jongin looks incredibly offended. “Your suppressants stop working, you hire a whore to fix your heat, you put your safety in risk and lie to me for months, and you still think you’re right?”

Chanyeol’s brain may be slow, but he recognizes “whore” as offensive—not that being a whore is an
offense, but—he’s not? Right?

Kyungsoo hardens his expression.


“What?!”

“Apologetic,” Kyungsoo says again.

“No?” Jongin lets his arms fall. “I’ve read your emails. I know you’re paying for him. You put an
unknown alpha inside your house during your heat, how dangerous is that, Kyun—”

“Apologetic to him,” Kyungsoo says again. “That wasn’t nice. You’re not like that. I know you’re
angry, I shouldn’t have lied to you. But you’re calling him bad names and you barely know him.”

Chanyeol feels incredibly small when Jongin looks at him.

“I’m sorry,” he says, blushing. “I guess the correct term is sex worker. Is it?”

“It’s hired mate,” Kyungsoo says. “He’s my mate.”

That makes Jongin’s mouth fall open. “You can’t be serious,” he stares at Kyungsoo.

“I am,” Kyungsoo nods. “Now say: I’m sorry Chanyeol, it’s nice to meet you. I will only refer to
you as a hired mate.”

Jongin looks at Chanyeol, speechless for a moment.

“I’m… sorry… Chanyeol? it’s nice to meet you. I will only refer to you as… hired mate.”

“Nice to meet you too,” Chanyeol bows.

“Good,” Kyungsoo nods again. “Now you can scream at me for lying. Chanyeol, why you don’t
keep Taemin company at the kitchen?”

“Okay,” Chanyeol nods, relieved, leaving the room as fast as possible. When he closes the kitchen
door, Taemin has his mouth full of cake – the cake from the guest dinner.

“Yeah, this cake is my favorite dish. Kyungsoo baking cakes, who would—,” He says absently,
before spotting Chanyeol. “Hey, big dick guy. Sit here!”

Chanyeol sits in the chair, carefully placing the pillow over his dick.

“We haven’t been introduced!”

“I know who you are,” Chanyeol says, smiling. “I guess everyone does.”

“Ah, maybe not everyone,” Taemin laughs. “And who are you?”

“Park Chanyeol,” he sighs. “Kyungsoo’s mate or whore, as… Jongin says.”

“Pardon my mate, he’s a bit protective, even with his friends. I guarantee you he has done worse,”
Taemin gets suddenly serious. “He says horrible things when he’s mad. Once he told me he was going to dump me and mate Psy.”

“Psy… the guy who sings ‘gangnam style’?”
“Yes,” Taemin nods, serious. “Can you imagine?"

“It’s really tragic,” Chanyeol smiles sincerely. “But I’m not offended. I guess I’m really a whore. Technically saying, I mean. Nice terms doesn’t change the meaning…”

Taemin eats more cake, eyeing him curiously.

“Well, you see. I also sell my body for money,” he licks his mouth, rubbing the mug between his fingers. “I have to be at least half naked in every danm video and show I do, even If I’m not comfortable with it. And once and a while, I have to kiss some random omega to prove I’m a badass alpha or something.”

“It’s not the same thing,” Chanyeol raises one eyebrow.

“You’re right. I do it to make people horny, you do it because Kyungsoo apparently almost dies in his heat,” Taemin counts on his fingers. “I think it’s so strong because he repressed it. But well, you must be some superman. Like, Kyungsoo… he’s not very… social. I was shocked to find he accepted to mate.”

“I heard he tried to mate before,” Chanyeol says sheepish.

“Oh, you mean Junmyeon?” Taemin bites the spoon. “He’s such a nice person, but they only dated. For some years, yeah, that’s true. Never looked much like a couple. When people date, but don’t mate, the relationship always seems to be pointless, I think.”


Something breaks in the other room. Chanyeol shrinks in his chair.

“Don’t worry,” Taemin smiles easily. “They’ve had worst fights. I’ve been here for the last thirteen years, I’ve seen things.”

“How did you know about Kyungsoo’s heat?”

“Oh, Kyungsoo told me,” Taemin shrugs, smiling softly. “I tell Jongin there are no secrets in our relationship, but I’m just lying. I hide pepero boxes from him all the time.”

Chanyeol can’t help but laugh about that. What else can he do? He’s naked in someone’s else kitchen talking to an idol. Nothing makes sense anymore.

“Wait,” Chanyeol’s brain seems to be working again. “Junmyeon?”

“Yes,” Taemin nods. “Suho, the writer? He wrote *Written in the stars*? Number one best seller few years ago.”

“Fuck,” he tries to get up, but then remembers he’s naked. Chanyeol is reading the book Kyungsoo’s ex wrote. *Kyungsoo’s ex boyfriend is Yifan’s ex mate and Yixing’s actual date?* Chanyeol almost believes the theories Minseok told him. It can’t be a fucking coincidence.


The kitchen’s door slams loudly; Chanyeol almost falls from his chair, startled by the noise. Jongin is standing there alone, obviously not happy.

“Let’s go home,” Jongin says to his mate before pointing to Chanyeol. “And you –*It’s not over.* We
are going to talk.”

Chanyeol gulps, hides his hands under the table. After he hears the front door closing, Kyungsoo comes to the kitchen. He’s in his robe, and he barely looks at Chanyeol, picking some vegetables in the fridge. He holds a giant knife and uses it to cut some carrots, strong and fast – Chanyeol is afraid Kyungsoo may cut his own fingers in the process.

“I’m sorry,” Kyungsoo says, looking at the carrot he’s chopping. Chanyeol asks himself if Kyungsoo has already apologized so many times to someone else. Probably not, he concludes.

“That’s fine,” he says, still worried about the knife, and even more worried about Kyungsoo’s lack of expression. “You know, my friends would do the same thing… Or probably worse, because once Baekhyun went into my things and he found an anal plug—he put it on the front of our house and wrote ‘Chanyeol’s man’ on it. It wasn’t even mine. And another time, in school, Jongdae found out I liked some girl and dressed like her… he kissed me using a wig in the middle of the school. And lately he went to my internet history and found out I watched knotting porn—”

“Do you watch knotting porn?” that caught Kyungsoo’s attention. Chanyeol gets red – again, he talked too much.

“Anh… once? Just once. I was curious… I know… it’s not real. The heat… it’s not--”

“Do you like watching it?” Kyungsoo is still holding the knife. Maybe today is the day Chanyeol becomes a beta.

“No! I think it’s disgusting, and humiliating for omegas,” he recites automatically. “I would never enjoy that.”

“Humm,” Kyungsoo goes back to his activities. Chanyeol lets out a breath. “But why did you watch it, then?”

“I… I never mated an omega…?” he’s positively pink in the ears, they’re burning. “I… I was afraid I was going to do something wrong.”

Kyungsoo ignores him. Things are back to normal. He’s making a soup, Chanyeol notices.

“Are you still in heat?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo answers dryly. “Why you keep asking me that?”

“You… seem… too calm?” Chanyeol bites his lips. “I… we barely…”

“It’s good… no? You said you wanted more breaks,” Kyungsoo says, moving a wood spoon inside of the pan. Chanyeol groans, sad. He wants Kyungsoo’s attention so bad, not even during heat he gets it.

“I’m okay—I can…” Chanyeol suddenly wants to cry. “Come here…”

It’s because Kyungsoo is about to cry, he realizes when his mate leaves the pan in the sink to sit in his lap. He’s still in heat, Chanyeol thinks, this is too much for him. Chanyeol hugs him, kisses his neck, cheek, forehead, and his wet eyes.

“I’m really sorry,” Kyungsoo says with a small voice. Chanyeol knows Kyungsoo is saying that because he’s no good with words. He barely talks, so probably I’m sorry means a lot more than it seems.
“That’s okay, I… wasn’t mad,” Chanyeol smiles, tearing up a bit. “I know it’s not your fault—”

“I know it hurts you, Chanyeol,” Kyungsoo says harshly, all of a sudden, wiping his eyes with the back of his hands. “You’re not… worthless. You’re not a whore.”

Chanyeol kisses Kyungsoo, pushes his tongue against his mate’s pursed lips until he opens his mouth. Kyungsoo kisses him back after a moment, pulls him closer. Chanyeol feels something twisting inside him; he’s sure he’s seeing a side of Kyungsoo no one else sees. He’s seeing Kyungsoo completely and clear.

“Forget the soup,” he says against Kyungsoo’s lips. “Let’s go to bed.”

“Okay,” Kyungsoo gets up in a jump.

It’s a different type of touching, this time. Chanyeol rubs his face over Kyungsoo’s shoulders; Kyungsoo grabs Chanyeol’s hips gently. Moving inside of Kyungsoo feels natural and rhythmic, like waves at the sea. Kyungsoo praises him, talking softly in Chanyeol’s ear, you’re so good, feels amazing, I like it. They sleep fast.

Chanyeol wakes up with Kyungsoo poking him.

“You’re over me,” he says. “I can’t feel my arm.”

“Sorry,” Chanyeol smiles, giving him some space. “Your heat—”

“Yes, it’s over,” Kyungsoo rolls his eyes. “You can go back home.”

“Are you kicking me out?”

“You’re the one asking if it’s over,” Kyungsoo tries to stand up, but Chanyeol pulls him back to the bed. “Also, you have to go back to your party, don’t you? Did you blow the candles?”

“Nop,” Chanyeol remembers it, but shrugs. “It’s probably over already! I will apologize to them later, when I open my presents.”

“Oh,” Kyungsoo’s cheeks get pink. “I’m… I don’t…”

“You don’t have to give me anything,” Chanyeol locks Kyungsoo in a tight hug. He thinks it’s amazing how his mate fits exactly in his arms. They stay quiet for a while, and it’s been a long time since silence made Chanyeol happy, but he loves the discreet sound of their breathings.

“I want to give you something,” Kyungsoo says suddenly. “It’s… the least I can do. What do you want?”

“Is it food? Because I just want to eat your—,” Kyungsoo elbows him. “Okay, it was just a joke. I can only be kinky with you if you’re in heat, I know.”

“Just answer my question.”

“Hummm… so… it can be anything?”

“Anything possible.”

“Anything? Any, aaaany, aaaaaanything?”

“Yes.”
Chanyeol presses his nose against the junction of Kyungsoo’s neck and shoulder. Kyungsoo shivers, but stays quiet, waiting.

“I want you to miss work today and stay here in bed with me.”

“What?!” Kyungsoo tries to move, to break away from Chanyeol’s arms, but fails. “No.”

“You said anything.”

“Anything, like a thing. A palpable thing.”

“Well, too bad I don’t want anything like that,” Chanyeol holds him even tighter after he tries to escape. “By the way, no fancy gifts, the last thing I want is to give your co-workers a reason to call me a trophy mate.”

“To be a trophy mate you have to be exposed,” Kyungsoo sighs. “Also, if I had a trophy mate, you certainly wouldn’t fit in my personal definition of perfect candidate. Let me go!”

“No. Call Amber and tell her you’re still in heat!”

“No.”

“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol pleads. “I missed my party. You should miss work so we will be even.”

Kyungsoo takes a long, long breath. He slaps Chanyeol’s arm.

“Let me go.”

Chanyeol whines, but loses his grip. Kyungsoo sits up in bed and stares down at him.

“Don’t you want to spend your birthday with your friends?”

“No,” Chanyeol says resolutely. “I spend every day with my friends. Today I want to be here with you.”

Kyungsoo shakes his head, jumps off the bed and leaves the room. Chanyeol sits up, rubs his eyes. He looks for his phone on his clothes, thinking how funny will be returning home dressed in his Gryffindor costume. He has approximately 300 messages.

“Holy shit,” he scrolls down. Some of the messages are just people saying happy birthday, but there are a least a hundred from his friends. Baekhyun himself sends him fifty where are u?????.

**baekhyun** chanyeecool

**baekhyun** your cake!!! Lets sing happ bday

**baekhyun** tao is throwing up

**baekhyun** sent a picture *taostripes.jpg*

**baekhyun** he ate noodles you see
baekhyun listen can I eat the cake

baekhyun jongdae told me u fucking???

baekhyun but Dara is here???? We were trying to set u 2

baekhyun IS THE MEAN CHEF

baekhyun OMG QWERTYUIOSDFGHJKL CREAMPIE

baekhyun Jongdae read that

baekhyun he’s asking for divorce again

baekhyun I’ll have to marry Dr. Hot Dimples

baekhyun 4 real where ar ug???

baekhyun u*

baekhyun sent a picture *hotpeopleinhome.jpg*

baekhyun are u fucking

baekhyun send me a video

baekhyun is the mean chef good in bed???

baekhyun does he judge YOUR DICK LIKE

baekhyun too long and thin like a pepperoni sausage!! eliminated

baekhyun I think mine looks like a tuscan sausage???? jongdae agrees

luhan happy bday :) <3 miss u

luhan I left your gift with yifan, it’s a watch!! You never use one

sehun tao, baek and at least half of the party are wasted

sehun sent a picture *theydead.jpg*

sehun 50 points to slytherin

sehun where are you?

sehun Dara is looking for you, please tell me you haven’t left :( 

choa does this yeri girl has a mate?

choa where are you?

yura I came to see you and you left
yura I was going to be mad but Jongdae told me you were with ~someone~

yura I’m glad, you were in need

yura GET SOME AHAHHAHAHA

hyeri can I sleep in your bed because

hyeri your friend told me you’re not coming home

hyeri omg do you read suho LOL

yifan apparently I only came here to babysit your drunk friends

yifan Tao’s new mate is your ex? Life is weird, man.

luhan he left in your room!!!

yifan Is Kyungsoo okay?

hyeri Yifan was here???

jongdae I kept the cake in the fridge, everyone is too drunk to notice

Chanyeol reads, laughing loudly. He needs to check his timeline later to see the pictures and the videos; the party seems to be a success, after all, and that makes him happy.

“You dick does look like a pepperoni sausage,” Kyungsoo chuckles behind him.

“Shut up,” Chanyeol drops his phone on the floor, turning to face him. “Are you reading my messages?”

“I called Amber, I’m not going today,” Kyungsoo ignores his question, crossing his arms. “What do you want to do? No sexual activities.”

“I know! I don’t want that,” Chanyeol tries to hold him, but Kyungsoo steps back, out of his reach. “Let’s watch a movie? Or maybe some anime? And cuddle! I want to cuddle.”

“Okay…”

“Don’t make it sound like a burden… Are you mad or--”

“I’m not,” Kyungsoo walks to his closet, opens it with a concerned face. “I hope my underwear doesn’t strangle your ass.”

“Why are you picking clothes for me? No! No clothes for me and you,” Chanyeol complains.

“Do you expect me to spend the entire day naked?”

“Yes? It’s not like it’s the first time.”

“No knotting.”
“I don’t want to knot you! I just don’t see why we should put clothes.”

“What’s next? Do I have to pretend I’m your teddy bear too?”

“Oh… that would be perfect,” Chanyeol smiles, satisfied. “You know what would be even better? We should order french fries and some trashy pizza.”

Chanyeol is sure he never saw such an offended expression on Kyungsoo’s face.

“You wouldn’t dare.”

After some fighting, Chanyeol orders the pizza. Kyungsoo follows him around holding a cane (???) and tries to block the door when the delivery boy comes, but Chanyeol wins by giving him wet and noisy cheek kisses until he runs away, wiping his face.

“Are there Yifan’s movies on Netflix?” Chanyeol asks, cuddling a pissed Kyungsoo in bed. The sheets are on the floor, the room smells like pizza and they’re still dirty. That’s how Chanyeol knows Kyungsoo is too tired to keep fighting.

“Yes,” Kyungsoo sighs. “They’re horrible. In one of them he’s a freaking cat.”

“Ooooh! Let’s watch it! Oh! I can’t believe it! That must be hilarious.”

“Why are you torturing me?” Kyungsoo asks, serious, but it’s hard to look threatening when he’s tucked in Chanyeol’s arms. “Tell me.”

“What? I’m not,” Chanyeol gives him another noisy kiss in the cheek. “This is the best day of my life so far.”

“Really?” Kyungsoo’s tone is a mix of skepticism and pain. “Being naked in bed all day eating trashy pizza and seeing terrible movies? This is your best day?”

“Yeah,” Chanyeol says, smiling his too-creepy-smile. “This is exactly what I wanted.”

Kyungsoo stares at him blankly and doesn’t complain anymore. After a while, Chanyeol looks down and watches him sleep, instead of paying attention to the movie.

Chapter End Notes

1. I want to thank you all for reading this fic. I started writing WITS a long time ago, and to be honest, I lost control of how long it was supposed to be. Because of that, I thought about not posting it, since I wasn’t in the mood for revising. But I received such nice comments and analysis about the first chapter – I thought no one would read it, since it’s a long story and I couldn’t correct/revise. Well, from now on I guess I’ll continue to post it! Please keep talking to me! I’m shy, but I read all the things here and on tumblr, It motivates me a lot. Thanks again :)

2. There is a mixtape for this fic with the songs mentioned on the first chapter. It’s on 8 tracks (Writing in the stars//I’d rather go blind). Also, you can find the edits/moodboards on tumblr (la-bruja-del-mar, you can ask me anything!).
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

In the beginning, we were free.
Like wolves, we ran in the forest with no gender’s rules tying us.
Scents and mating were a natural part of the organization. No one was less than the other was.
Society of “civilized” man stretched the technology, but restrained us into social norms and put omegas against their nature. Taught them to think they are less for their connections with their ancestors, for their gift of procreating, for their uniqueness.
They told omegas to suppress their scent and scenting ability, an important trait to hunt, mate and protect their litter. They told omegas to reject their leading and aggressive traits and to feel guilty for their sensibility and sexuality. They disconnected omegas from their image, locked in the reflection of the moon.

Chapter Notes

beta’ed by the amazing london9calling!
religious issues, prejudice and slutshaming

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chanyeol is sitting for so long he can’t feel his ass. He hits his head back against the chair. He hates exam days. He only works in the café at night, and it’s six in the morning. The nurse who is draining his blood is not gentle with him, he skipped breakfast to do the exam, he barely saw his friends in the last few days.

But he is okay. He’s more than okay.

After apologizing in person to the people who tried to contact him during his birthday party and coming back to work, he could finally feel good enough to compose and read. He’s feeling emotionally stable and calm.

Kyungsoo’s scent is still in his skin. Chanyeol closes his eyes, inhales and remembers. It was really good, being around his mate all day; to keep poking Kyungsoo’s tummy until Kyungsoo slapped Chanyeol’s hand away; to hear him humming absently while checking his phone; and even being casually spanked for making a distasteful joke about his heats. Doing everything with him feels good, but sometimes Kyungsoo rests his head on Chanyeol’s chest, fidgeting and singing, and well – that’s amazing.

Chanyeol feels a wave of satisfaction very different from knotting or playing songs, something barely audible in his chest, a contentment.

He wakes up to a long and tired sight next to him.

“You make this face,” Yifan shakes his head. “You’re truly fucked, buddy.”
“Yifan,” Chanyeol smiles and tries to stand up to hug his friend. Luckily, the nurse stops him before Chanyeol rips the needle out of his arm. “Oh! Okay.”

“You’re really dumb.”

“What are you doing here?”

“My exams,” Yifan shows the papers. “I guess the tables have turned, as you would say.” Chanyeol laughs, pointing in a dramatic way, and the nurse glares at them.

“You’re next,” she says to Yifan. “If this one decides to let me do my work.”

Chanyeol freezes, sits straight and mimics zipping his mouth. She rolls her eyes before removing the needle carefully.

“Can’t you be… less?” Yifan asks seriously.

“Shut up! How was the party?”

“Nice,” Yifan nods.

“And…?”

“I’ll tell you after we finish here.”

Yifan buys crepes and takes Chanyeol for a walk. Chanyeol doesn’t know where they are going, but he doesn’t mind.

“… and then Tao threw up for the sixth time. He’s no good with alcohol. That Sehun kid… he’s nice.”

“Stop talking like an old man. Sehun must be only few years younger than you.” Chanyeol licks the melted chocolate off the crepe’s filling. “And did you meet Baekhyun? He thinks you’re hot.”

“The noisy kid from Hufflepuff who told me he knew how to make my dick float without using magic?”

“… It’s probably him.”

“He has a mate, no?”

“Yes. He just…. He’s just very flirty. His mate doesn’t mind.”

As if Jongdae could hear thoughts, Chanyeol receives a message.

jongdae @ beagle line >D I’m coming home later!!! I had a problem at work :(  

jongdae chanyeol. we have to talk! you can’t run from me forever!

jongdae don’t sleep early or I will wake you up when I get home
“Sorry,” Chanyeol says, keeping his phone in his pocket. “Go on.”

“Did you like Luhan’s gift?”

“Are you asking me if I liked a Rolex?” Chanyeol laughs. “I guess not…”

“Luhan said you wouldn’t accept it.”

“Because it’s expensive…? I liked, but…”

“Listen. Luhan is rich—not rich like Tao, *new money* style. His family comes from money. He asked me once if I wanted his old Maserati.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol covers his mouth full of crepe.

“And he likes you. Money doesn’t buy true friends,” Yifan looks up, still walking. “He’s very lonely, even if he looks popular. I think he’s too sweet for the things he chooses to do, but he won’t admit it.”

Chanyeol thinks about these words. He throws the stick in a trash can as they walk.

“I have a problem,” Chanyeol says.

“Please don’t start another *I like Kyungsoo* rant. I can tell in your face, you don’t have to tell—”

“It’s not that,” Chanyeol almost screams, embarrassed. “I mean, it’s related, but… it’s something else.”

“Okay, okay. What is it?”

“I started working for CHOOSE because I wanted to record an album,” he says, slowly. “I always wanted to, but—I don’t know… I started doing thing after thing and I never had time. College, military service, casual jobs, being with my friends… I think… I think if I really, really want to do it… I must compromise?”

“Well, yes.”

“So I’m thinking about doing that soon,” Chanyeol says. “I wanted to—“

“Are you gonna drop us too?”

“Well, I mean, after Kyungsoo… well, you understand, right? I won’t be around if he doesn’t need me anymore. But I still have two heats to go.”

“Maybe more than that. Clients can keep a mate for twelve heats, and they usually prefer the full thing.” They stop walking to wait for a red light. Chanyeol has no idea of where he is. “A full sun cycle. You know Yixing is into alternative medicine.”

“Alternative medicine?”

“Yes.” They cross the street. Chanyeol grabs the sleeve of Yifan’s shirt. “Minnie is a specialist in AM. You should read his book. I think have a copy… somewhere…”
“Minnie AKA Xiumin AKA Minseok?”

“Yes…? Wait… why Xiumin?”

“Long story,” Chanyeol sighs. “But I was saying I need your help. I will chase my dream and nothing else will be in my way. I want to record an album, I want to get some use out of the material I have… I just don’t know how to start.”

“Humm,” Yifan turns the corner to face an old building and picks his keys out of his pocket. “But the real question is: what do you want to do with your music?”

“Huh?” Chanyeol follows him. Yifan opens the gate and, after Chanyeol comes in after him, closes the gate and locks it. “Do you live here?”

“Yes,” Yifan nods, distracted. “Answer my question.”

“I don’t understand…”

“What do you want to be with your music? You’re already a musician. So, what’s missing?” Chanyeol bites his lips, moves his head to an inexistent beat, and hits his foot against the ground.

“I want to be… successful?” he tries.

“You’re not? What’s success for you?”

“God, Yifan,” he crosses his arms. “This is too deep. I need to sit down. Where do you live?”

“Here.”

“We’re in the middle of the hall.”

“I live in the apartments.”

“In all of them?!” Chanyeol makes a scene of pointing.

“There are just four,” he says, not moving. “I sleep on the upper floor. It was easier for me to buy them. I hate noisy neighbors.”

Chanyeol is truly speechless.

“It’s not like it was expensive. Your house was probably the same price.”

“Well, yes, it is a big house,” he considers. “But I live with two people. You live alone in an entire building.”

“It’s nice,” Yifan shrugs, walking to one of the doors. Chanyeol watches him silently. Yifan opens the door and waits.

“Call me cheesy or something, but,” Chanyeol walks slowly. Inside, the place isn’t exactly pretty, but it’s cozy – couches, tv, table, lots of small decorative items. “I kind of look up to you?”

Yifan keeps quiet, attentive, sensing the seriousness in Chanyeol’s voice.

“And I think I see a lot of me in you, too. So when I see you… so lonely… I get scared. This is how I’m going to be if I break my bond?”
Yifan stares at him for a while.

“Do you want something to drink?”

“No,” Chanyeol shakes his head.

“You can sit,” Yifan says. “I brought you here to talk. We’re too tall to have a conversation while standing.”

“You’re right,” Chanyeol sits on the closest couch. There are some journals on it.

“I’m not good at starting conversations,” Yifan says.

“I’ve noticed,” Chanyeol laughs. “Can I ask, then?”

Yifan sits ceremoniously in a big beanbag on the ground. It looks like Yixing’s, but bigger. He looks at Chanyeol with his normal threatening face and gestures for him to go on.

“Why haven’t you contacted him?”

“I don’t know what to say.”

“What if he mates Yixing?”

“I’ll try to be happy for them, I think.”

“What if you can never be happy with a mate again?”

“We always can find ways to be happy,” he lifts his shoulders slightly, lets them drop. “I will find something to be proud of.”

“Are one of these apartments just your closet? You never repeat clothes.”

“Yes. They’re also signed clothes. I have a thing for Tom Ford, but don’t tell Tao, I’ve been using Chanel.”

“Are… they… people? Are you telling me you have a crush on a guy called Tom Ford or…”

“I’m not surprised. You’ve been using the same jeans since I’ve met you. The scrubbiest Calvin Klein I’ve ever seen.”

“A gift from Sehun. Is Calvin Klein also a person or…”

Yifan swallows something, licks his lips and nods to nothing in particular.

“Let’s change the subject. You’re depressing me.”

“I was kidding. I know Calvin Klein is a guy who does underwear.”

“Just… shut up. Did you finish your questions?”

“No. So, I just found out Kyungsoo dated this Junmyeon guy. I mean, Suho. Aren’t you jealous? Because lately all I do is get stressed, man.”

“What? Of course not. To be honest, I think it’s hot they’ve dated. Sometimes I’ve even pictured it —”
That makes Chanyeol jump off the couch. Yifan laughs loudly, his expression going all soft.

“Don’t even try,” he says. “Control your hormones. You look like a teenager sometimes.”

“I know,” Chanyeol sits again, an imaginary tail between his legs. “I wasn’t… This is new. I’m just…”

“You don’t have to explain. It’s common being protective, you know. In the beginning.”

“Thank you. Are you going to help me with the album?”

“Humm,” Yifan reclines on the beanbag, a movement that certainly would make Chanyeol fall on the ground, but somehow he looks majestic. “I will… indirectly.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ll find out,” Yifan smiles.

Chanyeol is singing *quelqu’un m’a dit* when he’s interrupted by a long, loud sniff. Nothing is weird in the living room or the kitchen, and he takes some minutes to find Baekhyun behind the couch. He’s in a fetal position, a blanket over his head.

“Hey,” he says, kneeling on the couch, looking down. “Bad day?”

“Hey,” Baekhyun rolls in the ground, looking up. “Bad life.”

Chanyeol sits at the couch and sticks his head out so he can look at his friend.

“I’m listening.”

“The kids were okay today, so I released them early. I wanted to surprise Jongdae at work, I knew he would like strawberry donuts… but he was already there in the donut shop. With that Min- something guy.”

“Please tell me you didn’t make a scene.”

“I didn’t,” Baekhyun sniffs again. “I came home to cry.”

Chanyeol sighs. He leaves the couch, jumps to the other side to sit in the ground too.

“Was he doing something wrong or just talking?”

“He *lied* to be there.”

“You don’t know that,” Chanyeol tries to touch his friend, but Baekhyun moved away, shrieking.

“Yeah? What was the work problem? Minseok’s pants were on fire and he needed Jongdae to take it off?”
“Weren’t they just talking?”

“Well, he’s not at home, is he? He could be doing anything by now.”

“Why don’t you just call him?”

Baekhyun keeps quiet. It’s not his normal behavior, being like this. His nose is red, his eyes are puffy and his fingers are tangled in the holes of the old blanket.

“Jongdae is going to leave me again,” he says, oddly calm.

Technically, Chanyeol thinks, Jongdae left the country, not Baekhyun. At that time, Jongdae was unemployed and studying, so he could move easily. None of them was mated, but it felt weird for them to be apart, anyway. Baekhyun joined an orchestra immediately, travelling and dating constantly. Chanyeol was doing obligatory military service like any other alpha, his life a hell too deep to care about their absences. His squad mocked any sentimental interaction he had with betas and alphas – and, besides his mom, Chanyeol had no omega missing him.

“He’s not leaving. You know he can actually talk with someone he dated without being romantically interested in them. You do flirt at lot and he doesn’t complain.”

“Oh, yeah, Oprah. Turns out, I flirt with people because I’m mated. It’s a joke. I would never mate anyone in this world but him. Jongdae knows that. I don’t lie to him.”

“Oh, what do you want me to say? What can I do to make you feel better?”

“Nothing. No useful advice comes from someone who doesn’t know what it feels like,” Baekhyun turns around, covers his face with the blanket. “I’m going to take a nap.”

Chanyeol waits for Jongdae at the garden. He’s drinking hot chocolate, no sugar; he has a sudden desire to drink something bitter and warm. Jongdae parks in the same place – nothing is different about his clothes, his hair, the way he walks.

“Oh, look at you,” Jongdae puts his bag on Chanyeol’s lap. “Waiting for me? Your hair color is fading. You should dye it red, to match that bite in your mouth.”

The happiness in his tone actually bothers Chanyeol.

“Baekhyun saw you with Minseok at the donut store,” he spits, weirdly enjoying the way Jongdae’s smile falters. “Why did you want to talk with me?”

Jongdae makes a reflexive expression before sitting next to Chanyeol. He looks at the garden, serious. Lately, the rose bush is getting weaker, but it’s probably the weather. The anises somehow look better, resisting the winds and rains. Jongdae takes the mug from Chanyeol’s hands and drinks the rest of the chocolate.

“I wanted to talk about that,” Jongdae inspects the mug. “I thought you liked yours with a lot of sugar.”

“Go on,” Chanyeol plays with the grass under his bare feet.
“I don’t talk much about my relationship with Xiu… Minseok, I know,” Jongdae reaches for his bag and unzips it. “I was unsure if I should tell you we mated. I doubted it, for some time… But since I saw him again, I kept thinking I should.”

Jongdae takes a book off his bag. A blue cover, Coffee with the Moon – free and shameless omeganess, Kim Minseok.

“He called me, you see,” he continues. “I bought his book, asked him to sign it. I’ve missed him, Chanyeol. But not in the way you think… When we mate, we… synchronize. I don’t know how to explain better. It’s like our mate is a mirror, a part of our shadow, walking in the same rhythm. When I left him, he left something with me. I lost a part of me, too.”

Chanyeol picks up the book from Jongdae’s hand. He’s starting to get sick of coincidences.

“I wanted to see him again. Just… see if he’s okay. Baekhyun is my mate, I have no doubt we are tied to each other. Fate is strong in our bond. But that doesn’t erase my past.”

“Why did you lie, then?”

“Well, how badly is he overreacting?” Jongdae shoots him a sad, sad smile. “I know him, Chanyeol. He won’t understand this. He may have dated a lot, but I’m the only mate he had.”

“So… that’s what you wanted to talk?”

“Yes,” Jongdae places a hand on Chanyeol’s knee. “I can’t tell you what to do. But listen… You need to get out of your… situation as soon as you can. This will be incredibly painful… but it’s better if you do it before getting too deep. I don’t want you to feel the same I felt.”

Chanyeol opens the book. There’s a I hope you enjoy the book, read it with love, daedae.

“Go talk to him. He’s behind the couch,” Chanyeol says. “I’ll be here reading.”

In the beginning, we were free.

Like wolves, we ran in the forest with no gender’s rules tying us.

Scents and mating were a natural part of the organization. No one was less than the other was.

Society of “civilized” man stretched the technology, but restrained us into social norms and put omegas against their nature. Taught them to think they are less for their connections with their ancestors, for their gift of procreating, for their uniqueness.

They told omegas to suppress their scent and scenting ability, an important trait to hunt, mate and protect their litter. They told omegas to reject their leading and aggressive traits and to feel guilty for their sensibility and sexuality. They disconnected omegas from their image, locked in the reflection of the moon.

In this book, Dr. Kim Minseok remind us what science has proved: ignoring nature is doing no good to us as a group – omegas, betas and alphas. In an effort to remain “neutral”, we forgot that neutrality doesn’t exist: “neutrality” tends to the ones who created it. Our society is keeping
conservatives rules under the laws and the structure of our lives and denying its existence at the same time.

In Coffee with the Moon, Dr. Kim Minseok tell us about the moon cycles ("heats"); the ties with creativity, identity and body functions; the impact of suppressants use in omegas and alphas; the effects of prejudicial ABO beliefs in the health system; alternative/natural medicine; and, of course, the bond-related subjects.

ZHANG YIXING

Chanyeol is alone in the house when he wakes up.

He thinks it’s time for him to talk with the café owner about his resignation. He wants to do it in advance, so she can replace him before he leaves. She’s really, really nice, and doesn’t show any surprise. You’ve been missing a lot lately, must been busy… could it be because of a mate? The bite was still in plain sight, even with Tao’s lipstick. Chanyeol plays mostly old songs, even if the night is warm and people seem to be in a happy, pop mood. Yeri brings him a coffee, as always.

“I had so much fun at your party,” she gives him the coffee and there are small cookies around the cup. “Your friends are really nice too, Chanyeol. I hope you don’t forget me when you leave us.”

“Thank you,” he bows, clearly touched. He never thought Yeri would have him as a friend. Chanyeol can’t say he has no omega friend anymore. “I won’t forget any of you! You can always be my friend, don’t worry.”

She leans close to him and whispers:

“There’s a man in the corner, don’t look now,” she’s faking a smile, as she speaks. “He’s being weird. I think he was waiting for you.”

Chanyeol pretends he’s laughing, and looks over the cup as he drinks. The man is not subtle. He’s wearing wayfarer inside of the café, a leather jacket and a cap. Chanyeol keeps his things inside the guitar case, as always, and leaves the café, not looking back. It takes some minutes until he notices the car following him.

Chanyeol stops, the car stops. Chanyeol walks, the car follows him. Chanyeol turns back to see who’s driving. The driver rolls the window down.

“Hello,” the man in a cap says. “Come inside the car.”

“No?” Chanyeol says, stepping back in the sidewalk. “Who are you?”

The man sighs. He takes off his cap and glasses.

“Come inside the car or I will make you,” Jongin says. Chanyeol is shocked.
“What the hell?”

Jongin turns off the engine and opens the door. Chanyeol is watching him like a movie scene. Jongin leaves the car, dressed casually in jeans and a white shirt under the jacket. He passes his fingers through his brown, flawless hair.

“For the last time,” he says patiently. He has a huge bite mark on his neck, already fading. “Get into the car.”

“What if I don’t?” Chanyeol walks into his personal space, looking down to meet his eyes. Their breaths are mingling and Chanyeol could see the pores in Jongin’s face, if he had any visible ones – is he even human?

Jongin kicks him right in the balls. It’s a strong kick, and Chanyeol falls to his knees before facing the ground.

“You alphas think you’re so intimidating,” he carefully takes the guitar case from a whining Chanyeol. “Let me keep this in a safe place. I respect musical instruments.”

Chanyeol looks up, but it’s too late. Jongin pushes his shoulders back, and Chanyeol falls on his back. Jongin peacefully straddles him, legs on each side of Chanyeol’s hips.

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol is still in pain. “Is this because I wished I was a beta? I’m sorry, fate. I learned my lesson!”

“Shut up,” Jongin presses his hands against Chanyeol’s chest. “Are you going to get in the car or will I have to do it myself?”

Chanyeol looks up. Maybe he’s still sleeping, everything points to that: he’s sleepy; he’s on the ground; and there’s a hot omega threatening him in a sexy way. This is obviously an erotic omegadom dream. Chanyeol is not proud, but he did visit this tag in his lonelier nights.

“Sorry,” he swallows. “I’m mated.”

Jongin rolls his eyes—or maybe not. The wind lifts dust up, and Chanyeol coughs. Jongin rubs his eyes with his long and pretty fingers.

“Fuck,” he says, bouncing dangerously close to Chanyeol’s sore dick. “Argh!”

“What,” Chanyeol squirms under him. This is some crazy, painful erotic dream.

“My eyes,” Jongin looks up, waving his hands close to his face. “My contact lens! Fuck, I hate when this happens!”

Chanyeol maneuvers him to the side, making him sit on the ground. Jongin is tearing up and his eyes are getting scarily reddish.

“I think you need to take them off,” Chanyeol kneels in front of him. “Let me help you. Don’t move!”

Chanyeol holds Jongin’s chin with one hand, pulls his eyelids up, until Jongin takes out both lenses. His eyes are still irritated after it.

“Where are your eye drops?”

“I think I have one bottle in my car,” Jongin tries to stand up. Chanyeol gets up and helps him. “I
“You look like you’re really high,” Chanyeol laughs. “Let me get your eye drops. Give me the keys.”

“No,” Jongin says, still looking up. “You’re coming with me!”

“To where? You can’t drive. I guess I’m the one kidnapping you now,” he smiles. Jongin tries to slap him, but misses and hits the air.

“I’m not kidnapping you,” he says, crossing his arms. “I just wanted to talk to you. Also, I came to apologize.”

“This is the shittiest apology I’ve have ever witnessed,” Chanyeol confesses, almost laughing. “And let me tell you, I have experience in this area.”

“I’m sorry,” Jongin bows. “I’m sorry twice, I mean.”

“You’re not really good at this, but okay, forgiven. That’s all? Can you see again?” Chanyeol waves his hand over his face. Jongin blinks.

“I can see, but I can’t drive without contacts,” he says, plumbing his pockets. “I will call someone to pick me. Thanks for listening to me. I’m really, really sorry for what I said. Not for the kick.”

“I think I deserved the kick,” Chanyeol nods. “Where are you going? I can drive you.”

“No need,” Jongin says, narrowing his eyes in the front of his phone. “Is… is this… the 3?”

“Ok, listen. I don’t have to go home early tonight or at all. I can drive you,” Chanyeol sighs, carefully taking the phone from Jongin’s hands. “Isn’t this what you wanted in the first place? For me to get in the car?”

“Yes, but I was expecting you to at least scream at me before accepting my apologies” Jongin crosses his arms. “You are being too nice, okay? I’m feeling guilty.”

“That’s because I’m nice,” Chanyeol holds him by the elbow, guiding him to the passenger’s side. He waits to see if there’s another car coming. “Give me the keys.”

Jongin’s car is not like any other car he has driven before. It takes five minutes for Chanyeol to find the GPS, while Jongin is whining, in a struggle with the seatbelt. Chanyeol helps him with the eye drops, but Jongin keeps complaining.

“I will fix this, okay, close your eyes,” Chanyeol says, holding his chin. Chanyeol gives him a light kiss on each eye and smiles. “See? Kissed the booboo away. Now stop crying.”

“That was cute,” Jongin whispers, rubbing his eyes. When he looks at Chanyeol again, he’s serious, even if his cheeks are rosy. “Since you’re not mad with me anymore… can we talk? Sincerely? I have things to explain.”

“Yes,” Chanyeol sits straight. “Listening.”

“I’m really sorry for that day, I was just so mad…” he starts, looking down. “I know it looked like I had no right to say those things to him. But… I don’t know how much you know about Kyungsoo —”

“Not much,” Chanyeol says, fast.
“I’m his best friend since he’s fifteen. It was… almost two years before we were presented as omegas. We synchronized, you see,” Jongin smiles, but a sad, sad smile. “The first lubrication stain he saw… was enough to make him take suppressants. The doctor tried to stop him, but who stops Kyungsoo?”

“Good question,” Chanyeol murmurs.

“I didn’t. It was really hard, but… we grew up together, supporting each other. I mated in my first heat and he never did… until now. Since then, I tell him everything. I don’t tell Taemin everything, and he’s my mate. I even pretend not to know he hides peppero boxes under the bed,” Jongin rolls his eyes. “But I told Kyungsoo everything. Omegas have to stick together, no matter what. No offense, but alphas suck?”

“Offended, but I agree,” Chanyeol says absently like he’s not hearing.

“He was with me in my darkest times. He helped me in every heat when Taemin was in the military. I’m probably the only person he hangs out with, let’s be honest. Imagine how I felt when I found out he was lying and hiding this… entire situation? Right under my nose, with the help of my mate? I was blinded by anger.”

Chanyeol wants to consider that, but somehow he remembers Baekhyun and Jongdae. Secrets are complex things, after all. He turns to Jongin and is shocked to see he’s leaning into Chanyeol’s personal space. Chanyeol closes his eyes, ready for being a victim of another act of violence, but Jongin is only scenting him.

“I don’t know why he decided to hide his heat from me,” Jongin says, reclining back on his seat. “But I know he has feelings for you. You know that? He has a towel he sniffs sometimes. Since I saw you—I recognized your scent, I knew it was yours.”

Chanyeol is numb. Jongin bites his lips.

“Why would he hide something so important from me? I’m not reliable? I’m—Can you drive, please?” Chanyeol reacts a bit exaggerated, turning the engine on and stepping on the gas. “Can you spend the night? Taemin is on tour, and he took the babies with him. Kyungsoo is ignoring me. I guess I’m alone…”

“Okay,” Chanyeol nods. It’s not like he wants to go back home and pick a side in his friend’s couple’s fight. “If it’s okay.”

“I have a lot of things to tell you,” Jongin wipes his eyes. “And I… have to ask one thing, after.”

They stop at a KFC first. Jongin is still with puffy eyes and a sad expression, so Chanyeol is probably going to do everything he asks.

“I can’t go because of paparazzi and shit. Also, you have bigger arms,” he shoves money in Chanyeol’s hand. “Use everything. Bring soda too!”

Chanyeol returns to the car without seeing a thing in front of him; he’s pretty sure he bought half of the place. Jongin takes the bags and the bowls, shushing him.

“If you tell him we ate fried chicken, I swear for the moon,” he threatens again. It’s like he tries to have some second manlier personality, but it is very noticeable he’s using a mask. “I don’t want to be beaten with his stick again.”

“He beat me up with a cane,” Chanyeol confesses.
“You probably deserved it.”

“I asked for delivery pizza?”

“Fuck, haven’t you lost a limb or anything? He must really like you,” Jongin laughs, but stops suddenly. “Well, let me ask you, before I let your big ears inside my house.”

Chanyeol forgets his oily shirt immediately, gulping.

“What?”

“I asked if you knew he has feelings for you.”

“I… I’m not sure… but since we’re mates… I guess,” Chanyeol gestures vaguely. “He doesn’t hate me?”

“Ok, pay attention, disgusting knot owner,” Jongin moves a chicken wing in the air like a finger. “He likes you, okay? He never told me, of course, but I know. Kyungsoo would never tolerate someone like you if—”

“Back to the beginning, I see--”

“Shut up. He likes you, so I want to know,” Jongin drops his hand back in the bucket. “Are you with him only for his money? Because if it’s the case, I can give you money, so you… I just… I just don’t want you to hurt him.”

Chanyeol makes an aborted movement to leave the car. His hands close, fists trembling, before he takes a long, long breath. It’s again a painful, but fair statement. He waits until his voice comes normally.

“No, I’m not,” he looks Jongin in his eyes. “At this point, I wished the contract never existed. But at the same time, I know… It would never happen otherwise.”

“That’s a very ignorant affirmation. Fate finds its way,” Jongin nods to himself. “But— I liked your answer. Do you like him?”

“I… I love him,” Chanyeol says easily, so easily that it makes him laugh.

“Does he know?”

“I guess not. People says I’m obvious… I never told him, anyway.”

Jongin points to the road. Chanyeol drives, listening to the GPS and some soft music. Jongin lives in a secluded place – Chanyeol has to drive five minutes after passing through the gates to see the house. When they’re walking, Chanyeol realizes it’s not that fancy, but extremely private. They pass by three more gates before seeing a blue, cute and traditional house. There’s a garden too, and big dog houses. Inside, it’s even more cozy – a brutal contrast to Yifan’s place, - with pastel colors, many pictures and blankets.

“It’s so silent without them,” Jongin whispers. Chanyeol puts the guitar case next to a wall, and his eyes catch beautiful paintings on the wall.

It’s a moon altar, the first his eyes have ever seen so close. There’s a moon the size of a basketball on the top, a painting of wolves running under the moonlights, moon calendars and colorful stones. His mother does have a small place over the nightstand with seawater and a moonstone, but nothing like
an actual altar. This one has a marble base, decorated with shells and moon phase drawings.

“Are you going to drink anything besides soda?” Jongin asks from the kitchen.

“No,” Chanyeol yells back. He feels like the moon is watching him, somehow. The books on the table seem familiar, and Chanyeol reads the titles. One of them is *Coffee with the moon*. While Jongin is busy, he opens it. *To my first and favourite patient, with all love. Kim Minseok.*

“Come sit in the couch,” Jongin shouts. “Or I will eat everything by myself!”

Chanyeol doesn’t think it’s humanly possible to do that, but he runs anyway. Jongin is sitting with his feet over the couch, no shoes on. He gives Chanyeol some space to sit next to him, but he doesn’t put on music or turn on the TV. He just stares at his visitor.

“So, will you tell me about yourself, pretending I haven’t researched even your blood type, or you just want to listen to my—I guess Taemin’s theory?”

“What theory?” Chanyeol scratches his nose. “You researched me? How?”

“Taemin thinks Kyungsoo told him because he didn’t want to ask for help,” Jongin drinks his soda. “And of course I would help him; whether he’s asking me for it or not.”

“You keep saying help,” Chanyeol turns to him slowly. “You said he helped you, you would help him. What does that mean?”

Jongin keeps eating the chicken slowly, staring at Chanyeol. It’s becoming a habit to be silently judged by everyone.

“Oh…” Chanyeol straightens up. “That means sexy time? Are you guys…?”

“Sexy time. What the hell…? Are you eleven or something? We don’t fuck,” Jongin spits. “But yeah, he took care of me during heats, brought me water, sang for me, helped me with the toys…”

The image forming in Chanyeol’s head is making him aroused and jealous. It’s an uncomfortable feeling.

“I’m not like Yifan, I’m not like Yifan,” Chanyeol chants.

“I’m telling you serious stuff and you’re focusing on this?” Jongin licks his fingers. This does not help Chanyeol. “I will be very honest with you. Do you believe in fate and in the moon connection?”

“No,” Chanyeol says, but he’s not really sure. He tries to remember what the “moon connection” is.

“Good. Kyungsoo neither. I told you he suppressed his heat even before the first one, right? But let me tell you: it wasn’t the only thing he lost. He used to sing—I mean, he loved to sing. It was… a gift. But as you know, the suppressants, that garbage, affect people’s voices after some time of use. There are other things too. It makes it hard to smell, to feel things, to understand what your body is saying,” Jongin sits in a lotus position, facing Chanyeol. “He preferred to stop singing than having heats. He knitted, too. I think he still does, sometimes, when no one is looking. He used to make sweaters for us, but he stopped doing that too. He never accepts affection in public easily. Only with me, because I’m his public mate, but… he used to be a koala, too. All the time. Sitting in people’s laps, leaning on them… touching them. Do you know what that means?”

Chanyeol shakes his head negatively.
“He bashes everything which sounds too omega. He hates his omeganess. He hates an important part of who he is,” Jongin says intensely. “But we cannot hide who we are forever. The suppressants stopped working and he has his heat… I don’t know, but… I’ve heard—Amber told me it’s horrible.”

“It’s… scary.”

“Because he’s suppressing. Because he denies his essence. It’s not his fault. I mean, I embrace my omeganess, but sometimes I have to be someone else in order to be safe. People out there hate omegas, even if they don’t say so,” Jongin relaxes his shoulders. “I can’t say much about being not mated, of course. I… always had a mate. And maybe because of that it was easier for us – me and Taemin, - to be comfortable in our skins. We’re so connected sometimes people mistake us for each other. If we’re together, they never know our genders. I’m not afraid of looking too alpha-y. He’s not afraid of looking like an omega. Because when you embrace who you are, you realize that it doesn’t matter. Being an alpha, omega or beta… they’re just differences like hair colors or sizes of the nose. They give you some traits, but they don’t define who you are.”

Chanyeol looks at his own hands resting on his thighs. Jongin offers him some chicken. They eat in silence for some minutes.

“You do the same thing, don’t you?” Jongin says casually. “I have a good nose, but I bet most people can’t smell you. You look anything but an alpha, even with… this… big… everything.”

Chanyeol lets his body fall in the couch, looking up.

“I never had a rut.”

“Good Moon,” Jongin says displeased. “Ruts are so great for your body… I can’t imagine how sexually repressed you are. What are you afraid of?”

Chanyeol never thinks about being afraid. He just takes suppressants to be more comfortable, to make more friends, to not to be embarrassed publicly… He doesn’t want to be like the smelly alphas, walking around stuffing their chests as if they’re making their territory… He wants to be more… neutral. His sister was on suppressants too, after all.

“Not… being in control of my body?”

“That’s exactly what suppressants do,” Jongin slaps him lightly. “If you had regular ruts, you would be more relaxed. Sometimes I don’t even know Taemin is in rut? He just dances a lot and annoys me and the babies.”

“I don’t know if I want to talk about that, okay? It’s enough for me you talking about “helping” Kyungsoo.”

Jongin shoves some chicken in Chanyeol’s mouth, laughing.

“Are you jealous of him that much? My mate doesn’t mind. Why would you?”

“I just feel jealous… all the time…” Chanyeol lets the air out of his lungs. “I wish I could stop feeling like this. I’m not into possessive behavior. I’m… not like that.”

“You’re doing this because you feel insecure about him. I can tell this by experience – I was just… I was way worse than you are, I promise you,” Jongin picks up his phone after rubbing his oily hands on his pants. “Don’t worry, I bet he feels the same. He follows you and all your friends on instagram.”
Chanyeol jumps off the couch, then sits closer to Jongin.

“What do you mean?” he stares at the screen. “Are you invading his account?”

“I have the password! Can everyone stop saying that?”

“He doesn’t follow me. I went to his account, also, it was private.”

“You really don’t know much about Kyungsoo,” Jongin chuckles. “He’s the king of keeping secrets.”

Jongin lends him the phone. This account is @prince-of-tennis12, and there’s just an anime name for identification: no pictures, no profile info. Jongin is right, the user follows Chanyeol and all of his friends, including his recent, brand new ones. Jongin closes Chanyeol’s jaw delicately.

“If you tell him I showed you that, you die,” he smiles. “I’m going to take a bath, have fun on Instagram or… everywhere. Anything you want, you can pick, okay? Just keep your alpha hands away from my altar.”

Chanyeol nods, still focused. @prince-of-tennis12 follows everyone Chanyeol follows. Everyone, including the cats accounts, the café where Chanyeol works (!!!) and holy shit, even Dara. Chanyeol stays there, sitting still, stunned, before leaving Jongin’s phone on the couch.

He walks to the wall closest to him, full of pictures. The one which calls his attention is a picture of Minseok and Jongin. They look incredibly young, and they make Chanyeol remember Kyungsoo’s pictures – maybe Minseok is in one? Chanyeol is ready to believe any crazy connection, after all these coincidences.

He remembers what he read in Minseok’s book, something that he also read in Junmyeon’s book. He read about the moon connection: the correlation between omegas, moon and water. Moon controls the water and waves; the cycle of the heat is the same amounts of days (if regular) as the moon cycle; the heat, by the old legends, it’s the manifestation of the Moon controlling the omega’s body, materialized in their “leaking”, sweat and lubrication. An actual state of trance. Chanyeol even watched some rituals on YouTube so he could better understand Junmyeon’s descriptions. People dressing in wolf skin, howling at the moon; some dancing, some watching, scenting. The wolf thing, Chanyeol knows, because he’s not really that ignorant. Similar paths of social and reproductive organization, he wrote in an essay in school.

Chanyeol puts the book in its place and goes back to the pictures. Mostly from friends and family. The other part is just pictures from Jongin’s pets: dogs, cats and birds. Chanyeol picks one from the wall: It’s Taemin and Jongin wearing the same sweaters, each one holding a dog in his arms. It’s ridiculous and insanely cute – Chanyeol rubs his hand against his chest unconsciously. He misses Kyungsoo against his body; he wants to put Kyungsoo inside of his clothes and just walk around. Chanyeol sighs, puts the portrait in its place and picks another.

“It’s my family,” Jongin says, behind him. Chanyeol turns back violently. Jongin is in a tiger onesie, wet hair and cleaned face. His eyes are slowly getting back to normal.

“Oh,” Chanyeol looks down. Five people sitting at a table.

“This is my parents and my sisters.”

“They look nice…”

“I know we don’t look alike,” Jongin gives him a brief smile. “We’re adopted, my sisters and I. My
parents are betas.”

“They’re beautiful like you,” Chanyeol says in a polite way. “Family are the people we love.”

Jongin studies him.

“Come on,” he finally says to Chanyeol. “Let’s watch something.”

That escalated quickly, he thinks, as he’s slapped. Jongin has this loud, high-pitched laugh and he tends to spank people during it. They were talking about the series on the television, Chanyeol made a joke and now Jongin looks too pleased.

“You’re funny,” he says, leaning in bed. How they went from “whore” to hanging out in bed, only the Moon knows. “Your guitar is okay? I kind of threw it inside the car…”

“Yes, it is.”

“Can you play it for me?”

“Of course,” Chanyeol leaves the bed to grab his guitar. Jongin looks thrilled to see him with the instrument. He takes a picture and send it to someone. Chanyeol wants to ask, but he keeps quiet, just looking.

“Oh, my Moon! Look at this,” he shows Chanyeol the screen. For a second, he thought it could be Kyungsoo.

**jongin sent a picture**

**jongin** he likes me now!!! He is going to play for me

**taemin** is this another alpha in my bed, you even sent me a pic

**taemin** I’m speechless with your cheating ass

**taemin** is… this because he has a big dick?

**taemin** you said you liked mine :(?

**taemin** hey, did he accept your apologies or you just kidnapped him??

**taemin** I need to know if I have to call my lawyers, are you keep him against his will??

**jongin** he accepted!!!!!!!!!!!! He’s my friend now

**taemin** ok, say goodnight to the babies

**taemin sent a picture**

While Chanyeol is clearly embarrassed for his reproductive parts being a subject of their
conversation, Jongin seems happy to see the picture of the dogs and cats. He sends Taemin a long, long audio, asking about what they ate, did, if the ears of one of them (the name is Michael Jackson) are better after the meds the doctor prescribed…

“They’re really your kids, aren’t they?” Chanyeol laughs. He had a dog once, but a car hit him.

“I guess,” Jongin says, trying to smile. He shakes his head and looks at Chanyeol. “So, play something for me.”

“What do you want?”

“Fluffy songs,” he says, tucking himself under the blankets. Chanyeol plays some childish song his mother used to sing for him. He’s so concentrated he barely notices Jongin is messing with the phone again. He thinks Jongin must be feeding Taemin with news, so he keeps playing.

“Did you like the song?”

“I did,” Jongin nods. “I put it on Instagram.”

“What?” Chanyeol takes the phone away from his hand, almost dropping his guitar on the floor. “What?!”

“I guess Kyungsoo will finally stop ignoring me now,” Jongin says peacefully. “I tagged you.”

kimkai some of you have mp3, I have @pcy_real to sing me to sleep ♥(˚◡˚)#video #music #singing

callmebaby ohhh who this??; @growl

kaisbaby *eye emoji* kekekekekek

kaistal I LOVE the song!!!

julyann2 @anna56

omegascelebs good night, nini! <3

cute___doggos_2 cute!

“Sehun is going to eat me alive when he sees this,” Chanyeol bites his lips. The number of comments on the photo is increasing alarmingly.

“Who’s Sehun?” Jongin yawns.

“My friend… he has a crush on you…”

“Which one? The red hair is maybe, the blonde is okay, the orange hair is fuck yeah,” Jongin smiles. “Or… maybe is the cutie who looks like a deer? Is he an omega? I always wanted to be in a same gender relationship…”

“How did…” Chanyeol shrugs. Seems like everyone knows about his life better than him. “Sehun has orange hair… And I really hope you haven’t called Luhan an omega because he hates it.”
The phone in Chanyeol’s hands vibrates and plays some pororo song. Chanyeol looks at the screen and a surprisingly fond sound comes out of his mouth when he sees a pic of Kyungsoo in a penguin onesie glaring at the camera, the name *the penguin lord!* flashing in the middle of it.

“I think it’s him,” Chanyeol lends the phone to Jongin. “Please send me this picture later.”

“Did you like it?” Jongin answers the call, putting on the speaker. “Hello…?”

“What are you doing to him?”

“Good night, Kyungsoo,” Jongin winks. “How was your day?”

“Are you saying something offensive, because I—“

“If you answered my calls or my messages, you would know I was trying to apologize to my friend Chanyeol. He’s right here. Say hello to him!”

“Hello,” Chanyeol says before Kyungsoo can say anything. He’s weirdly emotional about Kyungsoo’s sleepy voice over the phone.

“Did he do something mean to you? I can go-”

“No,” Chanyeol says fast. “He apologized. We’re okay. I swear!”

“Don’t let him tell you what to do. Or convince you to eat disgusting food.”

“I am not eating—“Jongin tries.

“Keep your lies to Taemin. Give my number to Chanyeol in case he needs to run away from you.”

“I guess you’re the only one here who can lie?” Kyungsoo hangs up and Jongin almost breaks the phone in his hands. “Moon, I hate when he does that!”

“How do I always get in the middle of other people’s fights?” Chanyeol asks himself.

“How do you not have your mate’s number?”

Chanyeol scratches his head. Jongin blinks, then makes an ‘O’ with his mouth.

“I’m sorry,” he says, blushing. “You two never see each other, right?”

“No,” Chanyeol puts his guitar next to the bed, just to do something with his hands. “I just…”

“Give me your number,” Jongin asks and Chanyeol spells out the numbers. “Now go get your phone.”

There are some messages from “unknown number”: Kyungsoo’s contact and many pictures of Kyungsoo, Amber, Jongin and the other guy, all of them in cute onesies.

“Who’s this guy?” Chanyeol points to the man in a bunny onesie. Jongin shoots him a funny look.

“Junmyeon? You never saw him? I know Kyungsoo has pictures of him in his house. And he’s famous…?”

“I don’t pay much attention to faces. I generally see the top of people’s head.”

Jongin laughs loudly, hitting Chanyeol’s arms.
“For the moon, you’re just hilarious,” Jongin lays down on his pillow. “Aren’t you going to sleep… or… just going to lie there dressed like you’re really planning to run away?”

Chanyeol feels his face burn.

“I sleep in my underwear,” he whispers.

“I saw your dick,” Jongin spits. “I will survive seeing your nipples again.”

“Okay,” Chanyeol takes off his clothes and gets in bed. It doesn’t feel weird, but he’s feeling guilty. Like he’s doing something wrong. And he’s… not?

Jongin sleeps fast, Chanyeol has no memory of sleeping, but he wakes up with a poke in his chest. He looks down and sees a tanned arm over his hips. Jongin is dead asleep next to him. Another poke, he looks up.

Moon help him, it’s Kyungsoo. He is standing near the bed, dressed in formal clothes – maybe Chanyeol is making him up. Chanyeol pinches himself. He’s awake.

“Get out of the bed,” Kyungsoo whispers.

“Okay, I can explain,” Chanyeol jumps off the bed fast as lighting. Kyungsoo just walks to Jongin’s side. “It’s not what it looks like.”

Kyungsoo frowns, but pays him no mind, fixing the weird way Jongin’s arm fell on the bed. Kyungsoo caresses Jongin’s cheek with his index finger lightly, in such a delicate way that it makes Chanyeol’s heart hurt, then walks casually to the door. Chanyeol follows him – unconsciously, by scent. When they get out of the room, Kyungsoo closes the door cautiously.

“Thanks,” he says, looking at the floor. “He doesn’t like to be alone. Brings him bad memories.”

“No… problem?” Chanyeol smiles, confused and relieved.

“I should have… I’m being too hard on him,” Kyungsoo sounds worried. “Are you really on good terms with Jongin?”

“Yes…” Chanyeol nods eagerly. “I like him! It was just a misunderstanding.”

“Good. I was –”

Chanyeol can’t stand another minute of just looking at Kyungsoo and hugs him. Kyungsoo is using a cotton shirt with those scent-blocking perfumes, but Chanyeol doesn’t care – his mate is warm against his chest.

“I have a meeting with food distributors,” Kyungsoo says, but holds him anyway. “I can’t stay. I just came by to see if you’re okay.”

“Just five minutes,” Chanyeol pleads, nosing at his mate’s neck. “I won’t keep you any longer.”

Kyungsoo mutters an okay, standing quiet in Chanyeol’s arms for a minute or two. After that, he pushes him away, and Chanyeol almost believes he’s going to be at least slapped, but Kyungsoo holds him down by the ear until they’re close enough to kiss.
It’s more like a press of lips. Chanyeol does it again and again, because he’s abusing of Kyungsoo’s rare patience.

“I miss you,” he says, rushing the words. He’s not lying. When Chanyeol thinks he can only see Kyungsoo again on the next heat, he feels like he can’t breathe.

“I have to go,” Kyungsoo says, in an indecipherable voice. Chanyeol lets him go slowly. Kyungsoo pats him in the head. “If it’s not much trouble… could you hang out with him for a while?”

“Jongin?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods. “I’m really busy today and I can’t— That’s okay if you don’t want to.”

“Well, I don’t mind, I’m not busy,” Chanyeol ogles Kyungsoo’s tight pants. He looks hot today, Chanyeol thinks, shameless. “I would do anything if you asked me to. You know that, don’t you?”

Kyungsoo bites his lip.

“Thank you. I left food in the fridge,” he says, leaving without looking back. Chanyeol hates himself, but while he’s still hurting, he can’t help but notice how good his mate’s ass looks in those pants. Then, he gets jealous, because Kyungsoo never dresses this good when he had a meeting with Chanyeol. It’s an entire list of feelings until Jongin wakes up and eats, crying out of happiness.

“If Kyungsoo didn’t cook for me, I would have died years ago,” he tells Chanyeol, while eating some tapioca porridge. “I tried… but I’m not good. I’m glad no one expects omegas to cook these days.”

“Have you ever met conservatives?” Chanyeol laughs, some of the porridge pours out of his mouth. “They do think they should live for cooking and having babies, never leaving home.”

Jongin stops moving his spoon for a few seconds, before putting in his mouth.

“Yeah,” he says weakly. “I don’t talk to those cavemen. I grew up in a very progressive house. My parents are associated with Beta Rights.”

“Oh… My friend Jongdae is too, you know, the blonde one,” Chanyeol remembers he hasn’t warned his friends he’s okay. “I gotta let them know I’m with you…”

“Are you going to stay with me?” Jongin looks at him with big, big eyes. “You don’t have to…”

“I just have to figure out some things today,” he says sincerely. “Maybe two heads think better than one.”

chanyeol I’m alive and well!!! friend’s house

baekhyun (°°)

chanyeol next time I will talk to jongdae

“I know Kyungsoo asked you to be here,” Jongin says, and he’s blushing. “He thinks I need a babysitter. You don’t have to be around if you have things to do.”
“I don’t… at least until the afternoon. Then I’ll just play at the café again,” Chanyeol shrugs. “And you can come with me.”

Jongin smiles, bright and open. He’s very beautiful. He’s also, Chanyeol finds out, a big mess. Jongin constantly walks into glass doors (I forgot my contacts!), stops mid-sentence when he sees a pet (what’s his name?? sorry, it’s a her!! sorry girl!!), laughs at absolutely anything in a very noisy way (have you seen those little chipmunks??) and he unconsciously follows Taemin’s voice when he hears his songs playing (he sings at home all the time!! I don’t know the difference!).

“How did you two meet?” Chanyeol asks, biting the straw of his milkshake (he secretly hopes Kyungsoo never finds out he’s eating fast food). They wait in the line for the movie, it’s a scy-fi.

“Ballet,” Jongin laughs, throwing his head back – he does laughs a lot. “We were eleven.”


“Yes, it is, isn’t?” Jongin smiles, brushing his neck. Chanyeol notices the fading bite. “But we were just kids. He was my best friend. I didn’t think… I guess I had no idea he was going to be my mate. Puberty helped Taemin a lot, I was so much hotter than him.”

“You… still are…?”

“I am?” Jongin laughs again. “That’s cute. Maybe I am, but he’s more popular than me.”

“Don’t hate me, but I’m not a fan of him.”

“I don’t mind!”

They walk a bit in the line. The place is crowded, so Jongin is using a cap, half hidden in Chanyeol’s embrace. He’s an octopus, but Chanyeol is a needy person and doesn’t complain.

“Did you hear about this movie?” Chanyeol asks. “I don’t know anything about it.”

“Of course I did! Everyone is talking about The Binary for like, months! It’s based on a bestselling book by a scientist. You know, that genius one with a robot voice? He has a disease and he can’t move his body.”

“Yeah? I guess Baekhyun told me… And I forgot.”

“Doesn’t he mind if you watch it with me?”

“Nah, he has a mate for that,” Chanyeol smiles. “That makes me think… Jongdae and Baekhyun met each other when they were eleven, too. But they dated so many people before dating each other.”

“Your friends?” Jongin asks, a bit intrigued. “Blondie and red hair?”

“Yes, exactly.”

“They’re mates?”

“Yup.”

“So maybe you haven’t paid enough attention. Mates are mates even before they know. Fate is always sending signals.”

“I don’t believe… well. I guess… maybe. They did act like twins or something. I… was the one who
kept doing music. They went to uni together, and… they have similar interests… they have the same height… and the same taste in—"

“You don’t know much about mating, do you? We don’t have to become each other when we mate. I mean… Taemin and I… it’s different, because we mated too young…” his expression gets darker, somehow. “And… well, it’s like they say in Teenage Mating, our scents have mixed before we even finished maturing our body. We do look alike in most things, but our case is specific. Most people are complementary opposites or… just people who fit, you know.”

“Humm… so I don’t know if there were any signals,” Chanyeol helps Jongin to cover his face as they enter the movie theater. “Did you read your signals or…?”

“I guess the biggest one was because I didn’t want to mate him, it just happened that my heat and his rut synchronize… which at that point I thought it was a coincidence, but today I know there’s none. We were obviously mated in everyone else’s eyes, but I liked someone else. I thought I did,” Jongin points to their seats. It’s in the front, for security reasons. “I’m glad everything worked out for us to be together, even under such complicated circumstances.”

“You thought you just reacted to hormones?”

“Yeah,” he laughs again, sitting in his seat. “Taemin didn’t even know he was an alpha. Minho… a friend of his told him everyone he had a knot, as a joke. It was a crazy night.”

“Did he never study biology in school?” Chanyeol sits carefully while holding the popcorn and the milkshake. “So, what happened?”

“He studied in a conservative school, I went to public,” Jongin drinks Chanyeol’s milkshake, even with the bitten straw. “Sleepover at his house… I was already lubricating, but I had no idea of when my heat would come… I guess I triggered his rut. The rest was biology.”

“And the other person? The one you liked?”

“Oh, that person rejected me before anything could happen between us,” he blushed, putting some popcorn in his mouth to disguise his redness. Chanyeol frowns. He thinks it’s impossible that someone would ever reject Jongin. He may be a bit moody, but he’s such a cute, attractive, lovely person, who would be immune to such sweetness—

“Fuck, it was Kyungsoo, wasn’t it?” Chanyeol stares expectantly at him.

“He… told you?” Jongin is already purple by now. “Why would he— it was like… a decade ago…”

“No, he didn’t. I just guessed,” the lights are down, but Chanyeol faces him, anyway. “Based on the fact you interrupted his heat to call me a whore and everything.”

“Oh, no, I did, but, see…” he’s cutely embarrassed. “That’s wasn’t because I was jealous. That was because he lied.”

“I don’t believe you. I know you guys had some sexy time,” Chanyeol tries his best to be just mad and not think about it in a hormonal way this time. “By the way, it’s over. I don’t want any funny business between you two, after knowing that.”

“Can you please stop calling— these weird terms. Spending my heat away from my mate was a hell, it’s not like I was enjoying it,” Jongin stops talking after someone shushes him. The movie is about to start. “I know I’m too… attached to him—”
“Attached? Don’t you think it’s possessive or—”

“Yes, attached,” Jongin is whispering close to Chanyeol’s ear, the trailers are too loud. “Maybe it’s hard for me to see him mated, but I have a mate myself. And I can see fate was against me and Kyungsoo being together. He rejected me because he didn’t want to date anyone, but the same reason made him find you. Also, I only spent the night I mated in Taemin’s house because I was heartbroken and he was trying to cheer me up. The Moon knows better than us.”

“The Moon likes to see people suffer, then,” Chanyeol mutters.

“Only the ones who go against her will,” Jongin whispers again. “Because they can’t see the signals.”

“Sometimes you talk like conservatives, but instead of the God, it’s the Moon,” Chanyeol says, too loud. “What’s the point of believing in something that gives you no free will?”

“Conservatives uses their God as an excuse to justify oppression,” Jongin spits. “The ones who listen to the Moon are the ones who listen to themselves. I’m saying fate exists, but not that I know what it wants or it’s an immutable, painful old truth. Some things change, some don’t. Like everything else in the world.”

“Everything changes in the end,” Chanyeol is tired.

“Everything changes because we’re the same thing. Stars have died but their elements are in our body. They’ve changed their external form. You’re not a water person,” Jongin shakes his head. “You don’t know we can change our form, but not our essence. Alphas are just like that, instead of change to pass around the problem, they just explode things in their way.”

“So I’m destructive for being an alpha? I mean, I understand you’re saying as a group, but me, I, am like that too?”

“Everyone has a destructive nature—a savage, wild one, from our wolf side. I was just telling you that you never had to change to fit anything. You live in a world that fits you better, so you never had to talk to your Moon side, to find a way to survive by adapting.”

They’re shushed intensely enough to pay attention to the starting of the movie. It’s an intense narrative, incredible special effects and good actors, so they talk about that on the way to the café. Chanyeol plays his traditional set, all his favorite songs, and Yeri is talkative on his coffee break.

“Is that your boyfriend?” She glances to Jongin, sitting at a table in the back. “He’s so hot!”

“No, he’s not,” Chanyeol laughs. “He’s too much sand to my little truck.”

“Yeah, like I would believe that,” she hits Chanyeol in the arm. “Everyone knows you’re a player, Chanyeol.”

He almost chokes on his coffee, but Yeri keeps talking.

“Choa… your friend, said she can play here a few days a week when you leave,” she smiles. “She’s really nice. I’m glad she accepted our offer so soon.”

“Yeah, I wonder why she did that,” Chanyeol drinks a sip to keep his mouth shut. “Thank you for the coffee!”

He convinces Jongin to stop by Sehun’s apartment to say hello. Sehun seems about to faint in
Chanyeol’s experienced perspective, but his resting bitchface tricks Jongin and it’s hard to notice he’s fangirling inside.

“Oh, such a nice place,” Jongin nods, looking around. “I would live like this if I was single.”

“He’s not sin—” Chanyeol says, and Sehun elbows him in the stomach so hard Chanyeol thinks he spits some coffee.

“My boyfriend lives in another country,” he says quickly. “I’m single in this country.”

“Stop trying to cheat on Tao,” Chanyeol whispers to Sehun when Jongin steps inside of Sehun’s closet. “Jongin is mated too!”

“Don’t drag the mood down,” Sehun whispers back. “What are you doing here with him, anyway? How did you guys meet?”

“Long story,” Chanyeol sighs, waving his hand dismissively. “Also too weird. Go talk to him for a while! I will pretend I’m not here.”

Sehun and Jongin get along just fine; because they work in the same field, they have many co-workers in common. They also know a lot about clothes and shoes, so Chanyeol gives up talking to them and checks his Instagram. Jongin posted a video of Chanyeol playing in the café. Since the last night, more than four hundred accounts asked to follow him – Chanyeol accepts everyone, but it takes time. Jongin leaves to talk to Taemin on the phone (Is Shakira eating fine??? She hates the dog food you buy!!), Chanyeol talks about the movie.

“So it’s the same time than us, like, they have cars, internet, social media and everything,” Chanyeol pours tea in Sehun’s winter is coming so we need hot coffee mug. “But they have another gender system. It’s like, first there are only man and women and in some groups a third gender… and only women can get pregnant.”

“Like humans are… cats or something?” Sehun is drinking in the Beta is the best version mug.

“Yeah, like most animals,” Chanyeol takes Jongin’s mug, Sehun’s favorite (I like my coffee like my ass: too hot for you). “But they think it’s kind of oppressive, because there are some rules and different laws for women and… there are some people who tries to be out of the system like… no gender, or not fitting in the one they are assigned… kind of. Well, in the end it’s different but they have the same problems as us.”

“Scy-fy is always a metaphor, isn’t it?”

“I guess. I went to a library with Jongin and we bought the book. The guy believes in multiple universes. He even describes one with hybrid people. People mixed with animals.”

Sehun laughs, hitting his own thigh.

“You would be a dog! And Jongdae a dinosaur!”

“That would be horrible. I don’t want to have a flea problem.”

“Sorry,” Jongin sits with them. “I don’t trust him with the babies… Is this my tea?”

Sehun nods in his permanent state of blushing.

“Thank you,” he smiles. “Can we go out again Sunday? I have nothing to do this weekend.”
“I’m fine with it. Want to join us, Sehun?”

“I guess…”

“Can we do some hard exercise? I’m tired of being stagnant,” Jongin checks his legs. Sehun is getting redder, so Chanyeol knows exactly what he’s thinking.

“Of course,” Chanyeol laughs, covering his mouth with the mug of the tea.

Maybe it’s because of the movie. Maybe it’s because of the fried chicken and the milkshake. Maybe it’s because the house was supernaturally silent when Chanyeol came in.

But the dream starts when he’s sitting in bed, under a terrible illumination. The image – it’s from a cameramen perspective – shakes.

“It’s so hot in here,” Chanyeol says, opening the robe he’s wearing. He’s naked under it. “I’m feeling weird… I miss my alpha so bad… hummm…”

The camera focus in his glistening body. Chanyeol is perfectly waxed and he’s obviously using some make-up. He lies in the bed.

“I wished he was here to take care of me…” Chanyeol whispers dramatically while touching himself. “I feel so empty… where is he?”

The camera shakily moves to the door. Kyungsoo is standing there, naked, spotting an unreal erection.

“What did I tell you about starting without me?” he walks to the bed, grabbing Chanyeol’s thighs.

“I’m sorry, alpha,” Chanyeol says, sitting up. A fake tear runs down his cheek. “But I’m so turned on and lonely without you!”

“On your knees,” Kyungsoo says. “Show how much you missed me.”

Chanyeol eagerly turns, lifting his ass high. There’s so much lubrication in there that it seems someone stuck an entire lube pot inside of him. It’s also thick and artificial, but Kyungsoo doesn’t care and sticks his dick in immediately, with no warning, like it’s that simple. Chanyeol moans loudly.

“Hummm… that’s what I needed,” he moans exaggeratedly. “Knot me, alpha! I need your knot, give me!”

“Do you think you deserve it?” Kyungsoo asks.
“I do! I deserve it! I’m being a good boy,” Chanyeol lifts his hips even higher. “I’m your omega, mark me! You fuck me so good!”

Kyungsoo thrusts into him violently, only touching Chanyeol by the strong grip on his hips.

“And who do you belong to?”

“To you, alpha, to you only!”

“And what do you want?”

“I want you to fill me up!”

Kyungsoo stops moving, Chanyeol cries out.

“Say it the way your alpha likes. Be a good boy.”

“Cum on me… Fill me up… Dominate me…” he pleads, almost crying. “Don’t stop!”

“That’s not how I like. Do you want to get punished?”

“I’m sorry! No!”

“Say it!”

“Make me pregnant,” the camera focus in Chanyeol’s anguished face. “I want your babies!”

“Yeah? I’m not convinced.”

“It’s true… it’s true, alpha, I want to belong to you… And have your child!”


“Feels so good! Feels so good…”

Chanyeol has no idea he is screaming until he realizes both Jongdae and Baekhyun are staring at him with shocked expressions. They’re only wearing underwear, and Chanyeol barely heard the door opening—for a few seconds, he doesn’t know where he is. He sits up, holds his face in his hands.

“Nightmare?” Jongdae asks gingerly. He looks terrified. Chanyeol probably woke up the entire neighborhood.


“I dreamed I was doing knotting porn as an omega,” he says blinking hard to make sure he’s awake. “And Kyungsoo was… well. You know.”

“Ohhh, Freudian shit… Also guilt trip,” Jongdae nods to Baekhyun.

“Maybe hidden desires…? Did you see some gender bender thing in his internet history?” Baekhyun whispers.
“Can you two give me a break?” Chanyeol rubs his face. “I’m clearly traumatized.”

“I’m sorry? But that was your fault for watching those things,” Jongdae crosses his arms. “I guess you forget that omegas—”

“Listen to the omega advocate,” Baekhyun says dryly. “Boy here got his teaching from his mate, Mr. perfect Xiumin.”

“Please don’t start a fight now,” Jongdae sighs, leaving the room. “I’m going to get Chanyeol some water.”

“Yeah, why you don’t ask Minseok to carry the water bottle for you?” Baekhyun screams at Jongdae. “He is so strong and he has ABS, different from my nutella tummy!”

Chanyeol gives him his best really? look.

“Well,” Baekhyun shrugs. “What do you want me to say? One day you knot, one day you’re the knotted one. I’ve watched knotting porn once, and the girls in it bite each other so much it looked like a fucking meal. So I think you should watch better stuff?”

“I need a break from this mating thing,” Chanyeol whispers.

“Here,” Jongdae enters the room, offers Chanyeol a glass of water. “Want to sleep in our bed?”

“No,” he drinks it too fast. “I’m going to get some air.”

“It’s cold as fuck outside,” Baekhyun says. “Put some clothes on. Also, I hate to break the news, but you kinda wetted your pants, so… better clean that mess…”

Chanyeol looks down. He wants to die.

“Oh my god,” he trembles. “This is a fucking nightmare.”

He cleans himself, puts a jumper on and leaves. Baekhyun is screaming something like yeah, my pants have a hole, so maybe you should call Minseok, because he’s so clean and organized, so Chanyeol isn’t exactly in a hurry to come back home. He is not hungry, he doesn’t want to visit or talk to any friends; he just walks. Maybe he should go to his mother’s house. She won’t kick him out.

Chanyeol walks for a long time trying to keep his mind free of thoughts. He’s tired of how his life is gravitating around this specific subject. Chanyeol never really thought about gender, mating and family issues before working for CHOOSE. He just made music, had friends and tried to have an okay life, then one day… Chanyeol looks up. He’s walking on the street where Kyungsoo lives. Fuck.

It’s freezing, but he sits on the sidewalk anyway. He looks up at Kyungsoo’s window (it’s too high to see anything), and stays there. Eventually, a stray dog comes around and Chanyeol pets him.

“What’s your name, dog?” Chanyeol says and then realizes his shaky voice. “Are you lost like me?”

Chanyeol puts the dog in his lap. He’s small, has dark fur and a wet nose. Maybe the dog is hungry or thirsty – Chanyeol should take him home. For some reason he can’t understand, Chanyeol cries. He has a huge weight on his chest and when he looks up, the full moon is right above him, as if she’s watching.
“Well, I guess you’re punishing me,” he says loudly. “I’m not that easy to convince. You’ll have to work harder.”

“Are you a beggar or just lovesick?” a man in a cute pink sweater approaches him. Chanyeol blinks, the street was deserted a second ago, but the man’s sweater looks like Kyungsoo’s pink one – or maybe Chanyeol’s heart is just reaching for some reminder. “Or maybe both?”

“Why do you want to know?” Chanyeol grumbles, pouting. “I can’t even suffer in peace….”

The man stands next to him. He’s handsome with a cute, soft chubby face and his hair is dyed white as the moon. He stares at Chanyeol, rubbing his chin.

“I asked because if you were a beggar, I could help you! But you’re not, are you? I think I know you…”

“Maybe,” Chanyeol looks up, wiping his eyes. “From other parallel universe or something.”

“Oh, do you believe in alternative universes? I’m an enthusiast!” the man claps, excited. “Do you want to talk? If you’re not busy crying and swearing at the moon, of course. I can get you a beer, there’s a nice bar near here that is open all night. It’s on me!”

Chanyeol doesn’t need to smell him to know he’s an omega. The night is windy, but his scent is strong and thick.

“You shouldn’t ask unknown alphas out, sir,” Chanyeol rubs his nose on the top of the dog’s head. “It’s dangerous. We’re the scum of the earth. The root of all the evil in humanity. We also watch horrible porn.”

“Humm… I don’t disagree,” he laughs like an old man. He looks like an old man, Chanyeol concludes. “But if I decided not to do anything dangerous for omegas, then I would do nothing. And I’m very intuitive myself, I think you’re a good person. I’m pretty sure I have seen your face before and I don’t believe in coincidences.”

Chanyeol laughs dryly. It’s a sad sound. “Fate, alternative universes, blah, blah, blah. Are you that Suho guy or something?”

“Yes,” the man smiles simply. It takes some time to Chanyeol to understand he’s not joking. “Are you a fan? I can sign you book.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol holds the dog tight to his chest and stands up. “Are you Junmyeon? For real?”

“Yes,” the man– Junmyeon bows. “Nice to meet you… Mr…?”

“I’m Park Chanyeol,” he says. “I don’t know the dog’s name. We just met.”

Junmyeon laughs again. Looking like that, he’s probably not much older than Chanyeol.

“Is Doctor Zhang in here too?” Chanyeol checks the street.

“Yixing? No,” Junmyeon blinks. “How do… Do you know him? Or you just read somewhere we were dating?”

“… I read,” he lies, nodding. “But I know him. He’s my doctor too. Wait… were?”

“Yes. We’re not dating anymore. Are you into him? He charms all his patients, I see. It’s not hard. Yixing is a very charming man.”
“Incredibly handsome and very sweet,” Chanyeol agrees. The dog licks his arm. “I would totally date him, but no. I’m not into him.”

“Maybe I saw you in his office?”

“I guess not.”

“Oh, I remember now,” Junmyeon snaps his fingers, excited again. “You were in Jongin’s Instagram! The guy playing guitar!”

“Yeah,” Chanyeol smiles. “It’s me.”

“What a coincidence. I was just talking about him!” Junmyeon laughs again, shaking his head like a kid. “No coincidences.”

“I’ll surrender,” Chanyeol’s smile dies in his face when he realizes this is Kyungsoo’s sweater. “Wait. You were in the fourteenth floor of that building, in Do Kyungsoo’s home? Is this his sweater? What are you doing so late in his house using his clothes? Please tell me you guys aren’t dating again. Like… you’re smart and cute, I can’t compete with you. Also, Yifan still has feelings for you and I’ll die if Kyungsoo dates someone. I’ll die.”

Junmyeon gapes at him.

“You… Kyungsoo? Yifan?! How do you…? What the…?” Junmyeon shakes his head. “Get in my car. We need to talk.”

Between the first and the sixth beer, Chanyeol tells him everything. He cries, because he’s dumb and Junmyeon has this comfortable, calming aura, like a mother, and Chanyeol trusts him as his mentor. Junmyeon gives him many hugs and feeds the dog, petting him gently.

“For the moon, this… is an extraordinaire story,” he nods. “Everything is so interconnected! Fate is strong in your bond with Kyungsoo. I’m jealous.”

“Yes…” Chanyeol straightens up suddenly. “But you haven’t told me what you were doing in Kyungsoo’s house? He doesn’t have time to give me a five-minute hug, but he can meet you late at night? I guess you two—Oh god, I’m sounding just like Baekhyun.”

“Calm down,” Junmyeon laughs. “I wasn’t doing anything wrong. I can only see Kyungsoo at this time, when he’s home after the work… I had dinner at twelve tonight by myself. Oh, it’s almost day
already. Last night.”

“And you guys kept your hands to yourselves?”

“We’re not dating, Chanyeol,” Junmyeon says carefully. “You don’t have to worry. Kyungsoo broke up with me after four years of dating, a long time ago. We were in uni. He looked into my eyes and said: I like you, but I have no time for dating and you treat me like I’m a kid, so we’re done. And then he kept watching a movie like nothing happened while I was crying right next to him. I spent two weeks listening to sad Mariah Carey songs, you know.”

“I can see him doing that,” Chanyeol looks at his beer. Yes, he can picture Kyungsoo in the last heat they will spend together, standing at the door and saying: it was nice to meet you, then slamming the door in Chanyeol’s crying face. “First Jongin, then you… I’m the next.”

“He’s visibly different… I thought maybe… I had no idea he was mating… and knotting! Shocking. But he was… I don’t know. Relaxed,” Junmyeon says quickly. “He’s always so tense and focused. Took me three months to get him to bed—”

“I’m not ready to hear that!” Chanyeol covers his ears. “I’m not Yifan! I don’t think it’s sexy, okay! I’m just jealous!”

“What did that pervert say?” Junmyeon pokes Chanyeol, amused. “I miss his playful side. I mean, you have to reach really far to find it, but sometimes he jokes.”

“It’s terrible and cruel most times,” Chanyeol drinks his beer. The seventh?

“What am I saying? He must have changed a lot,” Junmyeon smiles, shaking his head. “I can’t believe he’s still thinks about it fifteen years after we broke up.”

“He’s a really nice person, besides being mean and, you know, the bitchface,” Chanyeol wipes his mouth. “He takes care of everyone. He’s… sweet in his kind of rude way. And he likes you… He misses you.”

“Yixing talks about him, sometimes.” Junmyeon finally takes a sip of his beer. “We’re always so close and… we never face each other. I don’t understand. I wish I met him… just to talk. I want to see how much he changed.”

“Why you don’t call him? I have his personal number,” Chanyeol offers.

“No. If we are destined to meet, we will,” he smiles. “I trust the Moon.”

“God, why are you Moon worshippers all like that?” Chanyeol rolls his eyes. “Can’t we do something because we want to?”

“The term is Moon Child, alpha,” Junmyeon slaps him playfully in the arm. “And yes, I can call him if I wanted to, but I’m not comfortable yet. I believe when it happens naturally, I will be ready. I’m not waiting for the Moon to do anything, it’s just a way of speaking.”

“Yeah, the Moon doesn’t like me much,” Chanyeol pats his little friend. “Isn’t that true, little wolf?”

“How could you say that? The Moon loves every child.”

“Am I child of the Moon? Jongin called me a bomb guy or something.”

“Of course you are,” Junmyeon taps him in the arm. “He was probably saying you have a fiery
“That’s because I’m a Sagittarius? Is this astrology again?”

“No,” he sits comfortably in his chair, as if he’s getting ready. “In the Moon cults we recognize we, as humans, are made of the four elements. Some people have more of one element, of course. On the original cult, the omegas were designed as the Moon’s Child, and the alphas as the Sun’s Child – for the mating ritual. They associated the fluids and the gestation as water gifts, and the warm body temperature in rut and the presence of the knot as fire gifts. The wind and the earth gifted the priests and the witches – the ones who couldn’t participate of the mating ritual, the betas. But of course, this is very primitive. Most of the Moon Children, as the entire group, lived in wild places with the wolves. Today, the Moon Cult is about to accept nature and embrace the elements.”

“Hummm… It’s like I’m reading your book,” Chanyeol smiles. “But where’s fate in this?”

“We believe there’s an order of things, an attraction. Like there’s a scent of facts… and we smell them? Too complex?”

“Yeah.”

“Fate is just a way of saying we can recognize the way nature is perfect. Do you know how all the things fit in nature, how evolution means finding a way to survive and everything we need, we can find? This is fate. The order of the universe.”

“I guess if you say it like that… seems… believable,” Chanyeol plays with his cup. “I wish I never had to think about that.”

“We all wish the same,” Junmyeon says. “But we can’t run from our fate.”

Chanyeol drinks the rest of his beer. He’s too drunk for discussing theories. Junmyeon gives him the dog.

“I’m going to pay the bill,” he warns, leaving the table. “Just wait for me here. I don’t think you can stand up by yourself.”


“Good nigh… I mean, good morning,” a voice next to Chanyeol says. He tries to look up, and he only sees a baldhead. “I agree with you, alpha. We are all wolves.”

“Thank… you?” Chanyeol stares at the old man. He is dressed in all black, like a priest, standing in the outside of the bar. Fuck, Chanyeol blinks and straightens up in the chair. He’s a conservative priest. “Sir? Father?”

“You can call me Father,” he smiles softly. “I was going for a walk and saw you talking to the dog. Don’t you have to work today? It’s a little early to be drunk in a bar. You shouldn’t expose your omega to this environment.”

The priest makes a head movement, pointing to Junmyeon. Chanyeol shakes his head.

“I don’t work today, Father. And he’s not my omega. He’s just a friend of mine.”

“I see,” the priest says in distaste. He gives Chanyeol a paper. “In case you want to get better. God
“Okay,” Chanyeol smashes the paper and push it into his pocket. “Good morning, Father.”

Wolf seems tense in Chanyeol’s lap.

Chanyeol is used to waking up to his friend’s noises, but he thinks certainly, there’s a better way to wake up after drinking than Baekhyun screaming at his door.

“Jongdaaaaaaaeee, Chanyeooool,” his voice is like a hammer in Chanyeol’s head. “I was invited to a party! Dr. Hot Dimples is going to receive an award! Pick your suits!”

Chanyeol puts the pillow over his head, but Baekhyun slams the door. Jongdae whines somewhere:

“It’s in two weeks, do you have to make a scene right now?”

“Are you reading it?” Baekhyun says, excited. “Right there… under the– Dr. Zhang Yixing is awarded for his contribution to mapping beta hormones. This was the research I participated in!”

Chanyeol’s brain, still affected by the alcohol, takes its time to process these words.

“Dr… Zhang Yixing?!” Chanyeol sits up, holding the pillow against his chest. “No… It can’t be.”

“I got the invitation by mail… And there’s one letter for Chanyeol too,” Baekhyun stops at Chanyeol’s door. “You never told me you were a patient of Dr. Hot Dimples! Are you hitting on him?!”

“Fuck, it can’t be,” Chanyeol feels a headache pressing at his temples. “Are you serious? Give me that thing.”

“Is this a dog?” Baekhyun points to the floor, where Wolf looks concerned, but calm. “Jongdae! Chanyeol brought a dog home! Judging by his alcohol smell, he may have stolen it.”

Chanyeol gets up and takes the invitation from Baekhyun’s hands. Jongdae runs to them, and stares, gasping, at Wolf.

“Are you…” he says, gaping at the dog. “Where did the dog came from, Chanyeol?”

“I found him in the street, okay,” Chanyeol opens the envelope. “His name is Wolf and he’s my friend.”

“Are we keeping him?” Baekhyun kneels on the floor, hugging an alarmed Wolf. “Please say yes!”

“See?” Jongdae points to Baekhyun. “This is why we agreed no pets in this house! None of us has the fiber to say no. First is one dog, and in few days, we have the entire zoo in this place.”

Chanyeol is too focused on reading to pay attention to his friends’ bickering (he still listens no, we can’t keep him and we can’t have children! Every beta couple has a fucking pet, Jongdae!)
“Dr. Zhang Yixing is awarded for his contribution to the research of mapping beta hormones and you are cordially invited to the ceremony at the XXII Alternative Science Awards,” Chanyeol reads aloud. “At Friday, 22 December, in the auditorium of the ABO Science Campus at the Public State University. At 8 pm, the Public State University Orchestra will play several movements from the famous Gustav Holt’s famous piece ‘The Planets’ and at 10 pm the Professor Kim Minseok, MD, will present the award—”

“Why am I not surprised,” Baekhyun sighs, tired. Wolf licks him. “Is there anything this guy can’t do?”

“I already knew,” Jongdae blushes. “He invited me too, but I refused. I knew you would be mad.”

“Why? You should lie to me like you did last time,” Baekhyun spits. “If you want to see your beloved mate! Send him my condolences for dating a cheater like you!”

“I never cheated on anyone— Baekhyun! Come back here right—”

Chanyeol wants to cry. Why, why him? He sits in bed, and feels something on his ass. He passes his hand over it and notices it’s just something in his pocket. A piece of paper.

CONSERVATIVE CHURCH OF THE CRY OF THE SACRED WOLF – ARE YOU A PART OF GOD’S PLAN?

In the book of Revelations, God says: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End”. God is the life, he exists everywhere and controls everything. God is the life created by the mating of two complementary parts, alpha and omega. You are his plan and you still have time to accept the truth. The sun god waits for us in heaven, if we live as if he taught us in the Book of the Wolves. He made his child a wolf in this land, half-human, half-animal, and taught us the meaning of living in a pack. The Conservative Church invites you to listen to his Words in our Mass this (and every) Sunday! Married Betas are welcome! Unmated Alphas and Omegas can come to our Conservative Dating Night.

“What the hell…?” Chanyeol scratches his head. “This is some…”

“Chanyeol is reading conservative church shit, Jongdae,” Baekhyun presses his lips. “That’s the highest level of rebellion he has achieved. I live in a house full of snakes.”

“What?! First the dog, than this?” Jongdae ignores Baekhyun’s offenses to scream at Chanyeol. “What’s happening to you?! Don’t you know you live with betas and those people hate us? You know the conservatives have murdered betas! And how much they make our lives a living—”

“I know! I know,” Chanyeol smashed the paper. “A priest gave me the pamphlet, I was drunk, I just accepted it without reading, ok? I had a crazy night.”

“You’ve been having a lot of crazy nights lately,” Baekhyun says, suggestive. “I’m not even that mad about the conservative shit. I feel like a badass when they call me a product of the coyote devil. Kind of a rockstar.”

Chanyeol frowns. He did history essays in school – and he went to public school, where everyone
could discuss such things. He remembers the description of the Dark Ages, when Europe was under the Conservatives Rules, and they used to sexually abuse betas to confirm their status – no knot or lubrication, guillotine, - kill children from unmated families, have intimate inspections of omegas to see if they were knotted, and sentence to death any person related to the Moon Cult. Many other places suffered the same thing. He’s aware. He would never support this.

“I am,” Jongdae crosses his arms. “I don’t want to see you around those people.”

“I wouldn’t,” Chanyeol assures them. “I want no business with them.”

“Can we go back to our previous discussion?” Baekhyun asks. “Because I want to know if I’m going to be single to dye my hair back to black to match my mourning.”

“How many times do I have to tell you I don’t have anything with Minseok? We’re just friends,” Jongdae lets his arms fall. “I love you, Baekhyun. I did literally anything to prove to you how much I’m committed to this relationship.”

“That’s not true,” Baekhyun says, and lifts a very confused Wolf in the air. “I want a dog. I can’t have a baby, so I want the dog.”

Jongdae closes his eyes. He sighs, seeming deeply tired, and sits on the bed next to Chanyeol.

“Okay,” he gives up. “But you have to take care of him. We don’t even know if he’s vaccinated or he has some horrible disease.”

“He’s okay,” Jongin says simply, holding Wolf like a baby. “He’s castrated and everything. He was probably abandoned.”

“Yeah,” Sehun agrees. “His hair is flawless, his nails are well done and he looks nourished.”

Chanyeol leaves them alone for few minutes and they become best friends – all Chanyeol asked for was some help with Wolf. Now he’s taking care of five dogs, including Vivi; he has to run in the street every time they chase a cat.

“What if someone is looking for him?” Chanyeol asks, trying to disentangle his legs from the various leashes. “How do I know?”

“I volunteer at the animal rescue center, Chanyeol,” Jongin laughs, making faces at a happy Wolf. “I would know if someone lost this cute little thing! Who is a good boy, huh? That’s you!”

“People abandon animals constantly,” Sehun shrugs. “They abandon people… can you imagine what they do to dogs…”

“Are you going to buy him a leash? You know he’s still growing, right?” Jongin asks, smiling to his
own dogs. One of them, Cher, is trying to gain his attention. Jongin rests one knee on the ground to pet Cher too. He has new, bright red bite marks. “I think I have some old things from James Brown I can give you. He was almost the same size as Wolf when he died.”

“When you said hard exercise, I wasn’t thinking about this,” he complains. His arms are hurting. “The boys went shopping for him. I will call you if we need anything.”

“I’m shocked Jongdae accepted him,” Sehun helps Chanyeol, holding two leashes. “They’re really taking the relationship to another level.”

“Since the Minseok situation happened, I guess it was only a matter of time,” Chanyeol gives up holding the leash and holds the two poodles in his arms. “Wolf came at the right time.”

“My doctor is called Minseok,” Jongin says casually, and Chanyeol bites his tongue to not tell him it’s the same person.

“Yeah…?” Chanyeol says, balancing a dog in each arm. “How did you meet him?”

“He was a resident in obstetrics when I got… sick, he’s my doctor since.” Jongin says, petting his dog. Wolf is jealous and electric in his arms. “He’s going to present an award in the ABOSci, at the Public State University. Taemin can’t come with me, so if any of you want to come… There’s an orchestra, it’s going to be awesome.”

“Oh, I guess I’m going.” Sehun laughs. “But it’s because my boyfriend is a close friend of the guy who’s being awarded.”

“Tao is coming?” Chanyeol asks. “I miss him.”

“Yes, he’s very excited,” Sehun nods.

“Why isn’t Kyungsoo coming with you?” Chanyeol tries to sound disinterested, almost casual.

“He’s going with Junmyeon,” Jongin says. “Maybe I’ll go with them. It’s just… Junmyeon was dating this guy, you know, the other doctor. So it would be better if he wouldn’t go—But Minseok is presenting, so… It just feels weird for me to go with them. I was the third wheel when they were dating. That feeling never leaves you.”

“I know,” Chanyeol says sincerely. Sehun laughs, and then Chanyeol finally realizes he understands too much of what’s going on. “You told him?”

“Just that Kyungsoo is your mate, not mine,” Jongin laughs too. “I think he will figure the rest out.”

“I already know many things,” Sehun smiles, sheepish. “Tao can’t keep a secret for his life.”

“Well, I’m already fucked up, anyway,” Chanyeol says. “At least I don’t have to hide anything from you.”

“Sehun told me you are trying to record an album,” Jongin says, finally putting Wolf in the ground. “Why haven’t you told me? I know a thousand labels.”

“I want to do a rap album,” Chanyeol smiles. “Of course, your mate is a pop idol, I thought he couldn’t help me.”

“I guess it’s the moment to talk about my embarrassing rap phase,” Jongin lifts his shoulders, smiling. “Thank god Kyungsoo stopped me. I had dreads, guys. Dreads.”
“Moon,” Sehun laughs. “I had a rap phase too. Chanyeol can tell you about— It was… complicated.”

“Can’t you two stop bonding and help me with your poodles? I can’t feel my arms.”

Chanyeol can’t feel his arms or legs, he is too hungry to be eating only popcorn and coke, he’s breaking his agreement to not to watch the UltimateChef, but who cares? It’s the final, it’s live and it’s the closest to having Kyungsoo next to him that Chanyeol can get. Sehun is probably texting Jongin, his new best friend, Baekhyun is occupying the entire couch by himself with the exception of Wolf, and Jongdae is making more popcorn.

“Sunny’s plate seems delicious,” he says to Chanyeol. “We should eat something better during culinary shows. Otherwise, what’s the point?”

“I can hear you,” Jongdae says, leaving the kitchen with two giant bowls of popcorn. He’s using a shirt that says DOG DADDY. Took him a few days to adapt the car for the dog and post exactly twenty-two pictures and videos of Wolf on his Instagram. Baekhyun, sincerely to the Moon, bought a baby crib. They’re out of control.

“The popcorn is good,” Sehun says, eyes glued to his phone.

“I made salty and sweet,” Jongdae puts a bowl on the ground, next to Chanyeol, and lifts Wolf to make the dog sit on his lap. “Is it bad, Chanyeol?”

“No, I like it,” he says. He agrees with Baekhyun, but he tends to be nice to Jongdae’s efforts in most things. Not that he needs to, because Jongdae can do everything without help, but Chanyeol feels guilty. Once, on a cold night when they drank too much, Baekhyun made a friend who could tell about “people’s lives”. She explained she didn’t know much about it, she just knew. She told Jongdae he was a witch, and in other lives (Chanyeol now asks if past or alternatives), he used to manipulate the lightning. Jongdae laughed until she told him he once burned to death. Then, she looked him in the eye and said that in this life, he wouldn’t die by fire, but he should be careful around Chanyeol. He kind of attracts these things. Since then, Chanyeol deeply believes the kitchen accident was somehow his fault.

“See?”

“He’s a snake,” Baekhyun pokes Chanyeol in the head. “Now shut up, it’s the decision.”
“Hello, everyone, we’re back to hear the judge’s final decision,” Tiffany says, smiling, looking marvelous in a red dress. “Let’s find out today who’s the ultimate chef. Seulgi?”

“Hey, Tiff. Despite Taehyung constant joking, we have decided. You can bring the contestants here,” Seulgi smiles. The two final contestants enter the room holding hands. The camera shows the reaction at the judge’s table and Chanyeol tries not to fangirl when Kyungsoo appears. He’s in a suit, and his hair is shorter. He looks out of this world.

“The internet is freaking out, #teamyoona is trending on twitter,” Sehun says.

“I’m on #teamsunny,” Baekhyun says. “And Wolf is too, right, Wolf?”

Wolf rarely barks, so Jongdae laughs, petting his head.

“If you guys don’t shut up, Chanyeol won’t hear his boyfriend speaking,” he mocks. Baekhyun and Sehun start chanting something like OOOOOOH, in an attempt to embarrass Chanyeol.

“Shut up, he’s not my boyfriend,” it’s his only defense. “No, shut up for real, Kyungsoo is speaking right now.”

“…I think Sunny’s plate is impeccable, no doubt,” Kyungsoo nods, his glasses making him look younger. “But I think Yoona’s soup had more… taste. Even if it wasn’t perfectly executed, I think the clients, seeing in a professional way, would be more impressed. She may be new in the business, but perfection comes with time, and talent is natural. She has my vote.”

“Thank you,” She bows, obviously tearing up. “It’s my grandma’s recipe, a family secret.”

“She would be proud,” he says, bowing back.

“Fuck, look how nice he’s being,” Baekhyun sits up. “Is this your fault, Chanyeol? Did you break something inside of him when you impaled him with that monstrous thing you call a dick, huh?”

“There isn’t one day in my life I don’t ask myself how you became a teacher,” Sehun says, serious.

“Shut the fuck up you two,” Chanyeol throws popcorn at them. “I can’t hear a thing!”

“We don’t even have to hear Taehyung’s vote. Yoona has two votes, which means she won,” Tiffany smiles and shrugs.

“She doesn’t give a fuck,” Jongdae laughs. “I like her.”

“Ahhhhh! I’m tweeting #cryhardersunnyteam for you, Baek,” Sehun laughs, clapping. “I will open the champagne bottle! I knew she was going to win.”

“This is bullshit,” Baekhyun crosses his arms. “Sunny is the winner in my heart.”

“Yoona just won the cover of ArtCulinaire, a winery tour in Italy and kitchen equipment to her restaurant,” Tiffany hugs a crying Yoona, smiling proudly. “Thanks for watching the show. We will come back in the next season. Don’t forget to visit the #theultimatechef. Adieu!”

“That was the best season,” Sehun smiles and passes the phone to Chanyeol. “Check it out!”

kimkai my celebrity crush won!!!! #babies #instapet #instadog #teamyoona #crying #theultimatechef @ohsehun vivi is cheering too!!!
“You should’ve let Wolf go to Jongin’s house,” Chanyeol says to Jongdae. “His friends are having a party and he’s here, alone.”

“He’s too young for that,” Jongdae spits. “I will tuck him in bed right now! Those dogs stay up all night. No way.”

“Well, I’m also going home,” Sehun announces. “Nice to see you, guys.”

In few minutes, the house is silent again. Chanyeol sits in bed with his exemplar of Written in the stars, but then decides to sleep. That book seems cursed. Tomorrow will be a long day of facing reality.

It’s not Baekhyun singing. There’s a music… a famous song playing. Chanyeol turns in bed, eyes closed, and yawns. The song keeps playing right next to him.

“Please let me sleep, just once,” Chanyeol pleads. The song doesn’t stop. Chanyeol opens his eyes, ready to attack the origin of the sound.

“Hello,” says Taemin, his face just a palms length away from Chanyeol’s face. “You have to wake up!”

Chanyeol falls from the bed. He doesn’t hit his head on the ground, so he’s probably hearing the laughs, for sure. He sits on the ground.

“Hello,” a familiar man standing in the door says. “Nice to meet you, the famous Chanyeol!”

“Fuck, are you…?” Chanyeol tries to stand up and Taemin offers him a hand.
“This is Minho, he’s my friend,” Taemin smiles, helping Chanyeol. “Cute underwear. Is it the same
bear you were hugging while you were sleeping?”

“Er… nice to meet you, Minho,” Chanyeol sits on the bed, crossing his legs. He notices he’s using
rilakkuma socks too, so he gives up trying to hide his small obsession. “Who let you guys in…?”

“A guy named Sehun gave Jongin the key and Jongin gave it to us,” Minho waves at a quiet Wolf.
“And I heard about you. A friend of mine lent me your mixtape. Also, I saw you in Jongin’s
instagram and he told me you’re after a label. I happen to be looking for a new guy. We could help
each other.”

“I came because I’m clingy,” Taemin nods. “Also, it’s my free day and he promised me we would
hang out and maybe eat some ice-cream.”

“We can work and hang out,” Minho shrugs. “So, show me what you gooooooot! Did you guys get
it? Rick and Morty? No?”

Taemin and Chanyeol exchange a glance.

“He’s better when he’s doing music, I guarantee,” Taemin pats Chanyeol’s shoulder. “He was my
manager, believe it or not.”

Chanyeol puts some clothes on before taking them to his studio. He’s nervous, even if he has years
of hidden material to present to them. He overanalyzes his choices every time he plays a song, and he
avoids looking at their faces in order to concentrate better. Chanyeol is usually confident in his
performances, but right now it seems definitive, for some reason.

“I like your recorded material,” Minho says, reflexive. “But you’re better doing live. Why is that?”

“I guess it’s because I work playing in…many places. I have more experience with shows…” he
shrugs. “That doesn’t mean I don’t like creating, but I’m better doing or… improvising. I think…”

“This is a very common trait in rappers,” Taemin says. “Don’t worry.”

“It’s true, but it means you need some real studio experience,” Minho points. “I think I should take
you to Key’s place so you can get accustomed with indoor work. Don’t worry, he’s from the same
label as me.”

“Then, why we can’t go to your studio?” Chanyeol looks between both men.

“Minho’s studio is in Japan,” Taemin chuckles. “We only go there for the finalization of the album,
unless you decide to move out, of course.”

“Not yet,” Chanyeol smiles. “The boys won’t let me divorce them so easily. And the house is also
mine.”

“The boys? You date more than one person?” Minho blinks. “No judging. Just curious.”

“No, it just a way of speaking. I guess we do have almost a marriage, but they’re only my friends.”

“He’s Kyungsoo’s mate,” Taemin whispers. “Do you remember Kyungsoo, right?”

“Of course I do,” Minho laughs, impressed. “I mean, you’re brave. It’s not anyone who can face
him. He’s nice to me, but probably because I never step out of line.”

Chanyeol gapes at him. Oh. Minho is an alpha. Chanyeol would never have guessed.
“Isn’t this supposed to be a secret?” Chanyeol scratches his head.

“Don’t worry about me. My life is basically keeping secrets,” Minho smiles and Taemin hugs him, affectionately. Chanyeol is somewhat jealous of this cozy atmosphere; he wants hugs too. Taemin seems to sense that and kisses his cheek. Chanyeol blushes.

“Look at him, isn’t he cute?” Taemin pokes him, laughing so brightly he may be mocking Chanyeol.

“Listen, stop being nice to me. I can’t be your fanboy,” Chanyeol says, laughing. “I’m too old for that!”

Chanyeol thinks while holding the steering wheel, *today should have been a good day.*

During the last week Chanyeol had lunch with his family, went to the studio with Minho, took Wolf to the vet and he was a *really* good boy. Jongdae and Baekhyun are on good terms again, Tao came early and he received the email warning about Kyungsoo’s heat – which means he hasn’t given up on Chanyeol yet. There was even a farewell cake for him at the Café and Yeri gave him a cute cupcake pendant as a goodbye gift. The people commenting on his Instagram posts are very different from before – some of them even request songs and videos.

He’s doing fine. He’s doing amazing until Friday, 22 December, 7 am, when Baekhyun announces he is going to see Dr. Hot Dimples, with or without his mate. Wolf leaves the room immediately, because he’s the smartest being in the house. Chanyeol goes to Key’s studio with Minho, notebook in hand and cellphone dead in his pocket. When he comes back, Sehun and Tao are already waiting for him, Jongdae and Baekhyun are dressed and ready to go. The room is filled with tension.

Chanyeol drives. Baekhyun and Jongdae don’t say a word. Sehun is messaging Jongin. Tao is freaking out about being late and missing Yixing’s speech. They enter the parking lot.

“So, Jongdae, tell us,” Baekhyun says casually from the passenger’s seat, staring at his mate in the rearview mirror. “Why did you and Minseok break up? I don’t remember you telling me about it. And it’s hard to believe you would break up with such a *flawless* human being.”

Chanyeol sighs deeply. Tao barely looks up, asking Sehun quietly what’s happening.

“They’re having *this* fight,” Sehun whispers back. “Jongdae has a hot ex who happens to be here tonight. You know, the guy who’s presenting the award.”
“Why are you asking me this now?” Jongdae asks cautiously.

“I don’t know, I’m just curious,” Baekhyun smiles. Chanyeol wishes he wasn’t driving, so he could leave the car.

“Are they going to break up?” Tao seems worried. “No!”

“No, honey. Baekhyun is just insecure and annoying.” Sehun assures him, serious. “He’s not confident like us.”

“Sehun, the Moon knows I love you and your very firm ass,” Baekhyun says, loud. “But I have to tell your mate you have been flirting with your celebrity crush for the past few days.”

“What?” Tao blinks. His flawless make-up shines with his surprise.

“Sehun even lets Vivi sleeps at his house,” Baekhyun shrugs. “It’s pretty serious.”

“We’re just friends,” Sehun says quickly, and even his naturally expressionless face seems to say “oh-oh”. “He has dogs too…”

“Jongdae, my love, I asked you something.”

“Can you please let it go?”

“Who’s this guy? Do I know him?”

“He’s just a friend!”

Chanyeol presses his face against the steering wheel. This day should have been a good day. The fights don’t stop, so he decides he’s going to leave them by themselves. Everyone has a cellphone, they will find each other eventually. Chanyeol doesn’t know the university well— the last time he was at the SPUni, Yura was graduating -, but he follows the sound of the orchestra. Most seats are taken, and Chanyeol was blessed by nature with a privileged vision thanks to his height, so he just stands next to a wall. He spots Yifan easily, doing exactly the same thing, but on the opposite wall of the auditorium. He can’t recognize many people sitting.

“Neptune’s arrangement,” a man on the stage announces.

He is hugged before he can see who is strangling him.

“Chanyeol,” Luhan jumps on him, smiling. “It’s always so easy to find you! I liked the purple hair!”


“I’m a dumb man, you know,” Luhan smiles fondly. “I wanted to support Yixing. And maybe see you and Yifan. I’m feeling lonely at home…”

“I’m happy you’re here, I’m using your gift and everything,” Chanyeol points at the watch on his wrist. “But aren’t you here for… someone else?”

“No, no, no,” Luhan shakes his head. “I’m leaving tomorrow. I just came here to see Yixing. I want to congratulate him, but, I’m working so much— I need his help, honestly.”

“I’m motivated,” he answers, smiling back.

Luhan tells him about his work. The orchestra is playing, so he has to talk directly in Chanyeol’s ear. When the act is over, Chanyeol waves to Yifan.

“He’s looking handsome in a suit,” Luhan seems impressed. “I’m shocked.”

“Don’t be mean,” Chanyeol laughs. People are leaving their seats and standing up. He sees Sehun walking somewhere alone; sometimes he’s sure he can hear Baekhyun talking, but what Chanyeol really knows is: the entire staff of CHOOSE is here. Half of the people around him look like alphas and Chanyeol isn’t trying to roast his own gender, but classical music isn’t exactly their field. He catches Minseok, Yixing and Tao talking next to the stage; his first instinct is to push Luhan away from that direction.

“Where are we going?” he asks, confused in Chanyeol’s arms. “Where’s Yifan?”

“Let’s get some fresh air,” Chanyeol says. “He will find us.”

They’re almost at the door when Chanyeol feels Kyungsoo’s presence. He feels, better than just smelling it. It’s like sensing, a déjà vu; he just knows Kyungsoo is near him. He turns his head to the side and sees Jongin talking to someone he’s hugging. Behind them, staring at Chanyeol, is Kyungsoo.

And Chanyeol notices, because he’s deep in alpha trashness, he’s using those goddamn tight pants. He’s staring at Chanyeol behind his glasses, serious, like he has no idea he’s been watching back.

“Hello?” Luhan asks, sounding even more confused. “What happened?”

“Nothing,” Chanyeol forces himself to look back at his friend. “Let’s go out for a while.”

Chanyeol keeps talking to make himself calmer. Yifan finds them eventually.

“What are you two doing here?” He frowns. “Minseok is going on the stage in a few minutes.”

Luhan gets up to hug him. Yifan steps back. For a moment, Chanyeol thinks it’s just his regular too-alpha-for-this self, but Luhan’s face scares him.

“Guys?” he tries. Luhan walks intently, grabs Yifan’s arm and smells it.

“Listen—” Yifan starts.

“I can’t believe you,” Luhan’s grip on Yifan’s arm gets stronger. “I can’t believe you’re mating him.”

“If it wasn’t me, then it would be another alpha,” Yifan says, too serious. “At least with me you know we won’t actually mate.”

“Is Minseok your mate now?” Chanyeol asks, but he knows the answer.

“Yes,” Yifan says, and he looks down. “I said yes to his profile. He needs a mate, after all.”

“I can’t… I don’t want to look to your face,” Luhan spits, letting Yifan go. “You should have told me!”
“What difference would it make?”

Chanyeol is feeling like he can’t breathe. It just too much. Everyone is fighting when he’s around. Maybe he’s guilty? Maybe he should just go back to the time he hadn’t met any of them, when he was lonely, but in peace. He can hear Luhan and Yifan’s voices, but he can’t really understand what’s going on. He closes his eyes, trying to regain his control, but he still feels like he’s going to pass out.

*Stop fighting. Stop fighting. Stop fighting.*

“Chanyeol?” he hears, but he’s running already. No security stops him in the hall, and he runs against a few people, but they let him pass. Chanyeol stops, touching the walls, feeling their consistency, *it’s real. It’s safe.* He finds the bathroom by chance, and goes inside without checking if someone is there. The noise gets distant and he lets his body falls on the ground, sitting.

Chanyeol hugs his legs and cries.

He’s feeling overwhelmed and tired, infinitely tired. He wishes that the time stopped for a moment, so he could understand the reason all the people in his life are angry, why he is feeling so much lately, why he’s feeling like he’s going to *burst.* He can’t run away from himself, not even for a minute.

A cold hand touches his face.

“Count with me,” Kyungsoo’s voice says right in his ear, but Chanyeol can’t open his eyes. “I will count to ten. One… two… three…”

“One… two… three…” Chanyeol whispers after him.

“Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten,” Kyungsoo says.

“Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten,” Chanyeol repeats.

“Take a long breath,” Kyungsoo waits. Chanyeol takes a long, deep breath. “Now let’s do again. One… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight… nine… ten.”

“One… two… three… four… five… six… seven… eight… nine… ten,” Chanyeol says.

Kyungsoo’s hands hold his shoulders. He can feel Kyungsoo’s arm on his shoulder, pushing him back. Chanyeol lets his body rest and realizes he is laying on Kyungsoo’s chest – his short legs are placed on each side of Chanyeol’s body.

“Can you feel me? I’m right here. Take another long breath,” Kyungsoo says, pressing his hands on Chanyeol’s chest. “We’re on the bathroom floor, there’s no one else here. The trash is blocking the door, no one can get in here. Everything is okay.”

Chanyeol grabs Kyungsoo’s right hand – his own hands are shaking -, and holds them against his face, inhaling the scent. Kyungsoo’s clothes smell like the scent blocking perfume, but his skin can’t hide his natural scent.

“It’s just me,” Chanyeol can feel Kyungsoo saying against his shoulder and pushes his body down so both get more comfortable. “Yes, relax. You’re safe.”

*I’m not,* Chanyeol thinks, but he feels better wrapped in his mate’s warmth. He opens his eyes, breathing more slowly. He rest his head on Kyungsoo’s shoulder and stretches his legs. Kyungsoo is massaging his chest in small circles.
Chanyeol is almost calm when someone tries to open the door.

“Chanyeol?! It’s Luhan. ‘Chanyeol, are you okay?’

“He’s getting better,” Kyungsoo says out loud, hugging Chanyeol closer. “He’s being taken care of, please don’t come in.”

“Oh, okay,” Luhan says. “I will write ‘don’t come in’ in the door, then. Who’s there?”

“It’s his mate,” Kyungsoo says easily. “Thank you.”

“Oh,” he hears Luhan says. Chanyeol grabs Kyungsoo’s other hand, holding both closely to his chest.

“Everything is okay,” Kyungsoo assures him. “Take your time.”

“Keep talking,” Chanyeol pleads. “Your voice…”

Kyungsoo talks about the book he’s reading. Chanyeol breathes slowly, rubbing the small fingers between his own. The bathroom is cold, because of the air conditioning; the smell of deodorizer is artificial and irritant; and the sound of clapping irrupts occasionally. But it doesn’t matter to Chanyeol, because he can only hear Kyungsoo’s soothing voice, feel his warm body and his familiar scent. Chanyeol still feels a pain in his chest, but he no longer wants to disappear. He wants to keep feeling his mate close to him.

“I’m okay,” he says, looking at the ceiling. “I’m… fine.”

“You’re almost breaking my fingers,” Kyungsoo says softly. “Are you sure?”

“I’ll be fine soon,” Chanyeol drops Kyungsoo’s hands. “I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to apologize for having a panic attack,” Kyungsoo holds his hands again.

“How did you know I was here?” Chanyeol almost whispers. He hates the light in his eyes.

“Followed you by your scent, then I saw you running away. It’s not a discreet happening.”

Chanyeol smiles. “Can you smell me?”

“Yes, all the time.”

“Really?”

“You smell me even with my scent blocking, don’t you?”

“Yeah,” Chanyeol rubs the back of his head against Kyungsoo’s chest. “It’s the best smell ever.”

“I can’t say the same about yours right now. I can sense your distress,” he says carefully. “What happened?”

“I don’t know…” Chanyeol feels incredibly small when Kyungsoo kisses his nape. “Everyone was fighting today. I just wanted things to calm down and… disappear.”

“Was it that guy? The one who knocked on the door?”

“Yeah. But all of my friends were fighting today,” Chanyeol tries to sit up. “I have to tell Luhan I’m
“Stay there,” Kyungsoo doesn’t loosen his embrace. “He will wait. He knows you’re not alone.” Chanyeol relaxes. He can hear the audience clapping.

“We’re missing the speeches,” he says.

“It’s been recorded,” Kyungsoo retorts. “We can watch later, don’t worry.”


“I’m not here for Yixing. But I do admit he’s a nice person.”

“Are you here for Minseok?”

“Yes.”

“Should I worry about that? He’s a serial homewrecker.”

Kyungsoo laughs right next to Chanyeol’s ears. The night is good again.

“Is he?” he’s still laughing. “Is that how you people call him? He would love to know it.”

“Yeah, he’s a heartbreaker too,” Chanyeol says, nodding.

“I guess… it’s how people call omegas like him,” he can feel Kyungsoo shrugging. “Independent, not ashamed and refusing to belong to someone.”

Chanyeol thinks about that.

“I didn’t mean to sound prejudiced,” he blushes, after he concludes that Kyungsoo is right. Minseok never did anything wrong to be labeled like he wanted to hurt someone. “Is he your friend?”

“You can say so. He was Junmyeon’s friend in college, that’s how we met. He took care of Jongin years ago,” Kyungsoo sounds nostalgic. “He was never my doctor, but I’m grateful for his actions. He’s like an older brother to us—me and Jongin, I mean.”

“He’s really nice,” Chanyeol agrees.

“Have you met him?” Kyungsoo asks.

“We had dinner together,” Chanyeol says and suddenly regrets it. “I mean— I was having dinner with my friends, and we have a friend in common, so he… he kind of gave me some wine… not in a… flirting way… because he’s dated my friend, you see… but not just because of that… I also have… no interest of— I just…”

“That’s okay,” Kyungsoo chuckles. “You don’t have to explain.”

Chanyeol repositions himself so he can face Kyungsoo, but doesn’t turn completely in his arms. It’s weird to have to look up to see his mate.

“You don’t mind, really?”

“No,” Kyungsoo frowns. “Should I?”

“Of course not,” Chanyeol says as fast as he can. “It just… I don’t know. I… I… get jealous
sometimes. I didn’t want you to think… I was having dinner with someone… in a romantic way.”

Kyungsoo laughs again, but it sounds sarcastic.

“It would be tiring to be jealous of people around you, Chanyeol. I wouldn’t even know where to start.”

“What… what do you mean?” Chanyeol turns more to the side, almost sitting on Kyungsoo’s thigh. “What?!”

“You know what I mean,” Kyungsoo says, serious.

“Are you calling me a slut?!” Chanyeol is a mess of feelings again, but he is mostly pissed.

“No, because I don’t know what you do to affirm it so,” Kyungsoo deadpans. “But you act like you’re dating every one of your friends. And if I’m your mate and you call me friend…”

“This is so unfair,” Chanyeol crosses his arms. “I call you friend because I can’t call you my mate. And all my closest friends, who, by the way, are just my friends, know I’m mated.”

“Oh, okay. Do you want me to believe you are married with a couple of friends in a platonic way?” Kyungsoo’s tone is poisonous and bitter. “Or what about this Luhan guy? Is this the watch he gave you?”

“What? I… I never ever in my life touched Baekhyun or Jongdae in a sexual way. I had accidental hard-ons while we cuddled, but the Moon knows I can’t control it. And how the… hell you found out about Luhan’s gift? It was Yifan who told you?”

“It doesn’t matter who told me. Why you can accept his gifts and not mine? It’s okay to look like you’re someone else’s trophy mate, then?”

“He’s my friend,” Chanyeol’s voice is shaky. “He was just being nice to me!”

“Yeah, what else do your friends do to be nice to you?” Kyungsoo shows a hard expression that makes Chanyeol want to run again. “I would love to know.”

“I don’t have to hear this from you,” Chanyeol spits, even if his voice is still shaky. “You say this shit to me, but your fucking ex goes to your house like, at ungodly hours of night and uses your fucking clothes—”

“How do you kn—”

“And you have this very unhealthily close relationship with your “best” friend, I mean, I may look like I’m dating my friends, but you actually date him, and you “help” him in his heats—I may be an alpha, but I’m pretty sure that involves sex things—”

“This is ridiculous,” Kyungsoo shakes his head. “You can’t actually be comparing my friendship and the support of my friends with your… life. I know you friends were trying to set you up with another person. You barely sleep in your house—”

“Are you spying on me?!”

“Do I have to? Don’t you show this to everyone?” Kyungsoo shoots him a cold glare. “Anyone would think like me if they knew you.”

It hurts. Chanyeol thinks he wants to cry, but the truth is, he’s already crying when he turns his back
to Kyungsoo. He curls into a ball and falls to the ground.

“So you should call CHOOSE and ask for someone who’s not a fucking slut like me,” he says, holding his knees. “Maybe it’s why I’m in this job, right? I’m a fucking whore. I’m a paid side chick. I enjoy knotting you in the dark so I can fuck everyone behind your back. The alpha dream, huh? It’s not like I have feelings for you, while you say to my face that you don’t care. I know you don’t, okay? I know you’re just paying for me.”

“Chanyeol,” he hears a noise and feels Kyungsoo’s hand on his shoulder. Chanyeol slaps it away.

“No, don’t fucking touch me,” he says, swallowing tears. The floor is cold and humid. “I’m not even hard, can’t you see? I have no use for you.”

His voice sounds horribly fragile to his own ears. He is fighting too. He and Kyungsoo are fighting, because there’s no way to run away from their bond too. Chanyeol would be forever stuck in this mess of people, no one ever happy, and no one ever in peace. He desires to have no part in it, to take a suppressant which would guarantee he has no hormones, no feelings, none at all. He’s tired. He’s exhausted. He can’t breathe.

“Chanyeol, I’m sorry,” he hears Kyungsoo voice in his ear. “I’m here, see, next to you. I’m not mad. I’m sorry for what I said.”

Chanyeol feels Kyungsoo climb on him. It would be funny, having Kyungsoo lying down on him that way, in another situation. Now, Chanyeol wishes he had the strength to push his mate away.

“I wasn’t implying that,” Kyungsoo presses his face against Chanyeol’s neck. “I… I don’t think you’re a slut. I was just jealous, even if it’s hard for me to admit it.”

Chanyeol sniffs; his face completely wet, and stares at the ceiling. One of Kyungsoo’s legs is laying between his own, but it feels like the least arousing thing he ever felt next to his mate.

“It’s… just… you’re so popular and friendly. It’s so easy for you to touch and be intimate with people. I… can’t do anything about it. I can’t claim you as my mate. I know…” Kyungsoo stops as if he’s still deciding if he should say it. Chanyeol whines to rush him. “I know you wouldn’t be my mate if we met in another situation. You would be scared of me like everyone else.”

“I wouldn’t,” he says. Kyungsoo turns and gives him a small kiss on his wet cheek.

“Even if you were my friend— or, something like that… I’m not very interesting or insanely attractive, I’m aware… Your friends are… different from me… I don’t even know what to say, most of the times…” Kyungsoo is closing his hand tight around Chanyeol’s arm. “You walk around with these hot, funny, different people, sleeping in their beds, being close to them… I feel like you should mate someone who is more like you. But at the same time I feel an urge to kill just thinking about you with another mate.”

“I think you’re the greatest, smartest, handsomer, hottest, cutest—”

“That’s too much. I’m not cute.”

“Fuck, look,” Chanyeol wipes his face, sniffing again. He holds Kyungsoo tight, like he’s one of his bears. “You’re really cute. It’s hard for me not to keep kissing you like you’re a fat baby. Or carrying you around like a pet. Even if I was scared of you I would still be your friend— your best friend. And I have to tell you I do find a lot of people attractive, but I can’t even think about the nice pants you’re wearing today without getting a hard-on. So, let’s change the subject. To resume what I was saying, I like you so so so so sooooo much, you shouldn’t be jealous. I’m a complete fool for you.
You can ask Luhan or any of my friends, because they’ve all heard me babbling about my hot mate. And you know what? You can ask people in the alternative universes too. I bet out there, there’s a giraffe hybrid named Chanyeol trying to mate a penguin hybrid named Kyungsoo, shocking the entire scientific community. Or like, a famous Chanyeol who is so crazy about his Kyungsoo he would declare his crush on live television without even noticing. I bet there’s some girl Chanyeol or even an omega Chanyeol—"

He can feel Kyungsoo smiling against his neck before giving him little pecks on the chin, cheek, and ear. Chanyeol feels like melting under his touch.

“Stop talking,” he chuckles. “You’re really dumb.”

“I am,” Chanyeol kisses his nose. “Please, let’s not fight again. It kills me.”

“Unrealistic,” Kyungsoo shakes his head. “We will fight again. For example, these nice pants you liked.”

“What about them?”

“I bought them right after my last heat. Now, my heat is coming again and I’m retaining liquids. So my friends had to help me dress.”

“Fuck,” Chanyeol says, laughing. “It was Jongin’s thirsty ass, wasn’t it— He can’t give me a break.”

“I thought you guys were friends. I mean, he adores you now. And you were cuddling him in his bed, only in your underwear.”

“Are… we… literally fighting again? A minute after the last fight?”

“What were your friends fighting about?”

“Minseok. Everything started because of Minseok’s love life.”

“Well,” Kyungsoo sits up. “Our fight too, to be honest.”

“Do you think I was hitting on him too?”

“No,” Kyungsoo smiles. “No, I don’t think so.”

“And why are you so sure?” Chanyeol sits up too. “Is it because you were hitting on him? Are you four a gang of omegas who keep kissing and dressing each other in tight pants?”

Kyungssoo slaps him, chuckling, looking at least ten years younger.

“No! I just told you he’s like an older brother,” Kyungssoo sighs. “I would tell you everything, but it’s about Jongin’s life, not mine.”

“Jongin told me you have a secret Instagram account to follow me and spy on my friends,” Chanyeol says, fast.

Kyungssoo narrows his eyes. His Ultimatechef judge persona is showing.

“I guess I’ll tell you everything,” he says. “But not here.”
When Chanyeol opens the door and Wolf jumps on Kyungsoo, sniffing him, he realizes Tao had never ever seen Kyungsoo before – but he said *are you giving me the keys because you’re sleeping at your mate’s house?* Chanyeol said he was taking Kyungsoo to meet the dog, and Tao hasn’t questioned a thing. Was it obvious?

Wolf seems confused between the two of them. It’s the same scent.

“There’s no one here?” Kyungsoo sits on the bed, already taking off his shoes.

“Not yet,” Chanyeol closes and locks the door, ignoring Wolf’s silent plea to stay in the room. “We are going to wake up to Baekhyun’s singing if everything went right.”

“What if it didn’t?” Kyungsoo smiles. “Who’s keeping the dog?”

“Me, of course,” Chanyeol reclines at the door. He loves the sight of Kyungsoo being comfortable on his bed. He honestly can’t believe he would ever get tired of this. “Do you need help taking off your pants?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo says seriously. “But don’t get too excited."

“I like the inclusion of the ‘too’. You already know I will be, right?"

Kyungsoo just glares. It’s really hard to take the pants off. Chanyeol asks if they used some oil to help get them on, but Kyungsoo just slaps him quiet. Chanyeol also takes his clothes off, striping everything. They get under the blanket, heads on the pillow, facing each other. Chanyeol pokes him in the belly, until Kyungsoo turns and presses his back against his chest. Chanyeol, happy, throws one arm over him and tucks Kyungsoo’s head under his chin.

“You’re like a mother kangaroo,” Kyungsoo complains, but Chanyeol can tell he’s smiling.

“Yup,” he hums, contently. “Now talk about things. Tell me stuff.”

“What I was supposed to tell you? Oh… it was about Minseok—”

“You have to say his name very carefully in this house.”

“Oh, yeah, I forgot,” Kyungsoo chuckles, and Chanyeol feels it against his chest. “Well, I met him a long time ago. I was working at a terrible restaurant and he was in college, he was a resident in obstetrics. Jongin was his patient… I think he was probably his first? I don’t remember. I know he wasn’t really sure if he wanted to be an obstetrician yet.”

Chanyeol knows the answer, but he keeps quiet by a miracle.

“Did you guys hang out?”
“Not really. I only saw him when he was at the hospital or when he was hanging out with Junmyeon.”

“Did you go to the hospital a lot?” Chanyeol was worried.

“Yes, to visit Jongin. He was there for almost a year for his treatment.”

Chanyeol holds Kyungsoo’s hand, sniffing his hair.

“What happened?”

“I don’t like remembering it,” Kyungsoo sighs deeply. “He got pregnant during his first mating. As you know, it’s very dangerous, but it was even worse because he has a defective colon and birthing canal. He lost the baby and had some internal damage. He almost died.”

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol whispers. “Is he okay now…? I mean… I know he’s alive, but…?”

“He’s better, it was a really long time ago,” Kyungsoo rubs Chanyeol’s fingers. “He still can’t have kids, though. He doesn’t tell anyone, but I think sometimes people notice…”

“Is he intergender? Because Baekhyun is too. He was supposed to be an alpha, but he never developed the hormones. Dr. Yixing tested him for his studies. I don’t understand much, but seems that everyone has beta hormones, but sometimes they block the others? Something like that.”

“No,” Kyungsoo shakes his head. “Jongin is a full developed omega. He just has defective organs. It doesn’t cause him any problems if he doesn’t try to have children.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol presses his lips. He knows he can’t fully understand what it really means.

“Minseok helped him a lot, not just physically. Taemin was already a trainee at that time, I was working, his parents and his sisters were busy… he was really alone and in pain for months. Minseok practically adopted him.”

Chanyeol supports himself on one elbow to look down at Kyungsoo.

“That’s why you’re so worried about him?”

“It’s one of the reasons,” Chanyeol can sense Kyungsoo’s sadness, as he can sense smoke when something is burning. It’s fast and weirdly unexpected, like a punch. “I feel guilty about it, mostly. I was young and so obsessed with work. In my mind… since I didn’t want kids… I thought he was okay with doctors taking care of him. I never realized he was traumatized and he needed company and support. I was…”

Suddenly, Chanyeol understands. *We can’t truly give people what we think we shouldn’t have.*

“You thought he would try to overcome or hide the pain, because that’s what you do,” Chanyeol says simply. “But he wasn’t like you.”

Kyungsoo stares at Chanyeol, quiet. Chanyeol kisses him on the cheek and falls back on the bed, never letting his hand go.

“You always surprise me, always,” Kyungsoo finally says.

“I hope that’s a good thing,” Chanyeol rubs his legs against his mate.

“It is,” Kyungsoo nods. “I’m not a fan of surprises, but… without them we can’t be truly
challenged.”

Chanyeol gives him a noisy kiss on his back, happy. Kyungsoo tries to wipe it.

“I only see you like three days in the month, you can’t complain about my grossness!” Chanyeol hits him lightly on the arm.

“You’re seeing me more!”

“Yeah… now it’s like five. What a dream. A hundred percent satisfaction of my cuddle needs.”

Kyungsoo turns in bed to face him.

“It’s true when you say you don’t have anything with your friends?” he asks, too serious.

“Yes,” Chanyeol makes a scene of nodding. “I’m claimed. Not by you, but by my own my needy self.”

Kyungsoo gives him a brief smile before getting serious again.

“Then bite me.”

Chanyeol gapes.

“What?!”

“Bite me,” Kyungsoo repeats, staring intently at his mate’s eyes.

“But… I can’t? Kyungsoo… how are you going to explain…?”

“Don’t worry about that. I have a public mate. Also, I don’t give most people enough intimacy to ask me about my marking,” Kyungsoo lifts one eyebrow, and Chanyeol thinks he looks hot. “But I will know you marked me. And everyone who tries to hit on me, too. They will know I’m claimed, when they see it.”

Chanyeol feels a full body shiver. His mouth gets wet suddenly.

“Okay,” he sits up to straddle Kyungsoo, already getting hard. “Where?”

Kyungsoo lays down properly, on his back, to face him, and moves his head to the side to expose his neck. Chanyeol gulps. The classic biting. He always thought it was an unnecessary display of mating – it fades, it’s actually violent and old fashioned. Also (and for some reason Chanyeol thinks about the Binary movie’s display of mating, the alliances), it does not stop cheating or abandonment.

But his hands are shaking when he holds Kyungsoo’s shoulders, rubbing his lips on the soft skin of his neck until he gets to the junction. Chanyeol licks it, kisses it and sucks it lightly. He can hear Kyungsoo’s heart beating faster, his anticipation.

Chanyeol sinks his teeth until it breaks the skin. Kyungsoo makes the loudest noise he has ever heard – not even during the fight Kyungsoo has raised his voice this loud. Chanyeol presses him against the bed, bites him even further. The response is a long, desperate moan and a hardening dick pressed against him. Chanyeol licks the area clean, licks the blood in his mouth. He stares at Kyungsoo.

“Sorry. Was it too much?”

Kyungsoo shakes his head and he tries to say no, but no voice comes out of his mouth.
“Okay,” Chanyeol licks his lips again. “Do you want to bite me too?”

“No,” Kyungsoo finally says, taking deep breaths. “I want to suck you.”

“This again?” Chanyeol hopes his blood stays flowing to his dick, because he’s feeling like blushing again. Kyungsoo stares at him. “Okay.”

They shift positions. Chanyeol lies in bed and stares at the ceiling, because not only is he embarrassed, but also he can see Kyungsoo’s bite mark and it looks like he hurt Kyungsoo. He feels his legs being spread apart and looks down, startled.

Kyungsoo is rubbing his fingers on his own ass. Then, he rubs his lubricated hand on Chanyeol’s cock. He gets to his knees and puts it in his mouth the most he can, rubbing the base and the balls carefully.

“Holy motherfucking shit,” Chanyeol whispers, trying to remember how to breathe.

Kyungsoo circles his tongue around the top, sucks it messily. Chanyeol barely notices when one of his hands goes back to get more wet. Kyungsoo is popping Chanyeol’s knot when he puts the first finger in.

“Fuck,” Chanyeol screams suddenly. Kyungsoo smiles. “Give me a fucking warning if you go there!”

He stops complaining when Kyungsoo licks around his knot, and even welcomes, in a more relaxed way, another finger. It’s insane how worked up Chanyeol can be just watching how Kyungsoo’s red, puffy lips caress him. But Kyungsoo’s fingers – around his dick or inside him, - are driving him mad. It’s a lot.

“Are you going to come?” Kyungsoo asks after the last long whimper that escapes Chanyeol’s mouth.

“I guess so,” he says. He’s almost crying. Kyungsoo opens his mouth, pressing it against the tip of Chanyeol’s dick, and fucks him harder; his hand gripping Chanyeol’s cock stronger, sliding up and down. Chanyeol can’t keep his eyes open when he comes, but when he can see again, Kyungsoo is licking his lips.

“You can’t be nasty like that,” Chanyeol finally says. “I can’t take it, okay? I have a weak heart.”

Kyungsoo laughs. Chanyeol knows it’s his favorite sound in the entire world.

“I was going to ask you another thing, but since you can’t handle it…”

“Fuck, no, say it,” Chanyeol grabs his hand. “I was kidding. I want to do your entire list of weird fetishes.”

Kyungsoo laughs again, but he seems a bit shy.

“Can I come over you?” he says, avoiding Chanyeol’s eyes.

“Fuck,” Chanyeol screams again. “Of course you can.”

Kyungsoo does the same gesture from before; he rubs his fingers in his wet ass and thighs, before touching his own dick, fast and strong. Chanyeol grips Kyungsoo’s thighs, looking him in the eyes. Kyungsoo comes unsurprisingly fast, mostly over Chanyeol’s chest, but one spurt hits his neck and
Chanyeol thinks he could die in this moment and he would be a happy man.

“You look so hot when you come,” he tells Kyungsoo, more fond than horny. Kyungsoo wipes the mess away from Chanyeol’s chin, his eyes saying something again, glinting. He kisses Chanyeol, gripping his neck, and the kiss tastes like claiming.

“You need to tell me your kinks,” Chanyeol says after the kiss. “Cause this was awesome.”

“You already fulfill all my kinks,” Kyungsoo laughs.

“This is the hottest thing you’ve ever said to me,” Chanyeol declares, serious.

“Did I ever say something hot?” Kyungsoo frowns. “It was probably an accident.”

“You don’t have to! Everything you say or do seems hot to me,” Chanyeol nods, smiling. He inspects Kyungsoo’s hand playing with the cum on his nipple. “You like… this, don’t you? That’s why you’re obsessed with oral… how did you say? Performing oral sex…? It was something like that.”

Kyungsoo smiles shyly.

“I do,” he nods sheepish. “I wanted to taste you.”

“That’s not good,” Chanyeol laughs. “Semen is bitter and has this horrible texture. See? I can judge too.”

“Shut up,” Kyungsoo slaps him, but he’s still smiling at Chanyeol. “You said you wanted to hear. Don’t mock me.”

“Okay, I’m listening.”

“It’s not about oral. I’m not exactly into males,” Kyungsoo shrugs. “But I like feeling full, sometimes.”

Chanyeol stares at him for some long, long seconds while trying to make his brain work again.

“Are you telling me you’re into… moon helps me… oh my god, that’s why you never let me take my dick out of you?” Chanyeol slaps his own chest, his hand getting all sticky. “Do you… Moon, Kyungsoo. I take it back… I can’t hear these things.”

“Stop being dramatic,” Kyungsoo slaps him. “Yeah, I like when you fill me up until I’m dripping, okay?”

“Fuck! Holy shit, fucking, fuck,” Chanyeol grabs Kyungsoo’s shoulders and shakes him like a bartender shakes a drink. “If we’re not going to knot, you need to stop now!”

“We’re not going to knot,” Kyungsoo says simply, elegantly unaffected by the shaking.

“Great, so let’s talk about unicorns and cute things,” Chanyeol drops Kyungsoo and lets him fall against his chest with a wet, gross sound. “And maybe taking a bath later. We’re disgusting.”

“I don’t mind,” Kyungsoo says, searching for Chanyeol’s fingers. “Now I’ve said mine you can say yours? You never talk about what you like during mating.”
“I like you,” Chanyeol sighs. “I kind of like carrying you, too. I could carry you all the time. Would you let me knot you against the wall, someday?”

“No.”

“Jerk,” Chanyeol says, moving on the bed. He kisses Kyungsoo until he’s being slapped. It hurts, but Kyungsoo gives him a small kiss on the sore place after, so he’s okay again. They take a quick bath, and almost flood the bathroom after a small fight with water. Chanyeol stops Kyungsoo’s dressing, and puts his mate’s clothes in the highest place he can find. Kyungsoo kicks him in the ankle.

“Sing for me,” Chanyeol says, picking up his guitar case.

“Do you read Suho?” Kyungsoo points at the book on the table and smiles.


“What?”

“Anything.”

“You can play anything?”

“No, I’ll listen to your voice and just get inspired.”

Kyungsoo gets serious before he starts singing. Chanyeol closes his eyes; lets his fingers just slightly caress the cords. He feels the drums in his chest—he needs to play the drums again. He has no idea of what he’s playing, but he’s playing something to match Kyungsoo’s tone.

Chanyeol feels like he doesn’t need anything else in the word. He hopes secretly that every Chanyeol out there feels this way at least once. He stops playing and tries to memorize what he did. He opens his eyes. Kyungsoo is sitting on his bed.

“I’m sorry,” he covers himself with the blanket. “I can’t sing for a long time anymore.”

“That’s okay,” Chanyeol puts the guitar on the floor and goes to bed. “I like the sound of the rain too.”

Chanyeol cuddles him in bed. Kyungsoo does what he always do when he’s distracted, fidgets with Chanyeol’s fingers.

“The plants are taking a bath,” Chanyeol whispers, pressing Kyungsoo tighter against him. “What are you thinking about?”

“Caramel and cinnamon,” Kyungsoo says.

“That’s very specific. I can’t think like that,” Chanyeol laughs. “Why are you thinking about these things?”

“Thinking about a dessert.”

“Are you working now? Moon, Kyungsoo. I’m right here.”

“I’m always working. And you make me think about cinnamon, sometimes.”

“Cinnamon? Why?”
“I can’t explain. You just do,” Kyungsoo yawns. “Can we sleep? It’s really late.”

“No! No, no! Tomorrow you will leave…”

“We are going to see each other in a few days.”

“Few days…! Few days is not very comforting.”

“I really need to sleep… the closest to my heat, the less sleep I’ll get.”

“Okay,” Chanyeol gives up, giving Kyungsoo a kiss on the neck, close to the bite. “Let’s sleep then.”

“Can I… put on some clothes…?”

“No.”

Chanyeol spends at least one hour trying to interrupt Kyungsoo’s departure. He’s attacked several times, but he never gives up.

“Let me go,” Kyungsoo demands, exhausted and locked between Chanyeol’s legs. “I’m already dressed. You can’t keep me in bed.”

“I can and I will.”

“Don’t you have things to do?”

“I can pretend I’m sick because my mate rejected me.”

“Chanyeol.”

“Stay at least for breakfast! I can cook something for you!”

“Do you know how to cook?”

“I was the official cook of this house for three months when Jongdae was hurt.”

“Oh, yeah? What do you do now?”

“I just clean.”

Kyungsoo moves inside of Chanyeol’s leg lock, but it’s only to look at him.

“You clean?!”

“I do. That’s the reason my room is the only dirty place in the house,” Chanyeol tries to bite Kyungsoo’s cheek, but Kyungsoo moves his head too fast. “I’m clean too, you know? I’ve been using socks also. I wash my feet twice a day after you complained.”

“I’m not saying— I wasn’t surprised because I think you’re dirty,” Kyungsoo says, now really trying to run away. “Let me go!”
“Then why? Because it would hurt my alpha pride?”

“It could be,” Kyungsoo sighs, giving up. “My brother is an alpha and he never cleaned any of his shit.”


“No, he’s okay. He’s older, so he can get away with his laziness.”

“My sister is also an alpha and she’s very into cleaning! And organizing…”

“Chanyeol.”

“I won’t let you go.”

“I can’t feel my arms, but that wasn’t what I wanted to say.”


“I know your sister and your mother.”

Chanyeol’s smile dies on his face. He blinks. He only notices how distracted he is when Kyungsoo finally slips out of his legs.

“What do you mean?” Chanyeol sits in bed.

“Exactly what I’ve said,” Kyungsoo grabs his own arms, standing up. “You have really strong legs.”


“I only realized when your friend commented about your sister, but I did take a yearlong course with your mother years ago… Maybe seven, eight years, ago,” Kyungsoo says. “She was really nice to me and she showed me a picture of you and your sister.”

“Fuck,” Chanyeol scratches his head. “And you remember it? Does she remember you?”

“I guess so,” Kyungsoo blushes. “We’ve talked few times after it. She’s really nice.”

“Well, Moon,” Chanyeol whispers. “Now, you’ve impressed me.”

“She kind of tried to set me and your sister up on a date,” Kyungsoo sighs. Chanyeol laughs.

“Yeah, my sister was probably in college… She was a real player during graduation. I guess seven years ago I was still in the military, so no chance of us going on a date.”

“I almost escaped you,” Kyungsoo says and it’s Chanyeol’s time to slap him. “What? She is hotter than you.”

“Yeah, and you know what? She snores louder than an earthquake,” Chanyeol crosses his arms, pouting. “But I guess you can go fight her mate if you’re so eager to get a hotter mate for yourself.”

Kyungsoo chuckles, but approaches Chanyeol gently.

“I was kidding,” he gives Chanyeol a little peck on the lips. “Don’t be mad.”

“Another kiss,” Chanyeol makes his best kissy face. Kyungsoo frowns. Chanyeol locks him in his arms and, in a really fast movement, drags him to bed again. “No leaving!”
“I have to go!” Kyungsoo protests, his words muffled in Chanyeol’s shirt.

“No!”

“I’ll stay for breakfast, but please, let me go.”

“Okay.”

It’s weird to be in the kitchen in the morning with everything clean and silent. Chanyeol happily makes some pancakes, while Kyungsoo sits at the table and waits.

“Peanut butter or jelly?” Chanyeol asks, showing him the jars.


“An anarchist?”

“No, just hungry. I barely eat at the restaurant.”

“That’s… weird. And ironic,” he considers, serving the pancakes. “Where did Jongdae put the juice?”

“No time for an entire meal,” Kyungsoo says. “I eat whatever is left.”

“You never had a full dinner in your own restaurant?” Chanyeol turns, leaning in the fridge door.

“Aren’t you serious?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo stares at him, putting half of a pancake in his mouth.

“Well, what do I know,” Chanyeol finds the orange juice and sits next to Kyungsoo. “Are the pancakes good?”

“Yes, over caloric, but I don’t mind,” Kyungsoo spreads more jelly on his pancake. “Why do you have the Art Culinaire? I saw it in your room. Also from Jongdae?”

“Who’s calling me?” A sleepy voice asks. Jongdae walks into the kitchen wearing the same shirt he was using at the awards, his underwear peeking out. His face is swollen and his hair a mess. Wolf is silently following him.

“Were you hit by a train?” Chanyeol asks, worried.

“Yes,” Jongdae sits. “Good morning, Kyungsoo. Lovely to see you again.”

“Good morning,” Kyungsoo nods.


“He slept at his brother’s house,” Jongdae says, pouring some juice. “He’s going to be there for the next few days.”

Chanyeol and Kyungsoo share a significant look.

“And Sehun and Tao?”

“They’re okay,” Jongdae sighs heavily. “They went to that Yixing guy’s house, I think. There was a party or something.”
When Jongdae decides to rest his face against the table, Kyungsoo says, quickly:

“Well, I have to go. Nice to see you again.”

Chanyeol makes a kissy face and waits. Kyungsoo stares at him for a few long seconds, then turns back and leaves.

“Your loss!” Chanyeol screams before he can close the front door.

“You two are cute,” Jongdae whispers. “Like two very different pieces of a puzzle. Opposites attract, huh…”

“Slept a journalist, woke up a philosopher,” Chanyeol chants. “What happened?”

“We’re on a break.”

“Fuck.”

“I know,” Jongdae lifts his head, rubbing his eyes. “I don’t know what to do anymore. I must be doing something wrong. He was never that jealous. I mean, he’s friends with Liyin, and I pined for her for like… years? He never pays much attention when I hang out with her.”

“You never mated her,” Chanyeol considers. “He’s as much scared of losing you as you are. He thinks you will leave him, because you never broke your bond with Minseok.”

“You’re right. What do I do?”

“You’re asking me?” Chanyeol laughs loudly. “My mate thinks I’m a slut, pal. I’m not the one to give advice.”

“You two looked fine.”

“For now. He still thinks I’m not reliable,” he sighs. “Am I a slut, Jongdae?”

“Nah, not really. But let’s be honest, you do look like you’re promiscuous,” Jongdae picks up a pancake. “Isn’t that the reason Dara rejected you?”

“What?” Chanyeol stops with his spoon in the air. “What the hell…? Wasn’t it because we’re both alphas?”

“No, no… She thought you were a beta like me, Baekhyun and Sehun,” Jongdae smiles, confused. “No one ever thinks you’re an alpha when you’re around us. You’ve been smelling lately, but… She wasn’t sure if you were someone she should trust. I’m pretty sure she already dated another alpha.”

Chanyeol waves his arms, mouth open, blinking.

“How the fuck hasn’t anyone ever told me this?”

“It’s kind of hard. I thought you knew.”

“You’re my friend! You should have defended my honor!”

“Chanyeol,” Jongdae shakes his head. “I can’t defend your behavior. You have a thousand friends we never meet. Every day you are in someone else’s house. You show up with bites and hickeys. You introduce us to a guy as your friend, and, bam! you are mating him. And it seems you never sleep alone.”
Chanyeol is so offended, so damn offended he can’t talk. Kyungsoo is right, after all.

“I’m sorry,” Jongdae shrugs. “I know some of these things happen because of your job, but most people can’t know about it.”

“Does everyone think like that?” Chanyeol lost his appetite.

“I’m not sure, but your sister calls me brother-in-law number one,” Jongdae points out. “Doesn’t she know Baekhyun is older?”

“No one knows,” Chanyeol rubs his eyes, leaving the table. “I’m going to get dressed. I’ll wash the dishes later.”

“Are you mad at me?”

“No. You’re just saying the truth.”

Minho is busy, because it’s Saturday. Chanyeol decides he should help his friends.

He’s passively drinking a hot chocolate, sitting in the garden when they arrive. Chanyeol knows they’re coming before he can see them. People are staring, a car almost invades the sidewalk, and Wolf gives a gentle bark at nothing in particular. They stop at the small gate. Jongin is using the tightest pants Chanyeol has ever seen in his life, a shirt (who runs the world? Omegas! written on it) and a big coat. Minseok is not that cold, for some reason, his black button up shirt open wide. They’re using sunglasses on this cold day – even as Wolf gets comfortable inside of his blanket. A man carrying bags almost drops them on the ground when Jongin smiles at him.

“Open the gate, sweetie,” Minseok waves. He notices the garden and keeps staring wide-eyed.

“Someone who lives in a nice house like yours can have more than three jumpers,” Jongin informs him. Chanyeol shrugs and opens the door. While Jongin runs to Wolf (where’s the good boy?), Minseok actually hugs Chanyeol. An alpha girl shoots him an envious look while passing by.

“Hey,” Chanyeol says, embarrassed. “I’m glad you could come.”

“Me and Nini are hungover,” he says. “Try not to scream. How are you doing?”


They do make themselves comfortable. Jongin lies on the couch with Wolf resting on his belly; Minseok picks a chair and drinks coffee with absolute elegance, legs crossed. Chanyeol sits on the ground.

“So, Chanyeol, what I can do for you?” Minseok asks between sips. His hair is messy, wavy, but it looks like a professional made it like that.
“I will do you a favor if you can return it,” he says, sitting up straight. “Only you can help me.”

“So why did you ask me to come?” Jongin frowns.

“Because one, you’re cute,” Jongin giggles at him. “Two, Wolf likes you, and three, I need someone to testify I’m not doing anything wrong with Minseok. Just in case anybody says I’m being flirty.”

“It’s for Kyungsoo, isn’t it?” Minseok asks Jongin.

“Probably,” he shrugs, petting Wolf. “He was with you last night, right Chanyeol? He lent me his glasses and never came back to pick them.”

“Can’t you scent him here?” Chanyeol is confused. “He was right here a few hours ago.”

“No, because now you both stink the same,” Jongin rolls his eyes to the back of his head.

“That’s good,” Chanyeol says pointedly. “No more taking advantage of him with the excuse of tight pants!”

Jongin laughs loudly, startling Wolf. Minseok seems confused.

“You’re so funny,” Jongin is actually crying of laughter. “Did he tell you I had to press him down on the couch by sitting on him to close the pants?”

“No,” Chanyeol gulps, tense. “Think about unicorns.”

“Yeah,” Jongin says casually. “And it was hard, you know, so he was moving under me and making those noises… Are you picturing it, Chanyeol?”

“No,” Chanyeol lies.

“Good, so I won’t have to say how it ended.”

“Now I want to know,” Minseok exclaims suddenly.

“Not very sexy. I did close the pants and he complained for thirty minutes because I hadn’t let him use his khaki I-am-sixty-years-old pants.”

“You should burn those horrendous things,” Minseok drinks his coffee in peace again. “Kyungsoo’s ass should be more exposed. He has a nice butt.”

“I value my life,” Jongin mocks. “Chanyeol here is a possessive alpha, you see. I can’t harass my best friend anymore.”

“I’m not,” Chanyeol hugs his knees. “It isn’t about me and him today, okay.”

“And who’s this about? I bet on your friends,” Minseok says. He probably noticed the portraits of Baekhyun and Jongdae on the walls. It’s hard to smell betas, but if Minseok and Jongdae mated, the scent also should have denounced the beta.

“Yeah, my friends and you,” Chanyeol takes a breath. “I can help you talk to Luhan if you talk to Baekhyun.”

Everyone sits in silence for a while. Even Wolf senses the seriousness, snuggling in Jongin’s arms as if he’s hiding.
“I tried to talk to him, yesterday. He avoided me like the plague,” Minseok stares at his coffee. “I know he wasn’t there for me, but… I never did anything to hurt him. I don’t really deserve being treated like that. We’re not mates anymore, but…”

“He knows about Yifan,” Chanyeol confesses. Minseok’s mouth makes an ‘O’. “And Jongdae… he’s paying a high price for keeping contact with you. Baekhyun… his mate is freaking out.”

“Why?” Jongin is the first to ask.

“I guess he’s feeling insecure… I thought if he talked with Minseok, he would be more comfortable. Baekhyun is friendly… He’s just scared. Minnie here is a threatening hot omega.”

“Thank you,” Minseok winks. “I guess I can help you.”

“Great,” Chanyeol picks up his phone. He calls Luhan. As expected, Luhan answers it almost immediately.

“How are you doing? Yesterday…”

“Sorry I freaked out. I am fine, now.”

“Really? I’m the one who has to say sorry. I wasn’t… thinking right. I already talked with Yifan. We’re okay. We won’t fight anymore.”

“No problem. I understand. Listen… There’s someone here I want you to talk to.”

“Hmm, okay…?”

Chanyeol ceremoniously passes the phone to Minseok. Jongin leaves the couch with Wolf sitting in his arms. He and Chanyeol go to the garden, outside.

“I wish I could hear,” Jongin says while babying Wolf. “Minseok never talks about this guy.”

“How much does Minseok know about… well… everything?”

“Most things,” Jongin makes a face. “He’s also a client, isn’t he? I was one of the last to know, after all.”

“It’s just so weird, seems that everyone knows each other,” Chanyeol sits on the grass. It’s cold, but he doesn’t mind. “Are you reading the book? Of alternative universes?”

“Yes and I’m loving it,” Jongin smiles. “He doesn’t discard the possibility of us having superpowers in them? Can you even imagine it?”

“Yeah,” he says, and remembers the witch and Jongdae. “I can imagine, but I’m not a big fan. It’s like spider man says, with great powers come great responsibilities.”

“I wish I could live there,” Jongin says, his eyes lost in something very far. “I would have some power to make me go anywhere, anytime. So I would never be confined in any place. I would never be alone for too long.”

Chanyeol looks up at him. He remembers Kyungsoo’s words. It hits him like an epiphany, how
much stronger they are. Different from Chanyeol’s experience, they have to go through many secret, intimate fights before fighting on the outside world. He thinks about Kyungsoo, his restless but calm nature, his strength – he’s so tough, in the crudest meaning of the word. He has to be tough – who would respect Kyungsoo’s “meanness”, his opinion or just his presence in some spaces if they know who he really was? Kyungsoo works twice as hard to achieve what he wants. He can’t relax. He can’t eat right, he can’t sleep right, he can’t date, he can’t fail.

Chanyeol feels a wave of affection he can’t explain. He wishes he could protect his mate from all this pain.

He’s warm.

Chapter End Notes

hey!!! this author is a moon child and she cries reading the comments! thanks 4 being so nice to me :) I’m always surprised by your thoughts!

EDITS AND MOODBOARDS on tumblr (la-bruja-del-mar)
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

In some Moon Cult movements, particularly in Reincarnationism and Alternative Universes Beliefs, to be born into a pack is a popular phrase referring to “to find a group of people you’re destined to meet”, or a spiritual mating to a group which someone belongs to, contrasted with the one who are destined to be alone, “lone wolf”; the ones destined to live only with their mate “true alphas”/“true omegas”; and the ones who are destined to establish their own pack.

Chapter Notes

religious issues, prejudice, people talking about violent/rape acts

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chanyeol is too warm.

The fever starts in the middle of the week, just after Christmas. He wakes up dizzy, trembling and sweating. He has exactly the same symptoms of Jongdae and Baekhyun’s sickness of months ago, with the exception of throwing up a lot. He does throw up a bit, but only when he eats solid things, which is not happening during the days he spends in bed.

Minnie, as Baekhyun now calls Minseok affectionately, examines him.

“It’s probably a 24h flu like they had,” he says, almost blinding Chanyeol with that damn light.
“Everything else seems to be working fine, and apparently you’re not having an allergic reaction, nor food poisoning. You need to get tested, and until there, drink fluids and rest.”

“I’m not going to get tested again,” Chanyeol whines. “CHOOSE obligates me to do so every two months or less.”

“Well, me too,” Minseok laughs. “I mean, not anymore, but I was there before you.”

“You’re not a client anymore?” Chanyeol pulls the blanket up. Minseok has to listen his heartbeat and with no shirt on the room feels like it lost ten degrees.

“No, I’m not a client anymore. Open your mouth,” Minseok places a thermometer on his tongue. “Close your mouth. Now, stay there and don’t move. Also don’t speak.”

Chanyeol makes a face. Minseok laughs and pats his head.

“I know you want to ask more, but I guarantee you there is no problem with Yifan or Luhan,” Minseok nods. “There are many people waiting for a vacancy and I’m pretty sure it’s an omega in more need than me. Focus on getting better, right? You have to be good to do your job.”
Chanyeol starts to get afraid when the fever don’t cease in the end of the week. He stops throwing up, he has enough energy to do things, but he still has a low fever. His sister insists he goes to the hospital, but Chanyeol dismiss her, explaining that he has a full-time doctor at home.

And it’d fucking true.

Since Chanyeol obligated Baekhyun and Minseok to talk to each other – literally locking them together in order to solve their differences -, Minseok is always in their house. In a span of days, he goes to the homewrecker to the homebuilder. It’s like there was a tiny piece missing in a puzzle, a small detail no one noticed before, but everyone could sense something was wrong – until it’s found and the image is complete.

Chanyeol is taking his tea and medicines and is surprised by Minseok and Baekhyun in exercise clothes (Gym is boring, but Minnie and I went to CrossFit! It’s great!); he opens the window and notices there’s a small wood roof over some plants (Minseok reminded me top protect some of them from the rain, that’s why they were so weak); he goes to the bathroom and catches them cuddling in bed while listening to songs (oh! Chanyeol! Is it too loud? There’s hot chocolate in the kitchen for you).

Chanyeol finally gets it after witnessing Minseok making Baekhyun actually sit down to work on his singing skills (How do you teach music if you can’t train yourself? I know it, let me help you). He remembers how Baekhyun made Jongdae’s life a living hell before they mated – he’s a stupid little kid and he has no idea how to deal with his feelings. Now he runs around Minseok bumming and annoying him because he probably is attracted to him, not just jealous of him.

Chanyeol is happy they’re okay, but seeing their dynamic is not helping him to get some rest. He feels Kyungsoo’s absence in his bones. He keeps asking Jongin for pictures or videos, but he’s not being nice lately.

chanyeol you don’t even have to send to me the picture
chanyeol just upload it on instagram
chanyeol it’s enough for me
jongin sent a picture *taeminlookingforthecamerawithdisgust.jpg*
chanyeol I’m not being a creep!!!
chanyeol I just miss him a lot, okay!!!!
jongin sent a picture *taeminnotgivingafuck.jpg*
chanyeol listen I’m going mad
chanyeol I’m sick, be nice to me!!!
jongin does that means you won’t be ready for his heat???
jongin we synchronized again, my heat is coming too :( 
jongin I made Taemin cancel two shows to come home, so I can’t help soo!
chanyeol listen I’m not going to ask for THIS type of help

chanyeol can you please stop giving me these thoughts

chanyeol also maybe if you give him a little space you guys wouldn’t be in synch

jongin sent a picture *taeminwrigglinghiseyebrows.gif*

jongin bitch we synchronized our birthdays, keep trying

jongin didn’t I give you his number?? talk to him, you dumbass

chanyeol what if he ignores me

jongin sent a picture *taeminrollinghiseyeseys.gif*

jongin he will

jongin he never answers unless it’s very serious

jongin but you’re probably used to it

jongin sent a picture *taeminsmilingwhilehisheadisbleedingholdingagun.jpg*

chanyeol stop sending me taememes!!!

chanyeol are the gun and the blood real or it’s scenographic

jongin it’s real

jongin he was shot

jongin I don’t have one day of peace in my life since I’ve mated

jongin so leave me alone, I’m in preheat and I screamed to my bird today

jongin get well!

During Friday night his phone rings. He’s alone in house – the boys left a note we went to the movies with Minnie! we didn’t touch that thing you made! He’s still feverish, but now he feels more energetic, and in a span of five hours, he cleans his entire room after a year of delaying. He’s carrying one of the sixteen (!!!) garbage bags to the trash when he answers the call.

“Hello!”

“Are you in home?” Yifan asks. “I’m going to pick you up.”

“Yeah. He’s going into heat?”

“Yes. You sound weird. Are you okay?”
“Yes,” he nods, locking the phone between his face and his shoulder to put the bag in the trashcan. “I feel like running, you don’t have to come.”

“What?” Yifan laughs. “I’m close to your house already. Pick your stuff and wait for me.”

Chanyeol takes a quick shower, because he can’t stop sweating. He’s feeling so warm he doesn’t even dries himself off, just dress his clothes on his wet body. He picks carefully his gift to Kyungsoo (he had time to do it, since Minho freed him from work while he was feverish), his good old bag, puts food and water to Wolf and runs to the garden. He sits in the passenger’s side so quickly Yifan almost drops his quesadilla.

“What the hell?” He asks after Chanyeol slams the door violently.

“I’m in a hurry,” Chanyeol says. “I’m missing him.”

“I can see, want some—”

“Fhank uuu,” Chanyeol nods after putting the entire quesadilla inside of his mouth. “Rivee!”

“Holy shit,” Yifan says, starting the car. “Okay, calm down. What’s in the box?”

“A gift.”

“It’s for him?”

“Yup!”

“Why? It’s your mating birthday?”

“No, Christmas.”

“Hummm…” Yifan smiles.

“Don’t mock me.”

“I’m not mocking you. I think it’s cute.”

Chanyeol holds the box closer to himself placing strategically over his crotch. He’s hard, but this is nothing new. He’s anticipating. He can’t stop thinking about mating.

“Did you see Junmyeon at the awards?” Chanyeol asks, wiping the sweat off his forehead.

“Yes,” Yifan side eyes him. “Why are you asking?”

“Do you know how people on the internet calls couples ‘mom’ and ‘dad’?” Chanyeol can’t stop shaking his legs. “For me, it’s you two. I can help but ask.”

“Moon,” Yifan laughs. “We talked a bit. I wasn’t ready to talk yet. I said two words.”

“You’re not the chatting type, man. Don’t stress yourself over it. What did he say?”

“Small talk.”

“Humm, and what about Minnie… Minseok, huh? I guess now you’re two aren’t mating, you can date again.”

“I’m still a signed alpha,” he sighs. “How did you know that?”
“Long story.”

“His justification was that he wanted to be able to date again.”

“They have to justify?”

“Yes. Everyone have to justify the termination. Do you still think about it?”

Chanyeol takes a moment to find the right words. His brain is thinking about filthy things.

“Not really,” Chanyeol confesses. “I know I should leave CHOOSE, but I don’t have the courage to do it. He… let me bite him.”

Yifan seems impressed.

“Taking it to next level,” he smiles again. Chanyeol almost falls from the car when they got to Kyungsoo’s building. “Fourte—”

“I know,” Chanyeol screams, running. He takes the stairs, and he’s so excited he only stops to take a breath in the front of Kyungsoo’s door. He doesn’t have to knock or ring the doorbell. Kyungsoo opens it.

“Chanyeol…?” He asks, frowning. He’s using a big white t-shirt, his hair is wet and he smells so good.

“Hi,” Chanyeol gives him the box, and then drops the bag on the floor. Kyungsoo puts the box in the kitchen’s table without asking. Chanyeol is just following him by scent.

“You’re really sweating,” Kyungsoo says, staring at him. “Are you okay?”

“I took the stairs,” he explains, smiling. “I missed you.”

Kyungsoo is inspecting him. Chanyeol can’t wait and hugs him, a bit violently.

“Your scent…” Kyungsoo says against Chanyeol’s neck before licking a stripe of skin. “Chanyeol… you’re— shit!”

Kyungsoo’s casual swearing, if Chanyeol hasn’t scented his heat hitting him, would shock Chanyeol. Kyungsoo entire body shakes, his fingers grabbing Chanyeol’s shirt tightly. For a moment, they keep their foreheads pressed together, just breathing, smelling each other.

“Chanyeol,” Kyungsoo whispers, trying to put some space between them. “Listen…”

Chanyeol wishes he had the patience. He hugs Kyungsoo even tighter, kissing the bite mark he made, making a trail of kisses in Kyungsoo’s neck. Kyungsoo moans desperately, rutting against him.

“You smell so good,” he whispers suddenly, his body pliant in Chanyeol’s arms. “We can’t…”

“What do you want? Tell me now, before I lose my fucking mind,” Chanyeol tries to regain some control, but in the moment that he looks at Kyungsoo, he loses it. He kisses Kyungsoo messily. He can’t be a second without touching his mate or he’s going to explode.

“I… I have to…” Kyungsoo says against his mouth, breaking the kiss. “Just… forget it. I cooked—”

“Not hungry,” Chanyeol kisses him again, this time a briefly kiss. “Can I take you to your room?”
Kyungsoo nods. He doesn’t complain when he’s carried, moved around or when Chanyeol almost rips his underwear off. Kyungsoo has this painful expression, as if he’s resisting something invisible. Chanyeol doesn’t take a minute to get them naked, but he feels suddenly relaxed when he climbs in bed. He doesn’t have to rush anymore. His mate is right under him.

He leans down and presses their foreheads together.

“I know,” Kyungsoo says.

Chanyeol kisses him slowly, hands wandering by arms, chest, nipples. They kiss for a long time, just touching every part of skin possible. Chanyeol isn’t rushing anymore, but he feels an overwhelming desire to taste his mate, to devour. Kyungsoo cannot stop inhaling Chanyeol’s skin, and he comes, surprised, after a deep bite in his tight. He lets Chanyeol lick and kiss his body for some time, and then loses his patience.

“Lay down,” he demands. Chanyeol lies in bed immediately. He watches, paralyzed, when Kyungsoo turns back and sits on the base of his dick – letting it press in the crack of his ass. His rim is wet and Kyungsoo slides easily, back and forth. Chanyeol’s knot pops almost instantly and Kyungsoo rubs his rim against it shamelessly. Chanyeol is not sure if he comes from the friction or just by watching the scene, but he’s pretty sure that even in his recurrent wet dreams with his mate he had never imagine he was going to see this.

Kyungsoo turns to him after, gives him an intense kiss and touches himself, leaning over Chanyeol until he comes. Chanyeol already knows it’s his way of marking.

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol pants. “You’re going full nasty today, huh?”

“Yeah,” Kyungsoo inhales the skin of Chanyeol’s chest. “And you need to calm down you dick, because I’m thinking about doing that wall thing you wanted to do.”

“Don’t worry, I will concentrate,” Chanyeol nods enthusiastically. While he waits for his knot to deflate, he holds Kyungsoo’s hand. They are both sweating a lot, but if feels insufferable to not touch him.

“It’s enough,” Kyungsoo whispers. He’s fingering himself open, and Chanyeol is speechless. Kyungsoo straddles him and lets Chanyeol’s cock enters him slowly.

“Hold on to me,” Chanyeol warns him. Kyungsoo hugs his neck tightly, and Chanyeol holds the back of Kyungsoo’s tights, standing up. He walks close to the wall, but he doesn’t press Kyungsoo against it; he just lifts his thighs up and, gripping them carefully, lets gravity do the rest.

Kyungsoo screams.

He hugs Chanyeol tight; trying to avoid sliding all the way down, but it’s not effective. He keeps making loud noises, quivering at each fall; Chanyeol’s knot swells inside of him and Kyungsoo just pants, legs shaking around Chanyeol’s hips. When he feels they’re too close, Chanyeol presses Kyungsoo against the wall, lifting his thighs high and thrusting into him harder. Kyungsoo lets out a strangled cry and comes, pressing his face on Chanyeol’s neck.

Chanyeol has no idea of when he came, but he’s still in awe when he sees Kyungsoo’s face after it. He looks at Chanyeol, leaning his head against the wall.

“You asshole,” he says, closing his eyes. “I would punch you if I could.”

“Too much?” Chanyeol asks. Kyungsoo pulls the back of Chanyeol’s neck and kiss him.
“Yes,” he says, still panting from the kiss. “Now let’s do again, but in the bed.”

“Understood,” Chanyeol maneuvers him carefully back to the bed. He lays Kyungsoo in the bed, but they don’t let go of their embrace. Chanyeol smells him and feels ready to another round. They knot again, and it bothers Chanyeol how silent Kyungsoo gets during it.

“What’s wrong?” Chanyeol asks, wiping his forehead. “I miss your voice.”

“Nothing,” he says – he just came, but he’s still lifting his hips by reflex.

“Want a break?”

Kyungsoo stares at him and shakes his head negatively. They knot again. This time, Kyungsoo does speak oddly eloquent while writhing under him, for Chanyeol’s wonder.

“I want to wake up tomorrow and can’t move a single part of my body,” he whispers in Chanyeol’s ear with a reedy voice. “Because you fucked this heat away from me. Huh, are you listening?”

“Moon, help me,” Chanyeol cries, his hips can’t stop moving.

“Are you coming? Because I want you to—” he jolts up abruptly, clings to his mate’s shoulders and goes quiet again as he’s being filled up.

“Are you okay?” Chanyeol asks when he feels like he can talk again. “Do you need to stop?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods, eyes closed. “My heat is over.”


“My heat is over,” Kyungsoo repeats, fatigued, saying every word as if it’s draining his energy. He closes his eyes and only opens them again after Chanyeol slide off him. “I’m hungry.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol slams his own chest. “I thought I had killed you or something.”

“Not today,” Kyungsoo says weakly, moving slowly out of the bed. “I’m going to…”

“No need,” Chanyeol gets up, runs to the door. “I’m still full of energy. Stay there.”

Chanyeol runs to the kitchen. He opens the box, prepares the plate, singing. It’s like Kyungsoo’s heat had infected him. He picks the small wood box in the corner of the kitchen, equilibrates everything over it: plate, glass, fork and spoon. Kyungsoo is sitting in the bed, gaze lost in somewhere, when Chanyeol approaches him.

“What’s that?” he asks, inspecting the plate.

“I made it for you,” Chanyeol does a little bow. “It’s crab spaghetti, my mother’s recipe.”

Kyungsoo stays silent, just watching Chanyeol put the table over his legs. He picks the fork, rolls the spaghetti on it, holding with a spoon, and eats it.

“If it’s bad, remember I only do music,” Chanyeol says, apprehensive. “No need for aggression.”

“It’s not bad,” Kyungsoo murmurs.

“Oh, good,” Chanyeol smiles. “I tried to do a dessert with caramel and cinnamon, but it was really ugly. I’m not good at adorning the dish… My friends ate everything. I didn’t want you to eat
something like that.”

Kyungsoo lifts his head and gives one of his intense, undecipherable stares.

“I made you a gift too,” he says, at last. “It’s in the couch. Don’t open… now. Or here.”

“Thank you! I’m happy,” he says, wiping his forehead. “I was sick these days, I thought I wouldn’t come, but I’m here with you. I barely feel the fever. I’m not even hungry or anything. Just energetic.”

Kyungsoo eats the rest in silence, eyes down. Chanyeol takes the things back to the kitchen and cleans it, whistling some song. Everything is clean and in the right place, so he comes back to the room to find Kyungsoo curled in a ball under the blankets. Chanyeol happily lies next to him.

Chanyeol tries to cuddle him. Kyungsoo’s body jerks up and he slaps Chanyeol’s hand away.

“Come on,” Chanyeol pouts, trying to hold him again. “Just some cuddles.”

Kyungsoo moves away from him, turning to the other side. Chanyeol faces Kyungsoo’s back, confused. Chanyeol lifts a hand and reaches him, touching his arm lightly and Kyungsoo reacts as if he was burned.

“Kyungsoo,” he begs. No answer. Chanyeol curls in bed too, feeling the warmness in his body evaporate. He’s cold. He’s freezing. But he can’t sleep.

He stares at the ceiling. Kyungsoo is sleeping, and, in his position, Chanyeol can see the bite mark, red against his pale skin.

Chanyeol is a fool.

He was being endlessly stupid when he was jealous. Lying on Kyungsoo’s cold bed, he understands, after all, he has no competition. There’s nothing to compete for. No prize at all. Kyungsoo let Chanyeol bite him because, truly, Chanyeol is the only person who mates him. Kyungsoo hired him specifically for that. Chanyeol is Kyungsoo’s mate. But that doesn’t mean anything.

In the end of the day, the reason why Chanyeol is in that bed is because Kyungsoo is inaccessible; untouchably closed to any feelings who may distracts him. A wall he created protects him. Chanyeol was never inside of it; Chanyeol is way more than a whore – because Kyungsoo is a omega, and his heat requires a lot more than just plain sex. His heat is too strong and he needs a mate. He’s not just using Chanyeol’s body, he’s using his feelings too.

Every word from Yifan and Luhan’s conversations, Minseok’s rant, Tao’s warnings – even Yixing’s warning… they make sense. Kyungsoo is a nice, respectable person, but he does not love Chanyeol. They are just attached emotionally as they are attached physically.

However, Chanyeol confesses to himself, feeling a string in his throat, he is in love with Kyungsoo. He has no doubt of it – it’s just his nature. He loved Wolf after one day of having the dog. He would love Kyungsoo just by being friends with him. He is in love with him, because right now, even realizing how much he’s being used, he just want to make his mate happy – no matter how much it would destroy him. He keeps forgiving all of Kyungsoo’s faults and aggressions, his coldness, his silence, trying to make things work by himself. But it’s not about him. It's not about marking, knotting, claiming, mating.

There’s no reciprocity.
Chanyeol leaves the bed. He dresses himself ceremoniously after cleaning the mess. He’s crying when he gets to the door, and almost forgets Kyungsoo’s gift. It’s a small black box and Chanyeol picks it before leaving the house with his bag in his back. He does not call the driver; he just walks.

The first thing he sees when he gets home is his friends in the couch. Baekhyun is sitting in the corner, eating some pepero; Minseok is lying over him; Jongdae’s head is on Minseok’s lap, Wolf on his chest, body sprawled in the rest of the couch. The tv is on.

“Hello,” Jongdae says, and he gapes when he looks at Chanyeol. “What happened?”


“Nothing,” Chanyeol repeats, walking to his room. “I need to sleep.”

He can’t talk, so he send messages to Yifan.

chanyeol hey, I’m home, sorry I haven’t called you
chanyeol can you not send that email? It’s 5 and no complaints, thank you
yifan what happened?
chanyeol nothing bad, his heat is over, I did my job
chanyeol I’m just not in the mood
yifan do you need to talk to the therapist? she’s here tomorrow
chanyeol no! thank you, you’re cool

He wakes up in the other day with low knocks in the door.

“Fuck, what day is today?” his head is hurting, in the same way it hurts after he went to a tequila bar.

“Sunday, 31 December,” Baekhyun enters the room holding a mug. “You slept an entire day. Minnie examined you and told us it wasn’t a coma, so we let you sleep.”

“Oh, okay,” Chanyeol sits up. “Where are they?”

“Minnie drove Jongdae to work,” Baekhyun shrugs. He offers Chanyeol the mug. “You know, my
“Aren’t you mad or something?” Chanyeol takes the mug and takes a sip. It’s tea. “A week ago you were freaking out about the two of them together.”

“Yeah, I was,” he laughs. “No, I’m not mad anymore. I… think I was freaking out because I noticed they were bonding again and… Jongdae never actually explained to me what happened. After Minnie told me they broke up because Jongdae was missing home, I guess it was kind of… okay.”

“Okay?” Chanyeol laughs. “That’s all?”

“I like Minnie,” Baekhyun blushes. He blushes. Chanyeol wants to throw up.

Chanyeol throws up.

“Goddamn,” Baekhyun steps back, startled. “What the hell?”

“Sorry,” Chanyeol looks at the mess in the floor and wipes his mouth. “I’m still sick, I think.”

“You look like trash,” Baekhyun says, checking his own clothes for some splash. “What’s happening?”

“Physically, no idea,” Chanyeol lies in bed again, throwing the mug on the floor. “But guess what? I was rejected again.”

“Oh…” Baekhyun straights up his posture suddenly. “The mean chef?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m sorry, buddy,” Baekhyun awkwardly jumps over the vomit on the floor and sits in bed, next to Chanyeol. “He doesn’t deserve you. You’re too good for him. Literally. He’s evil.”

“Probably,” he nods. “But I love him.”

“What?”

“I—love—him,” Chanyeol spells out. “I want to get married and have babies with him.”

“You mean have babies in a general way or you want to get pregnant?”

“General way.”

“Oh, that’s great. I guess no gender bender fetish for you…” Baekhyun nods. “So this is pretty serious, what are you going to do?”

“Cry, get wasted and then, cry again.”

“I can help you with that. I mean, today there’s a new year’s eve party to go!”

“I wasn’t saying I would drink right now,” Chanyeol frowns. “I’m sick.”

“Yeah. That’s a pity. It’s a very famous friend from Minnie.”

“His name is Junmyeon?”

“Yes… how did you—”
“I’m glad I’m sick,” Chanyeol moves in bed, pulling the blanket over him. “I’m not going, I’m going to stay home and keep Wolf company.”

“Aren’t you recording an album?” Baekhyun taps him. “Well, use this pain, man. Pull an Adele on him! Taylor Swift-y that tiny bitter man exposing his weaknesses! Step on him musically like Beyoncé does with Jay-Z’s cheating ass!”

Chanyeol turns to stare at his friend.

“I think this is the best advice you ever gave to me. Also it was oddly inspiring.”

“I am very inspired lately,” he blushes again. Chanyeol rolls his eyes.

“Get out!”

“I will,” he stands up. “This room is stinking! If you don’t clean this mess, you know Wolf will try to eat it, right?”

In the midnight, Chanyeol holds Wolf tightly, sitting in the couch under the blankets. He is watching Evangelion and eating chicken soup. He turned off his phone, because he’s not going to watch people being happy when he’s miserable again.

“So there’s just us, Wolfie,” he says, sighing. “Two rejected and abandoned animals.”

Wolf just stares. He’s reflexive, probably.

“Do you miss your last owner? Or different from me, you learned to love and respect yourself?”

Wolf turn his head.

“I know I’m being dramatic. It’s just my first real heartbreak,” he shrugs. He must be annoying the poor dog, because Wolf jumps and goes to the door.

“Are you going to leave me too? Is that it?”

Wolf walks a bit and puts his forelegs in the wall, right in front at the window. Chanyeol looks up. The moon is in plain sight.


Chanyeol remembers he didn’t find his book while cleaning his room. Someone must have taken it from there. He gets out of the couch to pick Wolf. But Wolf starts to howl. He *howls* to the moon.

“Oh, it’s too much,” he picks Wolf up from the ground. “You’re *freaking me out.* Let’s sleep.”
When Minseok recovers from the hangover, he takes Chanyeol to be tested. Chanyeol goes to a different lab than the one CHOOSES recommends, but it is basically the same process. Baekhyun and Jongdae spend the day in bed, giggling and sleeping, and Chanyeol knows something happened.

He finds out few days later, when he stops forcing himself to get more lines to a song and goes to the kitchen, just to move, to get some air. Jongdae is sitting at the door, reading, and Baekhyun and Minseok are arguing about something. Chanyeol is alarmed, ready to break up a fight.

“You can’t be serious,” Minseok points. “You’re using the same shirt for four days? Did you take a shower this week?”

“I’m on my vacation,” Baekhyun walks into Minseok’s personal space. “I have the right to be lazy.”

“To be lazy, not dirty! Go change it.”

“What? No way.”

“Baekhyun. Go change it.”

“Make me.”

It takes some seconds to Chanyeol realize that Minseok is not ripping Baekhyun’s shirt to clean it, but he gets it when they’re sucking each other mouth. Chanyeol stays there, mouth open, while they’re having into some intense hate-sex – another tag he visited, not proudly – on the couch. He turns his sight away when he sees Minseok’s naked ass, and he notices Jongdae is still calmly reading while they fuck two meters away from him.

“Aren’t you… going to do something?” Chanyeol asks.

“Nope,” he says, eyes still in the book. “Had a long day at the work today, I’m too tired. Also, this is a really good book? People always mocked Suho, I thought he wrote fiction for teenagers. Just obvious prejudice against omega’s literature. That’s some good shit, right there.”

“Okay…” Chanyeol nods and leaves the room when the noises get too loud. He locks his room door when Wolf gets in, and stays staring at the wall for a long time.

He calls Minho and gives him an ultimatum.

“I’m fucking ready,” Chanyeol says. “Just select the material and let’s get practical.”

“If you say so,” Minho answers. “I’m ready too. But I’m just warning that we’re going to have to do a lot of stuff there if we go now. Not just record it. Until the album is ready, you’ll have to do a lot of boring work. You have to take pictures, think about the concept, you’ll have few control over some choices, also the dis—”

“I’m ready.”

Minho’s deep sigh is loud over the line.

“Pack your things.”
He calls Yifan after.

“I’m going to travel. Japan,” he explains. “I’m finally doing the album.”

“Yeah, I know,” Yifan says. “Are you going to leave us?”

“Not yet. I can come back for a few days if he needs me.”

“Amazing,” Yifan says dryly. “I’ll put in the system, but you have to warn him.”

“Don’t you guys do that?”

“Well, we do, but we send the message you sent us. Isn’t better to talk to him directly too?”

“We’re… not talking.”

Yifan’s deep sigh is loud over the line.

“I’ll send the email.”

Chanyeol decides to send a message to his mate too. It's not going to hurt. He clicks in the Kyungsoo’s contact.

He has a fit before actually writing the message. Wolf barks at him. It’s like courage, Chanyeol!! in dog language.

chanyeol oh, hi!! It’s chanyeol here

chanyeol you asked jongin to give me your number

chanyeol I’m talking to you to warn about my travel

chanyeol Yifan said he sent you a mail

chanyeol I hope it’s there hahah

chanyeol just to clarify it’s a work travel, not fun stuff

chanyeol I’m going to record an album so it’s important

chanyeol but I warned my producer I may have to come back
chanyeol so in case if you need me…

chanyeol I’ll be around

He spends an entire day packing. He throws away more three bags of garbage (Minseok informs him he’s an accumulator), he says goodbye to each plant and goes out for a walk with Wolf. He keeps an eye in his phone, but he’s not expecting much, since Kyungsoo seems to have already seen (literally seen: 8:47) it. He does not know why he’s feeling so nostalgic –he will be away few months, at the worst scenario. On the night before leaving Chanyeol goes to his mother’s house to tell the news. They have dinner, and as soon as she leaves the room, Chanyeol looks for her shrine; he finds it in the corner of her room. Seven seashells, one glass of seawater and sand and a picture of the moon.

“Mom, I know it’s weird to ask, but you have been into the Moon Cult?” he asks, when they’re cleaning the dishes. “Or…”

“No, I haven’t,” she smiles. “Why?”

“Anh… there’s always a glass of seawater around. I never asked, but…”

“Oh, you mean the offerings?” She nods. “Oh, yes. I keep them inside the house since your birth. It’s a payback.”

“A payback?”

“Yeah. Do you remember I told you I almost died when you were born?”

Yeah, Chanyeol remembers. Chanyeol spent part of his childhood feeling guilty by it and another part being annoyed by his sister (your big ears got stuck on mom!!!). It was a lie, Chanyeol found out when he was a teenager. It wasn’t his fault. His mother was a really tiny person who had to give birth to two abnormally big babies; his sister’s birth was complicated, Chanyeol’s birth was nearly a death sentence.

“Yes,” he says, frowning. His mother is a tiny omega chef. Is this some Freudian shit? He has to ask Baekhyun. She even has dark hair, holy shit.

“The doctors wanted to do a C-section,” she says, giving him a towel to dry his hands. “But a Moon Cult midwife actually helped me when it happened. I was in home and she lived next door. Well, she was an old woman and she died long ago, but I’m still grateful she took care of me. She knew you were an alpha when she held you! I’m still impressed she knew.”

“How do I only know now I was brought to the world by a Moon Cult midwife?” Chanyeol is half pissed, half scared.

“You never asked,” she shrugs. “Also, I didn’t understand most of what she said. She died when you were a small boy, but when she was around, she always lent me spices and natural medicines.”

“Humm,” he tries to absorb this information. “What did she tell you?”

“Those things religious people say. She spent more time with your sister and I remember she said Yura was a great leader, a true alpha, those things. I guess… oh, yeah. She told me you were an alpha, but she also told me you were born into a pack. I was a bit scared after that, I thought she
meant I was going to have more children.”

“A pack? Like a pack of wolves?”

“Yes, they always make those wolf references, right? I remember she said... you were a part of pack. I don’t really know what that means. She also asked me to pray for your health giving a small offering to the moon, which they always say. Oh... and to keep you away from the fire. But... well, every kid has to be kept away from the fire, right?”

Chanyeol drops the towel on the floor.

He comes home, kisses wolf in his sleep and checks if the boys are fine – the three of them are sleeping peacefully in bed. Chanyeol opens his notebook to do a little research. He’s avoiding the Instagram and he can’t sleep. Something hurts in his chest, a sudden fear of separation that he knows it’s not rational.

He searches: born into a pack moon cult. He clicks in the Wikipedia article.

In some Moon Cult movements, particularly in Reincarnationism and Alternative Universes Beliefs, to be born into a pack is a popular phrase referring to “to find a group of people you’re destined to meet”, or a spiritual mating to a group which someone belongs to, contrasted with the one who are destined to be alone, “lone wolf”; the ones destined to live only with their mate “true alphas”/“true omegas”; and the ones who are destined to establish their own pack.

In contemporary atheist usage, the term is distinct from sometimes similar terms used in mainstream Mixed Cults to refer to being or becoming progressive, which is linked to modern movements as omegarism, beta rights and pro-equality ABO. The phrase "born into a pack" is also used as an adjective to describe individual non-members of the movement who espouse this belief ("born-into-a-pack atheist" and the "born-into-a-pack omegarist") in order to distance themselves from the conservative movement, which does not endorse the concept of reincarnation or alternative universes.

Chanyeol clicks in another link, a more informal description.

Born into a pack

used to refer to someone who believed to be born to find a certain number of people which they’re tied to; popular between Moon Childs and AU enthusiasts.

Mark is born-into-a-pack.

[ before noun ] used to identify a vertent of Moon Cult.

Ariana Grande is a born-into-a-pack Moon Child.

[ before noun ] used to describe someone who is not part of conservative religions or holds conservative beliefs.

She’s a born-into-a-pack beta activist.

Chanyeol needs something even more informal. He clicks into a yahoo answers question how do I know I’m born into a pack???? Or I’m a lone wolf???
Chanyeol ignores the answers like if anyone doesn’t want to mate you, that’s how you know you’re a lone wolf ahhahahahahahah, and goes to the “best answer” by moonchild_alpha77:

Hey, that’s actually a frequent question. To find out your role into moon cults, there’s some ritual, which can help you, but the old moon child witches are said to know only by scent. After all, this is not very important; everyone can mate independent of their role. Lone wolves are known to avoid long-time mating and joining groups, by they’re not lonely. Born-into-a-pack people normally experiences some coincidences that helps them to find their pack. One of the most common is the endogenous mating (when there’s recurrent mating inside of the same group of people, but changing the ones involved in it). Another often happening is the “recognizing”, or the attraction of the group members by small occurrences, casual meetings and shared interests. It’s hard to a pack to actually find and recognize all its members, but moon childs believe they will meet by fate, being aware or not. Recently, UA enthusiasts use this concept to explain their attraction to the subject, but for moon childs, it’s part of the pack organization. By the way, don’t be worry! Betas are really important and loved in moon cults. Don’t believe when conservatives tell you betas can’t mate! In moon cults there’s no “coyote hell” or “being sacrificed to the werewolf son of the sun god after the judging of your sins”. I hope you’re satisfied with the answer.

Chanyeol closes the notebook.

“All right,” he says to Wolf. “I’m done with these things. Tomorrow I will forget all this shit and just focus on music.”

He doesn’t.

He has to drop by Minseok’s office with the results of the exams. While Minseok reads it, Chanyeol inspects the place. It’s clean with no decoration but pictures. Over the wall, pictures with patients; over the table, one with his family (Chanyeol thinks that the two older woman are his parents and the young one is his sister), one with Junmyeon and Yixing and a brand new one with Baekhyun and Jongdae. It’s cute.

“This is no good,” Minseok shakes his head, sitting in the other side of the table.

“I’m going to die?” Chanyeol frowns. “I’m feeling okay…”

“You’re not sick. Your hormonal taxes are extraordinarily high… Your body is not reacting to the suppressants anymore. I think what you had was just a rejection of its artificial hormones,” he picks a small notepad. “I wish Yixing was here, he’s the specialist in this.”

“Where is he?” Chanyeol asks. “I’m allergic to my suppressant?”

“He’s with Luhan. They’re working,” Minseok takes his glasses off. “Since when have you taken suppressants? Which one?”
“Minos. Since seventeen… well, since always,” Chanyeol shrugs.

“You never changed your suppressant after all this time?” Minseok slaps Chanyeol’s head. “Are you insane?”

“Ouch! No, okay? It was working.”

“I’m not a specialist, but I’m sure you shouldn’t be taking Minos. It’s too strong,” Minseok sighs and starts writing. “We have to test another to see if you’re just rejecting Minos or any suppressant. I will prescribe Ixion, just an individual dose.”

“Yixing told me I couldn’t just jump to one suppressant to another without a break,” Chanyeol panics. He can’t be without suppressants, or he won’t be able to meet Kyungsoo in his heats. “My next injection is in the end of this month.”

Minseok stops writing, put his glasses again and rises a finger.

“Listen, I will try to make this didactic. You… have… no… suppressants… in… your… body… right… now. The rest of the hormones, which should be blocking your alpha hormones but were defeated by your system, were expelled during your fever,” Minseok sighs. “Your tax is so high I could get pregnant here, only by talking to you.”

“Fuck… for real?” Chanyeol widens his eyes. Minseok slaps his own face.

“For the Moon, of course not, it’s just an expression,” he writes again. “I’m also prescribing a basic ABO biology book.”

He takes his injection before the taking the plane. When he meets Minho, he’s in pain, dizzy and confused. He spend his first two days in japan on a bed, messaging his friends.

**luhan** are you in japan?? When are you coming here to visit me :((

**chanyeol** sorry!!! It was a work thing!!!

**chanyeol** I’m sick and in bed :(  

**chanyeol** but I heard yixing is there???

**chanyeol** send him a kiss >/////<

**luhan** yeah, we’re finally creating another mating service!!

**luhan** he sent another kiss :*

**luhan** get well!!!
luhan sent a picture *cutecatsayinggetwell.gif*

chanyeol that’s cute :)

chanyeol are you ok? :( 

luhan getting a lot better

luhan don’t worry about me!

Chanyeol takes almost two weeks to adapt to the new environment. Minho is never home, mostly at the studio (Chanyeol isn’t the only person he produces) and he has to walk around alone, barely understanding what’s going on. He eats out in every meal, because being in the kitchen makes him sad; he does some tourism with old people; he takes his guitar with him and plays in random places, just by being inspired by the new faces he sees.

And, of course, he misses Kyungsoo. He’s almost used to the feeling, when he decides to check his Instagram in a moment of weakness. He has fun while doing it: he finds Sehun’s enigmatic photos while travelling with Tao; Jongdae’s videos of Wolf dressed as a unicorn; Yifan visiting home; Luhan and Yixing looking like models while doing everyday things. It’s good to see his friends, even if only by the internet. But he scrolls too much and finds a post from the day he left the country: a picture of Kyungsoo, Jongin, Amber and the twelve workers with a giant red cake.

kimkai happy bday for us! °••°•°•°•°•°•°•°° thanks @seulgi_redvelvet for the cake! Me and @dyodoro are getting older! Believe or not he’s older than me but why I do look almost thirty and he looks sixteen? :( everyone had cinnamon cake today in #twelve! #twelve #bday #28 #redvelvet #happy

omegacelebs you look great nini! <3 @betacelebs

krystaljung keep a piece of cake for me :( happy bday nini and ksoo! Love u

kais_wife fist me daddy!!!

amberllhama @krystaljung got u babe

keyshinee because… you’re almost thirty? Also ksoo is no parameter for aging

cutecouples kaisoo <3 missed your guys together

betacelebs @omegacelebs missing the UC marathon!

theultimatechef @dyodoro @seulgi_redvelvet being cute :)

ohsehun what do you want from europe? I’ll bring for you

kimkai you @ohsehun :)
Chanyeol stares at the picture for two hours. Kyungsoo is in his work clothes, looking small and smiling big. If Chanyeol could hug him, they would have to call a doctor to unstick him from his mate. At this point, with the end of the month coming and no email warning about the heat, Chanyeol thinks it’s over between them.

He distracts himself being friendly with every visit Minho receives. There are many people, most famous musicians and producers, and Chanyeol talks to them for hours. When he’s tired of boring work or signing papers, he goes to the other side of the studio, where there’s a trainee dorm and a dining hall.

In one of his rambles by the places, tiny, laughing people surround him. Chanyeol is frozen, because he can’t move until they leave, infecting the air with the strong scent. He tells Minho what happened when he returns to his room.

“They’re training to form a pop group of omegas, it’s a very popular concept around here,” he laughs. “Are you eating next to their dorm? There are people in heat there! They’re going to call the police on you.”

“I had no idea,” Chanyeol explains. Seems like the new suppressant is working. He barely smells people lately. “Also, they could have killed me easily. There are so many of them! It’s like minions, you know?”

He avoids going anywhere but the recording room, but they find him again. They know his name, and they say with an accent, always laughing, as if his name was hilarious. As the time goes by, they start touching him, patting his head and giving him food. Chanyeol is almost believing his sister and accepting he’s like a dog to the group, when he finds out one of them can talk to him.

“Are we being inappropriate?” she asks one day, very slowly and in full accent, after seeing how embarrassed he is. “I can stop them. They’re only doing this because they like you and they want you to be happy.”

“No, there’s no problem,” he bows. “I’m thankful, Yui.”

“Don’t be sad, Chanyeol,” she smiles and pats him gently. “One day you will forget who broke your heart.”

So, Chanyeol finds out, they’re pitying him – and they’re think it’s really funny that he’s suffering. And he is suffering. Almost two months after the last heat he was with Kyungsoo, and he has no email in his box.

chanyeol you would tell me if he picked another alpha, right?

yifan I would send an email warning you, yeah

chanyeol what if he’s spending alone???

yifan I had dinner in twelve and spoke to his beta friend

yifan she told me he hadn’t missed a day

yifan his heat have been irregular before, calm down

chanyeol can’t :(
In few hours, the real Taemin arrives in Japan and comes to Minho’s house. Minho asks, for the love of the moon, please take care of him, because I can’t. Chanyeol is more than happy to spend some time with a new friend.

Taemin, or how Chanyeol calls him, Jongin’s chaotic evil twin, makes his life a hell. With the excuse that he’s shy, he takes Chanyeol everywhere. He has a fucking gun with him (I’m too famous to walk out there without protection) and sometimes, to Chanyeol’s horror, he scratches his back with it; he talks with every fan, no matter what or when (a fan in a dark alley 3 am it’s still a fan); he likes to stay all night playing games (the night is still young, he says while the sun comes out); and he always want to choose the most incoherently dangerous option to do anything (we could just jump instead of taking the elevator, you know?). By the end of the week, Chanyeol is lying exhausted in a table at a ramen shop.


“Why does everyone thinks my pain is a form of entertainment?” Chanyeol lifts his head. He has to eat the damn ramen.

“Because it is,” Taemin says, moving his hashi around. “Anyone can see you’re missing your mate, but you do in such exaggerated way, you know. I haven’t seen my mate in a full month, but you don’t see me pouting in every corner.”

“I’m not pouting,” Chanyeol pouts. “Where are your mate? Is he trying to put tight pants in mine?”

“Tight pants, you’re hilarious,” Taemin laughs. “Jongin is at home, I’m the one travelling. To be honest, I don’t even know what he’s doing. He doesn’t need me for his heat now, because he took this new omega suppressant, Vesta. It worked on him. He hates the idea of being on suppressants, but it’s the safest. It was based on Yixing’s research.”

“You don’t miss him?” Chanyeol picks at his hashis too.

“I do, but you see, I’ve been mated for twelve years. I can survive some time away from him.”

“Do you think I’m overreacting? I mean how you’re not jealous?” Chanyeol stares at his bowl. “I can stop thinking that every minute I’m apart from him, he’s going to find someone else, or just forget—”

“Shut up,” Taemin pushes him back in the chair. Ceremoniously, Taemin straddles his lap and sits. “Now… it’s six hours and… seven minutes. Great.”

Chanyeol watches Taemin doing the entire process: grabbing his face, turning his head slightly and kissing him; but he still gasps, shocked. Because of that, he gives Taemin free access to his mouth. In the back of his mind, Chanyeol thinks, we’re in public!!! We’re both alphas!!!
It’s a nice, violent kiss. Chanyeol holds his hips, steadying him – Taemin is sitting on his dick and moving would be a problem. Chanyeol closes his eyes and relax; it’s okay, he thinks, making out. Taemin is the one who breaks the kiss.

“There, there,” he puts a hand in Chanyeol’s chest. “Now… it’s six hours and twenty-two minutes.” Chanyeol looks around, just to check if someone is watching.

“I don’t get it.”

“Look at you dick, pal,” Taemin presses it down easily. Chanyeol lets out an embarrassing shriek. “You’re not even fully hard. I don’t go to gym every day to get this reaction. Do you know I have a fanclub literally called I Would Bang Taemin with fifty thousand people around the world?”

“What are you doing, for the love of the moon?!”

“Giving you a practical example,” he shrugs, finally standing up. “We made out for fifteen minutes. What did you feel? Was it a bad kiss? Am I unattractive? Why are you looking like I made you recite the conservative wolf book?”

Chanyeol is still embarrassed, but now he understands. He shakes his head, pouting.

“So what do you think?”

“I think… I’m mated?” Chanyeol tries out. “Is that it?”

“That’s a start. So, what would happen if I was your mate?”

“Hummm,” Chanyeol gets red. Taemin laughs, sits to eat his ramen. “I must confess I would be hard just by seeing him… If he touched me… I would freak out. Right now… I can’t even think about kissing.”

“So cute,” Taemin smiles. “You two look like teenagers. Listen, he’s not going to simply forget you. That’s not what happens. Leaving a mate is a long process, people die while trying to vanish a bond.”

Chanyeol nods. He knows it.

“Maybe I’m not just worried about that. Maybe I’m worry… he may not care about me.”

“Are you serious?” Taemin laughs loudly. “Are we talking about the same Kyungsoo?”

“I guess.”

“Look, if he didn’t care about you, he would pretend you don’t exist. He wouldn’t talk to you, let alone touching you. If he’s gone that far, he likes you. Most people can’t even believe he mated. If I told our old classmates, they would pass out.”

“Old… classmates…?”

“Yup… We were from the same year. We studied in the same class, until he was presented. Then he went to an omega-only class. But this was in our last year.”

“He went to a conservative school?” Chanyeol barely screams.

“Yes,” Taemin frowns, chewing. “His parents are conservative, like mine. They’re from the same
church, the most progressive, but they’re still conservative.”

“You mean progressive like…?”

“Progressive like ‘we believe in the sun god and the werewolf son’, but we don’t think betas should die or mating only happens between alphas and omegas. But they’re still pretty conservative. Kyungsoo couldn’t hang out with me anymore after being presented. Then we both left our homes, so…”

“I see,” Chanyeol scratches his nose, thinking. “Thanks for telling me this. Sometimes it’s hard for me to understand him, he hardly shares his past or anything, to be honest…”

“Don’t judge him for creating a space between you two. If I was him, I would do the same,” Taemin says. “He’s… pretty much the conservative omega dream. He’s quiet and discreet, he can do all the things these sectaries want from a mate and he’s cute – never tell him I said so, but it’s true. I can’t imagine the things he must have being through with alphas.”

Chanyeol nods. He understands, but it doesn’t take away the weight in his chest.

It happens after three months in Japan. Chanyeol is working so hard he carries a pillow and a blanket to take naps during the recording. The musicians who work with him are nice, the gang of omegas still feeds him randomly and he doesn’t feel so alone anymore. He’s having a quick lunch in the garden when he receives a message from Yifan.

yifan are you busy? Do you have important things to do today?

chanyeol besides working, nothing. why?

yifan got some news. Not good. Do I call or…

chanyeol if it’s what I’m thinking, then just say

chanyeol there’s a probability I will cry, better not to call

yifan Kyungsoo asked to break the contract today

yifan his justification is he’s back on the suppressants

yifan apparently this new one Vesta worked on him

Chanyeol stops feeling the ground under him. He has to focus to keep reading.
yifan you have seven days to tell us if you want to be signed to another mate

yifan there’s a new guy waiting for a mate that seems nice

yifan he’s a socialite, but he do a lot of charity work, and he’s a volunteer at a library

yifan he’s cute and a nice person

yifan I know you need time, but think about it

chanyeol I bet this guy is great, but look

chanyeol there’s thirty nice omegas right here

chanyeol they’re all my type and they feed me

chanyeol and I just want some hugs

chanyeol I kinda made out with Taemin

chanyeol I’m sorry I think he’s your celebrity crush

chanyeol couldn’t react at all

chanyeol I know you think I’m dumb and cheesy but

chanyeol I waited for SO LONG to do what I’m doing now

chanyeol I’m living my dream

chanyeol yet he’s the only thing I can think about these days

chanyeol I never really wanted to mate

chanyeol But I wanted to see new places, to do an album, to meet new people

chanyeol I wanted to have an exciting life

chanyeol but I would drop everything if he wanted me back home

chanyeol because I’m feeling like I’m missing a piece of me

chanyeol and I can’t really enjoy life like this

yifan well I guess I may have something in my eye

yifan you’re not dumb

chanyeol sent a picture *thegiantpillowwithkyungsoopicprintedonit.jpg*

chanyeol what about now

yifan I have so many questions
yifan did you make this????
yifan is he dressed like a penguin???
yifan what size is this thing???
yifan do you sleep with this?? Please tell me you don’t kiss that pillow
chanyeol I made it, he’s in a penguin onesie, it’s 1,70, I sleep with it
yifan this is depressing
chanyeol it’s my safe way to cope
chanyeol I almost stole two tiny omega trainees to cuddle once
chanyeol Minho stopped me
yifan so I guess you won’t think about what I said?
chanyeol If I had to mate someone else now
chanyeol then I would feel like a whore
chanyeol It’s easier for me just to break the contract too
yifan I see
yifan I will send the papers by email
chanyeol thank you buddy

Chanyeol stays in the bed for two days. He’s not sick. He just needs a break. His bed is warm and he watches the world outside by the window, feeling numb and disconnected from the reality. He talks with his friends by Skype, when he feels like crying. Wolf is bigger, Sehun is back home, his sister’s mate is expecting, and he watches all these things happening as if he’s watching a movie.

“How are you feeling today?” Minho asks. He’s worried.

“Fine,” Chanyeol answers. There’s no other way to put it. “I can go back to work, you know?”

“Yeah, you could,” he smiles. “But I need you to do me a favor. I got an old friend in town—”

“Oh, Moon,” Chanyeol murmurs.

“And I can’t keep him company today,” Minho continues. “He’s not like Taemin, I guarantee. And he told me you two are friends already, so it won’t be a problem, right?”

Chanyeol sits up quickly when Junmyeon pops into the room, smiling. He’s holding a tiny bunny with him.

“Hello, Chanyeol.” Junmyeon smiles. He seems small and soft next to Minho. “I guess we meet again!”
Chanyeol is a bit happier. He goes with Junmyeon to a fansign (soon it will be you, no?); they take the small bunny, “Chantilly”, to a vet; Chanyeol buys Junmyeon a travelling notebook made for writers; at the end of the day, they eat candy while watching the sunset.

“Are you enjoying it here?” Junmyeon asks. Chantilly is tucked into a fluffy pink blanket, quietly sleeping in his owner’s lap.

“Yes,” Chanyeol nods, biting the pocky. “Sometimes I just wander around. People are nice.”

Junmyeon laughs.

“You were looking pretty sad when I saw you in your room,” he says.

“I’m sick,” Chanyeol lies.

“Humm…” he shakes his head. Chantilly moves its nose. “Maybe you got it from Kyungsoo? He’s been sick a lot lately too.”

Chanyeol’s heart jumps in his chest.

“Maybe it’s his suppressant’s effect,” Chanyeol shrugs, pretending he’s not freaking out. “I don’t see him anymore…”

“Vesta doesn’t give any collateral effects, it was synthetized during Yixing’s research,” Junmyeon laughs. “I was just joking. Anyone can see you’re trying to break a bond.”

Chanyeol rubs Chantilly’s nose, eats his pocky and avoids Junmyeon’s eyes.

“Yeah?”

“So you know I’m graduated in History, Chanyeol? My thesis was about a mating rite performed by a Latin American indigenous tribe,” Junmyeon says, casually, looking at the sky. “There are many mating rituals around the world, but they’re the only group who has a specific mating ritual after the death of the previous mate. The Igarapé people believe in possible multiple matings, like many other communities around them, but they also believe in destined mates.”

“I don’t… understand.”

“They believe you can have more than one partner in your lifetime, but not anyone can be your destined partner,” Junmyeon explains. “So when one mate dies, the other goes to a part of deep forest – I’m talking about a part of the Amazonian forest, by the way. A wild part. The person is hidden and stays there to be found by scent.”

“What if no one finds them?” Chanyeol holds his friend’s arms unconsciously.

“They die,” Junmyeon shrugs. “And most of them want to die. If it happens, it means they’re going to be with their mate forever. If someone finds them – and let me tell you, it’s a hard job -, means that they have a second chance to mate. They believe if someone returns from these conditions, they have died and they are going to start a new life with their new mate.”

“That is creepy,” Chanyeol lies his head on Junmyeon’s shoulder.

“No, it’s not. It’s just a different culture. I fell in love with the Igarapé’s way of seeing life. They don’t have compulsory mating rituals, and some people don’t mate at all. There’s no hierarchy in their social structure; just a small work division. But my favorite thing is their Moon adoration,” he
smiles. “But what I’m trying to say is: what I learned with igarapé people is that no one meets by coincidence. Moreover, even more, no one who mated can be truly separated. **Breaking a bond is a form of death.** Because of that, they never oblige people to mate – only the ones ready to go through the entire process can do it.”

“Do you think we’re obligated here?”

“Not entirely. I was talking about those places where omegas are mated by force. You know this still exists in extreme conservative groups, right?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol stops touching Junmyeon and puts a space between them. “Yes, I do.”

“No one should be allowed to mate without knowing what it truly means,” Junmyeon says, serious.

“Do you think about mating again?”

“Sometimes,” Junmyeon says. “But I haven’t died yet.”

It was because of the conversation, he has no doubt.

Chanyeol looks at his own paws, then at the omega wolves running. He waited too long for this. He’s the best hunter in the pack. He’s not the biggest wolf, but he’s almost as big as Yifan – and he’s the leader. Chanyeol can also fish, has good abilities in manual work and fighting. He had his first rut. He’s ready to go in the Run.

He’s been keeping an eye on a wolf of his age. The wolf is not very social and runs mostly with omegas like him, but Chanyeol doesn’t let that stop him. Chanyeol has been courting him, giving him small gifts, meat, fruits or just flowers he picks. The wolf rarely accepts Chanyeol’s offerings, but at least the wolf doesn’t accept from anyone else too.

His name is Kyungsoo and he’s in the Run today. He’s a good runner, plus he’s not in heat, so he can overtake many alphas and betas today. The alpha’s eyes are over Luhan, because his heat hit him recently, and maybe over Tao, because he’s the best fighter in the pack and he can take them down easily. Due to the fact Yifan’s pack has many omegas, some foreign wolfs came by. Chanyeol is not afraid.

When Yifan howls, the alphas and betas start to run. None of the omegas are seen anymore. They have to be found by scent. Chanyeol knows Kyungsoo’s scent by heart. He smells like spices, wood, bitter things. Chanyeol follows him around sometimes, but Kyungsoo always ignores him. The other alphas make fun of Chanyeol’s efforts to approach him, especially the ones who aren’t from Yifan’s
pack. Foreign wolves think they’re too weak, because Yifan lets his omega command the pack, and all wolves accepts Junmyeon’s orders. Chanyeol doesn’t mind – he thinks his pack is the best pack under the Moon.

Chanyeol’s mind may be wandering, but his body is on point. He can smell Kyungsoo around him, and he stops to concentrate on his scent. He runs to the right, almost sure he’s there.

He is. And he’s being chased by another alpha.

Chanyeol doesn’t know exactly what happens, but when he sees what he’s doing, he has his teeth deep inside of the wolf’s throat. It’s a foreign wolf, he notices, when the body hits the ground. Chanyeol never killed a wolf before. His mouth tastes like blood and something else, and it’s good.

Kyungsoo is still there, under the same tree he was being cornered. This time he doesn’t run. He is there, standing and watching. Chanyeol approaches him carefully. Minseok, the oldest alpha in their pack, told Chanyeol he shouldn’t take his omega like the foreign wolves do. Chanyeol should wait for him to lower his head, so Chanyeol could lick it, in a sign of hierarchy. Chanyeol has no idea of what the foreign wolves do, because Chanyeol never saw the other wolves mating, but he knows it’s no good thing, since they think Yifan’s pack is too docile.

Chanyeol doesn’t lower his head. He keeps staring at Chanyeol, and even in his wolf form, he’s too serious. Chanyeol howls at him, because he knows he must bite Kyungsoo in order to claim him – there’s other thing too, but Minseok never told him exactly what it is. Apparently, every wolf should know naturally. Jongdae, his only omega close friend, told him secretly it has to do with his knot and Chanyeol got so embarrassed they knew about his rut that he ran away before further explaining.

Chanyeol cries. If the other wolves have seen this, they would laugh. He’s probably the first alpha in the pack to be rejected by the omega he chased. He’s probably destined to spend his ruts alone, maybe even away from the pack. He doesn’t want to chase anyone else. Maybe he’s going to kiss the fire, and burn to death like the lone wolves do when they’re ready to die. He got burned once, in his leg, and he’s still has the scars – when he’s in his almost hairless human form, they look like a fiery bird.

Chanyeol licks his head. Chanyeol opens his eyes. Kyungsoo rubs his snout against Chanyeol’s one. When Chanyeol stops crying, Kyungsoo turns into his human form. Chanyeol follows him, because he’s too excited – Chanyeol loves Kyungsoo’s human form, he has eyes like an owl. Chanyeol lets out a small cry when he notices Kyungsoo has small cuts in his shoulders. He forgets he’s in his human form and he licks it. Kyungsoo laughs.

Kyungsoo leans in and presses his lips against Chanyeol mouth. Chanyeol gets red – he saw mated couples doing the same thing, - and howls. Kyungsoo hugs him, indirectly pressing Chanyeol’s face against his neck. Oh. Chanyeol’s heart is beating loud. He shows his canines, long and sharp, and presses them slightly against Kyungsoo’s skin. Kyungsoo gasps, hugging him tighter. Chanyeol bites him. He knows it’s painful and he has to hold Kyungsoo in place, because he shakes his entire body, screaming. Chanyeol knows the other alphas will hear and they will be aware Kyungsoo has been claimed.

It makes his blood run faster.
Kyungsoo’s body goes limp in his arms. Chanyeol has to put his mate on his back and take him to his— their tent. There he has to find out what his knot does. But, before that, he will show off his mate to every wolf in the Run. Chanyeol is content. He has a mate.

He turns into a wolf and howls at the Moon.

The Moon says back, “Who are you howling to?”

Chanyeol opens his eyes and immediately sits down. Junmyeon is at the door, holding a mug, in his pajamas. Minho is next to the bed, full dressed, and both have worried faces.

“What?” Chanyeol says.

“You were howling,” Minho says, shocked. “Howling like a dog.”

“Did you have a nightmare?” Junmyeon asks, walking into the room.

“Kind of,” Chanyeol rubs his face. “I may be going crazy.”

“Are we talking about the human size pillow or the howling?” Minho asks, half-mocking, half-curious.

“Oh,” Junmyeon says happily. “I was the one who gave him this onesie. He hated it.”

“Enough,” Chanyeol sighs. “I need to take a walk.”

He keep having those dreams. Sometimes it’s just him running, hunting, playing with other wolves; other time, he’s mating with Kyungsoo, what makes Chanyeol feels very apprehensive because he had never watched furry porn in his life. He gets used to it, since his work is exhausting him – they’re finally finishing the external appearance of the album, planning the distribution, the possible tour dates.

The nightmare happens on a quiet night.

Chanyeol is coming back to his pack, carrying a big deer with him. It’s late, the night is windy and he start getting alarmed when he hears no voices around. His pack likes to sing, to talk very loud; Chanyeol appreciates this very much. The puppies aren’t running around and this is even weirder, because they like to sleep all day and run during the night.

The first thing he sees is Yifan’s body trespassed by many arrows. Chanyeol drops the deer and runs to him. Junmyeon is the next – his body is floating in the river, an arrow in his chest. There are arrows everywhere and Chanyeol watches, horrified, the body of his brothers sprawled around the camp. He can see how violently they were attacked. Yixing has arrows in his chest, Jongdae in his legs, his body turned to the other side – it was a fast attack, they hadn’t time to run or defend themselves. Chanyeol runs to the last part of the camp, the puppies’ tent. In his way, he finds Kyungsoo. He was waiting for Chanyeol – he was the one who asked for deer’s meat.

Chanyeol turns to his human form, already crying. He holds the body of his mate: there’s a single
arrow impaling his throat. His wolf’s eyes are closed and he’s cold. Chanyeol wants to be there, crying, eternally, but he remembers the puppies. He carries the wolf in his human’s arms. Kyungsoo is small, and right now his body is rigid.

He finds the puppies’ tent empty and he lets a long sigh. Jongin and Sehun’s bodies are blocking the way and Chanyeol knows they have protected the tent until the puppies ran away – it’s easier for them, since they have no scent yet. Also, the attackers must have been mad to see they’re no longer there: Sehun’s entire body is covered by arrows and Jongin has many in his belly, where he was expecting Minseok’s new brood. Chanyeol knows Tao has trained the puppies right; they’re safe, as long they don’t carry the scent of the pack with them. For this reason, Chanyeol can’t go after them. He and Kyungsoo had given the pack three puppies. Chanyeol hopes they’re smart enough to survive on their own.

Chanyeol carries the body of his brothers, one by one, and throws them in the fire. Today is a full moon day, the last one of this cycle. Under the moonlight, he can see clearly the way their dead bodies burn. He leaves Kyungsoo for last; he kisses his mate body many times. He finally lets the fire consume Kyungsoo, howling sadly for the Moon. In this moment, Chanyeol doesn’t feel his love for the Moon anymore. His pack is dead – it’s only fair Chanyeol dies with them.

He jumps into the fire.

Chanyeol is crying so much that Minho gives up trying to console him.

“Okay, just try to tell me what happened,” Minho holds the glass of the water Chanyeol rejected. “Just—“

“They’re all dead,” Chanyeol says between sniffs. “I wasn’t there and they’re all dead!”

“Okay… who’s dead?”

“Everyone,” Chanyeol rubs his face. His chest are hurting so much. He still could feel the flames around him. “I left them and they’ve died!”

“Tell me just one name… or maybe it’s an apocalypse thing?”

“Yifan… Junmyeon… Luhan… Baekhyun,” Chanyeol tries to keep talking, but he can’t. He remembers the wolves’ bodies and he cries again.

“Just a minute,” Minho picks his phone. Chanyeol hugs his legs, shaking. He is so scared. “Look.”

Minho gives Chanyeol the phone. Chanyeol holds it with his trembling hands.

minho if you’re awake please answer quickly

minho Chanyeol had a nightmare and he thinks you’re dead

junmyeon is he still having nightmares???
“See,” Minho pats Chanyeol’s head gently. “It was just a dream. He’s alive and well. You don’t have to worry.”

Chanyeol isn’t completely convinced, so he calls Jongdae.

“I’m alive,” he assures Chanyeol, even sounding tired. “We’re helping Minseok with his heat. Baekhyun and Minseok can’t talk to you, but I guarantee they’re very alive too.”

“Who’s taking care of Wolf?”

“Sehun, who, by the way, is alive too.”

“Thank you,” Chanyeol says, relaxing.

Minho is so worried he demands Chanyeol comes back home. The work is almost finished and Chanyeol is clearly stressed, in his opinion. Chanyeol agrees. He’s missing home, his mom, his dog, his friends and even his sister – he’s not going to tell her, but…

He travels back after saying goodbye to his new friends, including the tiny omega group, who gives him many gifts. Chanyeol feels sad when there is no one expecting him; Minseok is still in heat, Sehun is too busy, like Chanyeol’s family. He opens his room’s door ceremoniously and falls on his bed; the first thing he sees is the black box.

Kyungsoo’s gift.

Chanyeol jumps off the bed and grabs it. He almost breaks the box trying to open it. It’s a sweater. A big, huge sweater with a drawing of Rilakkuma. Chanyeol puts it on quickly, running to the bathroom to check how he looks. The sweater fits perfectly, even being baggy as Chanyeol likes it. He rubs the fabric – it was knitted. Chanyeol wants to cry.

Since he’s alone, he goes out for a walk. He’s using Kyungsoo’s sweater and he probably will keep using it until Minseok screams at him. He goes to the grocery store, because he wants to cook something. He’s checking the blueberries when he hears his name.

“Chanyeol,” the girl says. “Pinky!”

Chanyeol turns and looks down. It’s Amber, dressed in casual clothes, next to a familiar girl. Oh, he thinks, it’s Jongin’s friend.

“Hello, Amber,” he smiles. “Long time no see.”

“Do you know my mate?” she points. “This is Soojung. Soojung, this is Chanyeol, Kyungsoo’s mate.”
“I’m…. I’m not,” Chanyeol’s blushes. He awkwardly bows and the girl smiles at him. She’s beautiful and has a bright red hair.

“Nice to meet you,” Soojung says. “But you’re not his mate?”

“Oh, they pretend they’re not mates, because Kyungsoo is in the closet,” Amber winks. “But he is.”

“Oh, okay,” Soojung nods. “In this case, congratulations!

“Oh yeah, congratulations,” Amber laughs. “I was just telling Soojung about the vomit bucket. I mean, we even have a daily bet of how many times he’s going to throw up in that thing. Salmon day is the apex of the bucket!”

“This isn’t fun, Amber. He can’t control himself,” Soojung hits her in the arm. “I don’t like when you mock omegas.”

“He’s still sick?” Chanyeol asks, worried. Why no one tells him about Kyungsoo’s health?

“He’s going to be nauseous until the baby is born,” Amber studies him, then laughs. “Why alphas are so ignorant about these things?”

“Don’t say things like that…” Soojung shakes his head. “She meant no harm. It’s probably very exhausting for you two since he’s pregnant.”

“Ba… by…” Chanyeol’s brain stops working. “Pregnant…?”

The two of them exchange a look. Amber waves a hand in front of Chanyeol’s eyes.

“Hey, big guy. Are you okay?”

Kyungsoo is pregnant. Chanyeol looks around, startled. He puts the blueberries in the place and runs away from the store. He still hears Amber calling him, but Chanyeol never ran so fast in his life – inside of his mind, he only hears: Kyungsoo is pregnant. Kyungsoo is pregnant. Kyungsoo is pregnant.

He scares the door attendant of Kyungsoo’s building when he appears from nowhere, screaming: Is Do Kyungsoo home? The guy recognizes Chanyeol and tells him that Kyungsoo moved out a month ago. Chanyeol sits on the sidewalk, trying to calm down.

“Think, Chanyeol,” he says. He can’t call Kyungsoo. Kyungsoo won’t answer. “Think!”

He hails a cab. There’s only one person who will answer this.

Kyungsoo is pregnant. Kyungsoo is pregnant. Kyungsoo is pregnant.

Chanyeol presses the doorbell insistently.

“Hello? Who died?” the sleepy voice comes out of the intercom.
“Jongin, it’s me. Open this fucking gate or I will jump it, I swear for the Moon.”

“…Okay. I’ll be waiting for you at the door.”

All the gates are open for him. Chanyeol runs, he can’t just walk. Jongin is waiting for him, standing straight with his arms behind his body. He is using his tiger onesie and he doesn’t look happy.

“Okay, look,” Chanyeol approaches him carefully. Chanyeol was already a victim of Jongin’s moodiness before, after all. “You have to tell me—“

He never finishes the phrase. Jongin takes out a baseball bat from his back and hits Chanyeol in the arm. Chanyeol falls on the ground.

“You asshole,” Jongin screams, hitting him again. Chanyeol tries to protect himself. “How do you have the courage to show your disgusting face here after abandoning your pregnant mate?!?”

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol curls into a ball, crying out. “I had no idea!”

“You liar,” Jongin hits him again, now also kicking him. “He’s four months pregnant and you have no idea? You make me sick!”

“He never—” Chanyeol screams in pain. He’s pretty sure Jongin is breaking one of his ribs. “—told me!”

“Do you think I’m going to believe you?” Jongin raises the bat again. “I’m going to do with you what Beyoncé should have done to Jay-Z years ago—”

They both freeze when the sound of a shooting interrupts Jongin. Chanyeol lifts his head to see Taemin, gun raised to the air in one hand, bowl of cereal in another, just wearing cotton pants.

“A man can’t eat his froot loops in peace anymore?” he asks, oddly smiling like always.

“Taemin!” Jongin screams. “I told you to not use guns inside the house! You’re scaring the babies!”

“You’re also scaring them, spanking some guy—” Taemin uses the gun to wipe the hair out of his eyes. “Oh! It’s Chanyeol! Hello, Chanyeol!”

“Hello,” Chanyeol groans. “Nice to see you…”

“Why are you spanking him?” Taemin puts the gun between his pants and his hips, so he could eat the cereal.

“Why I’m—” Jongin lets a long sigh. “He left Kyungsoo alone? Why do you think Kyungsoo is living with us?”

“Because we… like him?” Taemin chews his cereal, confused.

“He never told me,” Chanyeol says, fast, seizing the opportunity. “He broke the contract when I was away and never talked to me again!”

Jongin menaces him with the bat. Chanyeol curls into a ball again.

“Why would he do that?” Jongin asks, calming down.

“Because he doesn’t like me, so he doesn’t want me around?” Chanyeol lets his body rest in the ground. “I don’t know. He didn’t want it to happen, of course. Maybe he hates me now.”
“This makes no sense,” Jongin shakes his head, letting the bat fall. Chanyeol lets out a shaky breath. “Then why is he so sad? If he didn’t want you around, then he wouldn’t be missing you. It’s easier to believe you left him.”

“What?” Chanyeol sits up. “You can’t be serious! You know I’m crazy about Kyungsoo! Everyone knows it! Why would I leave him?”

“Because you’re an irresponsible alpha who can’t deal with being a parent,” Jongin spits. Chanyeol stands up with difficulty.

“I would never leave him or my baby,” Chanyeol rises a finger, for an emphasis. “I was away, it’s true. But I made sure he knew I was ready to come back when he needed me. He was the one who broke the contract without saying a word to me. He told CHOOSE he was on suppressants again.”

Jongin crosses his arms, biting his lips.

“So you’re telling me he lied? Again? What for?”

“Yes, he lied. I don’t know why. I just found out he’s pregnant, because I accidentally ran into Amber and she let it slip out,” Chanyeol shrugs. “It’s probably because he doesn’t want me to be around him. A baby is a headache, but a baby from someone you don’t love it’s even worse.”

Jongin rolls his eyes, then starts walking back home.

“You’re incredibly stupid. Both of you,” he pushes Taemin to the inside of the house. “Come in, let’s put some ice on you.”

Jongin makes him sit. Chanyeol has purple marks on his arms and torso. Taemin offers him a bowl of cereal, and Chanyeol accepts. They’re watching Hamtaro on TV when Kyungsoo opens the door.

Time seems to stop. Chanyeol would run to him, if he wasn’t in so much pain. The three of them face Kyungsoo, frozen at the door.

“Good morning, Mr. I Love To Lie To My Best Friend,” Jongin says, first. Kyungsoo lets out a long sigh. Chanyeol wants to hug him so bad. Kyungsoo is a bit chubby, his cheeks more prominent, and his baby bump is barely visible under the giant sweater he’s using. His thighs are bigger too, and the pants he’s wearing are— Chanyeol shakes his head. This is not the time.

“Welcome back, Kyungsoo,” Taemin stands up and grabs Jongin’s arm. “We’re going to let you talk to your mate in private, since you two haven’t been together lately… well.”

“What,” Jongin protests. “He has to explain himself first!”

Chanyeol wants to say something, but his voice is dead in his throat. He is finally around Kyungsoo again, but only to finds out his mate hates him; Kyungsoo prefers to lie rather than having Chanyeol close to him. Chanyeol shrinks in the couch. He wishes he never knew about the baby.

“I lied to you because you found out I was pregnant by stealing my pee after invading my house. Also, you put a gun on my face and told me you wouldn’t let me abort the baby, even if you had to keep my locked in your house like a prisoner,” Kyungsoo says slowly and peaceful. “And I knew you wouldn’t respect my decision to not to tell Chanyeol.”

Both Chanyeol and Taemin stare at Jongin.

“Well,” Jongin crosses his arms, pouting. “I haven’t invaded your house. I have a copy of the keys.
And the test was just to confirm, I already knew you were expecting.”

“Jongin, what did I tell you about stealing my guns,” Taemin says, caressing his mate’s arm. “Do not use it against people who can’t defend themselves. You can’t threaten a pregnant person.”

“You two should be thanking me,” Jongin points. “He was going to abort the baby!”

“I… wasn’t. Probably not,” Kyungsoo sighs. He’s avoiding Chanyeol’s eyes. “Can you two…”

“Of course,” he leans down and puts Jongin over his shoulder like a bag. “We’re leaving.”

Kyungsoo closes the door and puts the bags he’s holding over the table. After Jongin and Taemin leave the room, the silence falls over the place. Chanyeol is in the verge of the tears. Kyungsoo is staring at his feet.

“Why,” Chanyeol says. His voice breaks, and he wipes his eyes before he tears up. This is really happening, he thinks, he’s really pregnant and he didn’t want me to know.

Kyungsoo opens his mouth and then closes it. He bites his lips.

“I wasn’t expecting you to find out so soon,” he finally says. “I hope you’re not angry at me.”

Chanyeol presses his hands into his eyes and laughs, dryly.

“About what exactly? There’s a lot of things to be angry about, Kyungsoo.”

“About… My pregnancy,” he says.

“What?” Chanyeol looks at him. “What do you mean?”

“I’m taking full responsibility over this,” Kyungsoo says, hard and clean. “You don’t have to worry. I’m not expecting you to do anything.”

“What?” Chanyeol gapes. “What are you talking about…?”

“On that day… this happened. I know you had no idea you were in rut. But I knew. I knew since you came in,” Kyungsoo presses his lips together in a line, looking down. “And I could’ve told you. I should have stopped… you. Or just… used a condom. But I chose to keep quiet and I couldn’t control myself.”

Chanyeol just stares, frozen.

“… I won’t make you pay for my mistakes. I’m really sorry. I know you were just doing your job,” Kyungsoo continues, still not looking at Chanyeol. “You don’t need even to register the baby if you don’t want to. I know it’s going to be hard for you since you’re starting your career, so…”

Chanyeol laughs. It’s a painful, horribly loud laugh. Kyungsoo finally looks at him.

“You’re fucking kidding me,” Chanyeol says, standing up. “You keep me in dark all these months because you thought I didn’t want the kid? You haven’t even given me the chance to know—”

“Chanyeol,” Kyungsoo starts.

“No, shut up,” Chanyeol says, angry. “You haven’t the decency to tell me all of this before? So, what would you do? You would never tell me? Or just, oh, hi, Chanyeol, just for you know, I kind of had a baby today and it’s yours?”
“I would—”

“I said shut up,” Chanyeol crosses his arms. “I spent the last months feeling like shit, and I wouldn’t even—and how exactly is it just your responsibility? I made a mistake too. You asked for an alpha on suppressants for a reason. Holy shit, do you loathe me that much that you would rather erase me from your life than making me responsible for this too?”

Kyungsoo just stares at him.

“No, now you talk,” Chanyeol laughs dryly again. “Now you have to tell me, because I deserve to hear why I’m so repulsive you didn’t want me around my child. Or why you are so sure I’m such a piece of shit I would dump my mate and my baby. You never tell me anything, but I guess this you should say.”

Chanyeol is shaking. He takes a long breath. Kyungsoo is looking down again.

“You don’t get to be silent right now,” Chanyeol voice breaks. “I’ve been ignored for four months, Kyungsoo, I deserv—”

“Do you really think it’s your responsibility?” Kyungsoo says sharply. “Do you think anyone thinks it’s your responsibility? Huh? You don’t know a thing.”

“I don’t. I’m a stupid, stupid man,” Chanyeol walks closer to him. “So tell me, Kyungsoo. Enlighten me.”

Kyungsoo turns his back to Chanyeol. His voice is shaky.

“You can do whatever you want, in the end, this my problem,” he says. “I just hired you. You can leave. I can’t. I will have to carry this baby with me forever. And everyone will make sure this is my fault. I was the dumb omega who spread my legs open to a mate who wasn’t even mine.”

Chanyeol holds his breath.

“You have your entire life in front of you, and no one expects you to sit down and take care of a baby. That’s all they expect from me. Since I was sixteen, they’ve all just been waiting for me to give up of my stupid dreams and be a mate and a parent,” Kyungsoo hands are closed in fists. “Do you know what it feels like? I don’t think—”

Kyungsoo stops and takes a long breath before continuing to talk.

“You’re not repulsive, but you don’t understand. Of course, I know it’s better for you to leave. You were just working, not wanting to start a family. I can say this is both of our faults, but I was the one who should be careful, because I’m the one who is going to be punished by… wanting you. Or just existing, I’m not sure. Don’t tell me you’d rather be here with me, instead of doing what you wanted, because it’s a lie,” he swallows, and he turns his face a little to look at Chanyeol. “You think I’m dumb? I know how the world is, Chanyeol. I watched the nurses being cruel to Jongin while he was almost dying, tied to a bed, because “he should have had some self-respect, a boy of that age, pregnant”. I see how people mock Junmyeon, and he’s absolutely brilliant, just because— And I was there when Minseok had to change his specialization, because an omega can’t be a surgeon. An omega should take care of other omegas and that’s all. I know what is going to happen when people find out I was hiring someone to mate me. I guess after all, I will be the whore, not you.”

Kyungsoo turns again, facing the table and the wall. Chanyeol just breathes. He wants to hold Kyungsoo. He knows he can’t.
“You are… right,” Chanyeol says. He still thinking about how he’s going to say it, but he knows what he needs to tell Kyungsoo. “I don’t understand. I never had to understand. I won’t pretend I’m remotely aware of what it is being in your position. I know you will be the one being blamed for it.”

Kyungsoo slightly turns, a sign he’s listening.

“I can… comprehend we are under rules we haven’t created, and I don’t really care who did it. It’s not fair. There’s a lot of unfairness in the world and this is one of them. Sometimes I can’t understand what are you doing, then I realize it’s because I was never in your skin,” Chanyeol says slowly. “I can see the world hits you harder than me. I can see you trying. I really think you’re the strongest person I’ve ever met, like a super-hero. But you’re hurting, Kyungsoo. You can’t carry this weight all by yourself. All I’m trying to do is help you. And I made your life worse. You didn’t want to date and I gave you a damn child. You can see this baby as a burden… but I don’t. Maybe it’s because it won’t be a burden for me, you’re right. But I also love you and I will love this baby too.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t react. Chanyeol takes a deep breath.

“And when I see you like this… I can see you’re trying your best, but if they’re hurting you… You’re not really fighting back, when you decide to not to be what they want you to be. You’re just… punishing yourself. Instead of being free of them, you just lock yourself and become your own prisoner. And you know… I don’t have much to offer. I’m not the best mate, I think. But, for the Moon, Kyungsoo. I would do anything for you. Anything. I would help you to carry the weight crushing you down. I would take care of you when you don’t want to take care of yourself. I would even be by your side when you don’t want me anymore. So you can kick me away from your life, but… I won’t stop being your mate. I won’t stop loving you.”

There’s silence for a long time. Kyungsoo walks closer to Chanyeol without saying a word. Chanyeol is afraid. He can’t do anything but breathe. Kyungsoo pushes him down and presses his face to Chanyeol’s neck.

Chanyeol closes his eyes and repeats the gesture. He inhales his mate’s skin. He missed that smell.

“Are you sure…” Kyungsoo says softly. “You’re not saying this because I’m pregnant?”

“Where are your glasses? You’re fucking blind,” Chanyeol smiles, feeling euphoric. “I fell in love with you at the first sight of your thick ass.”

Kyungsoo slaps him in the ear. Chanyeol whines.

“It’s a lot thicker lately,” Kyungsoo complains, rubbing his nose in Chanyeol’s chin. “And it’s a hundred percent your fault.”

“I do what I can,” Chanyeol laughs. He is slapped again. “Can I kiss you?”

Kyungsoo kisses him. Chanyeol hugs him tightly, wanting to melt in his embrace.

“Did you miss me?” he asks, kissing every part of his mate he can reach. “Huh? Did you?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo says with a shaky voice. “I missed you all the time. I’m sorry—”

“You don’t have to be.”

“No, I do. You always forgive me when you don’t have to,” Kyungsoo says against his shirt. “Sometimes the only thing I can do is be cruel. You don’t have to forgive me.”
“I don’t care anymore. You’re here with me, that’s enough,” Chanyeol smiles against Kyungsoo’s skin. “I was missing you so much. I slept with a human-sized pillow with your picture in it.”

Kyungsoo laughs. *Fuck,* Chanyeol missed his laugh. The best sound in the world. He swings Kyungsoo in his arms, happy.


“You’re so dumb.”

“Yeah, I am,” Chanyeol nods, satisfied. “But… Can I ask you something?”

“What?”

“Can… I see your belly?” Chanyeol blinks dramatically. “Please, please?”

Kyungsoo gets out of Chanyeol’s arms and lifts his sweater. Chanyeol drops to his knees. The baby bump is bigger than he thought. He presses his face against it thoroughly. He wants to cry.

“Hello, baby,” he says, barely audible. “It’s daddy… did you miss me? Don’t worry, I won’t leave ever again, okay? Daddy loves you so much! I can’t wait to meet you…”

He’s feeling crazy, completely loose, relaxed. He is going to be a father. He looks up.

“I love you,” he says. Kyungsoo smiles back.

“I love you too.”

Despite Jongin’s threats of *dumping hot water* on them if he heard any sex sounds, Chanyeol and Kyungsoo sleep in the same bed. Chanyeol won’t leave his mate for another minute after all this time apart from him; during the *many times* Kyungsoo has to pee, Chanyeol accompanies him, staying at the door.

“I won’t die in the bathroom,” Kyungsoo says, trying to making himself comfortable in the bed. Chanyeol can’t stop staring at his puffed belly. He’s just using shorts and sweater, and he looks incredibly cute. “If you want to help, pick more candy.”

He’s also eating a lot of candy, or just *eating a lot.* Chanyeol stares surprised when Kyungsoo eats four hot dogs in ten minutes. Taemin laughs, *he eats eight when he’s watching anime.* Kyungsoo is also weirdly cuddling him. Maybe it’s because of the time they spent apart. Chanyeol doesn’t complain. Cuddling with Kyungsoo in bed is his favorite activity – and now Chanyeol is so happy, so so happy he can’t stop giggling.

“I love you,” he says, kissing Kyungsoo’s cheek. “I loooove you.”

“Perfect,” Chanyeol kisses him again. “I will use it every day from now on.”

“Don’t be irrational,” Kyungsoo complains, but holds Chanyeol’s hand anyway.

“Hey, Kyungsoo,” he says sheepishly. “When you gave me the gift. You kind of looked like you were mad at me. What did I do?”

“I wasn’t mad at you,” Kyungsoo slaps Chanyeol’s arm playfully. “You don’t understand a thing about biology, do you?”

“Probably not. I skipped class to learn how to play the drums.”

“I was impregnated, Chanyeol. The first sign of impregnation is rejecting the partner after the heat. It’s the nature’s way of saying your job was done,” he laughs. “If I was a black widow, I would have eaten you alive.”

“Hum… so… I’m glad… we aren’t spiders, then,” Chanyeol swallows. “I kept dreaming I was a wolf, lately. It was scary… Not every time, but… We had three puppies!”

“I was in your dream?”

“You’re in my dreams constantly.”

Kyungsoo kisses Chanyeol’s neck and lays his head there. Chanyeol puts a hand on Kyungsoo’s belly.

“I used to have dreams as a wolf when my parents took me to the church,” Kyungsoo says. “They weren’t good dreams. I also dreamed I was a priest and, once, I had a nightmare I was a witch.”

“Fuck, really?”

“Yeah. I made plants grow and made potions with them. Junmyeon was in my dream too, he was a mermaid. He gave me sea supplies.”

“That’s seems nice.”

“Well, until I was chased by fanatics with torches and stones.”

“Holy shit,” Chanyeol picks Kyungsoo’s hand and kiss it. “Maybe it’s Freudian shit? I don’t know, running from the conservatives.”

“My parents are conservatives. They’re not all bad. They were surprisingly okay with me dating another omega.”

“Will… I… meet them?”

“Of course,” Kyungsoo bites him lightly. “I have to explain how I got pregnant eventually.”

“Just for them or… to everyone?”

For a moment, the only thing that Chanyeol can hear is their breaths. He turns his head to press his face against Kyungsoo’s face.

“I guess…” Kyungsoo sighs. “I can’t raise a kid in secret.”
“Can I show you off to people, then?”

Kyungsoo laughs.

“Why would you do that?”

“Because you’re my mate? And I want everyone to see you? And maybe rub you into my sister’s face, like… look at this ass… this could have been yours… but now it’s mine…”

“If you’re going to be a pervert, then be a useful one,” Kyungsoo says in Chanyeol’s ear. “I’m uninterruptedly horny the last two months because of this baby… So if you want to give me a hand…”

Chanyeol sits up abruptly.

“We can’t,” he whispers, eyes wide. “Jongin is going to kill us.”

“It’s just making out,” Kyungsoo whispers back. “We just have to be quiet.”

Chanyeol turns off the light and goes back to bed. He has to find Kyungsoo’s mouth in the dark, which is not a problem, but the position is a bit awkward because he has to be by Kyungsoo’s side. Kissing is amazing. Chanyeol almost has a stroke when he grabs Kyungsoo’s thighs, and they’re huge, soft under his hands. He does press Kyungsoo’s dick over the shorts, since he looks a bit desperate. He bites Chanyeol’s ear to avoid making noises.

“Your shorts are wet,” Chanyeol whispers.

“Can I suck you?” Kyungsoo whispers back.

“Oh, Moon,” Chanyeol mumbles. “You can do anything.”

They get to do a few things before they hear the loud knocks on the door.

“I know what you two are doing,” Jongin screams. “I can smell your nasty mating!”

They giggle under the blankets. Kyungsoo kisses Chanyeol briefly.

“I think I forgot how easily you make me happy,” he says. Chanyeol can’t feel his face.

Chanyeol is still smiling when he comes home. Baekhyun and Jongdae seem to be exhausted even in their normal routines. Wolf is incredibly happy to see Chanyeol again. Sehun is tanned and full of gifts.
“So, I made this reunion here to tell you some news,” Chanyeol opens a beer. He knows he is supposed to open a champagne bottle, but last time did it, the cap hit Baekhyun’s throat. The boys are happier to drink a beer than actually listen to his speech.

“You recorded an album,” Sehun tries. “This is no news. Unless we can actually hear the album.”

“I’m very excited,” Jongdae says, tired, sounding like he’s saying his last words in his deathbed.

“So, as some of you know, I have an absolute gorgeous, talented, amazing, hot, smart, tiny mate,” Chanyeol says, satisfied. “And we are going to have a baby.”

Sehun frowns. Jongdae blinks and then raises his beer. Baekhyun is drinking until he gets the “having a baby”. Wolf barks.

“You accidently got him pregnant,” Baekhyun says. “He’s too smart to voluntarily accept having your big child.”


“I’m glad we’re betas,” Baekhyun tells Jongdae.

“This is cute,” Sehun says, expressionless. “Are we uncles now?”

“Come on, guys,” Chanyeol shakes his beer and some falls on the floor. Wolf licks it. “I was expecting more? I’m going to be a father! Aren’t you guys surprised?”

“Very,” Sehun nods.

“Kind of,” Baekhyun says. Jongdae is almost sleeping.

His family is more excited. His mother cries, his sister demands to talk to Kyungsoo, because she doesn’t believe Chanyeol. Minho is so surprised he asks for five minutes to process the information. Chanyeol buys the first small baby socks with Yifan.

“They’re so tiny,” he presses them against his cheek. “I want to cry!”

“T’can’t believe it,” Yifan shakes his head. “If Kyungsoo hadn’t confirmed it to me… I wouldn’t believe it.”


“Oh, Moon,” Yifan rolls his eyes, but follows Chanyeol. “Can you tell me why are we buying it? The baby is just a mass of meat now.”

“It’s not true!” Chanyeol says, excited. “I’m going to upload it in Instagram so everyone will know it!”

Yifan shakes his head again, smiling.

“At least you’re not pouting anymore.”

“No, no. I’m very happy! It’s everything I even dreamed of!”

“What about your album?”

“We set a date already. I’m just afraid about the shows. I can’t do shows around the birth date.”
Yifan nods.

“Are we going to eat or not?”

When Kyungsoo asked what Chanyeol wanted to do now they could be more open about their relationship, he answered, with no trace of hesitation: he wanted to have dinner at Twelve (and post it on the Instagram). He asked to bring Yifan, Sehun, and, secretly, another friend.

“Wow,” Yifan says, looking around. “This place sure is crowded on weekends.”

“Where’s…” Chanyeol spots Sehun and Jongin sitting at a table. “Oh, he’s there! Hey!”

It’s a rounded table, and there’s colorful plates on it. Chanyeol wanted to go in a Saturday, so he could get the special dessert for lovers – and he’s here, now. Sehun is over excited, taking pictures of everything, whispering and giggling with Jongin. Yifan is being his quiet self and Chanyeol always looks through the door, hoping he will see Kyungsoo just for a fraction of a second.

“Oh sorry, guys,” Junmyeon appears, dressed in his impeccable, expensive clothes. “I was late because—”

“Of your hair,” Jongin finishes. “Everybody knows you spend two hours in the mirror before leaving home.”

“Oh, Junmyeon, do you know Sehun?” Chanyeol points to his friend. “He’s a fan.”


“Oh, thank you! It’s nice to meet you, Sehun,” Junmyeon looks for a chair. Chanyeol elbows Yifan until he gets up and pick one for Junmyeon. “Thanks, Yifan. Good to know that aging taught you politeness. He was a savage when he was a teenager.”

“Well, you liked it, didn’t you?” Yifan shoots.

Chanyeol pretends to drink water and Sehun and Jongin exchange a look.

“That escalated very quickly,” Chanyeol whispers to Jongin, after noticing Junmyeon was embarrassed. Jongin nods, wide eyed.

Chanyeol asked the waiter if the chef was on the kitchen so many times that Amber came to see who was harassing him.

“Can’t you control your knot for two seconds?” She laughs. “He’s cooking today.”

“Come on, just five minutes…” Chanyeol pouts.

“Okay,” she sighs. “And what will the rest of you have for dessert?”

“The caramel apple pie,” Jongin says smiling. “For everyone.”

“Not for this one,” she points at Chanyeol. “He’s going to the kitchen with me.”

“Please tell me you two aren’t fucking in the food storage,” Jongin presses his temples. “It’s just… unsanitary.”
Chanyeol and Kyungsoo are fucking in the food storage – but the empty one.

“That’s why you came here?” Kyungsoo says, opening his shirt. “To harass me at my work?”

“Exactly,” Chanyeol kisses him, pushing him carefully against the wall.

“Ten minutes,” Kyungsoo says before biting Chanyeol’s nipple. Chanyeol whimpers. He loves Kyungsoo’s new intense libido, almost like his heats, but with no painful traits. It’s not because he’s too interested in sex, but it’s good to have Kyungsoo’s attention all for himself.

Chanyeol drops to his knees.

“I went to buy socks today,” he says, opening Kyungsoo’s zipper. “I bought an onesie, Kyungsoo. A tiny one.”

Kyungsoo laughs. Chanyeol pull his jeans down, then his underwear.

Chanyeol’s mom loves Kyungsoo. Sehun and Kyungsoo are instantly best friends. Kyungsoo is hanging out with Chanyeol’s friends every weekend. Kyungsoo even goes to Minho’s small party when the album comes out.

It’s about time Chanyeol meets Kyungsoo’s family. Chanyeol is almost pissing himself as he waits at the door.

“Calm down,” Kyungsoo says, smoothing his jumper. It’s hard to find things that fit Kyungsoo these days. He’s still hiding his baby bump, so he uses a lot of Chanyeol’s clothes.

“I can’t,” Chanyeol checks his hair for the hundredth time. It was red on the album cover, but he dyed it brown again. He’s using a suit. He never uses suits. He’s also bringing flowers. “I wish I could.”

It’s not bad. Kyungsoo’s parents are more… refined than he expects, but they’re respectful. Kyungsoo’s brother is as serious as he is. They casually ask about Chanyeol’s life, but never ask indiscreet questions. Chanyeol is sweating, but he manages to not say embarrassing things. He just stutters a couple of times. He calls it a success.

He thinks Kyungsoo’s family is too formal, compared to his own.

“Do you think they like me?” Chanyeol says while driving. “They’re… very… err… quiet.”

“You’re an alpha and you got me pregnant,” Kyungsoo says absently, typing in his phone. “You’re their lord and savior. Don’t worry about it.”
“That is not liking me.”

“What’s the difference? I like you, that’s enough,” Kyungsoo looks up. “We’re not going to Jongin’s. Let’s go to your house tonight.”

“Okay, but why?”

“So we can spend some time together,” Kyungsoo rubs Chanyeol’s thigh intently. Chanyeol tries to focus on the road.

“You going to kill me one of these days,” Chanyeol breathes out.

They’re giggling in the garden, because Kyungsoo’s brother texted him saying he was a bit scared of Chanyeol. Chanyeol opens the door and Wolf comes to him.

“Hey, boy,” Chanyeol kneels to pet him. “Where are your daddies?”

They’re in the kitchen, the three of them sitting in the table, facing different spots in the ceiling. It looks like a reunion, but since Chanyeol wasn’t invited, he just smiles and waves.

“So, hello, guys,” he says.


“Anh… I’m here with Kyungsoo… he’s going to sleep here… Just in case we make some noises…” Chanyeol says.

“See you in my office Friday,” Minseok waves to Kyungsoo.

“Of course. I will bring Chanyeol,” he nods. “I want him to get accustomed with a few things.”

“What things?” Chanyeol whispers.

“So, no one is going to tell them?” Baekhyun says, shaking a still frozen Jongdae. “Are we going to pretend this is not happening?”

“I wish,” Jongdae says, rubbing his eyes. “I feel like this is a prank.”

Chanyeol holds Kyungsoo’s hand.

“Huh, guys… maybe we should leave…” he says, pulling Kyungsoo’s arm. “See you tomorrow.”

“Minseok’s pregnant,” Baekhyun announces. Chanyeol and Kyungsoo look at each other.


Jongdae stands up, picks a book up that is over the sink and goes next to them, pointing at a page.

“This is the list of the people who have participated in Yixing’s research,” he says, glaring. “The first is Baekhyun. The other is the guy he thought he was.”

The first one says: **BB, 28. Gender: Beta. Sex: Male. Low levels of alpha hormones; no presence of knot; no history of ruts; low, but existent fertile spermatozoids.**

The second one says: **BB, 29. Gender: Beta. Sex: Male. Inexistent levels of alpha hormones; no**
“I forgot I was 28 at the time. I read it with my actual age in mind,” Baekhyun argues.

“You’re thirty,” Jongdae says, exhausted.

“The second one says this man has no testicles,” Kyungsoo looks intrigued.

“It could have been me. I have really small testicles,” Baekhyun explains, serious. “And the room was really cold when they examined me.”

Jongdae lets out a long sigh. Minseok takes a sip of his traditional coffee.

“So… you guys are telling me… Baekhyun got him pregnant…” Chanyeol says slowly. “Wow…”

“Welcome to this hell,” Kyungsoo says solemnly to Minseok. “Now, please excuse us, we have… to go.”

Kyungsoo drags Chanyeol to the room. Chanyeol still thinks about the fact his best pals are going to have a baby, but then he gets distracted while licking Kyungsoo’s rim until his mate starts drooling in the bed. He thinks he was never happier in his life when he wakes up. Kyungsoo’s body is warm next to him. The baby is right there. His baby. He chuckles to no one.

“Good morning, daddy,” he says in Kyungsoo’s ear. “Wake up. Today is a big day.”

It is. It’s Chanyeol’s first fansign. He’s going to take Kyungsoo with him. Everything is happening very fast. One day, he’s waiting for Kyungsoo to leave the restaurant, and a car passes by, playing his song. Another day, he’s just having a quick lunch, and the guy on the radio announces his name. Chanyeol is thrilled. He knows he’s not popular yet, but he will love his fans, even if there’s only two there.

Bringing Kyungsoo with him is also a huge step. It’s going to be hard to hide his belly there, in public, in the daylight. There are rumors on the internet since Jongin posted pictures on his Instagram suggesting they were no longer “together”. Kyungsoo is very careful when he’s in public spaces, but they can’t really hide his pregnancy forever.

Kyungsoo opens his eyes, “I want to eat Nutella, bacon and cream cheese.”

“Now? For breakfast?”

“Yes.”

“But my love,” Chanyeol pleads. “This is very greasy. This is no good for—”

“Chanyeol,” Kyungsoo turns his head to stare at him. His tone is deadly serious. “I want Nutella, bacon and cream cheese.”

“What about some juice and toast?”

“Nice,” Kyungsoo says. “I want Nutella, bacon and cream cheese over the toast with juice.”

Chanyeol sighs. It’s futile to argue. He goes to the grocery store in his sleeping shorts and slippers. The cashier is getting used to see him at the most improbable hours, occasionally buying weird
things.

“My mate is pregnant,” he explains. The cashier just laughs while packing for him.

The boys are still in catatonic state, but they appreciate the way Kyungsoo devours his food.

“He eats like a cavemen,” Baekhyun says with respect.

“You know Minseok will be like this in few months, right?” Chanyeol smiles.

“Don’t talk about that,” Jongdae cries out.

The fansign is not crowded, but there are more people than Chanyeol expect. To his surprise, there are even reporters. He’s nervous because Kyungsoo is sitting in the library, drinking hot chocolate and reading. One of the reporters ask him for an interview and he agrees. It’s from a music channel, and Chanyeol wishes he had dressed better.

“Hello Chanyeol,” the reporter smiles. He’s an omega and he has a strong scent. Chanyeol unconsciously brings a hand to his nose. “Can you answer some questions?”

“Of course,” he smiles, rubbing his nose. *Is that smell necessary? He’s dizzy.*

“First, we want to congratulate you on your first album and music video,” he smiles to the camera. “Chanyeol is the new artist from the Shinee label. He’s here today signing *Phoenix*, his first authorial album, for his fans.”

Chanyeol nods, a bit confused.

“So, Chanyeol, there’s few info about you on the internet,” The reporter says, getting closer to him. “What can you tell us about yourself?”

“Anh… I lot of things. I’m… a Sagittarius, I’m 29 years old, I like videogames, I read Suho, I have a dog called Wolf, my favorite color is—”

“I meant something more personal,” the reporter cuts him off with a fake smile. “Some of your songs say a lot about your life… or what seems to be your life. Are you writing from your own experience?”

“Yes, it’s true. I can’t really write something I haven’t lived. I’m not that creative, I guess.”

“I heard your album and something that impressed me is how variable the theme of your songs can be. You have songs that seems to synthesize the feeling of not belonging, of the depression in modern society… and another song entirely dedicated to a big ass.”

“I was very inspired by that specific ass,” Chanyeol smiles with satisfaction.

“…Great.” The reporter says slowly. “But some of them makes us think you’re a homewrecker or maybe a lone wolf. There’s a tradition between alpha rappers to be very sexual and promiscuous in their… public images. Also there’s a tendency to objectify omegas and betas, treating them as sexual objects. What do you think about that?”

“I wouldn’t know much about this…” Chanyeol looks at him and the reporter whispers *Jimin*. “…Jimin, because I’m mated. And I have no intention of breaking my bond. My mate is an omega and he would kick my ass if I was disrespectful.”
“Wow, that’s new,” Jimin says, staring at the camera. “So you won’t talk about money and cars too?”

“Well, I was broke my entire life. And I don’t drive much since my old dog was hit by a car. But when I have lots of money I will probably buy my mate a bigger car, because I barely fit in his.”

“What’s the message you want to send with your music, then?”

“I don’t know. I’m just a guy who loves music. Music is the only thing I’m good at. This album is just a collection of personal songs…I guess I hope people identify with my songs because I’m pretty much like everyone else. I love my friends, my family and sometimes my life sucks.”

“Nice,” Jimin says, smiling to the camera. “My name is Park Jimin and this is Hot Music News.”

When the camera goes off, he turns to Chanyeol, inspecting him.

“What you said was true?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol shrugs. “You know I’m a low budget artist, right? I’m too old for my debut and I wasn’t trained. I’m just a personal bet from a producer.”

“I see,” he looks Chanyeol over from head to toe. “My heat will hit tomorrow and my mate left me recently. If you hadn’t a mate, we could talk.”

Chanyeol gets embarrassed again. He has to learn how to deal with this. Two fans asked him to sign on their bodies. The reporter leaves and Chanyeol sits again, playing with the pen.

“The famous Chanyeol can sign my album?”

Chanyeol looks up. He stands up immediately.

“What are you doing here?” he asks, holding Luhan tightly in his arms. Luhan is getting blue by now. He notices Yixing is there too, reading the list of songs.

“I had to come for many reasons,” Luhan smiles. He still looks like a classical painting. “I couldn’t miss your debut, anyway. I saw a poster of you near my house and I was speechless. I was pointing and screaming: that’s my friend!”

“What does DILF mean?” Yixing asks. “I can’t understand the new slangs.”

“Daddy I’d like to…” Chanyeol coughs. “…be Friends with…”

“Oh, it’s because you’re going to be a daddy?” Luhan asks, excited. “I’m so happy for you, but… is… it from… your assigned mate?”

“Yeah, yeah,” Chanyeol smiles. He knows he’s going to be a father, but every time he listens it gets better. “We are actual mates now. No contract involved.”

“And you’re a DILF, Chanyeol,” Yixing says smiling softly. Chanyeol coughs again.

“Where’s your mate? I never had a chance to be introduced to him,” Luhan looks around. “Is he going to be at Minseok’s reunion Friday?”

“I… don’t know,” Chanyeol scratches his head. “Do you know he’s pregnant?”

Everybody knows,” Yixing says. “A reporter said on the television today. I think it’s his mate.”
“Oh, Moon,” Chanyeol says.

After the signing, Luhan shows him the video of Jongdae forgetting the camera was on and telling the cameramen, *My mate is pregnant. You know, he’s the guy who wrote coffee with the moon. I wasn’t ready for this, but I guess*—then throwing up. The video has a million views in one day.

Chanyeol is tired, but he feels a lot better when he sees Kyungsoo. He’s sitting, reading a book (*reproductive rights are omega rights*) and there’s a pile of plates next to him. Chanyeol shakes his head — Kyungsoo probably ate cake all day. But he forgives Kyungsoo, because he looks absolutely cute in Chanyeol’s yellow sweater. He’s using big glasses lately (*the pregnancy took my movements, my sleep and the rest of my sight*), and he looks incredibly soft.

Chanyeol thinks that if he was just a stranger, casually passing by there, he would fall in love with Kyungsoo all over again. He feels so lucky every time he sees his mate.

“Hey,” he says, leaning to kiss his cheek.

“Hello,” Kyungsoo looks up to him. His glasses makes his eyes look even bigger. “It’s over?”

“Yes, we can go home.”

“Oh, that’s great. Do you know Jongdae is trending on twitter?”

“So I’ve heard,” Chanyeol laughs. He remembers the memes; *when you’re in the tequila open bar followed by Jongdae’s I wasn’t ready for this, but I guess* — and throwing up. “He’s more famous than me in one day.”

Kyungsoo chuckles.

Chanyeol looks at the goo on Kyungsoo’s belly in awe. Minseok presses the equipment pointedly against the goo and points to the monitor.

“Look, there is,” he smiles, moving the thing around the belly. “Say hello to them!”

The image is black and green, matrix style, and a distinguishable small figure appears on it.

“They’re moving,” Kyungsoo says calmly. “Since you’re poking them.”

Chanyeol takes his time to understand what he’s seeing. He draws with a finger the head, the body and their feet. He gasps.

“It’s a very… big child,” Minseok nods. “But they’re seven months already. They can come visit us
anytime now.”

Chanyeol isn’t listening anymore. He is seeing the baby. He can see the baby with his two good eyes. He instinctively holds Kyungsoo’s hand. It’s… surreal. His eyes burn. There’s a baby right there. He is going to be a father.

“The alpha daddies always cry,” Minseok laughs. “But they always pretend there’s something in their eyes.”

This is not Chanyeol’s case. He makes a show of crying. Kyungsoo sits up to tap his shoulder.

“Listen, you can’t make this mess when I’m giving birth,” he says, serious. “Or I will ask the nurses to kick you out from the room.”

“Sorry,” Chanyeol sniffs.

“Well, Chanyeol. I’m glad you’re here,” Minseok says, after Kyungsoo cleans himself. They’re both dressed and politely sitting at the table. “There are some recommendations from now on and I don’t think Kyungsoo is going to follow them, so I’m counting on you to keep him in line.”

“He can’t,” Kyungsoo says, deadpan. “That’s why I’m pregnant.”

Chanyeol nods, blowing his nose.

“At least try or… I will call Jongin, and we both know he has guns and he is very emotionally unstable when the subject is babies,” Minseok says, putting his glasses on. “Or… I will ask my beloved mate Baekhyun to spend an entire day at your kitchen.”

Kyungsoo sucks a breath. It’s not he doesn’t like Baekhyun – he does. But Kyungsoo has a low tolerance to his personal space’s invasion. Baekhyun is getting used to be slapped by Kyungsoo, especially when he tries to mess with the baby bump. Jongin, for the other side, is completely out of control. Chanyeol is secretly turning his studio into a baby room (with the help of his friends), because he has no idea of what’s going to happen when Jongin finds out the baby is not going to live in his house forever.

“Is he doing something to you too, huh?” Kyungsoo asks empathetically.

“I won’t even complain,” Minseok sighs, picking up his notepad. “Baekhyun is a mess and Jongdae is freaking out; he’s the closest to a mate I will have for the next months. He cried for thirty minutes when I told him, then he scheduled all the things that we have to do.”

“I know,” Kyungsoo says. “Is he pressuring you to do that Moon Cult thing?”

“What do you think we are going to do today? A new moon party. It’s just the start. He wants us to do something like a baptism when the kid is born,” Minseok says, moving his hands as an emphasis. “And I can’t say no, because Junmyeon is doing all sorts of stuff too. I’m being cornered, Kyungsoo. I’ve got no chance to run away.”

Chanyeol is not speaking. There’s a frame on the wall saying, NO HEATS, NO OPINION. Minseok has now, over his table, a glass with seawater and a moon picture, and Chanyeol is intimidated.

“I guess I will just say yes,” Kyungsoo shrugs. “I’m tired.”

“And now you will be even more tired,” Minseok starts writing. “I will prescribe you some vitamins, but you’re forbidden to go to work until the baby is born—”
“What?” Kyungsoo cuts him. “No way.”

“Kyungsoo, do I have to remind you that every male pregnancy is a high risk pregnancy? The male body wasn’t designed to fit a baby perfectly. Omegas can do it, but the chance of something going wrong increases 20%. In few weeks, you won’t be able to be standing on your own. You won’t have the energy to work and even walking around can trigger the birthing,” Minseok says, deadly serious. “You have to sleep more, eat more fruits, drink more liquids and be quiet. It’s not just you, you know. You’re lucky you’re close, otherwise I myself wouldn’t do the birth. You have to be careful, because now you’re taking care of two people.”

Kyungsoo sighs. Chanyeol kisses him in the cheek.

“Make your alpha do all the work for you. He has long legs and he can take it.”

“I will,” Kyungsoo says.

“Now, the other recommendations,” Minseok goes back to writing. “Since Kyungsoo can’t breastfeed, I suggest you two sign up for the milk bank right now, so there will be no problem when you need to feed your baby. The due date is the last week of September, but it can happen anytime. Until then, put on some calming, classical music for the baby. Prenatal yoga can help with your body… No heavy foods, no smoking, no tea, no coffee, no sushi, no fish—”

“What zodiac sign the baby will be?” Chanyeol whispers to Kyungsoo.

“…I guess… Virgo? Libra?” he whispers back.

“—no eggnog, no tattoos, no piercing, no hair dye, no biking, no sauna or hot tub, no lifting, no soda, no climbing long stairs, no shaving and absolutely no knotting,” Minseok says, staring at Chanyeol. Chanyeol is offended and he wishes he could say Kyungsoo is the one who can’t keep his pants on. But will someone believe it? No, because Chanyeol is a horny orangutan and Kyungsoo hides his kinkiness very well.

“Does the baby need me dead to come out?” Kyungsoo says, crossing his arms.

Chanyeol is concerned.

“The green one is for betas?” Jongdae says with disgust. “How the fuck do they know the baby’s gender? An oracle?”

“I don’t even know the sex,” Chanyeol says. There are so many things to put in a baby’s room. Chanyeol doesn’t even know how to start choosing. He asked Kyungsoo and Kyungsoo said, while making the weirdest cupcakes in earth, I’m just pregnant. That doesn’t make me interested in those things. Do whatever you want to. Omega’s parental instinct is a lie, apparently.
“What color is the crib we bought?” Jongdae asks.

“Navy blue,” Chanyeol answers. He loved it. There are cute drawings of stars on it. “And the baby cabinet was pastel pink with pearls.”

Baekhyun painted the walls yellow. Chanyeol put all his rillakumas there. The nightlight was a purple flower. The carpet was tropical style. Kyungsoo said my eyes are burning, I’m blind and never came into the room again.

“Let me see that list…” Jogdae lifts the tablet. He marks the option changing table. “Let’s pick the green, anyway.”

Chanyeol is grateful Jongdae is helping. He’s dealing better with the details and he’s surprisingly unaffected by the fact he’s an internet meme. His popularity on the news journals have increased, even with Chanyeol’s sister reprimanding him. Junmyeon is helping too and he sent some nice gifts to them, besides Moon-related things Chanyeol isn’t aware of what it means. Yifan installed a smoke detector in the baby’s room and gave him electrical outlet covers (in case your baby or Baekhyun tries to put their finger on it). Tao came with bags and bags of gifts: Gucci’s baby clothes (Chanyeol had no idea this was a thing), a baby lounger, a Stella McCartney diaper’s bag, plushies and the cutest panda dinnerware set. He and Chanyeol cried over the tiny socks.

“Look what I found,” Baekhyun runs to them. “A baby bum fan.”

“It’s to make the bum more refreshed?” Chanyeol asks. “That’s cute.”

“Baekhyun, I asked you to find the baby monitor,” Jongdae hits his mate on the arm. “Please, stop bringing us weird things!”

“Okay! I found it, it’s in section three,” Baekhyun pouts. “I found the storages too. Don’t be mean to me.”

“Sorry,” Jongdae kisses the place he hit. “I’m nervous.”

“Shouldn’t we buy the same things?” Baekhyun asks. “I mean… we need the stuff too.”

“I need some months to deal with it,” Jongdae says. “Let Chanyeol act as a Guinea pig. He was faster than us.”

“Talking about that,” Baekhyun winks. “Check your Instagram.”

Chanyeol gives Jongdae all the diaper-related products he was holding and checks his Instagram. Baekhyun mentions him in at least three posts. Since they have short time before Minseok’s new moon party, Jongdae guides Chanyeol by his free hand down the aisles.

The first mention is a picture of Kyungsoo eating ice cream. He’s using his casual all black clothing and the bump is noticeable under his thin shirt.

omegascelebs let’s welcome Do Kyungsoo in our club! according to our source, a personal friend, he’s seven months pregnant! what a cute baby bump :3 #omegascelebs #dokyungsoo #twelve #TUC

beyhive_32 congratulations!

tiffbaby @taenysbaby MEAN CHEF IS AN OMEGA HOLY SHIT
onlyhotomegas DO YOU GUYS HAVE PICTURES OF HIS ASS?? HES THICK

yonghee he’s cute hahahah <3

yooooona who’s the other parent? CHUCK NORRIS? @omescelebs

hitmebabyonemoretime another badass omega!! #omesruntheworld

yuiyui the mean chef from UC!!!! he’s an omega like us ahhahah @yuiiiiii

taensbaby @tiffababy WTF!!!!

omescelebs @yooooona ahhahah nooo! we don’t know who the other parent is!! we know he’s not having it with kai because they’re not together anymore :( 

byunbyun_baek @pcy_real

Chanyeol clicks on the next mention. It’s the same picture, but the number of likes is at least ten times bigger, because it’s a famous celebrity gossip site.

paparazzitalk who watches The Ultimate Chef? i do, i was #teamsunny last season! for the fans of the show, we have some hot news! the judge Do Kyungsoo, mostly known as mean chef, was spotted with a BABY BUMP! I’m not kidding! the evil in chef’s whites is an OMEGA who’s PREGNANT. Did you fall from your chair? we can’t imagine which brave alpha did this, OR if he’s a single parent, since everybody knows he’s single now (y’all been checking @kimkai posts with songs about ‘a liar’? because we are!). I guess he won’t be in the next season! sad for us, good for the new contestants, who are safe from his death glare! #paparazzitalk

parkdoa I can’t believe! he’s too mean to be an omega

betacelebs @omescelebs

taeny_kingdom who the fuck would imagine

kimyiee he looks hot! I love pregnant males :) @pregnantguys

itsbetabritneybitch congratulations!! I hope he’s in the next season though

amy_324 he’s really horrible, he cheated on his mate???

bbbabba call the child’s service!!!!!!!!!!!!

aryaisanomega this is the best news everrrrrrrr

byunbyun_baek @pcy_real

theucfanatic @dyodoro is pregnant???????????????
The last one is from @kimkai. It's a collage showing two pictures from Minseok, Junmyeon, Jongin and Kyungsoo. Chanyeol remembers the first one. It’s the one in Kyungsoo’s living room. The second is new, and Chanyeol thinks it’s Minseok’s house, because they’re full of flowers and there’s a cake in the form of the moon.

@kimkai the omegang is reunited for @xiuminnie new moon’s party ❖❖ (♥️葒)❖❖ @bunnymom @dyodoro and @chantillythebunny #babyisintheway #moonchild #noalphanoproblem

@kaiballs ASKODAKOAOKAKO MY OTP IS BACK @kaisooisreal

@cuteeeeee the goddamn bunny with flowers aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

@omegascelebs what’s going on!!! Goddamn!!!

@kaiarmy look at the size of the belly @kaisbaby

@kaistal nini why are u like this

@ohsehun I’m comiiiiing! Do you want which ballon color?

@kimkai @ohsehun BLUE AND WHITE

@byunbyun_baek @pcy_real #noalphanoproblem I guess this was 4 u

@kaisbaby @kaiarmy he’s… really… pregnant

@ssssara THIS IS THE CUTEST THING HAAAAAAANNAAAA

@kimkai @pcy_real stinking feet is only here to provide me babies @byunbyun_baek

@pcy_real @kimkai don’t ask me for hugs anymore!!!!! I’m kidding :( I want hugs

Chanyeol is typing when he notices Jongdae stopped too. He’s in the middle of the aisle, taking a picture of the section. It’s a “baby room décor” themed room. One side, omegas and the other side, alphas. It’s the first time Chanyeol looks – or at least, pays attention –, to the way people raise their children, and he’s always surprised with how much expectation they raise… babies.

He’s not expecting anything from his baby. He just want them to be healthy. Kyungsoo also seems to be more neutral in this question. Chanyeol is doing a lot of research in how to actually raise kids (he learned a lot with the multiples intelligences theory), while his mate is more focused on practical questions. Kyungsoo thinks about problems Chanyeol couldn’t even imagine – and he solves them, of course. It’s funny how they never noticed the obvious: Kyungsoo is a good administrator; Chanyeol is a good nurturer. His mate makes Chanyeol’s entire schedule; even the baby-related things. Chanyeol loses himself in the colors, the things the baby will like, in what Kyungsoo should
be doing to feel more comfortable. Chanyeol was the one who actually said thank you to the many people who sent them gifts; even the ones Chanyeol wasn’t familiar with, like Tiffany, for example (she gave them a really useful baby stroller). Sometimes, Chanyeol has to stop his rehearsal to call home and check if Kyungsoo hasn’t sleep in the sink or if he took the vitamins. Sometimes Kyungsoo is so absorbed in the work, face glued to the laptop, that he forgets he needs to take care of himself.

“The alphas one is decorated with guns, cars and explosives,” Jongdae points, shocked. “Who looks at this and thinks… this is a good influence for my kid?”

“What do they do with that stuff if the person presents another gender?” Chanyeol is as confused as Jongdae.

“Sell it to pay the therapist this poor person will need,” Jongdae takes a picture with his phone. “Of course the omega’s one would be sea themed. I hate conservatives and I hate that book.”

“What book?” Chanyeol asks. He’s reading more lately than when he was in school.

“Omegas are from Neptune, Alphas are from Uranus,” He says, checking the picture. “That classic best seller from the eighties. I’m sending this to the Beta Rights.”

“I don’t know… Never heard about it,” Chanyeol’s phone vibrates. “Where’s are the betas from?”

“For conservatives? Probably Pluto. They don’t want us to exist; Pluto is not a planet anymore.” Chanyeol checked his phone.

**kyungsoo** mass Sunday 8 a.m.

**kyungsoo** don’t forget it

“Fuck,” he said. “I forgot I have to go with Kyungsoo to the church.”

“A church,” Jongdae gapes. “A conservative church?”

“Yes, we’re trying to please Kyungsoo’s parents.”

“Fuck, man,” Jongdae taps his arm, smiling sadly. “Good luck.”

**chanyeol** we’re finishing here, do you guys need anything?

**kyungsoo** yes

**kyungsoo** I’m craving salmon

**chanyeol** babe you know you can’t eat salmon

**chanyeol** everybody knows you can’t eat salmon

**chanyeol** why you do only crave things you shouldn’t eat
kyungsoo you asked

chanyeol what about that nutella crepe you like?

chanyeol some fries?

kyungsoo no

kyungsoo I want salmon

chanyeol what do you want me to do?? I can’t help you kill my baby

kyungsoo find something that tastes like sushi

“Guys, I found a baby mop,” Baekhyun shows it off. “Let the kid clean the house. We need one of that.”

“Where’s the goddamn monitor?” Jongdae looks around.

“Hey, you two can go,” Chanyeol says. “I’ll pick the things and pay for it. I can’t go now because Kyungsoo is craving something that tastes like sushi and I have to find this shit.”

Chanyeol is probably the person occupying the most space in the line. The cashier barely looks at him.

“Sir,” she says, registering his list. “You didn’t need to pick the products, only bring the tablet list.”

“Sorry. I’m in a hurry.”

“Okay, so you’re going to take everything now? We can bring the biggest things to your house. Your address is here.”

“Hummm… maybe the changing table. I can fit the rest in the car,” he thinks he can. “Here is my card.”

“Thank you,” she says, picking it. “Credit?”

“Yes.”

“Nice…” she looks at the credit card, then looks up to Chanyeol. “Park Chanyeol…? You’re Chanyeol?”

“Yes…” he freezes. Are the police searching for him? “Why?

“Wait… You’re really him. Even if your hair isn’t red?” She leans in to look better at his face. “Holy shit, you’re Chanyeol. Yonghee! Come here!”

“What—”

“What do you want?” A small guy comes on rollers to talk to them.

“Listen, this is Chanyeol,” she points, excited. “We’re going to your concert next month!”

“Oh,” Chanyeol sighs, relieved. “Nice to know!”
“I love that song about the ass,” the guy says. “I can’t stop hearing it.”

“Everyone seems to love that one,” Chanyeol smiles. Well, everyone, but Kyungsoo. He hit Chanyeol with a cane when he realized it was his ass. It was still a better reaction than when he heard the songs Chanyeol wrote before they met. He ignored Chanyeol for days after hearing the ‘love’ songs with other names on it (especially the ones for girls, because he was sure it wasn’t about him). It wasn’t Chanyeol’s fault. Minho was the one who decided the set list.

“Can you take a selfie with us?” she asks. Chanyeol agrees and makes the other clients in the line very pissed.

“Do you guys know where I can find something that tastes like sushi… but it’s not sushi,” he asks after he pays. “My mate is pregnant and craving sushi.”

“… Humm, I guess,” the guy says, pensive. “There’s a sushi bar in the third floor… They have such a good vegetarian sushi, it causes no problem for pregnant people… I ate a lot of their veg sushi when I was pregnant.”

“Oh yes,” the cashier nods. “It’s very similar to the regular ones.”

“Thank you,” Chanyeol smiles sincerely.

He’s late. He deposits all the boxes in home and drives like a crazy person to Minseok’s place. The sushi man made it twice as good when he found out who was going to eat it. Chanyeol has to be identified first in the lobby, then again at the elevator. It’s his first time at an exclusive omega apartment complex, and he feels like a criminal. The elevator door opens and Chanyeol knows he’s in the right place; he hears his friends singing, and the door is not completely closed.

He opens it, carefully stepping in.

Sehun is helping Junmyeon carry a big cake to the kitchen; Tao is showing Minseok something in his phone; Baekhyun is casually flirting with Yixing; Jongdae and Luhan are talking and smiling; Yifan is pushing the table so there’s more space in the room; Jongin is reading a magazine and Kyungsoo is sleeping on his shoulder.

Chanyeol feels dizzy. He has a strong déjà vu.

He inspires. He expires.

Déjà vu.

“Chanyeol, come here,” Yifan asks. “Drop this thing on the table and come help me. Pick up the other side of the table.”

Chanyeol blinks, focusing again. He’s here. This is happening. This is real.

“Okay, just let me,” he puts the box on the couch. His heart is beating fast and faster. He pushes the table to the corner with Yifan’s help. After few minutes, they’re all sitting in the room; there’s not a
chair for everyone, so, politely, the alphas sit in the floor. Chanyeol sits against Kyungsoo’s legs. He wakes up.

“Oh, you’re here,” he yawns.

“I brought your fake sushi,” Chanyeol smiles, looking up. “Wanna eat?”

“I’m not hungry anymore,” Kyungsoo says. Chanyeol pinches his leg.

“Well, now you’re going to eat this shit,” Chanyeol says, pinching him again. “I invaded a sushi bar’s line to get it. I had to talk to the manager!”

“Really?” Kyungsoo chuckles. Chanyeol isn’t even mad. “Sorry. Want a kiss?”

“Fuck yeah,” Chanyeol gets on his knees to kiss his mate. He’s so happy. A pillow hits his head.

“Don’t make another baby here,” Sehun complains. He’s sitting on Junmyeon’s lap. “Minseok wants to talk!”

“Everyone pay attention,” Yixing asks. “Tao, please stop eating the cake frosting.”

Minseok is the one standing up. Chanyeol always thought he was somewhat small, but now he looks like a doll.

“This small reunion was planned for Nini and I have no idea of what he wants, but, before that, I just want to make a small announcement,” he rubs his hands, eyes sparkling. Chanyeol can’t really believe he’s not a kid, sometimes. “As you know, I’m pregnant for almost seven weeks. I made an ultrasound today with the help of the nurse and… I just found out I’m going to have triplets.”

Yifan catches Jongdae before he hits the ground. Baekhyun rises from his chair, screeching.

“Holy shit, this is a dream came true,” he moves his arms around, excited. “Can you imagine if we break the bond and each one keep a child? So we can make an even better Parent Trap story?”

“Congratulations,” Yixing says, smiling. He’s the only one with a calm countenance. Jongin is crying, Kyungsoo is taking a nap again, Sehun and Junmyeon have similar confused expressions, Tao is trying to reanimate Jongdae, Yifan seems concerned and Luhan is the definition of shock.

“So, you can come now,” Minseok points to Jongin. Chanyeol goes in the kitchen to fetch Jongdae some water. While he’s helping his friend, Jongin puts Minseok and a very annoyed Kyungsoo in a comfortable seat. He gives them a flower crown, but only Minseok keeps it on his head. Kyungsoo holds it. Chanyeol knows he hates adornment.

“We already made our offerings earlier,” Jongin says, bringing a jar of water. “Now we just have to welcome the babies and eat the cake.”

It’s seawater, of course. Jongin rubs in Kyungsoo and Minseok’s belly. Junmyeon delicately moves Sehun to pick up a paper.

“Well, I brought a chant for us to welcome the babies. You all have to sing, so they can hear,” he says. “It’s from a New Moon Ritual. I’ll start and you guys follow me. Is… Jongdae awake?”

“Physically…” Jongdae says. Yifan is still holding him, just in case.

“Ok, I’ll go, then,” Junmyeon takes a long, long breath. Chanyeol hears the words and repeats it, but he can’t pay attention to the words (it’s something about the water that the baby is involved in and
the moon), because he’s star struck with their voices mingling together. Feels like a dream.

Minseok leans his head on Kyungsoo’s shoulder. They seem to be almost sleeping. Chanyeol can’t stop staring. The only Kyungsoo he knew was tired, exhausted, too-much-in-control Kyungsoo. He looks peaceful, now, relaxed, like he is for the brief moments after orgasm.

Chanyeol wipes his eyes.

Kyungsoo is stuck in a cycle of eating, sleeping and making angry noises. Chanyeol turns his back one second and he falls asleep. Chanyeol talks on the phone just a moment and Kyungsoo eats half of a cake. Chanyeol is trying to fit him in the seat and Kyungsoo growls at him.

“Don’t bite me,” Chanyeol warns. “You were the one who wanted to come.”

“I have to,” Kyungsoo complains. “We don’t have to come anymore after today, I promise.”

Chanyeol is nervous. He has never been into a Conservative Church. He is using a suit again, but Kyungsoo also is very formal. It’s a fancy place, all glass-and-marble; people aren’t exactly in suits, but they’re neatly dressed. Chanyeol secretly wishes he combed his hair. Kyungsoo walks and fake smiles to different people, acknowledging them with a small wave. Chanyeol picks the seat at the back – he knows he can’t hide, but at least he will try to not embarrass Kyungsoo.

Kyungsoo’s parents are nowhere to be seen, but his brother is in a seat far from them. Chanyeol gasps when he sees the priest.

“I know him,” he whispers to Kyungsoo. “He found me drunk in a bar with Junmyeon.”

Kyungsoo shoots him a look. It means explain yourself.

“I was crying in front of your house. Long story.”

“He’s going to talk to me when the mass finishes,” Kyungsoo says. “You better behave yourself.”

The first part of the mass is a long speech about the sun god, his son, dead and then reborn as a werewolf, and the calm, pacific heaven where the good people would be living after death. The priest looks at Chanyeol (easily spotted when standing) but he also looks at many people. Kyungsoo asks for water; the priest is talking about the good behavior and the sacrifice of earthily pleasures. Chanyeol tries to leave the quietest he can.

He’s coming back when he runs into two guys waiting at the door.

“Don’t come in now,” the smaller man says. He has a mark in his neck, visible but not too big. “He’s talking about lazy and late people. You don’t want to be an example, right?”

“No,” Chanyeol gulps. “But I have to give my mate his water bottle.”

“He can wait,” the other man says. He has no marks and he smells strong. Chanyeol does not need to smell them to know they’re both alphas. The unmated omegas at the church sit on the other side, the mated ones next to their mates, and both wouldn’t talk to an alpha as openly as they’re doing right now. “You know Father is trying to look progressive lately, so he picks on us to prove his point.”
“Oh,” Chanyeol says. He and Kyungsoo have no marks. Their sexual activity would have been in the vanilla tag since the pregnancy. “Okay.”

“Aren’t you…” the smaller inspect him. “Oh… you’re here with Seungsoo’s brother, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol nods, and his palms are sweating. The other man turns, surprised, like he just noticed Chanyeol is there. “His name is Kyungsoo, by the way.”

“Damn…” the unmated alpha whistles, looking up to face Chanyeol. “We were just talking about that. So you’re a miracle maker, huh? That boy is… difficult. You put a baby in him and everything. Congratulations.”

“We used to be in the choir together,” the mated alpha says. “But he left… I guess we were both teenagers at that time. I thought he became one of these liberal omegas, you know? Wasn’t he dating another omega before? What a mess.”

Chanyeol promised he was going to behave, but he has to count to ten before answering so he doesn’t hit one of them.

“I really wish you two would have some respect towards my mate. This is my first day here and I barely know you,” he says between his teeth, trying to smile. The two alphas give a step backward. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

“Sorry, you’re right,” the mated one says first, lifting his hands in a gesture of defense. “We’re not saying bad things about him, absolutely. He’s definitely a catch, I mean, I never heard him say more than two phrases… my mate can’t stop talking about… I don’t know, I don’t even pay attention anymore. And she can’t do anything in the house, she’s a terrible cook. I bet you don’t have this problem.”

“And it’s good he’s defensive, right? He’s not like these omegas who have no respect for their bodies. Also he seems very discreet… there’s nothing more awful than these futile, show off omegas,” the other alpha says, and they both laugh. Chanyeol is frozen. “Always smelling like whores… What’s the point of mating an omega who’s that easy? Wolves like to hunt… There’s no fun if they say yes immediately. The secret of finding a good omega to mate is being a little forceful, you know? They say they don’t want it, but they do.”

Torn between answering and throwing up, Chanyeol just walks in the room. He’s too disgusted to pretend he’s not. He sits by Kyungsoo and passes the water bottle.

“What’s wrong?” Kyungsoo asks.

“Nothing,” he shakes his head. “I’m just very… uncomfortable.”

Kyungsoo just smiles.

The mass ends before eleven and the priest goes straight to them. Kyungsoo smiles, and it seems scarcely genuine. Chanyeol passes a hand through his hair and straightens up his posture.

“I can’t believe my eyes,” the Father says, holding Kyungsoo by the shoulders. “Is this Do Kyungsoo, in person, right in front of me? I must be dreaming.”

“Father,” Kyungsoo says politely. “Long time no see.”

“Well, I thought I wouldn’t see you again. You’re too famous, now, son. Every time I see you on television, I think about that small boy in my choir. We miss your voice,” the Father says softly.
Chanyeol knows for a fact Kyungsoo is pissed. He doesn’t like being called small. “And who’s this lucky alpha with you? I bet he has something to do with this belly.”

Chanyeol, an incorrigible cheesy man, blushes.

“This is Chanyeol, my mate,” Kyungsoo says like a robot. “I’m seven months pregnant.”

“What a blessing! May the sun god guarantee you a healthy brood,” he says, letting go of Kyungsoo to touch Chanyeol’s arm. “Your face is familiar.”

“I’m a singer,” Chanyeol says fast. “My face is on many places. I’m allergic to alcohol.”

Kyungsoo rolls his eyes.

“Oh, yes, yes,” the Father smiles. “I think I saw you in a record store…? Forgive me, I’m too old to remember new things. I’m glad you two are here. It’s good to see that you found yourself a family, Kyungsoo. The sun goes down every night, but he comes up every day. No wolf is a lone wolf in this church. I hope this mating leads you to a better life.”

“Thank you,” Chanyeol says, because Kyungsoo doesn’t answer. “It’s my first time here.”

“Oh,” the Father looks at him curiously. “Perhaps your family are from a different church?”

“My family is pretty much atheist,” Chanyeol answers proudly. “My mom never took us to any religious place. But maybe it was because she was too busy. She raised me and my sister by herself after my father died, and she owns a restaurant, like Kyungsoo.”

“Oh, I see,” the Father says, and his tone isn’t exactly gentle. “Lucky Kyungsoo has you, then. He doesn’t have to worry about anything else but his family anymore.”

Chanyeol widens his eyes when Kyungsoo smiles – it’s too genuine to be a good thing.

“About that, Father, I think you misunderstood the reason of my presence here today,” Kyungsoo says. “I don’t plan on returning to the church. I hated every fucking day I spent in this disgusting place. I just came back to say goodbye to you, and to the stinking people who hide under this hypocritical moralist speech. It was good to meet you, but I have to do whatever I want. Have a good day.”

And simply as that, he takes Chanyeol’s hand and turns to leave. Chanyeol is still shocked – and some people around them, who overheard the conversation. There’s no rain outside, it’s hot, and the weather makes Chanyeol come back to his senses.

“Holy shit,” he says, still letting be drag away by his mate. “What was that?”

“The truth,” Kyungsoo says. “He always told us to be sincere. I can’t say I learned nothing in this place.”

“You said a bad word to a priest. And… fuck, you came here today just for that?”

“Yes.”

“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol holds Kyungsoo’s hand to stop him. “Explain.”

“I always wanted to say that,” Kyungsoo shrugs. “But these people believe omegas should obey their parents and then, when mated, their alpha. If I said anything while unmated, my parents would be in trouble, since they would be responsible for my acts. I knew if I came with you then they
wouldn’t do a thing. For the laws of the book of the wolf, you’re the one who can punish me.”

Chanyeol takes a moment to process everything.

“Okay… so… you basically used me… to offend a priest and an entire church?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo says resolutely.

“This is why we’re mates,” Chanyeol nods. “Pinky and the Brain.”

“What?” Kyungsoo chuckled. “You’re not mad?”

“I love you,” Chanyeol says. “Guess I’ll have to get used to being a part of your evil plans.”

Kyungsoo holds Chanyeol’s hand tighter. The sunlight is too strong, but it doesn’t matter.

“I think I have to tell you…” he says, looking at their interlaced fingers. “Thanks for being with me. I thought I didn’t need you around. I was wrong.”

Chanyeol smiles, giggles, laughs. He needs to hear that. He kisses Kyungsoo.

Chanyeol knows why he likes the idea of being a father. He’s someone else since he found out about Kyungsoo’s pregnancy. He finally has the sense of being needed. It’s not he’s worthless, but he never felt needed. He’s the second son and his sister is so much better in… everything; his friends are mated and successful; he’s an artist, but he wasn’t much acclaimed, and no one would die if he stopped making music. He lives in a world of possibilities, but none of them fits what he wants. Chanyeol could do anything, but also nothing – and no one would be truly hurt by his failure, but him.

But now, when he wakes up every morning, he remembers he has a baby coming, and he has to be prepared. Kyungsoo needs him too – he knows, of course, but hearing it makes him more certain, he has to be strong and resilient. His mother was a good parent in worst conditions; he has to be an amazing father to his baby.

“I love you so much,” Chanyeol says, smiling against Kyungsoo’s lips. “You are the best damn thing that ever happened to me.”

“I love you too,” Kyungsoo says and bites Chanyeol’s upper lip. “Let’s talk about this punishment thing at home?”

“Moon, you can’t give me a break, can you?”

“No,” Kyungsoo smiles. “I guess you’re stuck with me forever.”

Chapter End Notes

hey! I want to thank everyone for surviving all this angst, honestly! And also, thank you
for saying such nice things and making suggestions. So, the next chapter will be the final one, so this is your last chance to scream at me (by the way, you should, I'm the ANGST queen) :) I'll take time to answer AND consider your thoughts. As some of you may have noticed, this is a series now, because I'll post another (side, short) fic to help you to understand this relationship mess!

(btw thanks london9calling for being an amazing beta!)
Chanyeol opens the door carefully. He hears classical music and nothing more; that means the boys
are out, and Kyungsoo is at home. No news, of course. Kyungsoo is stuck in bed since the
pregnancy reached the eighth month; even going to the bathroom is an effort, now he is half-belly,
half-Kyungsoo.

Chanyeol takes his shoes off, closes the door and walks straight to the bathroom. After two hours of
screaming and jumping around, he must be stinking. He takes a good shower, smiling while the
water hits his face. It’s so different to have his own concert, to have many people who came to see
him, and not just to eat and accidentally listen to his music. It’s exactly what he was missing, to be
heard and to be appreciated completely. His fans already knew the songs, they wanted to hear, they
were paying attention and… having fun. Not casual applause, not small notes on napkins; screams
and posters.

Chanyeol tries to be silent when he gets in his room, but he makes a fond sound when he sees
Kyungsoo sleeping in the bed with Wolf next to his belly. Chanyeol takes one picture (his mate and
baby!!!! folder has 234 pictures, but in half of them Kyungsoo is covering his face), and dresses
himself slowly. The song ends, and the room falls silent for a moment. Chanyeol doesn’t like
classical music, even if it’s a recommendation, so he switches to his Jazz playlist – Jazz is as calm
and instrumental and it sounds way better. Chanyeol resists the temptation of kissing Kyungsoo
while he’s asleep; he’s looking adorable lately, chubby and sleepy, but he also is very irritable. His
mate went from “let’s fuck 24/7” to “stay 24 km away from me”. However, Minseok assured
Chanyeol it was a good thing, if he’s rejecting you sexually, that means the birthing is close. And
Chanyeol couldn’t contain his anxiety to hold his baby.

Chanyeol takes the book from Kyungsoo’s hands; he fell asleep while reading Minseok’s book, as
always. Wolf wakes up and runs to Chanyeol’s legs, and thanks to the Moon, the dog is very quiet,
rarely barking or making messes.

“Hey, buddy,” Chanyeol carries him and sits on the ground. “Want to read with me? Or do you
prefer to nap with that cute daddy right there?”

Chanyeol knows Wolf is a loyal dog when he stays. Chanyeol is learning a lot lately; especially
because he found out he does learn more when there’s music playing – thanks to that article. He
reads while singing, Cry Me a River, petting Wolf with his free hand.

In 1984, Omegas are from Neptune, Alphas are from Uranus was published and it caused a
sensation on the current gender debate. Relating the old myths about omegas-water-receptivity and
alphas-electricity-fecundation with the new scientific approach to study ABO dynamics in a
progressive view, the book became a best seller instantly. Yet, its content had many inaccuracies,
since the author kept the idea of the social hierarchy of genders as an immutable law and ignored
the prejudice and the oppression in the basis of our society. For example, the change of the lunar
calendar (13 months of 28 days, the cycle of the moon phases and the omega’s regular heat), to the Gregorian/solar one cannot be dissociated from the political view. Also, the “science” used by the book was based on a mix of common sense; the book itself had few references to support their affirmations. Today, we know that there are more than two genders, and the erasure of betas and intergenders are part of the binary conservative beliefs. The defense of the inherent monogamy of omegas and alphas are as much as violent as the idea of omegas being reproductive-creatures, with a “parental sense” – a total superstition as “fairies” and “witches”. The denial of the moon connection, the notion that “heats” make omegas less rational and the introduction of “suppressants” as an escape from the “burden” of heat, none of this is scientific. It’s plain conservative pseudo-science.

“What’s the name of this song?” Kyungsoo’s voice distracts him from reading. Chanyeol looks up, and his mate is staring back at him.

Have you seen Stella by starlight with moon in her hair, Ella Fitzgerald sings. Chanyeol prefers the Ray Charles’s version, but both are good.


“The baby always kicks when this song is playing,” Kyungsoo rubs his eyes. “How was your show?”

“Nice,” Chanyeol almost jumps, excited, but he’s careful to not disturb Wolf. “Can I… feel the baby?”

Kyungsoo frowns but nods slowly. Chanyeol nearly throws himself on the bed, lifting the thick sweater Kyungsoo is wearing. He puts his cheek against his mate’s belly.

“Oh… I can feel,” he smiles. “The baby is moving!”

“The baby moves all the time,” Kyungsoo says. “But they kick when they hear the song.”

Chanyeol rubs his cheek against the belly, wishing the baby knows it’s him. He can’t wait. He’s so nervous. Kyungsoo slaps him away.

“Get out,” he says. “I need to pee.”

“Do you want me to carry you?”

“No. I can walk.”

“You take ten minutes to get in the bathroom…”

“But I can walk,” Kyungsoo sighs. He is making a face, walking slowly, and even Wolf seems a bit worried, half asleep on the ground. But what can Chanyeol do? His mate is a stubborn little thing, so he waits until Kyungsoo comes back.

“The boys are going to my concert on Friday,” he says, sitting on the ground again. “Who’s gonna be here with you?”

“Amber,” he says. “She’s going to bring work.”

“Do you want a massage on your feet, huh?” Chanyeol kneels to hold his mate’s foot. He’s using
one of the (new and clean) rilakkuma socks, and Chanyeol rubs his nose all over it. “A kiss?”

“Stop being a dog,” Kyungsoo covers his legs with a blanket, shoving Chanyeol away. “I will sleep. Come here, Wolf.”

Wolf goes to bed happily, because he can. Chanyeol envies him and mumbles *traitor*.

“No kissy kiss?” Chanyeol pouts.

“Maybe after I spit it out, you know, this black-hole-stomach kid you put inside of me,” he says, closing his eyes. “Good night.”

It’s been a crazy week, but he has to admit it’s been a crazy year, so, nothing new. Chanyeol sits down, head between his legs, trying to calm himself down. It’s just his first televised concert. He is not going to do anything different from his other performances. He rubs his face, grabs a water bottle, but just plays with it, drumming the chair in a rhythmic beat.

“Chanyeol?” the woman with earmuffs on her shoulder asks, looking around. He stands up, waves the water bottle. She nods. “You’re coming in ten, okay?”

“Okay,” he starts to jump lightly for no reason. “I’m ready.”

“Great, we’re finishing the sound check,” she says, pointing to a random guy. “Someone give him some towels. Like, this man is sweating; can someone call the make-up artist again? His eyeliner is melting…”

Chanyeol sits down while they’re drying him and applying more powder on his face. He’s okay with makeup, really, but he can’t stay still. Yifan asked him to come to an “alpha night” after the show, let’s enjoy your last weeks of freedom, right? Kyungsoo was around and approached them with a meat knife raised, so Yifan explained (very quickly) it was just poker, whiskey and Yixing’s little snacks. Chanyeol actually laughed, Kyungsoo, what do you think that Luhan, Tao, and Yixing would do? They’re inoffensive, and they outnumber this pervert here.

Funny thing. Chanyeol learned that omegas are wilder than betas and alphas. Jongin and Junmyeon were “hunting” on a moon cult event, both using real big guns. They came home (Jongin’s house) smelling like blood and sweat, laughing hard. Chanyeol witnessed Minseok, honest to the Moon, changing a flat tire after just throwing up while talking on the phone like it was nothing. Baekhyun and Jongdae, of course, were running in circles, too confused to do anything. Chanyeol came home early and caught Minseok with two fingers inside of Kyungsoo’s ass, both looking serious and concentrated. *What the hell,* was the only thing Chanyeol could say. They looked at him as if he was the stupidest person on earth. *Measuring cervical dilation,* Minseok said, bored, his hand moving up and down. Chanyeol had no idea what it was, so he mumbled, *that’s the only way of doing it?* Kyungsoo threw a pillow to shut him up.

Honestly, his beta friends weren’t exactly better. Sehun announced he was going to move in with Tao, and Chanyeol was late to the farewell party. He came home and the three of them were hugging on the couch and crying. *I was never trained to be a father, what if I screw it up,* Jongdae was
“I don’t know who is the most ridiculous today, honestly,” Yifan says, his body resting on the chair like it’s a bed. He’s holding the cards lazily, chewing some gum and analyzing the table for the hundredth time. “Chanyeol and the pink eyeliner, Luhan and the most obvious poker face in the history or… Yixing… trying to play.”

“What do you mean?” Yixing says, looking around. Tao pats him gently on the shoulder.

“For the last time, Xing. You’re not supposed to say the truth in poker. That’s not… how…” Tao sighs. He looks very attractive today in a black suit, and it’s shocking to see Tao dressed in just one color. “Luhan, stop drinking. We can see you have two pairs—”

“What?” Luhan spits some whiskey. “You’re cheating, you… you… cheater!”

“I have two pairs too,” Yixing smiles. Tao drops his card on the table.

“I’m glad I’m not the worst player,” Chanyeol confesses, laughing. He’s tired, so tired, but after being so anxious about his performance, he feels oddly relaxed to be around his friends. Or maybe it’s because he’s smoking pot. He could be eating Yixing’s snacks, but Tao finished them in the first hour. “Fuck, what time is it?”

Chanyeol has to admit that he feels a bit of badass, playing poker in an empty place like this. Yifan has one of the apartments just for “privacy” things – he’s the only one truly living the single life… even if he can’t date. Yixing is single, but he doesn’t care. Luhan is single, but… it’s sensitive to talk about it. And Tao is practically married. Chanyeol concludes that their poker night is probably one of the most boring things that ever happened in that place.

“God… I think Yixing spent thirty minutes in his last play…” Luhan yawns and rolls up his sleeve to
check the time on his watch. “It’s midnight, boys. I guess we can call this a party.”

Yifan takes a breath, “Moon, I’m getting older just by watching your lazy asses.”

“I had fun,” Tao shrugs. “But I need my beauty sleep soon.”

“I like spending time with you all,” Yixing smiles, and he is still holding his cards. “Poker is fun.”

“Whatever you just played,” Yifan sighs. “That wasn’t poker. But honestly how I can be mad at you?”

“Can I take a picture? For my Instagram…” Chanyeol asks, yawning too. It’s a cycle. He takes his phone from his pocket and before he can open the camera, he notices he has a ton of messages and missed calls. “Fuck, wait.”

23 missed calls from an unknown number

10 missed calls from YURA

88 missed calls from nini!!!

1 missed call from Junmyeon

2 missed calls from <3 smol mate <3

“What happened?” Luhan asked, his voice faltering. He is very drunk.

“I don’t know, but if Kyungsoo called me, then it must be serious,” Chanyeol says worriedly.

“Look at him, he’s pale,” Tao mocks. “Did you ask permission from Kyungsoo to come? Or you just ran away from your dog’s house?”

Luhan chokes on his whiskey. Yifan snorts. Yixing claps excited.

“Oh, I see,” he says. “We are making fun of Chanyeol because his mate is scary and he is whipped, right?”

“Yes, Yixing,” Yifan sighs again. “Don’t try to join us. You’re going to ruin this thing. You can’t roast a beef, let alone a person.”

Chanyeol couldn’t care less. He is trying to read the messages.

unknown number: hey, I’m taking Kyungsoo to the hospital

unknown number: he’s feeling some pain

jongin: CHANYEOL ANSWER YOUR FUCKING PHONE

jongin: amber called me
jongin: Minseok is with me!! He’s worried

jongin: KYUNGSOO IS IN LABOR

kyungsoo: so I guess the baby is coming now

baekhyun: man??? Where are you?? We’re at the hospital

baekhyun: jongin called us??? Kyungsoo is going to the surgery room

yura: why you never answer your phone

yura: where are you?? Your baby is coming

yura: listen I’ll register this kid in my name if you don’t come

jongin: he had a placental abruption!! Its partial

jongin: but he has no time to wait for the baby to come out

baekhyun: I’LL BUY A NEW PHONE AND SHOVE IT IN YOUR ASS

jongin: he’s having an emergency c-section!!!

jongin: since you’re not here I’m going with him

jongin: WHEN I SEE YOU I’M GOING TO KICK YOUR BALLS SO HARD THAT

jongin: KYUNGSOO IS NEVER GOING TO WORRY ABOUT BEING PREGNANT AGAIN

Chanyeol stares at his phone for a few seconds, in silence. Then he takes a long breath, closes his eyes, and smashes his phone into his hands. The breaking sound startles even the drunkest (Luhan). They all stare back at Chanyeol.

“Kyungsoo’s in labor,” he murmurs. He throws the rest of his broken phone in the ground violently and screams, “Kyungsoo is in labor!”

Tao lets out a high-pitched scream. Chanyeol jumps off his chair, ready to run – he’s seeing red like there’s a giant alarm running off inside of his mind.

“Where are you going?” Yifan stands up too. “Chanyeol!”

“To the hospital,” he says, exasperated. “What the fuck! Did you just hear what I said?”

“You don’t even know which hospital they are at,” Yifan says, angry. “Calm down!”

“Do you want me to call Minseok?” Yixing asks, frowning. “Oh… he’s already… I’ll call Junmyeon then.”

Chanyeol can’t hear a thing, so he runs to the door. He barely hears Yifan’s get him! Something heavy falls on Chanyeol before he can reach the door, and he falls to the ground. He tries to move, but the weight over him gets even heavier. Struggling, he turns, and realizes that Luhan and Tao are sitting on him.
“Let me go,” he pleads, trying to push Luhan away, but he just gropes his friend’s ass. “I need to see my baby!”

“Calm down,” Yifan breathes out. “I’m going to call Junmyeon, okay? We find out the address, and then we’ll drive you there!”

“Anh…” Luhan says, hitting Chanyeol discreetly. “So… do you have his number now? Do you guys… chat over the phone or…?”

“Oh, no,” Yixing says softly, shaking his head. “That means you—”

“That means I have his phone number,” Yifan rolls his eyes while typing. “God, you two are kids.”

“Listen, I would love to tease Yifan now,” Chanyeol says, kicking something he thinks is Tao’s legs. “But… my kid is about to come, you know?”

“Stop hitting me,” Tao slaps Chanyeol back. “Luhan, control him. I’ll get the car. I’m probably the less drunk here. I mean, besides Yixing, but if you want to see your kid today, it’s better if I drive.”

“Behave yourself,” Luhan whispers, pinching Chanyeol’s belly. It’s futile; when Tao leaves, Chanyeol pushes Luhan up, making him fall to the ground.

“Chanyeol,” Yixing says calmly, the only person still sitting in the same spot. “No, no. That’s bad. Bad boy.”

Chanyeol is ready to protest, but he has to hold Luhan to calm himself down when he hears Yifan talking.

“…yes, I know the place. Yeah, yeah… next to a drugstore and a coffee shop. Yes, he’s here with me,” Yifan gestures to Tao to leave. “No, no problem. Kyungsoo is in surgery— Okay… Yeah, no, Chanyeol broke his phone… Tell her he’s coming, there’s no need— of course. See you—”

“He’s in surgery,” Chanyeol’s hands are sweaty on Luhan’s shirt. “Oh, Moon. This is happening. He’s… Oh my—”

“Geez, Chanyeol, you’re shaking,” Luhan helps him to stand up. “Calm down. Yixing, can’t you do that thing when you press something on the neck and then the person passes out?”

“I could,” Yixing smiles. “But he would wake up tomorrow.”

“No one will knock down anyone,” Yifan shouts. “Let’s go to the car. It’s not that far, but we have to get there before Chanyeol stops functioning.”

Too late; Chanyeol is sweating so much he can’t open the car door, even with Luhan patting his back and saying comforting things. Yixing sits in the front seat, helping Yifan with the directions. Tao is a bit nervous, but he seems ready to stop Chanyeol just in case panic takes over them again. Chanyeol feels like he’s dreaming, he waited for this, but… it doesn’t seem real. It’s weird to think he actually made a person and he’s going to see them today.

“Bad news,” Yifan says quickly, staring at them through the rearview. “We have to get gas.”

Chanyeol makes a guttural nose, almost crying; Tao holds him in place.

“Can someone give me a phone? I need to talk to someone who’s at the hospital, like, anyone,” he says, trembling like he’s cold, but he’s just scared.
“Call your sister,” Yifan warns. “She’s already there. Take my phone. Give it to him, Yixing.”

Yixing actually types the numbers for Chanyeol, since his hands are as useless as his mind. Luhan holds the phone against Chanyeol’s ear.

“Hello? I can’t talk right now—”

“Yes, you can,” Chanyeol screams. “It’s me, what’s going on in there?”

“Chan—where the fuck are you? Why did you never pick up your phone—”

“My phone is gone! Please, just tell me what’s happening!”

“He’s giving birth, that’s what is happening! When I arrived, the doctor was taking him,” she breathes out. She sounds anxious too. “His friend took my number and he is sending me news from the room. Do you want me to send it to this number?”

“Yes, it’s Yifan’s, my friend,” Chanyeol holds his friend’s hands since he’s not holding the phone. “I’ll wait for it. Is… is it bad or…?”

“It’s not a safe surgery. It was an emergency,” she said quietly. “But apparently the doctor said they’re not at risk. I mean, additional risk… I had no idea Baekhyun and Jongdae had another mate, by the way. They’re here and they’re talking to a guy.”

Normally, Chanyeol would tease his sister for talking too much – just like him, - but her voice is helping him to calm down. Yifan stops at the gas station and waiting seems to be a torture. People are staring, but of course, it must be a strange scene, a car full of alphas with three of them tensely snuggling in the backseat.

“Describe this friend,” he says, his voice shaking. “Keep talking.”

“Not very tall, white hair, chubby cheeks,” he smiles. “Familiar face.”

“Oh, it’s Junmyeon. He… he seems scared or…?”

“No, he’s calming Baekhyun. I mean, trying,” she laughs. “Don’t worry, you know. It’s going to be okay! Mom had us in problematic pregnancies and she’s okay and we are here too, right?”

“Yeah,” he breathes out. “But… I wanted to talk to him.”

“Chanyeol,” she says, and she sounds distracted. “The guy who’s accompanying Kyungsoo sent me a message. I’ll send it to you. Calm down, I love you.”

“I love you,” he says and nods to Luhan.

“Good, I wasn’t feeling my arm anymore,” he makes a face. “What now?”

“She will send messages,” Chanyeol lets their hands go, and rubs his hands on his jeans. “Ah, give me this.”

The car is finally moving again, and Yixing is whispering things to Yifan. Chanyeol is staring at the screen as if his life depended on it.

unknown number [23:25] ksoo friend: he’s being sedated
Chanyeol tries to do that thing that Kyungsoo did to calm him down. He’s grateful his friends are there, hugging him. The night is windy, the windows are down, but yet, Chanyeol is sweating like a pig. He can’t focus on anything. He knows it’s a major turning point in his life. They stop at a red sign. Yixing turns to him.

“So, what’s going on?”

“No problem yet… but… the birth is happening,” Chanyeol wants to say and I’m not there, but he knows everybody understood. He thinks about his mate… Is Kyungsoo in pain? Of course, that thing must hurt. Is he scared? Is he angry? Is he okay?

“Hey,” Yifan says, loud, to make Chanyeol pay attention to him. “Fifteen minutes, boy. That’s all. We are going to get there.”

It’s hard for him to believe in that. He wants to obligate Yifan to ignore the red sign, to drive like crazy, but he can’t be that irresponsible anymore. He is going to be a father.

Chanyeol covers his mouth. He can’t feel anything, he can’t think of anything else when the cry breaks the silence of the car.

A strong and loud cry.

“Oh, moon,” Tao whispers next to him. “Congratulations…”

Chanyeol feels the tears crawling down his face and he sobs and laughs at the same time. The video keeps going, and it shows the doctor cleaning the baby. The camera shows the exact moment they bring the baby next to Kyungsoo, and Chanyeol’s heart skips a beat. He looks exhausted, and he nods, closing his eyes after as if it’s hard to keep them open. Jongin (Chanyeol understands now he’s the one recording) says with a shaking voice, it’s a baby girl, she’s okay.

“Oh,” Yixing smiles to him. “How does she look?”

“I don’t know,” Chanyeol tries to speak clearly, but it comes out as Idunnouw. “It was too fast.”

“We’re almost there,” Yifan says, and his voice sounds weird. “Don’t worry.”
He’s right. Chanyeol jumps out of the car when they get near, and Yixing and Tao run after him. The receptionist seems scared by them, but after Yixing talks to her, she guides them to the maternity ward. Chanyeol isn’t aware of anything around him and Tao has to push him away from a glass door before he walks into it. Finally, he spots his sister, standing next to Minseok.

“Hey,” he screams, and then covers his mouth instantly. “Sorry, I’ll be quiet! Where is he?”

“Kyungsoo is sleeping now,” Minseok says, and he looks sleepy and satisfied. “It’s better if you talk to him when he’s more… conscious.”

“Is he okay?” He says, half hugging his sister. She smiles at him, rubbing his back.

“Yeah,” Minseok says, suddenly serious. “It was a tense beginning, but everything went fine. He and the baby will be free to go after two days of observation if he doesn’t present any problems.”

“Oh,” Chanyeol nods.

“Don’t you want to see her?” Yura laughs. “The boys are all gathering around the poor girl.”

“Oh,” he widens his eyes. “Can I? Can I?”

“Of course you can,” Minseok laughs, pointing to his right. “The door next to the glass window. You can go there with your wristband. Baekhyun and Jongdae invaded, anyway.”

Chanyeol walks a few meters, but he feels like it’s an eternity. He is so nervous that he doesn’t peak at the window, he just opens the door. The room is filled with baby cribs, and on the empty side, he sees his friends and a nurse. There’s a warning hanging on the wall, ONLY OMEGAS AND IDENTIFIED ALPHA PARENTS ARE ALLOWED HERE.

“Sir, what do—” she says, startled, but Junmyeon holds her arm gently.

“He’s the dad,” he informs, almost murmurs. “Come here, Chanyeol.”

Chanyeol rubs his hands on his jeans again. Baekhyun is holding Jongin and both of them have red, puffy eyes. Chanyeol looks down and finally sees the baby – Jongdae is holding her, rocking his arms slowly. Chanyeol rubs his eyes, sobbing.

“Hey,” Jongdae says softly. “Look who’s here. It’s daddy!”

Chanyeol approaches them and kneels down to get a better look. She is… he can’t put in words to describe. Her eyes are closed, she is breathing quietly, and she looks cozy, tucked in her blue blanket.

“Ah… she’s small,” Chanyeol manages to say. The nurse snorts.

“This is a huge baby,” she informs him. “49 centimeters and almost 7kg. One of the biggest I’ve seen here.”

“She’s agitated,” Jongdae says. The baby moves her arms suddenly.

“Ah, she’s recognizing the dad’s voice. She would recognize his scent too, but she is going to have some trouble smelling for the next few days… her nose isn’t used to all of these scents, only her omega dad’s one,” the nurse says fondly. “If the parents are mated, she can scent it in her alpha dad too.”

“Hold her,” Baekhyun says. Chanyeol looks up, scared.
“No,” he whispers. “I don’t know how to do it, what if I drop her?”

Jongdae sighs and tells Chanyeol how to hold a baby properly. Chanyeol sits on the ground and tries to remember how to breathe when Jongdae lets the baby rest in his arms.

She’s warm. She waves her arms again and opens her eyes. Jongin and Baekhyun gasp at the same time.

“Oh, look,” Junmyeon says. “She knows it’s you, Chanyeol.”

The nurse smiles, bending to fix the blanket.

“Most babies don’t move their bodies so soon,” she says. “In past times they would say she’s born to be a warrior.”

“Oh, yeah,” Junmyeon nods. Chanyeol would pay attention to that moon cult aura, but he’s focusing on the most precious thing in the entire world. She is so beautiful, he thinks. Minuscule fingers, hands closed in fists, lots of hair – she is the most beautiful thing he could even imagine. He doesn’t know for how long he holds her, but he can feel the tears forming in his eyes. Ah, he thinks, this is the best thing I’ve done in my life.

“She needs to rest, dad,” the nurse says. Chanyeol holds the baby tighter.

“No,” he murmurs. He doesn’t want to let go. It feels like he waited an eternity to have her in his arms. She’s… so much, and even if Chanyeol knows she’s probably blind now, she is staring at him. Oh, he loves this baby too much. He would kill someone for her easily.

“Park Chanyeol,” his sister’s voice calls him. She’s at the door. “The baby needs to rest. Give her to the nurse.”

He wants to protest, but Jongdae taps him on the shoulder, shooting him an odd look. He gives her carefully, almost crying again. The baby waves her arms again, making noises.

“She will cry,” the nurse says. “Take him from here.”

“Ah… no,” Chanyeol now murmurs, but he’s outnumbered, and the boys drag him out of the room. His sister hugs him when he starts to cry.

“She’s so small, I can’t let her alone, Yura,” he says, sobbing. “What if she needs me? She can’t defend herself!”

“She is safe,” she laughs, rubbing his back. “And you’re stinking. Did you take a shower today? You have other things to worry.”

“Ah… before the concert,” he sniffs.

“Yeah. Go home, clean the room too, so Kyungsoo and the baby will safe when they arrive,” Yura says softly. “She is safer here than around you and your germs.”

He nods, wiping his eyes. His chest hurts. How can he be calm, if he’s away from his mate and his baby?

“You’re coming with me today,” Jongin says, leaning into Chanyeol’s personal space. “We have things to do tomorrow. You’re lucky I’m weak from so much crying, otherwise, I would spank you again.”
“Can I at least see Kyungsoo?” He asks hopefully, glancing at Minseok. He looks very tired, and only now Chanyeol realizes how tiring it must be doing this type of surgery while being pregnant too.

“He’s probably not conscious,” Minseok says. Baekhyun is doing a weird shoulder’s massage on him and Jongdae is actually cleaning his sweat with a tissue. “But you can see him for five minutes. Take him, Nini.”

The room is cold. When Chanyeol opens the door, he smells that characteristic hospital scent and feels surrounded by cold air; the room is simple and small, and there’s only one bed. He enters alone, pushes the chair closer to Kyungsoo’s upper body.

Kyungsoo looks pale and small, covered by a blanket up to his chest. Chanyeol touches his face, ghosts his fingers on his cheek. Kyungsoo opens his eyes slowly.

“Hi,” Chanyeol says, trying to rest his face on the bed.

“Is… she okay?” Kyungsoo whispers. His voice seems too rough.

“Yeah,” Chanyeol whispers back, and his eyes are burning. “She’s so beautiful.”

Kyungsoo smiles briefly. He seems to have trouble keeping his eyes open.

“I bet she is,” he sighs. “I’m sleepy.”

“Go rest,” Chanyeol brushes the hair out of Kyungsoo eyes gently, then kisses his forehead. “I love you.”

Kyungsoo looks peaceful, but his skin is freezing. Chanyeol covers him more and rubs his sleepy face with both hands before leaving. Jongin takes him to the car before Chanyeol goes to see the baby again, and Chanyeol is easily convinced to follow him when his friend shows him a video of her being bathed.

“Why is she crying?” Chanyeol said, walking and watching at the same time. “Is it too cold?”

“It’s because she doesn’t know what a bath is,” Jongin says, opening the car door for him. “She is going to cry about anything, Chanyeol. She has no idea of what’s happening around her.”

“Yes,” he says absently, seeing how the nurse dried her and put a tiny wristband with “Do Kyungsoo” written on it. “Ah, she’s so cute.”

“You’ll have your entire life to appreciate that,” he says, and he’s not impatient; he sounds quite fond. “Close the door and put on the seatbelt.”

Chanyeol obeys, reluctantly keeping the phone in his pocket. Jongin’s eyes are puffed, but he looks calm, driving slowly.

“Are you using your contacts?”

“Yes,” he snorts. “I can see just fine.”

“What are we going to do tomorrow?”

“We are going to a register office to get the baby certificate,” he says, distracted. “Kyungsoo will
leave the hospital in two days, but he will still need rest after that. The baby needs a name for any legal procedures, as well the documents."

“We… haven’t discussed that…” Chanyeol scratches his neck. Everything happened so fast – there’s a lot they haven’t decided. “But…"

“Oh, you and Kyungsoo didn’t talk about something so important,” Jongin says dryly. “What a surprise.”

“Hey! It’s like… a bazillion things to think about!”

“It’s the name, Chanyeol.”

“Well, anything that Kyungsoo wants, then I’ll want too.”

“Of fucking course,” Jongin rolls his eyes. “But I asked him and he said ‘I don’t know and I don’t care, let Chanyeol do it, he’s better than me in this type of stuff’. And… let’s be honest, he’s right. He’s horrible at naming things.”

“Fuck,” Chanyeol breathes out. “I can’t do that by myself. I’ll call the boys.”

Jongin lets out a deep, painful sight. Chanyeol looks at him, curious.

“I just thought…” he starts to explain. “I just thought that if you two mated for real, then, you know, something would change. Not… everything. Just… nevermind.”

“Ah, come on,” Chanyeol snorts. “What are you afraid of telling me? Are you afraid of hurting my feelings? You?”

Jongin glares at him, just one second, before doing a wild turn. Chanyeol realizes it’s the first time he watches where Jongin is driving to – and, by the streets they’re passing by, they’re heading to Chanyeol’s house.

“I’m just frustrated. You two keep doing the same things, all over again. Not talking is… just one of them. You keep doing that thing in which you’re afraid of making decisions and taking the lead, and he keeps hating the bare idea of vulnerability. It’s just tiring to watch.”

Chanyeol gapes for a moment.

“What? Maybe… maybe we are just like that…”

“Oh, yeah. I’m not talking about being insecure or stubborn, Chanyeol. Those are traits. I’m talking about you being afraid of being an alpha and him being afraid of being an omega. I’m talking about Kyungsoo saying he doesn’t care about his kid’s name and you being so terrified of choosing your own kid’s name by yourself that you have to call your friends.”

“You’re exaggerating,” Chanyeol says, defensive.

“Am I?” Jongin stops the car. Chanyeol is right, they’re in the front of this house. “Pick some clothes and the things he likes.”

“Why can’t he come here—”

“Because your house is not the best place for a person in the post-birth state. Kyungsoo is not only fragile now, but he’s also a famous person, and here there’s everything he needs. At least for his first days,” Jongin makes a hand gesture, shooing him away. “Go! We are going to be up early
tomorrow.”

Chanyeol gets a few clothes, shoes, his favorite things and he also puts food and water out for Wolf. The poor dog is too lonely, and Chanyeol pets him a bit and leaves. When he returns to the car, Jongin is sleeping, face smashed against the steering wheel.


They sleep for a few hours before the alarm goes off and the dogs start to bark. Chanyeol rubs his face and realizes they both slept in their clothes. Jongin has to crawl to leave the bed and they’re both so lethargic that he kicks Chanyeol in the process and Chanyeol takes a few seconds to whimper.

“I’ll make coffee for us,” Jongin says, trying to stop his dogs from invading the room. The cat is already on the bed. “That poison will keep us awake.”

“Thank you,” Chanyeol says, sitting. He shoved all the things in the baby diaper’s bag Tao gave him. He searches through his playlist to find something to make them more excited. They have so many things to do before seeing Kyungsoo and the baby – buy a new phone, pick up the milk, the wheelchair, the results of the baby’s exams, ah… so many things. He finds the playlist he made for Kyungsoo and then, he has an idea.

They must look horrible, judging by the face of the registry office lady. She has dozens of Miley Cyrus, Rihanna, Madonna and other alpha singers’ pictures on her laptop, her pencils are ordered by color and over her head, there’s a frame with PROUD TO BE AN ALPHA MOM hanging on the wall. She’s thin and angry-looking and she checks Jongin’s ass out when he bends to pick the documents.

“Hmmm… Everything here, I see. The baby was born yesterday, 16 September, at the Public State Hospital, Omega parent, Do Kyungsoo; Alpha parent, Park Chanyeol,” she writes down neatly. “Female, 49 centimeters… That’s one hell of a big baby. I guess no mating for a while.”

Chanyeol understands she expects him to laugh and make another suggestive comment, but he wouldn’t, even if he had the energy for that. Jongin rolls his eyes, disgusted, and she sighs.

“Sign the name of the baby here,” she points, pushing the paper towards them. “Sign as the Responsible here, and the cutie there signs next to it, testifying.”

“Anh… What family name? Kyungsoo’s or mine?” He asks Jongin.

“Unless the alpha parent is unknown, doesn’t want to register the kid or the baby is adopted, then, it’s the Alpha’s family name,” the lady says like a robot.

“Ah…” he nods and writes PARK STELLA on the space designed to write the baby’s name.

“What kind of name is this?” the lady speaks quietly to herself. Chanyeol just signs, happy.
“Ste-lla. S-tel-la,” Jongin tests the name in his mouth. “I like it. It’s… different, but nice. It’s because of the Winxs?”

“What the hell is a winx? No, it’s because of the song. She likes it.”

“Well, if you say so,” Jongin lifts his shoulders, signing the paper. The lady stamps the paper gives them three copies, and then they’re free to go. Because Chanyeol can complain about anything but the lack of friend’s help, Sehun and Jongdae call and offer to bring few things to Jongin’s house. Baekhyun is locked on a school’s reunion, but he asks if Chanyeol needs his help too.

Chanyeol sees Kyungsoo during visiting hours, but he’s sleeping again, and this time Chanyeol doesn’t wake him up. Instead, Chanyeol inspects the flowers, the cute stuffed animals and the congratulations on your baby messages surrounding him. Today Kyungsoo has more color on his face, but he’s still looking tired, even in his sleep. When he goes to see Stella, she’s awake, and Chanyeol makes such an exaggerated begging face that the nurse allows him to hold the baby for five minutes. Luhan comes in right at that the time.

“Ah…” he smiles fondly, holding the door. “Look at you, all daddy-like.”

Stella is looking around with her big eyes and she follows the stranger’s voice.

“She’s so beautiful,” Chanyeol says again. He’s absolutely in love with every part of her. “Look at her babbling…”

“You’re just a biased dad,” Luhan laughs. “I can’t stay long. Me and Yixing are going home today.”

“Oh, no,” Chanyeol says, rocking her in his eyes. “Already?”

“Yeah, I just came to see your daughter before I go,” he makes a face. The nurse asks for Stella and Chanyeol tells his friend to wait. They leave the hospital together, walking.

“So, how are you feeling now?” Luhan puts an arm around him, and Chanyeol smiles, warm.

“Not very different. She’s just a day old. But… I’m really happy.”

“You look happy… and different too.”

“Is that good?”

“Yeah, I think so.”

Chanyeol pinches him in the ribs. Luhan slaps him back.

“So, what about you? How is work going?”

“Great,” Luhan says. “I mean… it’s different now I’m organizing. But it’s good to finish such an old project, you know.”

“Why is it different?”

Luhan looks forward like he’s focusing on something very distant. He licks his lips slowly.

“I think I wanted this… more before I was a signed mate,” he says, finally. “Now it’s just about finishing a cycle. I learned a lot, and I realized this isn’t my dream, after all. It’s something I needed to do, but… I have to keep walking, you know?”
“Yes,” Chanyeol whispers. “But do you know what you want?”

“Not really. But I’ll try new things. And also go back to few others. I think I want to be an actor again… I… think will be good for me, try on new masks. My old one is broken.”

Chanyeol stares at him. He feels like a season is ending in his life, and something else is beginning. He’s not scared, but he’s not feeling secure either. He lets the wind caress him, and stays quiet for a while.

“I’ll miss having you around,” he says solemnly, but he smiles after.

“Ah, I’ll miss you too, Chanyeol,” Luhan smiles back. He gets years younger smiling like that. “You make my life a lot better, do you know that?”

“Ah, so do you.”

“Don’t worry,” Luhan pats his arm gently. “You’ll be a terrific father.”

Chanyeol picks up Kyungsoo early in the morning because Minho warns him they can’t delay work anymore. When Chanyeol gets to his room, Kyungsoo is already sitting in a wheelchair, and Minseok pushes it slowly, talking to Junmyeon. Kyungsoo isn’t very interested in the conversation because he’s staring at his phone. Chanyeol bends to kiss his cheek.

“Hey, my love,” he gives his mate one of his noisy kisses. Kyungsoo wipes his face. “How are you feeling?”


“Ah, let’s go home then,” Chanyeol says happily. “Where’s Stella?”

“Stella?” Kyungsoo looks up, frowning. “Who’s Stella?”

“Your daughter,” Chanyeol informs him, poking his button nose.

“Stella,” Kyungsoo repeats. “That’s an okay name. Jongin took her to the car.”

“Ah… I wanted to hold her a bit before leaving,” Chanyeol pouts. “The boys are going to stay with you?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo says. “I’ll be fine.”

“Kissy kiss,” Chanyeol bends down again, making his kissy face. Kyungsoo snorts but gives him a peck on the lips. “Ah… I’m happy. So you will kissy kiss me again?”

“You really have to stop using that term,” Kyungsoo says and yawns. “But yes, if you don’t make this face.”

Chanyeol makes sure Kyungsoo is okay, runs to the car to give Stella a small kiss on her chubby cheek (she waves her tiny arms happily, and Chanyeol coos for five minutes) and then leaves. He will be in the Studio for only the Moon knows how much time. His album is selling more than
expected and they want to make a repackage; because Taemin is from the same label, he suggested making a collaboration – and, of course, since he’s the world famous one, Chanyeol has to fit his schedule, not the opposite. After ten hours of non-stop working, Minho declares it’s break time (but they can’t leave). While the musicians order pizza and talk, Chanyeol checks his brand new phone. The first thing he sees is a message from his sister, with a picture of his mother holding Stella. Chanyeol gets excited and shows it to everyone around him. Most of the messages are from friends congratulating him and sending pictures with Stella. Jongin’s house must be crowded. Chanyeol notices the beagles’ chat has unread messages.

jongdae @ beagle >D yeollie my friend, you have to check celebrity news

jongdae @ beagle >D I asked Baekhyun to tag u in some because you can sue them

jongdae @ beagle >D if you want it, of course

baekhyun @ beagle >D I tagged him and sent it to ksoo too!

baekhyun @ beagle >D people are motherfucking crazy on the internet

baekhyun @ beagle >D my favorite is this forum discussing Stella’s REAL paternity

jongdae @ beagle >D baekhyun, focus, please

jongdae @ beagle >D like, Chanyeol take a look on this

jongdae @ beagle >D and show it to your manager too

Chanyeol clicks on his mentions, a bit scared. Stella was born yesterday – how bad could it be already? When the account loads, he sees a picture of him kissing Kyungsoo through the hospital room’s door. Someone must have been outside of the window, with a really good camera.

paparazzitalk BREAKING NEWS!! This one is so good I can’t even believe it! So, you guys know about that addicting song on the radio, the one about the ass (don’t pretend you don’t like it)? I’m pretty sure most people heard about the new artist from Shinee, Chanyeol. In a crazy turn of events, our informants revealed to us he is the FATHER of DO KYUNGSOO’s child! I’m not kidding! As said in one of the last posts (I’ve been drinking wine, don’t remember which one) apparently Kyungsoo had a premature birthing, but he and the kid are fine. But I guess WE AREN’T after this revelation! What do you think about it? #paparazzitalk

aryaisanomega congratulations to the couple!!! They r cute :)

blessed___bygod @godsaysalphaandomega @alphaomegafamily @only_a_o_ships

betacelebs @omgascelebs @omgagecelebs @omega___celebs @omgagelebs1

omegazord <3 <3 <3 <3

theucfanatic booooooooyyyyy that’s an unexpected couple
Chanyeol drags Minho from his seventh slice of pizza and shows him the many accounts publishing pictures of Chanyeol and Kyungsoo in the hospital. He sighs, but shrugs after, like he can’t help it but relax.

“You guys should be more careful next time, hospitals are always surrounded by photographers,” he says, half speaking, half chewing. “This is actually okay for you. Gives you some publicity. I mean, you’re a rapper, almost thirty. No problem with having a family. But for Kyungsoo…”

“What?” Chanyeol asks quickly.

“Well, he was publicly dating someone months ago, right? And now he’s having a baby with you,” Minho makes a face. “You know people are more judgmental with omegas, especially their private life… But I guess you couldn’t help it. Just… you should make a public statement if this is bothering you.”

“Humm… what do I write, then?”

“I don’t know,” Minho laughs. “I’m just your manager and you’re not an idol, Chanyeol. Your personal life is up to you. But… if I had to write it, I would make it clear they’re crossing a line when they expose an omega in a post-birthing moment.”

Chanyeol checks Baekhyun’s recent tag. Different from the earlier pictures, all from the morning, this one is from the concert before Stella’s birth. Someone standing next to stage took it, and Chanyeol is squatting, singing something with the mike next to his face, looking to the opposite side. The photo is focused in his pants and he’s obviously spotting a huge erection; something that happens quite often when he’s performing because he’s very excited and his disgusting hormones don’t know the difference.

knotlovers the knot of the day today is from Chanyeol (♥ω♥*), the rapper, because he became a daddy yesterday – so we know this knot works (⌒_⌒°) #knotlovers

alpha_is_my_kink ASUlPSDFGHJKTY LOOK OF THE SIZE OF THIS THING

the_knot_watcher I’m buying his album… for… scientific… reasons…

paopao boy @alphacelebs look at his junk……

sssssssssept (ʃ Ș ș ő) ᴶ ᵃ ᵇ
Chanyeol hears Minho laughing and when he looks at his friend, Minho laughs even more.

“You’re like… very red,” Minho covers his mouth to avoid some spitting. “Don’t worry, they did the same thing with me. It’s just natural, get used to it.”

“Hey,” Taemin complains, holding his piece of pizza in his oddly small hands. “Stop bonding over your big dicks, you two. I can’t relate.”

“Do you know when his knot popped I told everyone so we would pretend his dick was just growing in a weird shape?” Minho laughs loud.

“Well, you’re a terrible best friend,” Taemin says, but he’s smiling fondly. “But I love you.”

Chanyeol smiles too. He will wait until he is sure of what he has to do about the hospital pictures. It’s so good to come home and see his daughter sleeping, peacefully in her crib, with a cute wooly hat and the most adorable clothes in the world. He wants to die. He kisses her hands, and she moves a little in her sleep.

“If you keep moving around her, she will be too agitated,” Sehun informs. He just pops in from a different room. “She knows it’s you.”

“Ah, what are you doing here?” Chanyeol asks truly curious. It’s three in the morning.

“Jonginnie asked me to help Junmyeon,” Sehun says simply. “Moon cult stuff. I’m kind of enjoying.”

“The moon cult?”


“Please tell me you’re not into ‘babies’ because of us. I mean, you’re still young, Sehun. Kyungsoo and Minseok got pregnant by accident. You have time yet. Enjoy your late twenties instead.”

Sehun makes a face. He’s looking older lately and Chanyeol thinks it’s because he’s traveling a lot. Sehun learns more by experience, he’s more of a sensorial person. Right now, Chanyeol can barely see the freshman, young adult he used to be. Because they dated so many years ago, it was hard to talk about emotional things, and they got distant year after year – no doubt, they’re friends, but Chanyeol can’t really know what’s going on in Sehun’s mind lately.

“Hey, since you’re here,” Chanyeol looks around for a chair, finds one and puts it next to Sehun’s. “I feel like we have to talk.”

“Listen I already cleaned your baby’s ass once,” Sehun says. “I’m not going—”

“Almost eight,” Sehun grins.

“I’m sorry I broke up with a lame excuse. I was really dumb and… I was lost. You deserved better. I mean, you got someone better. Tao is like… another level.”

“Yeah, he is,” Sehun whispers fondly. “But thank you, Chanyeol. That’s actually very nice to hear.”

“Good,” Chanyeol nods. “Now tell me about the babies’ thing.”

“Ah… Since I’ve moved… I mean, I’m still moving, but… since I agreed… Tao wants a family and seeing everyone moving forward… I think I should give it a thought. That’s all. No plans. But… since we’re going to adopt and it’s a long process…”

It’s hard for Sehun to elaborate his arguments, so most of the time he just keeps silent. Chanyeol thinks this is probably the reason that he and Kyungsoo clicked so well (and so quickly). Sometimes he looks away, and that means he’s processing words, meanings. They’re interrupted when Junmyeon comes in the room.

“Ah, Sehun,” he bows. “Sorry for making you wait. We can go now. Oh… Chanyeol. You’re here.”

Chanyeol lazily waves – he’s sleepy.

“Is Kyungsoo awake?”

“Yes,” Junmyeon says, serious. “He’s… talking a lot. It’s…”

He shakes his head as if he’s shoving the rest away from his mind.

“Let’s go,” Sehun stand up. “I’m kind of hungry. Can we grab some fries on the way?”

“Of course,” Junmyeon says and he smiles tentatively. Chanyeol takes a shower before going in the room. He, of course, forgets his clothes and the towel, so he checks the hall before running naked to Kyungsoo’s room. Jongin is sleeping and Taemin is at Minho’s, so he must be safe. Kyungsoo stares at him.

“Sorry,” Chanyeol smiles. “Can I use one of your shorts?”

“Come here,” Kyungsoo pats the space next to him in the bed. Chanyeol is a bit wet, but he sits there, anyway. Kyungsoo shoves his wet hair away from his face and turns to him completely – the blanket covers half of his body.

“Hey,” Chanyeol whispers because the silence is making him uncomfortable. Kyungsoo kisses him lightly on the lips. Chanyeol kisses him back; he’s missed Kyungsoo so much. He smiles when he feels Kyungsoo’s small hand sliding down his chest, he loves his—

“Whoa,” Chanyeol jerks back, grabbing Kyungsoo’s hand. “What are you doing, fussing with… things downstairs?”

“Making out,” Kyungsoo says like it’s very simple.

“You just left the hospital,” Chanyeol whispers, shocked. “Are we going to make another baby already? She’s like two days old, Kyungsoo, she doesn’t need a sibling!”
Chanyeol watches, even more scandalized, the way Kyungsoo’s head fall in the pillow. He’s so brutally fast asleep that Chanyeol is still holding his hand.

“Ah, so now you’re going to take a nap?” Chanyeol drops his mate’s hand, offended. “That’s it? Harassing me than sleeping? You’re lucky you’re cute, but I’m gonna steal your shorts.”

Kyungsoo remains sleeping, because fuck Chanyeol, apparently. Chanyeol also has to sleep in the corner of the bed, constricted against the wall. He’s aware he can’t cuddle his mate in his post-surgery state, so he puts a distance between their bodies. A few hours later, he hears the scream. Stella is crying. Chanyeol jumps off the bed and goes to her crib. He carries her around, rocking her slightly in his arms.

“Ah, are you hungry?” he whispers. He watches at least ten YouTube tutorials about *How To Feed Your Baby (0-3 weeks)* and waits until the milk is warm. He tests the temperature on his skin and tastes too, because he is curious.

“Yuck,” he spits. “Do you really like this stuff?”

Stella makes a weird sound, so he decides not to offend her food anymore. He sits with her in one arm and feeds her the baby bottle. Stella sucks impatiently, her tiny fists moving while she drinks. Chanyeol starts to hum a song, feeling completely at peace. She almost sleeps after finishing the bottle, but Chanyeol holds her for a while, waiting for her to burp, and admiring the way her chest moves.

“I love you,” he whispers, moving the tip of her nose with his index finger.

After two weeks of intense work, interviews, concerts, and waking up at ungodly hours to feed Stella or just calm her down – which sometimes is easy, and other times requires Chanyeol to walk around rocking her, singing, showing her toys or just crying with her because he’s fucking tired. To make things absolutely worse, he barely sees Kyungsoo, since his mate is a crazy workaholic and spends only a week resting; now Chanyeol can only be next to his mate when he’s sleeping or, when Kyungsoo work until late hours, matching Stella’s regular middle-of-the-night crying. He gets a kiss or a hug before Kyungsoo or him pass out on the bed. Because of that, the things they’re supposed to do are being delayed, and they’re only surviving because Stella has many uncles and aunts ready to spend some time taking care of her.

He wakes up to her screaming again. He looks to the side and Kyungsoo’s side of the bed is empty. He leaves the bed slowly and walks to the door. In his mind, he counts the steps until her crib – just a few…

Kyungsoo comes in, as always, in his white work clothes, with some boxes in his hands. Chanyeol watches, like a dream, the way he goes to the kitchen, dropping the boxes, then passing by Stella’s crib, walking straight to the bathroom. Stella keeps crying.

Chanyeol blinks. He must be very sleepy.

He picks Stella up and holds her, but she’s crying hard today.
“Come on, baby, are you hungry again?” he says, maneuvering her and the baby bottle warmer, each one with one arm. “No need to cry, I’m here already.”

He’s feeding her when Kyungsoo leaves the bathroom, wet, in his pajamas.

“She was crying,” he says and his monotonous tone hits Chanyeol like a brick.

“I’ve noticed,” he answers dryly, and Kyungsoo stares at him. Chanyeol lays Stella in her crib when she’s satisfied, and cleans the bottle. He’s feeling so tired he doesn’t even want to go to bed, he just sits on the nearest couch and stays there. He only realizes that Kyungsoo is still in the room when he approaches Chanyeol – or better when he sits on Chanyeol’s lap.

“Oh, Chanyeol,” Taemin waves. He’s in the tiger onesie, and his cheeks are rosy, looking like a kid. “I made pancakes and Kyungsoo left all the chocolate and blueberry sauce he made. Want some?”

“Yes, thank you,” Chanyeol nods. “Sorry for interrupting the happy breakfast vibes, but I have to announce: I talked with the boys and we plan on taking all the things and Stella to my house on Monday—”

“No,” they say in unison, pouting.

“And I need to know if you guys can take care of Stella this weekend because if you can’t I’ll leave her with the boys. I’m going to a festival in a city near here, but…”

“Oh, I’m on my break,” Taemin smiles. “I can take care of her.”

“I’ll leave only for few hours on Saturday,” Jongin agrees. “Don’t worry.”

“Really? No guns, no crazy or illegal shit,” Chanyeol points to them. “No Jongin cooking near her too.”

“Ah, why would I give a gun to someone who doesn’t know how to shoot,” Taemin laughs. “I’ll wait until she’s five.”

“I don’t cook anymore after the last fire,” Jongin cuts his pancakes, angry. “But it wasn’t completely my fault.”

“Also, Kyungsoo will be around, right? He will keep us in line,” Taemin says, unaware of Jongin’s reaction – looking down at the plate and chewing slowly. Chanyeol inspects him, curious.

“Hey,” he kicks Jongin’s leg softly. “Can we talk in the garden for a minute?”

“Okay…” Jongin nods, but he doesn’t look at Chanyeol. Taemin just keeps eating, distracted by the
“So, what do you want?”

“I need you to be honest with me,” Chanyeol says, serious, crossing his arms. “Have you ever seen Kyungsoo taking care of Stella? Holding her or feeding her?”

“You… should talk to Minseok,” he says, and he is looking to his feet.

“Answer my question.”

“No,” Jongin sighs, and he lifts his gaze to Chanyeol. “He asks about her… He worries about her… and he checks her things, but no… he never…”

“Not even in the hospital?”

Jongin shakes his head negatively. Chanyeol closes his eyes and throws his head back. After taking long breaths, he opens his eyes again.

“Why did you hide this from me?”

“She’s your daughter,” he starts, but he bites his lips again. Maybe it’s the bear onesie, but he looks… less threatening. “Chanyeol… after a person has a baby… or loses a baby, it doesn’t matter, we—the person feels horrible. The hormones… they go crazy. The body is not ready to not be pregnant anymore… We—well, it can cause unexpected crying, sadness, and… sometimes… a rejection of the baby. But it isn’t forever, you know… it’s the baby blues.”

Chanyeol looks back at him.

“I have a feeling you don’t think it’s just that,” Chanyeol says resolutely. “Otherwise, I guess someone would have told me, no? If it’s just hormonal.”

“You know what I think, Chanyeol,” Jongin says, exasperated. “But I wouldn’t tell you because you wouldn’t understand.”

“Why?” Chanyeol sighs, angry, letting his arms fall. “Why does everyone treat me like I’m the dumbest person on earth?”

“You’re not, but you are just like him. Why you don’t ask him these things instead of asking me?” he laughs dryly, shaking his head. “Honestly, what do you want me to tell you? Kyungsoo had a baby he didn’t want to have, he went through a surgery he wasn’t expecting, he’s… he’s just a person. And I know everyone loves this idealization of parental love, but just because you had a baby it doesn’t make you an instant *Mary Poppins.*”

Chanyeol gulps, closing his eyes again. Jongin pats him, until they’re looking into each other eyes.

“Are you really surprised this is happening?” Jongin asks, serious. His eyes are sad, and Chanyeol realizes he is talking about many things right now. “I’m going to eat my pancakes before they get cold. Good luck on your concert.”

Chanyeol thinks about it.

He thinks about it during the travels, thinks about it when he’s in rehearsals, thinks about it when he’s ready to go on stage. He forgets when he’s performing, but when he drops the mike, he’s thinking about Kyungsoo again. He sits in the designated room and asks to not be interrupted or
bothered – even if what he’s doing is just sitting down and worrying.

The door opens. “Sorry,” the staff says. “There’s a reporter here and he insists on talking to you.”

“Ah, I’m not in the mood—” Chanyeol says, but then Jongdae’s voice echoes you’re not in the mood for your best friend you son of a coyote. “Okay, he can come in.”

“Hello,” Jongdae pops in the room, laughing. He’s using formal clothes and he has a bag with him. “How’s my favorite rapper?”

“Better now,” Chanyeol stands up to give him a tight hug. “I’m missing you a lot. I’m sorry I’m not seeing you guys often…”

“That’s okay, no one expects you to be around after the baby came,” Jongdae grabs his shoulder and shakes it. “We know you’re busy. That baby is a big baby.”

“She looks very small to me,” Chanyeol laughs, and he feels immediately better. “Ah, what are you doing here?”

“Working,” Jongdae rolls his eyes. “The president is using bands to rise her popularity again. She’s here, did you know that? She may have watched your performance!”

“Ah, I hope she likes my music,” Chanyeol sighs, and his chest is still heavy with bad feelings. “I need to talk, do you have time?”

“I do,” Jongdae said, smiling softly. “Actually, this is my last reporting work. I asked to be moved to writing again.”

“What?” Chanyeol moves his arms to give emphasis. “You can’t be serious! You hated to be sitting in a chair all day long!”

“Yes, but I’ll work fewer hours,” Jongdae shrugs. “Someone has to take care of three babies and I can’t let Baekhyun or Minseok do that.”

Chanyeol whistles at that, impressed and, sits again.

“It’s a great step, man. How are you feeling?”

“Weird,” Jongdae sits next to him. “I… was terrified. Since I was presented, the only thing I was certain about was the “not having kids” rant. But now… I have to assume these kids. They’re mine too, I would be an asshole if I… left them. And… sometimes I think of how much work fate had to create this crazy situation. I dated Minseok many years ago and suddenly we cross paths again… Baekhyun is an intergender, but the chances of him impregnating someone were… so small. It was really a miracle.”

Chanyeol lays his head on Jongdae’s shoulder. Jongdae passes an arm around him, squeezing Chanyeol’s shoulder.

“Ah… that’s a nice way to think.”

“And how are your baby and your mate?” Jongdae asks softly, nuzzling Chanyeol’s hair with his nose.

Chanyeol lets out a heavy sigh.

“Not… great.”
“Why? Is this what you want to talk about?”

“Yeah,” Chanyeol says with a shaky voice. “Things are… difficult later. Between Kyungsoo and me.”

“Were things easy before? Because if it was, I wasn’t informed.”

Chanyeol actually laughs briefly. Ah, he thinks, I love my friends.

“No, it was never easy, but it was supposed to get better.”

“No relationship gets better after a baby, Chanyeol. It’s a living hell. What’s the problem? Stella doesn’t let you two sleep or mate?”

“Stella is not the problem…” Chanyeol gulps – he knows it’s Jongdae, his old friend, that has seen him naked and drunk, but… it really feels intimate to share his relationship problems now he’s really mated. “I mean, Stella does interrupt my sleep every night, and… I guess… well, lately I don’t want to mate? I guess Kyungsoo does, but if he wants to I… don’t.”

“What do you mean?” Jongdae laughs, his body shaking, “You can’t get it up, pal?”

“Shut up,” Chanyeol lets go of his embrace and Jongdae laughs even harder. “Listen, I’m not just a knot! I have feelings! I don’t have to mate all the time just because I’m an alpha.”

“I’m pretty sure every alpha already went limp once in their lives, don’t worry.”

“Stop being an ass,” Chanyeol kicks him. “That’s not what I’m talking about, okay?

“Okay, okay,” Jongdae tries to make a serious expression. “Go on.”

“I think Kyungsoo doesn’t want her…” Chanyeol says fast to avoid losing his courage. “And it hurts me. It hurts me that he’s rejecting her. I don’t know if I can’t sit down and watch him ignore Stella.”

Jongdae presses his lips together, clearly thinking; he sits in silence for a while.

“You should talk to him,” Jongdae finally says. “I panicked a lot before I understood what having a child really means. Kyungsoo hired you, Chanyeol. He hired you because he didn’t want to date… if he wasn’t ready to date, then can you imagine how hard it must be for him to actually raise a person? But he chose to have the baby and he chose to be with you.”

Chanyeol wants to cry – he always expects things to get easier, but life just gets more and more complicated.

“Hey,” Jongdae hugs him and rocks their bodies slowly. “You have to be strong now. Your mate needs you as much as your baby. Never forget that. He’s not doing that on purpose, but you’ll only find why if you talk to him.”

“I know,” Chanyeol confesses, but he’s terrified. “But making Kyungsoo open up is a herculean effort.”

“Probably. But you’re mates now, and no one will make him talk better than you.”
Chanyeol sleeps on the bus so he would have the energy to do everything he had to do. Baekhyun helps him with bringing the baby stuff and Chanyeol can’t stop kissing Stella on the way home.

“Daddy can’t believe he survived three days away from you,” he kisses her on the cheeks again, because she looks so cute in her baby chair. “I missed you so much.”

“Stop drooling all over the kid,” Jongin turns to glare at him. “You have such a big mouth, she must be scared you’re trying to eat her!”

Baekhyun laughs so much that the car does a little zigzag.

“Can you let me live?” Chanyeol pouts. “You mate has a big mouth too.”

“Yes, he does and I know you two have kissed. I’m glad I wasn’t there to watch that horrible scene. You two must have traumatized the whole of Japan!” Jongin complains, but he can’t turn any more because he’s holding the toys. Baekhyun stops the car and helps to carry Stella.

“She loves me,” he says. “She threw up in my face twice. That’s real love.”

Stella doesn’t agree or disagree, just look around with her big eyes. Wolf gets desperate when he sees Chanyeol, jumping on him frenetically.

“You missed me, boy?” Chanyeol picks him up and pats him, excited. “There’s someone here I want you to meet.”

Baekhyun gets closer to them and Wolf starts sniffing Stella, and she waves her legs in Baekhyun’s arms. Wolf can’t really smell anything, so he licks her. Stella makes scared faces, but she doesn’t cry.

“See? That’s Stella. You met her in Kyungsoo’s belly, remember?” Chanyeol says, trying to contain him. He knows Wolf wouldn’t hurt a baby, but he is too agitated. He keeps licking her cheeks. Jongin records the scene because the three of them are dying of cuteness.

“Come on, it’s over. We need to get everything ready so we can leave,” Baekhyun says, walking away with Stella. “You said you wanted to be alone with Kyungsoo, right?”

“Yes,” he nods, letting Wolf go. “I need the three of us, and no one else, just for tonight.”

It was hard to think about what he needed to say, and Chanyeol is pretty sure a lot of things can go wrong. He asked Minho (actually, he demanded) for free days, just in case the worst case scenario became reality. He sent Kyungsoo a message informing him they’re back home. He asked the boys to stay at Minseok’s home and take Wolf with them, so they could have privacy. He’s already sweating.

When he’s alone, he feeds Stella and puts her in her room. It’s very colorful and she seems to be confused for a while. Waiting for Kyungsoo to get home seems like an eternity. Chanyeol walks around, checks his Instagram, watches tv… when he hears the door opening, he stiffens on the couch. Kyungsoo is in his casual clothes, with the leftover boxes in his hands.

“I brought you cake,” he says, walking in. “And pizza for the boys too.”
Chanyeol opens his mouth and then closes it.

“Where are they?” Kyungsoo frowns.

“Minseok’s,” Chanyeol says, finally. “We… need to talk.”

Kyungsoo blinks, surprised for a fraction of a second, then he lowers his eyes and walks to the kitchen. Chanyeol jumps off the couch and follows him. Kyungsoo put the boxes on the sink and takes off his glasses, doing the same thing with them. Chanyeol waits, but his mate doesn’t turn back to face him.

“So, what it is?” Kyungsoo asks, slowly, almost whispering. He’s in a defensive posture; he looks a lot thinner, now Chanyeol has time to inspect him.

“It’s… about Stella and… us…” Chanyeol breathes. Moon, this is so hard. How can he put into words what he wants to say? “We don’t have time to discuss important things lately, and I think we should try… I think you should tell me if something is bothering you. If… you… don’t want anything I’m—if you—”

“Me or you?” Kyungsoo interrupts him.

“What?”

“I’m asking you if you are asking what I don’t want… or if you’re just trying to find a way to tell me what you don’t want,” his voice is iron again. “I don’t like when you string me along.”

“I don’t understand,” Chanyeol says, exasperated. “I’m asking what I’m asking. Are you unsatisfied with anything? Are you mad at me? Am I pushing you onto—?”

“What don’t you just say what you want to say?” Kyungsoo finally turns to him. Chanyeol almost forgot how Kyungsoo made him feel small. “Just… tell me you want to break the bond. I won’t die.”

“What?!” Chanyeol widens his eyes so much he thinks they may fall off his face. “What the hell?”

“If you want to do this, then just say it,” Kyungsoo deadpans.

“What? Are you crazy? I’d rather die,” he screams, passing his fingers through his hair. “That’s not what I wanted to talk about.”

“Then what it is?” Kyungsoo raises his voice too. They’re crossing a line, but Chanyeol can’t help – the mere thought of breaking a bond leaves him anxious.

“What is? You don’t fucking touch your daughter and you ask me that?” Chanyeol gives a step forward, pointing. “I want to fucking know if you’re not miserable because you have a family! I want to know if I’m not pushing you to be something you don’t want!”

“What if the answer is yes,” Kyungsoo says, also getting closer. “Then what are you going to do? Are you going to leave, like you always do?”

Chanyeol stiffens. He feels like he’s been slapped in the face. His eyes are teary, but his voice doesn’t falter.

“Don’t you dare to say that,” Chanyeol says, pointing a finger. “Because, yes. Then I should go and take her with me because I’m the only father she knows.”

Chanyeol expects Kyungsoo to slap him and say hurtful things; he’s used to his mate’s harsh words.
But Kyungsoo steps back, serious, and Chanyeol gasps when one single tear escapes from his eye. Kyungsoo puts his hands in his belly, a bit over his crotch, and drops to the ground. Then, it comes.

The scream.

It’s not a regular one and it’s the loudest thing Chanyeol has ever heard. It’s guttural, it sounds like something he kept inside for a long, long time.

Chanyeol thinks, absently, that it was good to close Stella’s room door. Kyungsoo is still on the ground, shaking, and he was never that small. Chanyeol kneels down to touch his mate carefully and his hands are shaking when he holds Kyungsoo’s body. Kyungsoo doesn’t resist and lets Chanyeol pick him up like a child.

“Kyungsoo,” Chanyeol says, pressing his face on his mate’s shoulder. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”

Kyungsoo doesn’t answer. He’s crying, a low cry like he has no strength left to cry harder. Chanyeol walks into their room slowly and puts Kyungsoo on the bed in the gentlest way. Kyungsoo is limp, eyes distant, and his hands are in the same place like he’s guarding something. Chanyeol moves them away and pushes his shirt up, then his pants down.

There’s a cut. A big cut, from one side to the other. The c-section.

It hits him hard, to realize he hasn’t seen it yet. It’s cicatrized, and it looks clean; Chanyeol passes a finger over it, and Kyungsoo keeps crying and shaking. Chanyeol wipes his own eyes, and helps Kyungsoo to take off his clothes. Then, Chanyeol takes off his own. It’s a bad sign, he thinks, that they haven’t seen each other naked. If they’re going to talk, there must be nothing between them.

He lays in bed and holds Kyungsoo, moving him until he’s on Chanyeol’s lap. Then Chanyeol holds him even closer, his lips touching his mate’s forehead.

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol whispers. “I shouldn’t have said that.”

Kyungsoo just keeps shaking. Chanyeol rocks him like he does with Stella, in a slow rhythm, humming a song – he knows now that Kyungsoo needs it. Kyungsoo was strong for too long and he finally broke; no one can deal with the pain that way – forever silent and by himself.

Chanyeol caresses the scar slowly. “Does it hurt?”

Kyungsoo sniffs and takes long breaths. “No. It itches, sometimes.”

Chanyeol smiles, rubbing his cheek all over Kyungsoo’s wet face.

“When they… did this, did it hurt?”

“No,” Kyungsoo says resolutely. He’s speaking clearly now. “But… I felt… like… I was open. I was open, but… when they took her out of me, I… felt like… some other things came out too. Is… it weird?”

“No, not at all. What things?”

“Feelings… feelings I kept,” Kyungsoo moved inside Chanyeol’s embrace, to look at him better. “Memories… I don’t know. Maybe it was because she was really big… but… I felt… a lot lighter. In many ways.”

“Ah, you do feel lighter,” Chanyeol mocks. “Where’s my favorite fat thighs? I’ll have to feed you
like Stella.”

Kyungsoo pinched his arm. Chanyeol makes a face.

“Are you going to leave me?” Kyungsoo asks, in a tiny voice.

“Because you’re skinny?”

Kyungsoo glares. Chanyeol sighs.

“I’m going to make another c-section on you, but in your head,” Chanyeol pokes Kyungsoo’s forehead repeatedly. “Then I’ll put Chanyeol loves you inside of it. So maybe you’ll understand, you dumbass.”

Kyungsoo grabs his hand; they’re just lying down, now, but Chanyeol keep an arm around his mate, so he can’t escape.

“You said yourself,” Kyungsoo complains.

“I was angry, Kyungsoo. I love you, and I wouldn’t survive a day trying to break a bond. They would bury me and I would be hugging the penguin Kyungsoo pillow inside of my coffin.”

“Ah, dramatic,” Kyungsoo rolls his eyes. “You said that but…”

“But what?”

“But you rejected me,” he says. “And now you have a lot of fans… maybe you would like to be single so—”

“If you start this leaving nonsense again, I’ll swear for the Moon,” Chanyeol flicks Kyungsoo’s nose to make him quiet. “I won’t go anywhere. I’ll be right behind you, ogling you in the tight pants Jongin put on you in a suggestive way. Are you listening to me?”

Kyungsoo nods. But Chanyeol isn’t satisfied. Something in Kyungsoo’s words bothered him so much he wanted to hurt his mate back. And it’s probably… the truth. After all, Kyungsoo faced so many things by himself, and Chanyeol was always distant. Chanyeol promised to help carry the weight crushing Kyungsoo, but he only made it worse. Jongdae told him Kyungsoo needed Chanyeol as much as Stella, and it was the truth.

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol says. “I’m a terrible mate. I should be listening to you, not accusing you.”

“I’m sorry I don’t speak,” Kyungsoo says. “I’m… not good with words.”

“I’m listening now, babe,” Chanyeol says softly, caressing Kyungsoo’s cheek. It’s almost dry. “You can say anything. Even bad things about me. I’ll pretend I’m not offended.”

“Even about your stinking feet?”

“That is a lie and you know that. I bought a thousand socks to avoid the bad smell.”

Kyungsoo laughs, his big, wide laugh, which crinkles his eyes and makes him look impossibly younger. His smiles falters after a while, and he fidgets with Chanyeol’s fingers, pulling one by one.

“You’re not pressuring me to do anything,” he says. “I guarantee.”

“Then…” Chanyeol thinks about the right words. “Then why don’t you hold her?”
“I’m not a monster, Chanyeol. If she needed me to do anything, I would,” he spits. “But she doesn’t. There’s always someone around to take care of her better… better than I would. That day… I didn’t pick her up because I knew that you or Jongin would do. If I was alone with her, then… of course, I would try to stop the crying.”

Chanyeol considers it.

“So… you don’t take care of her because you think you’re bad at it?”

Kyungsoo throws his head back and stares at the ceiling for a while. He closes his eyes, takes a long breath, then faces Chanyeol again.

“It’s not just… not being good at it,” he says slowly. “It… hurts me… to think I should. I know it’s not a nice thing to say. But the fact is… I’ve been terrorized into believing this would be my only future. No matter how far I could go, I would end up…”

He’s crying again. This time, it doesn’t seem that he’s fighting against it.

“…I know she’s not… she’s not the one responsible for that. I… wish I could… be a better parent for her. And at the same time, I feel powerless. Because, if I’m a good parent, if being a mate and having a kid it’s what I’m going to do, what did I sacrifice so much to be anything else?”

Chanyeol closes his eyes. It’s hard, but he has to understand. That’s the reason he didn’t want to date. That’s why he takes suppressants since the day he knew he was an omega. This is Kyungsoo’s entire life crashing down. Chanyeol is chasing this truth since he met Kyungsoo, or maybe even before it.

“…When I presented… they changed me from my classes to an omega-only one. When I was accepted into college, my parents barely congratulated me. My brother got a car and never had to pay a bill. I had to work two jobs to get my degree,” Kyungsoo says slowly, and he doesn’t sound angry. He’s just reminiscing. “I had to win a contest to open my restaurant. The people who harassed me at the choir, who sat by my side at the church, saying disgusting things about me. Everyone saying I was immoral for disobeying my parents, for dating an omega… None of my efforts were recognized…”

“… I know I shouldn’t care, but… their hate makes my life a hell, if I give a shit or if I don’t. It makes me angry… every time I think of how much… not just me, you know. All of my omega friends too…”

Kyungsoo is quiet again and Chanyeol’s mind wanders.

“The astrology book was right,” he whispers. “I left you alone. I was just cheering up people and making them laugh while you were working hard.”

“What?” Kyungsoo frowns.

“Nothing,” Chanyeol turns to him and smiles. “Keep talking.”

“Do you think I’m a bad person?” Kyungsoo asks, serious.

“No, not at all,” Chanyeol says sincerely. “You have the right to be angry. You… have the right to be uncomfortable with being a parent too. I was wrong about… demanding anything. You’re my mate, you are hurt and I should’ve been taking care of you too.”

Kyungsoo touches Chanyeol’s face gently, his finger drawing figures on the skin.
“I love you,” he says with such a passion that Chanyeol feels his chest burning. “You… make me feel… comfortable. Like nothing else did. I love every part of you.”

Chanyeol can’t just hear it, so he kisses Kyungsoo a bit exaggeratedly. He kisses back, then breaks the kiss, because they’re laughing.

“Ah, even my stinking feet?”

“Yes.”

“Even my weird ears?”

“Yes, but I hope Stella doesn’t have it too.”

“Fair enough. Me too, to be honest. And even my big dick?”

“Yes… sometimes… when I’m not sore.”

“People on the internet thinks it’s a pretty great dick.”

“That’s because they don’t have it stuck in their asses for days. I guarantee you they would change their minds.”

Chanyeol pinches Kyungsoo, but he’s already laughing.

“You tiny evil cute thing,” Chanyeol gives him a peck on the lips. “Can’t you be romantic? I’m the only mate you will have until you die.”

Kyungsoo just laughs. Chanyeol hopes Stella inherits his smile. They stay in silence for a while.

“So are we okay?” Chanyeol asks. “You don’t think I’m going to leave?”

“I guess not.”

“You don’t think I’m banging my friends or my fans either?”

“I… guess not,” Kyungsoo licks his lips. “Not your fans… not your friends. Maybe Jongdae.”

“Ah, that’s because he kissed me in school, remember? Dressed like the girl I liked and she was watching. It was my first kiss,” Chanyeol groans. “I hate him. How do you think I could have something with that troll?”

Kyungsoo laughs again, and he looks so relaxed. Chanyeol kisses his cheek.

“I was joking,” Kyungsoo says, and his eyes gets distant for a while. “I don’t think you’re mating anyone else. But do you—”

“Do… I…?”

“If I’m… not… a great parent,” Kyungsoo holds his hand and squeezes it. “Are you going to…?”

“You don’t have to be a great parent,” Chanyeol squeezes his hand back. “You just have to love her. I’m not a great parent either. I’m surviving by following YouTube tutorials. But I’m trying. And I love her, Kyungsoo. I… She’s a poop machine, throws up a lot, cries in the middle of the night, but… I love her so much.”
Kyungsoo sighs deeply.

“I love her…” he says, closing his eyes. “I’m just not good—”

“Ah, shut up,” Chanyeol lets his hands go and leaves the bed. “Stay there.”

“Chanyeol…?”

Chanyeol opens the baby’s room slowly and watches Stella sleeping.

“So I’m the one waking you up now, huh,” Chanyeol says, picking her up. “What does it feels like when someone ruins your nap?”

Stella answers by crying very loud. Kyungsoo is sitting on the bed, confused when Chanyeol kneels in front of him and lifts her like it’s a remake of the Lion King.

“Take the baby, Kyungsoo,” He says solemnly. “Just hold her.”

Kyungsoo holds her tightly, both hands around her waist-belly-chest. She’s so small that even Kyungsoo’s tiny hands look big – or maybe just the normal size.

“That’s it?” he brings her close to his chest and Stella stops screaming. She opens her eyes and looks around. “That’s all?”

“Well,” Chanyeol says, actually very offended. “I guess it is? Because when I do this, she doesn’t stop crying. I have to feed her and play with her!”

“Do you feed this baby every time she cries, Chanyeol?” Kyungsoo seems judgmental. “Now I know why this kid is getting so big.”

“Hey, she eats everything! She’s hungry!”

“No, she eats everything because you’re feeding her and she doesn’t know her limits yet.”

“I’m not gonna let my baby starve, Kyungsoo!”

“She’s not going to starve. Just distract her.”

“No way!”

Kyungsoo shakes his head, in clear disapproval. He rests his back against a pillow, laying down. Stella stays on his chest and she gets sleepy very quickly after Kyungsoo starts to caress her back. Chanyeol would protest if he wasn’t feeling like his heart is about to explode. He sits on the ground and rests his chin on the mattress, watching them. He loves everything about it, and he can’t help but poke her fat cheek pressed against Kyungsoo.

“Ah… This is everything I wanted,” he whispers.

“Chanyeol, I’m sleepy,” Kyungsoo says. “Can we discuss things tomorrow?”

“I’m on my free days. Can you skip work?”

Kyungsoo pauses before speaking like he’s considering his mate’s words.

“Yes.”
“Good,” Chanyeol nods, reaching for Kyungsoo’s hand. “So… Can… we, huh, go on a date?”

“What?”

“A date, Kyungsoo. We never dated. Can we?”

“Yes,” he chuckles. “I guess everyone knows about us, anyway.”

“Amazing,” Chanyeol smiles, satisfied. “Do you want me to put her in the baby crib?”

“No,” Kyungsoo says, yawning. “I don’t move in my sleep. Let her sleep here.”

“I’ll fix your pillow, then,” Chanyeol helps Kyungsoo to move into a better position. Stella is profoundly asleep, quiet as an angel. “I’ll sleep in the boy’s room to not disturb you two. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

The view is pretty. Everything seems so far away from a high place like this. Chanyeol stretches and breathes in, lazily rubbing himself against the glass windows. Kyungsoo, a person who cares more about safety than Chanyeol, admires the sight from two steps back. He is beyond cute today, with his black clothes and one of Chanyeol’s blue flannels; he’s back to his regular thin edged glasses, and converse. While Kyungsoo walks around looking like a kid, their real kid sleeps safely at Minseok’s home, where they dropped Stella for the day. Chanyeol wished they could be together, but she’s too young to accompany them. In the future, Chanyeol hopes they can take her anywhere.

“How do you know about this building?” Chanyeol asks, yawning. He woke up early to watch Kyungsoo and Stella and, to his surprise, she was awake and quiet on his chest. He had to remove her carefully to feed and clean her, so Kyungsoo wouldn’t wake up too.

“My dad is an architect,” He says, touching the glass windows with only the tip of his index finger. “He helped projecting this place many years ago.”

“Oh, then it must be nice to be back,” Chanyeol looks down. He has no vertigo, but it’s kind of scary. “Must be crazy to work here every day… Does he work here?”

“No really. He retired… And he worked mostly at home,” Kyungsoo says. “He did a lot of research; because of that, every vacation I spent with my family was just visiting buildings.”

“Oh, never… like… a beach?”

“No.”

“Ah, that sucks. I’ll take you to the beach then.”

“Did your mother take you to the beach?” Kyungsoo smiles.

“Ah, no. She was always busy. But my sister and my aunts did,” Chanyeol smiled back. “We didn’t have much money, so I spent my holidays with the boys, usually. Baekhyun used to steal his
brother’s car and drive us somewhere. It was nice.”

“I can… picture that,” Kyungsoo chuckles. “You three must have been a nightmare.”

“Yeah, but now we are old and… fathers,” Chanyeol says and he steps closer to Kyungsoo. “Can you take a picture with me?”

“You never asked me that before. You just—”

“Because you cover your face or look to the other side,” Chanyeol complains. “I want you to look at the camera!”

“Okay, okay,” Kyungsoo lifts his hands in surrender. “Take the picture.”

“Oh, no, I have a better idea,” Chanyeol pick his phone and raises it high. “Let’s record a video.”

“What do I do? I never recorded a video like that.”

“Smile, babe!” Chanyeol moves the phone so he could record the sight before them. When he turns the phone to himself, he can see Kyungsoo waving and smiling cutely.

“Hello,” he says and Chanyeol wants to bite his entire face.

“Heeey,” Chanyeol manages to say. “We are having a happy day!”

Chanyeol watches the video and feels satisfied with it. He puts it on his Instagram; Kyungsoo guides him so they can leave.

“What do you want to do now?”

“Hmmm,” Chanyeol says, typing. “Let’s eat ice cream, hold hands and watch the sunset!”

“Ahh, I can’t eat those things. Let have a nice dinner somewhere…”

“What are you saying? If I allowed you when you were pregnant, you would have eaten trash!”

“Well, it was because of Stella.”

“Are you blaming your newborn daughter, Kyungsoo? She’s a pure being, she did nothing.”

Kyungsoo takes his hand and drags Chanyeol to the elevator. He’s chuckling. Chanyeol finally posts the video, after writing a few thing he wanted to say for a while ago. He squeezes Kyungsoo’s hand and bends to give him a peck on the lips.

“Okay,” Chanyeol says against his mate’s mouth. “Where do you want to go?”

“There’s a nice restaurant my friend owns I want to go. I read nice things about them on the ArtCulinaire,” he explains. “I don’t eat out often, I should— It’s problematic to not be aware of what the others chefs are doing lately.”

“Then let’s go.”

pcy_real me and my mate @dyodoro on a date (*≥∀≤*) isn’t he the cutest thing in the universe? (♡volent ◡) Unfortunately, our baby Stella ♡ isn’t here, but I guess some people were so eager to see
her that they decided to invade our privacy :( It wasn’t nice, guys, but I can’t hear bad things over the sound of my ♡beating heart♡ #daddies #lookathimpeople #ilovehim

taozi you two are so cute!!!

pcynews asdfghasfh kill me @pcy___ @loeynahc @pcyseconddaughter

ucevents Ksoo come back to us!!!!!! @theucfanatic

galaxy_fanfan Kyungsoo is looking good

babykai @kaisooisreal @kaisoo @kaiballs

onlyhotalphas that’s a DILF right there @knotlovers

pcy_real @galaxy_fanfan even here… you keep harassing him…?? where are u, you perv? fight me!!!

kaisooisreal @babykai that’s just 4 publicity, he’s a new artist, we never saw them together and now they have a baby? yeah, media play

loeynahc @pcynews @pcyseconddaughter he’s fighting with a guy on the comments XDDDD I forget he’s an alpha sometimes, he’s so dumb XDDD

babykai @kaisooisreal so fricking fake… ksoo looks like he’s dying inside

Kyungsoo puts the playlist on in the car, but Chanyeol spends half of the way trying to download the video Baekhyun sent him. When the video finally loads, he can see Minseok holding Stella, while Jongdae shows her their video on a tablet. Stella hears their voice and starts to move her arms and legs, excited, and her eyes are wide and moving from one side to another.

baekhyun sent a video

baekhyun ughxdsdhasdfposash look at this

baekhyun she thinks you’re around

baekhyun she’s so cute

baekhyun I’m gonna steal her!!!

chanyeol you will have three babies!!!

chanyeol stop being thirsty!!!

Chanyeol stops typing when he hears the song; Kyungsoo is listening to the song Chanyeol used to hear when he was suffering for love.

“I was just, I was just, I was just sitting here thinking…” he sings. Kyungsoo is driving, focused and
serious. Judging by the colors of the sky, they won’t be able to catch a nice view of the sunset. Chanyeol doesn’t care – he has the best sight right now. It’s all he wanted; to spend some time with Kyungsoo like this.

“Hey,” he runs his hand over Kyungsoo’s thigh. “I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“Ah… we have so many things to do,” Chanyeol says, gulping. “Moon, Kyungsoo. We have to decide if Stella is going to a daycare or what school is better, and… she needs to be vaccinated, and we have to buy something so she can bite when her tiny teeth start to grow… And… fuck, what zodiac sign she is?”

“Virgo,” Kyungsoo says, eyes on the road. “One step at a time, Chanyeol. First, pick up my phone and open the internet app.”

Chanyeol does as he’s told. There are many pictures of a house and the description.

“What it is?”

“I sold my old apartment,” Kyungsoo says calmly, still focused on driving. “I found this house near my restaurant. It has enough space for us and even for Wolf if you want to. There’s even a place for Stella to play.”

“What…?” Chanyeol blinks, staring at the screen. “But why?”

“We can’t live in your house forever… for a few months, okay. But soon it will be too small for… five adults and four babies,” Kyungsoo says. “I… was… waiting for the right moment to bring it up.”

“But…” Chanyeol whispers. It’s scary to think about living away from his friends. Kyungsoo is right, but Chanyeol still feels a pain in his chest.

“We don’t have to think about that now,” he says comforting. “Just… think about it.”

“Okay,” Chanyeol nods. “I will. Anything else you want to talk about?”

“Jongin wants us to do… I don’t know exactly what it is… a moon cult stuff to celebrate her birthing,” Kyungsoo licks his lips. “I was going to say no, but… I think she needs… she needs to have this party. I want her to know we— we are happy to have her. I want to celebrate.”

Chanyeol thinks about it. Chanyeol hates to admit, but his moon cult friends are always right about… about everything. Jongin’s words haunt Chanyeol, but mostly because he needs as much help as Kyungsoo does. They’re just too dysfunctional to reject anything that may fix them – if that’s possible.

“I’m happy you want that,” Chanyeol says. “Stella will be happy too, she loves people and music… But are you okay with… those… cult stuff?”


“Ah… I have no idea of what it is like in a… how do they call the place where Moon Children meet?”

“There’s no such thing. They usually meet on farms, auditoriums or next to a river, under the moon,
if they have to perform a ritual,” Kyungsoo is parking perfectly while talking, and Chanyeol appreciates that in silence. “I guess this one will be at Jongin’s house. I have been in a few events like this, he always invites me.”

Chanyeol thinks about that, in silence. They walk to the restaurant, Kitty Kandy, a big, colorful place; it’s vintage looking, American 50’s themed. There’s a long line of people waiting, and when Chanyeol turns to talk to Kyungsoo, he realizes they’ve been holding hands for a while.

“Why are you so red?” Kyungsoo frowns. “Are you okay?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol says, and his face is really burning. “We… we didn’t… make a reservation…”

“No problem,” Kyungsoo approaches one of the security guys, never letting Chanyeol’s hand go. Chanyeol takes long breaths. This is really happening. The security guy calls a girl, and she’s using an apron.

“Hi,” Kyungsoo does a little bow. “Sunny asked me to visit her restaurant, she told me I could come anytime…”

The girl is already white as a paper when she sees Kyungsoo, and after he speaks, she nods and runs like the devil is chasing her. She comes back two minutes later, breathless.

“Table for two, follow me,” she says, showing them the way. Chanyeol feels a bit bad about the people waiting to come in. The list in the hand of the security guy is very long. They get a cute table, next to a window, and the night is clear, the starry sky in plain sight. There’s a classic jukebox playing Blue Suede Shoes, and the place is crowded, forcing the waiters and waitress to equilibrate many plates while they go around on their rollers. When Chanyeol looks at the table again, Kyungsoo is giving him the menu.

“I already know what I’m going to order,” he says. “Choose what you want.”

“I’ll eat the same thing,” Chanyeol grabs his hand, resting on the table, and shakes his head. “Order for me.”

Kyungsoo says perfectly the names in English, and Chanyeol notices that Sunny named the plates after famous cats, as Garfield, Felix, and Hello Kitty. When the waitress leaves, he laughs, pulling Kyungsoo’s hand close enough to kiss his knuckles.

“Are we going to eat milkshakes and hamburgers? I thought you didn’t like fast food.”

“It isn’t fast food,” Kyungsoo says, and he pushes his hands away from Chanyeol’s grip. “We are in a restaurant. You’ll see the difference.”

“Isn’t she mad you voted for Yoona?”

“Why would she be? Contests don’t measure your worth, they’re just competitions,” Kyungsoo looks at the window, and he seems to be reminiscing. “She got recognition, and the people who cheered for her will come to her restaurant. She’s a really good cook, she doesn’t need the prize.”

For some reason, Chanyeol remembers the things Yifan asked him about success. Kyungsoo is right, her restaurant is crowded on a Thursday night; she has success. But what if she thought she had to win to be truly successful? And what if she doesn’t, and she was just having fun, being sure she’s good enough?

Chanyeol looks at Kyungsoo. He’s incredible, no doubt, but he’s afraid of not being taken seriously;
Chanyeol is afraid of being mistaken as a threatening person, someone people can’t be friends with, someone feared, not loved. But in the end, if they both relied on their own judgment, they probably wouldn’t care about anyone else.

*Oh,* Chanyeol thinks, *so I can’t fix him without fixing me.* Chanyeol won’t make Kyungsoo realize how great he is if he had so little faith in himself too. Kyungsoo and him, from now on, will never face things separately.

“What’s up? Were you in the #teamsunny and now you’re mad at me?” Kyungsoo laughs, lifting his hand to cup Chanyeol’s face. Chanyeol leans into his touch, rubbing his nose in Kyungsoo’s palm. “Ah, you’re being a dog again.”

“I didn’t watch because of the contestants,” Chanyeol locks Kyungsoo’s hand between his cheek and shoulder. “I only watched to see you.”

Kyungsoo smiles but looks down. He’s embarrassed.

“Oh… don’t do that face,” Chanyeol warns. “I’ll throw this table away and I’ll mate you right here!”

“Don’t say things like that,” Kyungsoo pinches his cheek and Chanyeol whines. “We’re in public.”

“Okay, sorry,” he is not sorry, especially when he sees how reddish the tip of Kyungsoo’s ears are. “So, in the future can I go on the show as your mate?”

“I don’t know,” Kyungsoo bites his lip. “I refused the proposal to be in the next season. Maybe… if there’s another after this one…”

“Why?” Chanyeol feels a bit nervous.

“Ah… it would be tiring. I wouldn’t have time to be with you and Stella,” he says, absently. Chanyeol grabs his hands to draw his attention.

“It wouldn’t be because you… because people know about you… and Stella, and me?” Chanyeol asks, worried. Kyungsoo shakes his head.

“No,” he says firmly. “I wasn’t thinking about that. I was… worried because now you’re busy too, and we can’t let… we can’t always let our friends take care of Stella. And… I wanted to be with you… more often.”

Chanyeol smiles sincerely, feeling like he is melting in his chair. Thanks to the Moon, the food is served; it’s very cute, all vintage looking, full of cats and rainbows. Chanyeol takes a picture for his Instagram, of course, tags Kyungsoo, *me and my mate having dinner :)*

“Good, that’s good,” he says, munching. His milkshake is caramel flavored and it has m&ms on the bottom. “It is a lot better than fast food, but I don’t know how to explain.”

“They have better ingredients, more time and better concepts,” Kyungsoo says, and he stops after every bite, tasting, and thinking. “And, of course, they pay the workers well. The name of this combo is *Curiosity Killed The Cat.*”

“Your pronunciation is so good,” Chanyeol coos. “Do you speak English?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods. “And Sunny too, she’s American. I used to talk to her to practice.”

“I feel like this is a real first date,” Chanyeol chuckles, even if he gets a little sad. “I’m finding out a
lot of new things about you.”

Kyungsoo smiles, and he drinks a sip of his milkshake; it’s dark, probably dark chocolate, then Chanyeol picks his straw, licks it clean and puts it on Kyungsoo’s milkshake.

“Hey, you thief,” Kyungsoo flicks his nose while he drinks. “That’s mine.”

“We’re mates, there’s no such thing as ‘mine’ or ‘yours’, there’s just ‘ours’ now,” Chanyeol says, licking his lips deliberately slow to prove his point.

“I don’t have teddy bear underwear,” Kyungsoo grins.

“You don’t get what’s inside the teddy bear underwear if you don’t like it,” Chanyeol points, moving the straw. “That’s the whole package, babe.”

Kyungsoo laughs loudly, throwing his head back, but when he stops, he’s serious again. “I wish we could spend more days like this…”

Chanyeol interlaces their fingers. “We will. We will spend so much time together we will end up hating each other a bit.”

“I already hate you a bit.”

“That’s the spirit.”

Chanyeol knew it was kind of obvious to wait for someone at the airport, at night, using a cap and glasses, in black, but what else he could do? He had to be there and he wasn’t in the mood for being photographed, even if he wasn’t doing anything secretly. Because Jongin and Taemin were the worst planners in the history of time (Chanyeol witnessed them looking for a box while Taemin was sitting on the box), Stella’s party took four months to be completely prepared. Jongin tried to excuse himself saying there was a reason for all this delay, and to Chanyeol’s horror, the party ended up being a day after Yifan’s arrival – so he had to admit there was certain… synchronicity. Yifan was traveling for so long that he missed Chanyeol’s birthday; of course, there was no Hogwarts party this year, since he was doing a concert in another city. It didn’t matter, much, because besides having a happy-birthday sang by his fans, he had a surprise party a few days later, with a nice cake Kyungsoo baked for him and Stella dressed in the cow onesie Uncle Nini gave her. Kyungsoo had to take her away from Chanyeol’s arms, otherwise, he wouldn’t sleep (or let her sleep).

But now Yifan is coming back, and Chanyeol misses the asshole, so he offers to pick him in the airport. Yifan didn’t have even the decency to warn them he was away. Chanyeol had to find out on his Instagram, where he was publishing some crazy pictures around the world.

It’s easy to spot Yifan coming, with his only black bag and his permanent angry expression.

“Hey, pervert! Right here,” Chanyeol waves. Yifan smiles and shakes his head. Chanyeol jumps on
him, hugging him tightly. Yifan doesn’t complain but doesn’t hug back either.

“Enough,” Yifan says, tapping Chanyeol’s back. “I left for four months, Chanyeol. It’s not that much.”

“Well, excuse me for having feelings,” Chanyeol complains, but takes his bag anyway. “How are you, man? You’re tanned! I like the long hair too.”

“Thank you,” Yifan smiles. He’s looking like a tourist in his baggy clothes. “It was fine, really. I had a good time. And how are you? I guess I should…”

Yifan opens his bag and takes some papers out of it. He gives them to Chanyeol.

“What’s this?”

“Your birthday present. I met some of your fans, so I bought their fanarts. I thought you would like to have it.”

They’re incredible. There’s a chibi version of him in one of them, another is a realistic portrait of him with fire wings. He almost drops them when he sees a cute drawing of Stella.

“Thank you, buddy,” he smiles, trying to not tear up. Yifan won’t let him live if he sees him crying because of fanarts. “I’m good, really. But you missed a lot of things.”

“You can tell me. I’m free today—tonight. I slept during the flight, but I’m really hungry,” Yifan complains. “They serve some birdy food there.”

“I know,” Chanyeol laughs. When they get to the parking lot, Yifan frowns at the sight of Kyungsoo’s car. “Sorry. The first money I got I bought my mate a new bigger car, but he liked it so much now I have to drive his.”

Yifan laughs loud, slapping Chanyeol.

“Serve you right,” he nods. “We are going to look ridiculous in that thing.”

“Yeah, give me your bag. Wanna grab some ‘burgers? Kyungsoo took me to a nice place, I thought you would like it too.”

“I guess.”

During the drive, Chanyeol tries to explain to Yifan all the things that happened during his absence. It’s hard because some things still hurt him, but Chanyeol now has better news, new shiny moments to share. After all that mess of Stella’s first month, they started getting more comfortable with parenting. Chanyeol tells his friend how much he enjoys being with her, now she’s more aware of things around her, touching things, trying to interact. How she absolutely adores Kyungsoo, and how Chanyeol tries not to pass out from happiness every time Kyungsoo is taking care of her. He cries while seeing Kyungsoo changing her diapers, or just giving her a bath. Once, he heard Kyungsoo talking and he ran to the kitchen to find out he was having a conversation with a very noisy Stella. Now she’s more vocal, mostly saying vowels, but sometimes she says a ppppp or a jjjjj. Kyungsoo was cooking and she was on her chair, screaming aaaaaaaapppp and Kyungsoo was chuckling and saying, oh really? Interesting. Tell me more. Chanyeol locked himself in the bathroom to cry harder.

Yifan is silent, and sometimes he nods or hums.

“I’m glad you’re okay now. I can see it helped you two to get more mature,” he says, and Chanyeol
knows he’s already saying too much. “Where’s she now?”

“At home, she is feverish lately. The doctor said it was normal because her teeth are growing,” Chanyeol says and he squeezes the steering wheel harder. “I would stay with her, but only Kyungsoo can make her sleep when she’s crying like that.”

It’s like magic. Kyungsoo holds Stella against his chest and rubs her back in circles, and suddenly she gets calm.

“You two must be exhausted,” Yifan says and he sounds sincerely worried. “I have more free time now, so if you need help…”

“Do you know how to take care of kids?”

“I do, I have a big family,” he grins. “Sometimes babies are scared of me, but if they aren’t, I can take care of them. I changed a lot of diapers.”

“I’ll pretend I believe you, even if I think that you have a kid of your own lost somewhere else in the world, you pervert.”

“I can’t say I don’t have a kid. I can say I don’t know if I have a kid.”

“You’re disgusting.”

“No, that’s what happens when you’re an efficient alpha,” he laughs. “I mean, I’m glad you had Stella because Jongdae told me you are having problems getting… it… up.”

“Shut up,” Chanyeol almost honks, angry. “That was just one time! I can’t say no because I’m an alpha? I’m not a sex machine!”

Yifan wants to say something, but he’s laughing too much. Chanyeol slaps him.

“Don’t be friends with Jongdae. You two are a nightmare together!”

“Oh, boy,” Yifan wipes his eyes. “I was just saying… Kyungsoo is a dad, but he’s still young. He needs a mate that satisfies him, you know?”

“Fuck you.”

Chanyeol had to suffer for more twenty minutes until they get to the restaurant, sit down and Yifan finally distracts himself with the menu.

“Can you read it?”

“Of course. I’m Canadian, Chanyeol. English is my first language.”

“I’ll have to learn, then. I can’t be the dumb daddy forever.”

“I can teach you… and Stella,” he says, pointing to the The Duchess option. “Hmmm… this hamburger seems good… it comes with onion rings and a strawberry milkshake…”

“Are you implying that you’re going to be around?” Chanyeol asks, and his tone is unsurprisingly hopeful.

“Why wouldn’t I?”
“I don’t know, man. You don’t say anything and disappear… maybe you’re feeling restless again and you want to move out.” Chanyeol shrugs. “You’re not in CHOOSE anymore, right?”

“What? No. I just… I’m not a signed alpha, but I still work there. Yuri is in my place, you know… and I have to help Yixing. He’s too naïve, and he’s too busy now.”

“So, you’re going to stay?”

“That’s my plan.”

Chanyeol smiles, satisfied. They eat at least five burgers and Sunny spots Chanyeol and comes to talk to him. Kyungsoo introduced them (and Chanyeol met Yoona too, and Sehun and Jongin were around to fangirl and scream together when they saw her), and Chanyeol likes to talk to every friend Kyungsoo has, especially because they call him Kyungsoo’s mate and Chanyeol is a cheesy man who loves to hear it. She’s lovely today, and her colorful hair matches her purple jumper. She wishes them a good meal and leaves.

“She’s cute.” Yifan checks her out when she leaves. “She’s mated?”

“Listen here, you pervert,” Chanyeol raises a finger. “Stop trying to chase any omega you see! You know I’m invested in my mom and dad getting together!”

Yifan shakes his head, smiling.

“I don’t see that happening, Chanyeol. I mean, I like him, but… it’s been a long—”

“No, no, no,” Chanyeol hits the table, annoyed. “You’re going to Stella’s moon cult shit, and you’re going to talk to him and be nice to him, and then you’re going to mate and have children.”

“I’m not your—”

“Shhhhh,” Chanyeol raises his finger again. “This is not a suggestion. It’s an order!”

Yifan laughs and keeps eating. He knows it’s futile to fight with a passionate Chanyeol, probably. Chanyeol takes him home after they leave the restaurant. When he gets in his house, everybody is sleeping. He kisses Stella and goes straight to bed, where Kyungsoo is tucked in the sheets. Chanyeol takes his clothes off and lays next to him. He loves that he can see his mate sleeping, eating and doing anything, really. He learned that Kyungsoo likes to clean the house, to grill, to watch cartoons when he’s sleepy. He has an order to eat things and he never eats sweet things before the meals. He is in a really bad mood in the morning, and he only speaks after breakfast. When he’s really sleepy and cold, he rolls in the bed so Chanyeol can sleep over him. He shaves his legs, and Chanyeol thinks it’s because he’s very sensitive to textures, so Chanyeol is shaving his too.

“Goodnight,” Chanyeol whispers, kissing his mate’s button nose.

He has an interview the night of the party, so he goes to Jongin’s house a bit later. There’s a lot of parked cars, but he drives a really tiny one, so it’s easy to find a spot. He gets lost, because there is a lot of decoration and loud music, and before he can find his friends, he finds an old lady sitting on the ground. She’s really old, so Chanyeol gets worried.

“Hey, excuse me…” he squats to tap her gently on the shoulder. “Are you okay?”
She opens her eyes. She’s wearing a long white dress and she has flowers in her hair.

“Yes, I am, Alpha,” she nods. “Are you lost? Your mate is on the other side of this place, next to the pool.”

“Ah…” Chanyeol scratches his head. “Is he? How do you…?”

She points to her nose. The same scent, of course. Chanyeol forgets it all the time.

“Ah, thank you. I’ll try to get there. Are you sure you’ll be okay by yourself? I can help you to get up and walk.”

“Thank you, but I’ll be fine. I’m stronger than I look. I’ve seen more than eighty solar cycles, but I still bring pups into this world. I may run faster than you, even with your bigger legs.”

“Ah, are you a Moon Cult midwife,” Chanyeol sits on the ground next to her. He’s going to get dirty, but he doesn’t care. “It was one of you who help my mom in my birthing!”

“She’s a lucky woman, then. Moon Childs Witches are trained to save kids and omegas. Some of your “hospitals” and “doctors” believe they know things, but they ignore the severity of the birthing,” she says in a low voice, almost a whisper. “Death is very close to life when a pup is born. Magic things happen.”

“Ah, my Stella was born in a hospital,” Chanyeol says and he looks up. He knew it would be a full moon night – it was a pre-requisite to the party. “She’s fine, and so is Kyungsoo.”

“But your doctor is a witch, isn’t he? He’s not practicing, but he has the memory yet. I bet he is very passionate about his omeganess. All witches are,” she smiles, but her eyes are closed. She looks like she’s meditating. “We know our power and we don’t submit easily. That’s why they hate us and call us bad names.”

Chanyeol has no idea what she’s talking about with memory (maybe past lives? Alternative universes?), but he understands everything else and he agrees.

“Hey, uh,” he starts and he imitates her lotus position. “I’m sorry if I’m interrupting your… whatever it is… but you seem wise and I have few questions…? So can I ask you… things?”

“Ask, Alpha. I’m hearing you.”

“So, I’m mated and I have a child,” he starts, biting his lips. “And my mate is an omega and he… had some trouble… with being a parent. He kind of… didn’t accept much… his “omeganess” or… I guess it is… and now he is a lot better, but… I feel like it’s… I wish I could help him, you see. To feel more comfortable in his skin.”

“And do you want to know how you can do it?”

“Yes. Yes, I do.”

“Unfortunately, you can’t. This is a way of dealing with his essence,” she opens her eyes, but she is looking at the moon. “You can, of course, work your own problems. To mate is to become a permanent reflex of your other part. As an alpha, you should lead him by giving the example.”

“No offense, but can you guys be less cryptic? I’m not very smart,” Chanyeol frowns, and he gives up of being in that position, so he hugs his knees instead.
“See? That’s the root. You’re very smart, but you’re an artist, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

“So you have different ways to think and learn things. You mate is an artist too, so you both feel the world, not think the world,” she smiles.

Chanyeol gets what she’s saying. “It’s just that multiple intelligence things.”

“Maybe. People always say the same things but in different ways. If it’s hard for you to understand something, then just look for a different method.”

“I don’t understand… astrology, for example. So a bunch of stars can tell me how I am? And sometimes I don’t get science either. Like, they treat us like animals, and they pretend they’re neutral, but they aren’t? I also don’t really understand religion. I mean, I was raised atheist, but even when I visited a church… so many wrong things there! Like, they tortured my mate psychologically…”

Chanyeol finally takes a breath. “So music is what I have. No secrets and all the things you choose if you want or not. I can be happy, or sad, I can give meaning to life, and I don’t have to be anything either. Just… the guy who plays.”

She laughs. She has few teeth, but her laugh is youthful, somehow.

“Ah, fire beings. No patience, lots of attitude, and the typical hatred for anything who can tame them,” she says softly. “It must be hard for you and your mate to understand each other. He is a rock, that one… but it’s like that with mates. He can keep you grounded and you can make him warm…”

Chanyeol feels exposed and decides to keep quiet.

“… Astrology, religion, science, they’re just different languages. They all study nature in their own way. If you pay enough attention, you will see they pretty much converge; they’re the consequence of trying to find answers. Some people look at the stars, some people at their soul, and some people at their materiality. Of course, everything that human’s touch reek of their mistakes and desire for power, but the essence is just curiosity. Like you’re doing right now. If you want to find in music, then you’ll find. If that’s the method that fits you.”

He thinks in silence for a while.

“I get that. But I still don’t know how to fix him.”

“Hum, if you’re a musician, then… let me see… A pack is like a band. If someone is out of the rhythm, then the entire act is ruined. If you’re an alpha, it’s like your mate’s instrument needs your instrument to follow the song. If you’re wrong, he will play wrong too. If you’re right, he can commit a mistake, of course, but it’s going to be harder, because he’s following you, and you’re playing correctly.”

“So this is my fault?” Chanyeol almost screams.

“No, no it’s not your fault what happened before your mating. But he is your mate for some reason,” she says softly, reassuring. “Many people try to mate and they just don’t fit. You two mated because you have this compatibility. We don’t meet people by accident.”

“Oh, no, fate again,” Chanyeol sighs. “So what do I do?”

“I don’t know. You’re the one who knows your mate better. What does he need?”
Chanyeol finds Kyungsoo sitting pretty on a chair, eating some cheese balls. He moves his mate so he can sit, so he puts Kyungsoo in his lap. It’s a nice party and there’s a lot of famous people. Stella is in Kyungsoo’s brother’s arms, and she looks calm, biting the soft toy Kyungsoo bought for this specific use.

“What’s wrong?” Kyungsoo asks, and he shoves a piece of cheese in Chanyeol’s mouth. “Where were you?”

“I was talking to a Moon Cult witch under the moonlight,” Chanyeol says, still chewing. He hugs Kyungsoo closer, so he can rub his nose in his mate’s neck and smell him better. Kyungsoo no longer uses that scent-blocking perfume, but Chanyeol likes how warm his neck is.

“Ah, is that lady who helped us? She’s nice,” Kyungsoo says, distracted. “She told me Stella would be a hunter and she would take people down.”

“Is she going to be a serial killer?” Chanyeol is worried. “Are you okay with that?”

“I guess it’s a metaphor. Or maybe she will hunt bad people, I don’t know,” Kyungsoo says. “Are you okay?”

Chanyeol looks at him. Yeah, he is. He couldn’t be more okay.

It makes sense, after all. They’ve probably been doing that instrument thing for a while. Chanyeol is sure he wouldn’t record his album if he hadn’t mated Kyungsoo. He was too convinced he wasn’t good enough, and being around someone as hard-working as Kyungsoo helped him a lot. Mating made him a lot more confident, more prone to chase his dreams, to fight for his friends and family… He knows what Kyungsoo needs too. He needs a stable mate who takes care of things, sometimes, so he can sit and relax, sometimes. He needs a mate who reminds him of how great he is, just in case he can’t see that. He needs a mate who messes a bit with his life so he can leave his comfort zone and accept change. Chanyeol is doing that, he will try to do even more, so Kyungsoo can get a lot better too. They can be better together.

“I love you. Kissy kiss?”

Kyungsoo kisses him briefly.

“I love you too. Let’s finish this thing because I want to eat real stuff.”

Kyungsoo takes Stella away from his brother and despite her protests, gives her to an elderly man. Besides the flowers, the food, and the music, the only decoration is some mirrors on the ground. One man brings something that looked like a small, transparent pool in the size of an oven, and the elderly guy, to Chanyeol’s absolute shock, drops Stella in it. Chanyeol runs to Kyungsoo.

“What the hell is he doing?” Chanyeol grabs his mate’s shoulders, scared.

“She’s a baby, Chanyeol. She knows how to swim and she can stay underwater longer,” Kyungsoo says. “Look, she’s enjoying.”

She is swimming, excited. Jongin squats next to it and knocks next to her; she swims so she can get
near him, happy.

“What’s happening,” Chanyeol whispers. The elderly guy takes her from the pool after a few minutes. Stella blinks, surprised, and makes a happy sound, smiling. They put a tiny dark grey fluffy sheet around her and then Kyungsoo holds her. She’s making a lot of sounds, and moving, excited.

“Congratulations on your baby,” the man says. “We hope the seawater cleaned the pain, the blood and the memories she brought, and now she can have a new, bright new future.”

“Thank you,” Kyungsoo says, serious. Chanyeol brushes Stella’s bangs her away from her face; she has a lot of hair, thick and dark.

“You’re so calm about this,” Chanyeol says.

“They’re ok people, mostly harmless,” he says, blowing air on her face, so she would laugh. “Although I think this is a lot of unnecessary things, I like… the way they treat people. And if they want to do nice things for her…”

Yeah, Chanyeol understands. His friends are running around, eating, having fun. It’s fun to see how carefree they look. Minseok, with his big belly is laying on the ground, his head on Jongdae’s belly; Baekhyun is telling them a story, and Jongin is sitting on a chair, listening next to them. Some people are singing, and Chanyeol can spot Yifan talking to Taemin next to the cake. Junmyeon is talking to a group of people who look like fans. Amber asks Kyungsoo to hold Stella and he agrees. Her mate is next to her, quiet and serious.

“So that’s all,” Chanyeol says, staring at the girls playing with Stella just a few meters from him. “Just drop her in the water and then it’s over?”

“It’s a celebration, it’s just to make people see her and play with her,” he turns to Chanyeol, grinning. “What did you expect? Magic and blood?”

“Ah, maybe blood. People dressed like wolves, growling and dancing naked under the moonlight,” Chanyeol makes few gestures to illustrate his point. Kyungsoo slaps him, laughing.

“You’re ridiculous. But talking about being naked under the moonlight,” Kyungsoo says, and he holds Chanyeol’s hand. “I guess my heat will come back… eventually… and…”

“And you’re going to ask the hottest alpha in the world to help you?” Chanyeol wriggles his eyebrows, suggestive.

“No, no, your sister will be busy,” he says, nonchalant. Chanyeol drops his hand immediately.

“So it’s like that huh,” he grabs Kyungsoo by the waist and lifts him enough to take his feet off the ground, then kneels on the ground and drops him. “You little shit—”

He locks Kyungsoo’s hand over his head and straddles him. He can hear Amber saying:

“… so these are your parents, good luck in the future…”

“Stop, ah,” Kyungsoo chuckles, and he’s defenseless like that. “I was kidding! Chanyeol!”

“Say you’re sorry,” Chanyeol says. “Or I will give you a lot of my noisy kisses until we both pass out!”

“Fuck you,” Kyungsoo spits, but he’s smiling. Chanyeol attacks him with wet kisses all over his
face. He’s half kissing and half licking, and Kyungsoo tries to move under him to escape. Chanyeol finishes his punishment with a kiss in his mouth.

“Now, you’re sorry?”

“Not really,” Kyungsoo says quickly. “But I was going to ask you to spend my heat with me.”

“I should’ve said no. But we both know I’m a horny orangutan. Also, I love you.”

Kyungsoo smiles softly and Chanyeol lets his hands free to move again.

“Get off me,” he says, pushing Chanyeol’s chest away. “There’s more to it. I’ve been talking with these people here and there’s a mating ritual I want us to do.”

“Oh, so now the wolf skin comes in,” Chanyeol whispers, sitting on the ground. “Explain.”

“It’s nothing… weird,” Kyungsoo sits up, wiping his face with his shirt. “They have this… space with trees… and they do a thing called the Run. Basically, it consists of us mating in the wild. But just the two of us.”

“Fuck, it isn’t weird? Fucking with my bare ass in the wild,” Chanyeol complains. “This is really weird, Kyungsoo. What if a worm gets inside of my asshole while we’re knotting?”

“What?” Kyungsoo chuckles. “Don’t worry about worms. There’s a tent for the mating. It’s just because you have to find me by scent. It’s not a jungle, it’s a farm. I thought you would like it.”

“Me? Why?”

“Well, you have a more adventuring spirit, I think.”

“Yeah, but I don’t want anyone watching my naked ass while I’m mating!” Chanyeol pouts. “Why can’t we just use a bed like always?”

“I’ll let you knot me against a tree,” Kyungsoo lifts one eyebrow. Chanyeol stops, mouth open to complain, but he considers it.

“Well, if it’s the case… I guess… it’s not that bad…” he shrugs, fidgeting with the grass. “Okay.”

“Really okay or you horny orangutan ass just wants to—” Kyungsoo asks, but he’s interrupted by a big noise. Taemin lights some fireworks – actually, Kris does, and he looks a bit scared with the noise, but he keeps holding it.

“Hello! I guess it’s time for the birthday boys to come here so we can sing happy birthday,” Taemin claps, excited. Kyungsoo stands up, dusts off his clothes and walks to the table. Chanyeol follows him. Jongin takes Stella from Amber, and brings her closer to the cake, kissing her fat cheeks.

“Come on, right there,” Taemin lights up the candles. “Let’s see if now that Kyungsoo is thirty, he will look like he’s an adult.”

“Shut up,” Kyungsoo groans, and he looks like he wants to eat the cake even before singing happy birthday.

“Hey, make a wish before blowing out the candles,” Chanyeol warns him. “Don’t forget it.”

Kyungsoo closes his eyes when he’s blowing, and Jongin presses Stella’s face close to his so she feels like she’s blowing the candles too. She smiles, happy. Chanyeol asks himself what must be
going on inside of her mind. Probably she’s just enjoying the colors, but maybe she’s just like those babies from the movies, plotting world domination in silence.

Chanyeol is “obligated” to spend three weeks in Japan to promote a Japanese mini-album, but he does happily because Minho promises him a small break after returning home. While he’s in Japan, Chanyeol is emotional with how much love he gets from his fans. The group of omegas who fed him debuted, and Chanyeol and Minho go to their concert, with matching shirts and plushies. He asks for pictures and videos of Stella daily, and he watches them before sleeping. Stella and Wolf having deep conversations (aaaaahhh and barks, respectively), Stella making a mess while Kyungsoo tries to wash her and Stella sleeping in her giraffe onesie. Chanyeol comes back home with many gifts for his girls (any weird kid thing for Stella, any useful kitchen thing for his mom and a good laptop for his sister, so she doesn’t call him an ungrateful brother).

He gets ten free days and he is ready to spend every minute with his daughter. Chanyeol takes her to visit her family, his musician friends, to buy new toys and to interact with other babies (she goes to a music class for babies and Chanyeol records one hour of her beating drums with her small hands). He also can see Kyungsoo more, even if his mate hasn’t much free time to be with him. On the night of the new season of Ultimate Chef first episode, Chanyeol prepares a lot of popcorn and puts the soda in the fridge.

“Do you want to watch the show with us or are you going to sleep?” he asks Stella. She is sitting on her baby carpet, on the floor, and Wolf is lying next to her. She just stares at Chanyeol, biting her own tiny fist. Chanyeol laughs and blows her a kiss while he’s filling the bags with popcorn.

Stella suddenly starts making noises, agitated, and even Wolf lifts his head. A few seconds later, Kyungsoo opens the door. Chanyeol is always surprised with how good her nose is – she can smell her dads better than Wolf.

“Hello,” Kyungsoo says, bringing the leftovers. He deposits it on the table and stands on his toes to kiss Chanyeol’s cheek. “Where are the boys?”

“No idea,” Chanyeol answers, smiling. Stella starts to cry and Kyungsoo has to pick her up. She doesn’t like when her dads interact for long and exclude her, but she often forgets it after a few kisses. “Hey, the show will start in thirty minutes.”

“I will take a bath,” Kyungsoo says, lifting Stella high to smell her diaper. “And… give her a bath too.”

Stella doesn’t seem to care she’s being called dirty because she loves to be lifted. Kyungsoo leaves the room with her close to his chest and Wolf follows them. Chanyeol puts the leftovers in the fridge and checks his cellphone, just in case.

It’s really nice to watch the show with Kyungsoo resting on him. The guy they put in Kyungsoo’s place is too nice (his name is Jin and he’s vaguely familiar to Chanyeol), but besides that, they have fun while Stella falls asleep in her chair. They go to bed and Chanyeol wakes trying to squeeze his mate but finding nothing. He leaves the bed and finds Kyungsoo trying to calm down a stressed Stella.

“It’s her teeth,” Kyungsoo explains, and Stella looks up, with her lips pursed in an angry expression. “It hurts and she can’t sleep.”
“Oh, no, bad teeth,” Chanyeol says, kissing her cheek. “I will fight them for making my baby cry.”

She won’t be fooled by kisses today, apparently, because she makes angry noises and rubs her face in Kyungsoo’s chest.

“I think someone called you,” Kyungsoo says, rocking her in his arms. “Your phone was ringing.”

“Oh, okay.” he nods. There are three missed calls. Baekhyun, Jongdae, and Jongin. None of the first two answers Chanyeol’s calls, but Jongin does. He’s crying.

“Chanyeol?”

“Hey… what happened?”

“Can you come here? Minseok spent the night in labor and he’s done,” he says, and his voice is shaking too much. “The boys can’t talk to you right now so I’m calling.”

“Is he okay?”

“Yes, Minnie is fine, but the babies aren’t,” Jongin sniffs. “I’ll explain here. It’s the same hospital.”

“Yeah, I’m going.”

Chanyeol dresses himself in five minutes, kisses Kyungsoo and Stella and runs to the hospital. Jongin is waiting for him on the front stairs and he looks really tired. He’s in his sleep clothes and his hair is a mess. It must be an emergency for him to leave home like that.


“Minseok had the babies. It took six hours, but he’s fine. Beyond exhausted, of course,” he sniffs and hugs himself. “The first baby is a girl and she’s fine. The second one is a boy, and he had something…the doctor said it’s congenital amputation. He doesn’t have one leg… I mean… nothing under his knee. They think the membrane ruptured… that’s all I understood.”

Chanyeol sucks a breath.

“And the third one?”

“He wasn’t breathing when they took him…” Jongin gulps, and sighs. “But they reanimated him. He didn’t develop his lungs completely. He’s alive, but he will be here for a while. He needs a machine to help him breathe.”

Chanyeol nods slowly, looking down. He hugs Jongin after.

“Where are the boys?” Chanyeol asks, rubbing his back.

“Inside,” Jongin pushes him away and takes his wristband, putting it on Chanyeol’s wrist. It’s written OMEGA/FAMILY. “Minseok said I was his brother. Go talk to them.”

Chanyeol walks in easily, because the maternity is a crowded place. His heart breaks in a million pieces when he finds Baekhyun crying in Junmyeon’s arms. He goes to his friends and sits next to them. Baekhyun tries to speak and cries again.

“He’s been crying for three hours,” Junmyeon says. “It was… scary. I don’t think he’s going to stop soon.”
“Ah…” Chanyeol pats him. “And Jongdae?”

“Last time I saw him he was with the baby girl, but she should be sleeping now. He must be in Minseok’s room.”

“… he almost died…” Baekhyun says, sniffing. “The baby…”

“I’m sorry,” Chanyeol hugs them both. “Is he fine now?”

“Yes, both of the boys are fine. I guess they will have to stay here for a while,” Junmyeon answers. “You know, these things happen a lot. I’ve been telling Baekhyun that. Many premature babies don’t develop lungs completely. He will be fine. And the other baby doesn’t have one limb, yes, but he’s healthy. They’ll be better soon.”

Baekhyun is sniffing, and Chanyeol doesn’t blame him. It must have been scary to see his kids in danger. Chanyeol would have gone crazy. He takes advantage of the wristband and goes to the baby’s room. There’s a baby girl and a baby boy with Minseok’s identification. They’re small and rosy like Stella was (well, Chanyeol thinks, understanding his friends’ words better, Stella was bigger). One of them has a bandaged leg, and Chanyeol can see the empty space.

“Hello,” Jongdae says. Chanyeol turns to him, fast. He has puffy, red eyes and he seems exhausted. “Are you visiting them?”

“Yes,” Chanyeol smiles or at least tries to. “They’re beautiful. How are you?”

“Could be better,” Jongdae looks at them fondly. “But not that bad.”

“I’m sorry I wasn’t here…”

“That’s okay. They didn’t even let Baekhyun in. He was really scared… but it’s over,” Jongdae smiles sadly. “These babies are already driving us crazy. Is this going to be my life forever?”

“Probably,” Chanyeol holds him, and Jongdae doesn’t resist. “Are you really okay or you’re just trying to look strong?”

Jongdae lets out a long sigh. Chanyeol rubs his nose on his friend’s shoulder.

“It was… the scariest moment of my life… when they said he wasn’t breathing,” he says slowly. “I got white hair instantly, I’m sure. But now he’s… alive and well, and that’s all that matters to me.”


Jongdae chuckles and lets go of Chanyeol’s embrace.

“Thank you,” he smiles. “I think Baekhyun needs more help than them. Look, they’re sleeping just fine. The other one is looking peaceful in the incubator.”

“And how’s Minseok?”

“Calm as ever,” Jongdae smiles fondly. “He’s used to this type of thing, after all. He’s worried, but he’s not so anxious. He’s also sedated.”

“Ah, I’m glad,” Chanyeol says. “Don’t you think you should sleep too? Go take a nap, I’ll wake you up if someone needs you.”

Jongdae nods. He and Baekhyun sleep in the seats and Chanyeol walks around with Junmyeon,
always checking if something is happening.

“The worst is over,” Junmyeon says. He looks sleepy, but not really tired. “Now they will have more work, but nothing to be scared of.”

“It’s easy to say… If this happened to me, I would be freaking out too,” Chanyeol sighs and drinks the espresso from the machine. “They’re such tiny, fragile little things… It hurts my heart to think they’re in pain.”

“Ah, of course,” Junmyeon nods. “But you’re a dad, Chanyeol. You don’t think with your mind, but with your instincts.”

“Well, probably. Stella is crying because her teeth are growing and I’m already nervous,” he laughs. He sent messages to Kyungsoo informing him of everything and asking about her. She’s sleeping fine, so he could calm down a little bit. “But, you know, you would be a great dad too.”

“I only have interest in raising my bunnies, thank you,” Junmyeon laughs, and takes a sip of his coffee too. “I don’t even have a partner. It’s too soon to have a family.”

“That’s a pity, man,” Chanyeol sighs. “I know a single alpha who would be available…”

Junmyeon laughs at that, tapping his arm.

“Yeah, I know a few too. But I’m sure it’s too soon for me. Everyone has their own rhythm,” he says, staring at his cup. “Maybe I’ll never have a family in this… conception, but I do have a family, don’t I? I won’t push myself into things just because people expect me to.”

“Sorry,” Chanyeol says quickly. “I’m not implying you should have babies because you’re an omega, I was just—”

“I know, Chanyeol. Don’t worry,” he drinks the rest of his coffee, licks his lips and smiles. “There was a time when I thought I should pretend I wasn’t who I am. But now I’m comfortable… I know I can be whatever I want… and I know what I don’t want to be too. I already spent too much time caring about how the world would see me.”

“I’m sorry to ask… I’m really sorry if it’s invasive… but are you on suppressants?”

“No. I’ve been off them for a long time. Now I use my heats as a creative moment. They’re not too bad if you learn to listen to your body instead of blocking anything that bothers you.”

Chanyeol nods. He doesn’t want to be on suppressants anymore, and he really doesn’t want Kyungsoo to do that either. They can find other ways to avoid another unexpected pregnancy – after all, it was Chanyeol’s lack of knowledge about his body functioning that caused all that trouble (he doesn’t regret it, but…).

They talk more until Minseok wakes up. Then, Chanyeol wakes up his friends and lets them take care of their mate. He comes home, tired and sad, watches Stella in his sleep and goes to bed. He cuddles Kyungsoo tightly.

“Are they okay?” Kyungsoo asks, sleepy. He caresses Chanyeol’s hand gently.

“Yes, for a while. It would be bad if we waited a bit to move out? They will need help with the babies,” he whispers in his mate’s ears.

“No, we can wait,” Kyungsoo assures him. “Don’t worry.”
Chanyeol stays in the hospital while the boys do the baby certificate and get things ready to bring Minseok and the baby girl home. It’s kind of boring, but he keeps checking for news. He can see Sehun and Tao in their new house, Luhan traveling, and Yifan enjoying his free hours by dining in fancy places.

dyodoro tagged you in a post

Chanyeol clicks on it. Kyungsoo’s Instagram pictures were all dishes, foreign places and he had one single picture showing his face, and he was in a club with his friends – it wasn’t a selfie and Chanyeol found a very similar picture on Jongin’s Instagram, so it was probably their birthday. He almost spits the coffee when the post loads. It’s Chanyeol, dead asleep in their bed, no shirt on, and Stella taking a nap on his chest; both are sleeping with their mouths open (and drooling).

dyodoro bad news: ugly sleeping face is a dominant gene

keyshinee ekkekekekekekekkeke

bunnymom are you sure he’s not dead?

minhoshinee unflattering photo saved on my phone!

tiffany ♡・・・・・　

seulgi_redvelvet <3 Stella is soooooooo cuteeeeee I wanna bite her!!!!

amberllhama ASDFGHJKLSDFGHJK @kimkai @krystaljung @sataem

ohsehun don’t say things like this! she deserves better, she’s cute :( 

pcy_real I will make this into a 1,85m pillow and give it to you, my love  © >  ) J 　

On the first day, they only allow the baby girl to come home. Baekhyun holds her tightly and Jongdae pushes Minseok in the wheelchair, both looking at the baby so fondly that Chanyeol’s heart seems about to explode.

“Ah, did you meet Uncle Yeollie?” Baekhyun says, and he moves her tiny fist with two fingers. “Hello, Uncle, I’m Jiho!”

“Hello, Jiho,” Chanyeol smiles grabbing her fist with the tips of his fingers. “Nice to meet you!”

“Eonji will be joining us in few days,” Minseok smiles. He looks absolutely marvelous, like he went on a trip, instead of giving birth to three kids. It was a natural delivery and he laughed in the faces of the other doctors when they tried to convince him to rest, *I could make my own birth and still run a marathon after, but thank you for worrying, go wash your clothes.* “But unfortunately Jinho will have to stay… longer.”

“Don’t worry, baby! You won’t be alone,” Chanyeol smiles, happy. “Stella and Wolf are ready to meet their new friend!”

“Are you sure you can stay with them while we are out?” Jongdae raises an eyebrow. He and Baekhyun are taking turns to work and stay at the hospital with Jinho, and despite what Minseok
affirms, he looks sleepy and he can’t be alone with the baby.

“Yes, I can. I don’t have to work these days. I told you I’m the one in charge of Stella and she’s fine,” Chanyeol complains, defensive.

“Well, no offense, but your baby is one tough baby,” Minseok laughs, throwing his head back. “She would punch any danger away! She doesn’t need you!”

“Yes, and it’s not just because she’s like… huge,” Baekhyun nods. “She slapped me once and my cheek got red.”

“I bet you deserved it.” Chanyeol pouts. He knows Stella is too strong. She is not even six months old and she almost strangulates Wolf with her affection. She kisses the other kids a lot and the lady on the musical classes told Chanyeol she’s precocious to be so affectionate. “But this baby Jiho here is safe with me. Or Kyungsoo. He’s cooking at home today, testing some recipes.”

The three other adults make a unison sound of relief. Chanyeol crosses his arms, offended.

“It’s not like you three are the dads of the year too!”

“These kids are a day old. You don’t know,” says Baekhyun, while trying to lift Jiho’s middle finger to prove his point.

The baby room is crowded with the two cribs, especially because the triplet’s one is a triple crib. Chanyeol tried to persuade the boys to buy things separately, but Jongdae told him they would have a lot of time in their teenage years to affirm their unique personalities. You can’t treat them like they’re that dog with three heads, Chanyeol still said. Baekhyun laughed, I wish! Have you seen the price of the baby diapers? Let’s human centipede them. Minseok hit him so hard he flew three steps away.

Stella is rolling on the ground while Wolf watches her curiously. Kyungsoo helps them put the things in, even if he’s using an apron. Minseok falls asleep as soon as he gets in the bed, and Chanyeol has to physically remove Jongdae from the room, otherwise, he wouldn’t leave.

“Don’t let her unsupervised,” he says, hanging off Chanyeol’s shoulder. “Call me if she’s—”

“Bye,” Chanyeol says before throwing him out of the house. He hits the door harshly and Stella laughs at the sound. Chanyeol picks her up to meet her new friend – now, when she smiles, her two bottom middle teeth show, and her baby cheeks looks like moshis.

“No loud noises, okay? Uncle Minnie is sleeping,” he whispers, bending to show the baby in the bed, right next to his daddy. “This is Jiho. Say, hello Jiho, I’m Stella!”

Stella, of course, doesn't say exactly the same thing, but she does make a happy noise and tries to reach to grab the baby. Jiho opens her eyes.

“No, Stella, she’s not a toy,” Chanyeol straightens up his posture again. Stella looks sad and Chanyeol runs from the room before she starts to cry. “No, no, no.”

Kyungsoo leaves the kitchen with a pan and hits Chanyeol on the head.
“Five minutes with the kid and she’s already crying,” he complains, and he drops the pan in the ground to hold Stella in his arms. “Come on, don’t you wanna play with the cake flour and mess the entire kitchen? Your dumb daddy will clean it later.”

Chanyeol follows them, pouting and caressing his sore head.

“Don’t call me dumb daddy,” he complains. “She doesn’t need to know it so soon!”

“Okay, big daddy it is,” Kyungsoo sighs and he places Stella in the sink like it’s a bathtub. When he puts a pot with cake flour next to her, she grabs some and opens her fist, letting it fall and make some dusty effect. Kyungsoo laughs, and Chanyeol seizes the opportunity to hug his distracted mate.

“So, then are you small daddy?” he presses his face against Kyungsoo’s neck, sniffing. “Huh?”

“Don’t even think—” Kyungsoo elbows him away. “I’m cooking. Get out.”

“Why…” Chanyeol pouts again. “What are you cooking?”

“I’m making few things to put in the fridge so there will be food ready when they need it,” Kyungsoo says, and he checks a paper while Stella keeps messing with the baking soda. “Also, I’m making a nice dinner for the babies’ delivery. Even if now there’s just one here.”

Chanyeol sits down, watching him cook and takes a picture for his Instagram. It’s crazy now he has more than a million followers and he spends a lot of time checking the comments. Today, five minutes after he posts the picture he has more than a hundred comments.

pcy_real happiness ■ ☀️~/・。

taozi <3 <3 <3 <3 @xingsheep @xiaolu

afirestarter @pcynews @loeynahc @firestarters_ @beta_firestarter @firestarters_unite

pcyseconddaughter my dad and my sister

kitchenfreak they’re so cute!!!!!!!

bunnymom child labor, I see

ohsehun I bet Stella cooks better than @kimkai

pcynews HE’S OUT TO KILL ME TODAY ASDFGH so fricking cute!!!!! HOW @afirestarter

theucfanatic come back to us @dyodoro !!!!!!!!!!

kimkai fuck you @ohsehun

loeynahc I was so used to giving… now I get to receive…

amberllhama GO SLEEP KYUNGSOO

firestarters_unite what’s better than stanning a man who keeps having hardons at concerts?? a man who gives us cute baby pics when he’s in his break!!!! @pcynews__
Eonji comes home after a week, and he’s very confused, looking around, curious. He’s the reason his dads are busy lately – even Minseok, with his paternity leave. The three of them are taking a small course called “Parenting a kid with special needs”, which are helping them to buy new things for the baby. Eonji is a small, chubby and cute baby, and he looks happy when they put him next to his sister. The two babies cry in unison at night, and there’s always someone awake in their home, because Stella also cries and wakes up early. Chanyeol is back to doing television appearances, and he was chosen to promote an alpha scent – he didn’t think he was going to be the face of anything since he’s a bit older than other singers and Idols, but apparently, alpha-marketed products are much more interested in “mature” people. He does the commercial with Taeyeon, and she tells him about her birthday party.

“I talked some of your friends into coming to my party, It’s really a coincidence that I know them too, especially Kyungsoo,” she says. She’s really beautiful, but it’s still shocking how small and thin she looks. “I already closed the list, but he can bring one guest. Why don’t you show up?”

“Ah, I wish I could,” he sighs. “I can’t even sleep right now, and I can’t go to places with Kyungsoo
because one of us has to keep an eye on Stella.”

“Oh, don’t tell me that,” she chuckles, making a face. “My mate is expecting too. I’m really excited, but I’m also scared my life is going to be a hell.”

“Oh, it’s going to be a hell. But it’s worth it,” Chanyeol says fondly, and then he shows at least fifty different pics and videos of Stella doing random things.

After two weeks, Jinho comes home. He looks a lot healthier, but he is the smallest and thinner of the three. When they’re all together, they do exactly the same things. They cry in unison too, and they wake up the entire house. Wolf loves the babies and he runs around, excited, when they’re out of their cribs. Chanyeol is pretty sure that Stella thinks that Wolf and the triplets are all the same, and she tries to say babies, but mostly comes out as aeshhhhh.

Chanyeol is drinking hot chocolate, one night, playing cards with Jongdae, each one with a baby in their lap, when Minseok passes by wearing leather pants, a Queens’s shirt and boots. He has dark make-up on and he definitely looks like a rock star – no one would be able to tell he had three babies a month and a half ago. Jongdae whistles.

“I didn’t know we had models in this house,” he says, smiling. Jinho makes a face in his lap. Chanyeol would make a joke, but he has to stop Stella from messing with the cards on the ground.

“Then you were blind,” Minseok winks.

“What’s happening?” Chanyeol asks. Now Stella wants to climb him.

“Taeyeon’s birthday,” Baekhyun walks after him, holding Jiho and Eonji, one in each arm, both against’ his chest, as if he’s holding baguettes. “Never tell me I don’t love my fucking mate. It’s Taeyeon birthday, a fucking Rock’n’roll party and I’m giving up going to let Minseok have a nice night out with his friends.”

“I love you,” Minseok says absently, walking to the door. As if by magic, someone rings the doorbell.

“You better,” Baekhyun says, pouting. “I even did their make-up! I’m going to heaven, conservatives! Y’all better be ready for my coyote devil ass.”

Chanyeol laughs loudly, pointing at him. Stella laughs too, because she tends to imitate him. Baekhyun narrows his eyes at him.

“Ah, you think this is funny, eh? Let me see if you think this is funny,” he turns back. “Kyungsoo, my lovely friend, can you help me?”

Chanyeol’s smile dies on his face when Kyungsoo walks in. He’s using some nice, leather shoes, his hair is slicked back, and he has sharp eyeliner and smoky shadow on. To make things even worse, he’s using some black, Taemin’s Lucifer shirt without sleeves, and fucking tight ripped black jeans. Motherfucking ripped black jeans that look like a second skin.

“What?” he asks Baekhyun.
“Ah, I think I dropped something, but I can’t pick it up, you see,” he points at the babies by moving his chin. “Can you look for me?”

And, then, to Chanyeol’s horror, Kyungsoo bends down to look for “the thing”. Chanyeol lets out a guttural screech that scares the babies.

“What the fuck,” Mineok says, shocked, opening the door. Junmyeon and Jongin are on the other side. Baekhyun, of course, is grinning. He mouths “what about now, bitch?” to his friend. Kyungsoo stands again.

“There’s nothing…” he says, oblivious.

“Let’s go, guys,” Junmyeon claps. “Omegang night out!”

It takes some time for them to leave because Jongin stops to kiss all the babies, and Kyungsoo tries to check Stella’s things with Chanyeol poking him and then pointing to his lips. He’s dying by seeing Kyungsoo so beautiful like this; he will die if his mate doesn’t touch him.

“Baekhyun made me sit for half an hour to put this makeup on,” he says, ignoring Chanyeol. “I’m not going to ruin it “kissy kissing” you.”

When they finally get to leave, Chanyeol is more ready to cry than Stella – and she’s always affected by Kyungsoo’s departure like he’s never going to return. Baekhyun sits on the ground, imitating them. Jinho seems to sense his siblings are around and turns his face to them, agitated.

“So, just the three of us again,” Jongdae says, looking around. Stella’s toys are all over the room, everything is covered by fabric, just in case the triplets throw up (we need an exorcist for them, Baekhyun confesses, in an exhausting night) and the kitchen table has more baby chairs than adult chairs.

“Yes, just like the old times,” Baekhyun pouts. “Can I play cards too?”

“I’m thinking about spending my night checking Instagram,” Chanyeol says. Stella is getting sleepy after tearing up a bit. A month ago, she would be still crying, but now the babies easily distract her. “Do you think people will think they’re like… single and unmated?”

“Ah, Jongin said he’s ready to do a lap dance after the tequila,” Jongdae laughs. “What do you think?”

“Stop being jealous, you dumbass,” Baekhyun says.

“Ah, that’s rich coming from you,” Chanyeol points. “You’re way worse than me!”

“Yeah, maybe,” Baekhyun shrugs. The babies make weird sounds. “I maybe have done crazy… a few… things… because I thought Jongdae would leave me… a few times… but… that’s because he’s a Virgo liar, very slippery…”

“What?” Jongdae complains. “Don’t bring astrology into this.”

“… And Minseok is an Aries and he knows how to defend himself,” Baekhyun raises one finger. “I’m not jealous, you see. That thing you’re experiencing is a possessive alpha trait that clearly my genetics excluded.”

“Hmm,” Chanyeol grabs Stella from crawling into Baekhyun’s lap to play with the babies. “That’s really nice, guys. Do you know there’s a huge probability Yifan or Luhan will be there and both of
them had *sexy times* with Minseok, right?"

Jongdae and Baekhyun stare at each other.

“Well, I guess it’s time to put the babies to sleep,” Jongdae says casually.

“Yeah, I know, it’s late,” Baekhyun agrees. “Daddies have to… do things.”

Chanyeol would laugh, but he does the same. It’s kind of hard to make Stella sleep, but he sings a bit, rubbing her back, and she gives up. He kisses her and turns on the baby monitor.

“Daddy now is going to monitor your tiny dad too,” he whispers, tucking her in. She likes to sleep next to one of his old rillakkumas. “I need to keep this family together and those ripped pants are a threat.”

Stella is sleeping like an angel when they open the notebook. Jongdae even makes popcorn.

“So I’ll open the tag, but I’m gonna look into a few Instagrams too,” Baekhyun says, focused. “Minnie only posts the pictures after the events, so I bet he won’t post today.”

“Tiffany posted a picture,” Chanyeol shows him. It’s just her and Taeyeon, smiling, and she has an obvious baby bump. They’re a stunning couple. “She tagged it as… #taeyeonbday.”

“Amazing, click on it, yeollie,” he orders, looking again at the pc. “We both know our man nini is the Instagram bitch, but let’s keep an eye on bunnymom and… the enemies!”

“Enemies? Weren’t you into Yifan like… months ago?” Chanyeol laughs.

“Does anyone wants a beer?” Jongdae asks from the kitchen. Both of his friends say yes, but not too loud – nothing can be loud when there are four sleeping babies in the house.

It’s surprisingly nice, to stay at home with his friends drinking and laughing. It’s not like the old times… but… it’s close. They watch fail compilation videos while waiting for someone to post. Something pops on Chanyeol’s timeline.

“Fuck, we have one,” he whispers, and his friends jump into him (Jongdae is practically in his lap) to see. It’s Taeyeon, and she’s surrounded by them; Junmyeon is by her side, with Minseok, both holding fancy drinks, and Jongin, Kyungsoo, Sunny and Yoona on the other side, and they have beers and cake. Jongin and Minseok look wasted, but Kyungsoo and the girls are just smiling under the confetti rain. Chanyeol wants to cry. His mate looks so beautiful and he’s at home, watching it through pictures.

kimtayeon do not get confused with this omega harem, I’m a mated woman :) #noalphaprideride #myfriends #myday

taenys behave yourself tae!!!!!

tiffbaby @taetae @taefans @taeyeonfans @taenysbaby

yooooona my girl is looking flawless as always

taenysbaby where’s tiff??
“Amazing,” Baekhyun drinks a sip of his beer straight from the bottle. “I can’t go to my party and she flirts with my mate instead of me. This is a high-level nightmare.”

Jongdae actually laughs, “They look cute.”


“I’ll get it for you,” Baekhyun stands up. “I’ll check the babies too. I can’t stand looking at the photo anymore.”

No picture shows anything very suspicious. Junmyeon posts one picture with Tiffany and a girl with rainbow hair; Yifan posts one too, but he’s talking to a random girl and Jongin post a series of drunk videos. In one of them, he’s dancing on a table, just like the Caribbean. After the boys give up and go to bed, Chanyeol lays on the ground with his phone, hugging the penguin pillow. His favorite picture is the last one Jongin posts. It’s the entire omega gang smiling and eating cake on the ground. Kyungsoo looks so calm and beautiful that Chanyeol can’t help but feel happy he’s having a carefree night.

He sleeps like that, holding the pillow.

“Hey,” Chanyeol feels something on his arm. He opens his eyes. Kyungsoo is bending over next to him. “Why are you sleeping here?”

“What…?” he lifts his head and looks around. “I... don’t... remember.”

“Moon,” Kyungsoo makes a disgusted face. “This is really creepy. Did you keep the human-sized pillow?”

“Yes, this is the nice chef,” Chanyeol pouts. “He’s my mate.”

Kyungsoo laughs, “Oh, really?”

“Yeah. He’s a good mate. He never leaves to parties with tight ripped pants without giving me a kissy kiss. He also lets me cuddle him all the time. He doesn’t look anything like his evil twin.”

“Ah, I see,” Kyungsoo nods. “Well, I drank beer and I feel a bit restless, but I don’t want to interrupt you and your mate. I’ll be in the bed, you know, naked.”
Chanyeol watches him leaving and his words only make sense a few minutes later.

“I guess it’s over between us, nice chef,” he says, and he puts the pillow on the couch. “It was good while it lasted. Now, unfortunately, I’ll have to go back to your evil twin.”

The next day, Baekhyun complains about the noise (we have babies in this house) and Minseok tells them he woke up still drunk and talked for five minutes with the pillow, believing it was Kyungsoo.

Chanyeol wakes up on his first day of vacation in long, long months. It’s a Sunday, the weather is good, and when he looks down, Kyungsoo is already awake in his arms. Chanyeol smiles lazily.

“Good morning. Did the preheat keep you awake?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods, rubbing his face in his mate’s arm. “But I slept… for a while. I’m fine.”

“Hmm…” he nods, and he moves his body so he can be over Kyungsoo. He’s already warm, and to be between the fluffy fabric of the sheets and his hot soft skin makes Chanyeol feel cozy and satisfied. He kisses his mate, pressing their bodies together, and his stomach feels bubbly. Kissing like that, with no intention of mating, tastes like a dessert.

They stop kissing when they hear the door open – it wasn’t completely open before, but soon they hear small noises following it. Chanyeol lifts his head and sees Stella and Wolf. She’s crawling fast to their bed, laughing and the poor dog is following her.

“Fuck,” Chanyeol whispers.

“I told you the crib was too small,” Kyungsoo says. “She escaped again.”

“Hey, little lady,” Chanyeol moves to sit on the bed, and she sits too, lifting her arms. “This is not prison break!”

“Don’t pick her up,” Kyungsoo says, stopping Chanyeol.

“Why?” he asks, a bit exasperated. Stella is moving her arms up high, saying aatty. She wants to be picked up.

“Because then you’re teaching her that it’s okay to run away from the crib,” Kyungsoo presses his temples, closing his eyes. “She will associate breaking the rules with getting what she wants.”

Stella keeps saying aatty, but now a bit anxious, trying to stand up. Chanyeol looks down worried.

“Moon, Kyungsoo. This is too complex, she’s not even one year old yet,” he says, and his heart is
“Chanyeol,” Kyungsoo says pointedly.

It’s always the same thing. Chanyeol feeds her three little pots of baby food, and Kyungsoo complains, angry, that Chanyeol fed her too much. “She has to eat half of it for a meal, Chanyeol”, “But she wanted to eat three, what can I do? She’s hungry!” “Well, then stop feeding her. She’s a kid. If you keep feeding her, she will keep eating!” “Do you want me to let my kid go hungry, Kyungsoo? Do you have a stone heart?” “People ask me if she’s five, Chanyeol!” “Well, she’s fat, but she’s my baby and I love my fat baby!”

“Fuck it,” Chanyeol says, and picks her up off the ground, lifting her to kiss her chubby cheeks. “Do you wanted to cuddle with your dads, huh?”

Kyungsoo rolls his eyes, annoyed, even if Stella is moving her legs happily. Chanyeol puts Stella on the bed, next to him. He knows she’s going to crawl until she can rest on Kyungsoo’s chest. She loves to do that; smash her little cheek against him, trying to hug him.

“Tiny dad is mad because I’m turning you into a rebel,” Chanyeol says. “Go kiss the anger out of him.”

Kyungsoo does not have a stone heart so when she tries to hug him, chanting *aaatty aaatty aaatty*, he holds her. She is always excited to be the center of his attention and that’s how Chanyeol recognizes his genes.

“Your dumbass daddy is ruining you,” he says, but when she crawls to hug him, he rubs his nose in her face.

“Hey, no bad words to describe dad,” Chanyeol pinches him softly. “We discussed that.”

“Ohay,” Kyungsoo rolls his eyes again. Stella is quietly resting on him. “But now she’s going to cry when we leave her with the boys.”

Chanyeol knows that. He is the one who cooks the breakfast so she can be around Kyungsoo for a longer period, but he knows she is going to cry. Stella got used to them, to their now smaller house, to their quiet routine of baby care, big daddy, tiny daddy and sometimes a few uncles around. He doesn’t know how much time Kyungsoo’s heat will take to break, so he’s already worried. He holds her and sings while Kyungsoo checks her things, and pack the rest of the stuff.

Chanyeol’s old house is just a few minutes walking, so they get there by car in a blink of an eye. Stella is now happier, because she recognizes her uncle’s place, and she knows she will see the triplets. She loves them and calls them *aaaaby*, hugging each one tightly like she does with any dog. It’s a bit scary because she’s almost one year old, but she is really big and strong. But the triplets just laugh. They laugh about everything – no one in the fucking world would believe they’re not genetically related to Jongdae.

Minseok opens the door, and Stella waves his arms to him.

“Hello, baby star,” Minseok says, grabbing her and shaking. “Ah, you’re heavy. What are you feeding her?”

“Chanyeol is feeding her everything,” Kyungsoo says dryly. He gets very irritable in his preheat. “It’s really okay to let her here? We don’t know when—”

“What’s four kids after three…” Baekhyun says. He’s pushing the triplets’ stroller, and they are
wearing matching floral clothing. “Can we take her to the park?”

“Yes,” Kyungsoo nods, pointing to Chanyeol to give him Stella’s stroller. “She sleeps at six and wakes up three and five in the morning, first to eat, then after to play. Then she stays awake, she doesn’t like taking naps. I’m leaving enough diapers for four days.”

“Calm down, it’s not like we haven’t been with her,” Minseok says, and he kisses her cheek. “Cute thing!”

“We won’t be contactable,” Kyungsoo frowns. “If she gets sick—”

“Minnie is a literal doctor, like calm the fuck down,” Baekhyun sighs. “Jongdae! Where the fuck are you?”

“I’m going,” he says and he appears in the room with two big bags. He’s using his “ignorance is the disability” shirt, that sometimes the other boys use too. Jongdae seems ready to travel the world, but he’s only walking to a park; sometimes Chanyeol forgets that they have to carry everything versus three.

“Why are you so quiet?” Minseok asks Chanyeol, and Stella is trying to escape from his arms because she saw the triplets and she’s now in her aaaby monologue.

“Kyungsoo is mad at me, and I don’t want him to get angry,” Chanyeol says. “He will be mean to me until the heat starts.”

“Shut up,” Kyungsoo spits. Chanyeol mouths okay.

“Well, Stella,” Jongdae says, smiling at her. “You’ll be free of them for a while now, so, congratulations.”

Chanyeol is cold. He is really cold.

Sitting on a stone bench and staring at the green woods in his front, he has nothing to do but think about life and worry. He worries about Stella, first, because it’s automatic. He has no phone to check on her; he’s fucking naked. The lady next to him seems unimpressed. Most people in this Moon Cult thing seems unimpressed about most things, actually. He can’t say it bothered him, but it’s weird. The only reason he agreed with this jungle mating thing was because Kyungsoo asked. And, of fucking course, Chanyeol says yes. He can’t even complain. They treat them affably, and he sees how Kyungsoo is positively surprised to see places where betas and omegas are carefree, smiling and relaxed. Chanyeol can’t help but imagine a tinier Kyungsoo in a choir looking at a full church of
omegas looking down, silent, and how he looks, now, these people who talk about the power of heats, the importance of betas, the relevance of being different. Chanyeol likes that Kyungsoo can be in a place that sees things differently, even if he’s not really sure if he agrees with every word. Chanyeol also isn’t sure, and he has a hard time to understand the way they talk about nature and align them with people. The world is a beautiful place, full of things he will never understand, but as long as he can make his beloved ones happy, then he’s happy too.

“When I can go find him?” he asks the lady. She’s staring at the moon. It’s a new moon.

“When you can find him by scent,” she says calmly. “Can you, now? Can you feel his scent?”

“Not yet,” he sighs.

“Then wait, Alpha,” she smiles. “Don’t worry.”

He wishes he could be calm, but the last heat he spent with Kyungsoo was Stella’s conception. He is afraid Kyungsoo is in pain, or even worse; he’s alone, naked in those woods. He knows it’s just a farm and there’s no wild animal, but… if his heat is as strong as the previous ones than he is defenseless even against an angry bird.

It seems an eternity ago when he met Kyungsoo in his first heat. Now everything has changed, and he couldn’t ever predict his future. He was so sad and desolate when he signed up for CHOOSE, and now he can’t help but find a billion reasons to smile every day. Stella’s first words. The day when his fans waited for him in front of a radio station. A story that Jongin told him while laughing so much he was spitting his pizza. A small rat he found at home and now he’s taking care of against Kyungsoo’s warnings. The new and signed copy of Junmyeon’s book. The sunset he saw with Stella sleeping on his chest. The new guitar he bought. Jongdae’s awarded news article in the newspaper. A nice caramel and cinnamon frappe Kyungsoo made for him. Sehun’s call to tell him he started the adoption process. The way Stella reacts to his songs. The nice evening he spent with his alpha friends learning how to play poker because they all sucked. Waking up every day with Kyungsoo lazily cuddling him. The triplet’s weird form of communication that sometimes includes barking like dogs. The feeling when he hugs Minho after finishing a song. The sight of his mother teaching Stella to speak. Running in the morning. Eating ice cream with Choa and Yeri when they come to visit. Playing the drums on stage. The coffee Minseok makes him when he’s waiting for Stella to wake up so they can go home. Kyungsoo’s laugh when he’s watching cartoons. Wolf’s barks every time a stranger tries to talk to Stella. That time he slept until late and he woke up with the notifications of a fan project to send him love. The night he came home early and found Kyungsoo singing to make Stella sleep.

Kyungsoo’s scent.

Chanyeol doesn’t ask, he just runs. If he can feel the smell, his heat is already going strong. He is a bit desperate, and he doesn’t even care if he’s walking barefoot on sticks and leaves. He jumps over the stones, he doesn’t have to check twice, he knows where Kyungsoo is. Chanyeol finds the tent – it’s not big and there’s few water bottles next to it. He has to crawl to come in, and Kyungsoo’s scent is strong, but he’s not anxious.

Kyungsoo is lying peacefully inside, eyes closed. Chanyeol doesn’t have to announce his entry – to everyone else they smell the same, but they can distinguish each other’s scent. He carefully straddles Kyungsoo and presses their foreheads together. They stay like this, in silence, until Kyungsoo turns his head, showing his neck. He’s not in a rush; his scent is strong but brings calmness.

Chanyeol kisses the same place he bit before. And when he bites, Kyungsoo screams in a very similar way to that day in the kitchen. Chanyeol understands; they’re liberating old things, they’re
becoming wilder now. He licks the place clean carefully, slowly.

Kyungsoo lets out a long sigh, and whispers in Chanyeol ear:

“We did this before,” he says, barely audible. “I think… we really did this before.”

Chanyeol looks at him. Yeah, they did this before. Now, he knows Kyungsoo’s body better than his own. He knows what his mate likes and what he doesn’t. They don’t need to talk much, no further explaining.

And that’s how Chanyeol knows exactly what Kyungsoo is talking about.
She ties her boot carefully, so it takes ten minutes to be completely done. She has a perfect order for things, and in competition days, every ritual during the day is sacred. Unfortunately, she is not as focused as she likes to be.

Stella went to Uncle Yixing’s office in the morning. That’s not the problem, of course. She can always visit her “uncles” and “aunts” (they’re not biologically their family, with the exception of Aunt Yura and Uncle Seungsoo), but she did in secret. She lied to her dads.

Stella hates to keep secrets, but lying is even worse; her dads trust her. She said she was going to take a walk, because she was anxious, and, believing in her words, Tiny Dad sent her favorite meal. Stella ate the food and her guilt too. But Stella couldn’t tell them why she was going to visit Uncle Yixing, because it was her business.

Stella was feeling different later. Awake, perceptive… aware of things she never perceived before. She asked Uncle Yixing to test her. It took approximately thirty minutes – Big Dad sent her a dozen motivational messages and old memes during the waiting, truly believing she was just nervous about the fight later.

Now, as Stella picks her gloves, she knows she presented. She has no idea how she is going to inform her dads, really. She will have to admit she lied, but that’s not the worst thing, of course. She remembers when she needed to buy her first bra, and Big Daddy cried while hugging a mannequin, she’s so big, Kyungsoo, what are we going to do. To complete Stella’s humiliation, when she was embarrassed because of her bra size, Tiny Dad said, in the front of everyone, there’s nothing shameful about having big breasts, Stella.

Stella knew they would freak out if they knew she presented. Big Daddy would cry exaggeratedly like he did every first day of school in every year and Tiny Dad would pretend he didn’t care then he would control every single detail in Stella’s life. She needs time and she has a fight to win, so she can think about that later. Uncle Yixing is good at keeping secrets, he’s the only Uncle who never tells embarrassing stories about her dads. Uncle Baekhyun and Uncle Jongdae always tell her about Big Dad’s problematic teenage years, he skipped class to learn the drums, so he can’t judge you if you do the same. Uncle Minseok told her that Tiny Dad kicked Big Dad’s ass on the first day she called him “Tiny Dad” – now, he has to accept because Stella is seven centimeters taller than him. Uncle Nini showed her pictures of Tiny Dad dressed as a penguin and gave her all the animes he used to watch. Uncle Yifan told her things that her dads didn’t want Stella to know, ah, they weren’t exactly a happy couple when they started to… see each other.

Stella has no idea of how they met. People ask sometimes, because that’s a nice story to hear, how parents met. But Stella had to hear, only when you’re an adult. The closest to knowing about it she got was when she told them she wanted to be a boxer. Well, I guess you’ll have to work hard, Tiny
Dad said. *Aren’t we supposed to ask her to at least go to college?* Big Dad asked, confused. *We both hated to study what we don’t like, Chanyeol, she can be whatever she wants. But what if she decides to be a stripper, Kyungsoo?* Tiny dad laughed, *Well, you were a sex worker, you can’t bash strippers, can you?* Big Dad was offended, *You’re even worse because you paid for it.*

*Big dad was a sex worker?* Stella asked. They both got white as a paper. *This is that adult thing we talked about,* Tiny dad said, *Go sleep.*

Stella will learn a lot of things now she presented. Soon she will be an adult. She warms herself, jumping and stretching. She has to focus on the fight – she has to prove she will be good at it. She’s just a teenager, but she knows what she wants.

“Stella!”

She almost screams. Motherfucking Jiho is trying to invade the room by the window.

“Are you crazy?” Stella asks, clutching her chest. Jiho Jumps, falling on the floor.

“You only noticed this… now?” Eonji asks, opening the door like a normal human being should do, instead of jumping windows. He’s using his crutches today, instead of his prosthesis, so he sits in the nearest chair. Jinho walks after him, in silence.

“What are you guys doing here?” she sighs. *I fight in twenty minutes. I can’t hang out.*

“We are here to motivate you,” Jiho says, climbing in the window to give a better effect. She’s being very dramatic since she presented. She woke up her entire house walking with no pants, screaming *I have a knot!* Stella felt miserable because she was older than Jiho, but… now…

“You’re different today,” Jinho says. He’s too perceptive in his quiet way. You can’t hide a secret from him for too long. He was the one who found out who dated who between their uncles. Stella was mortified when she found out and she never looked at Uncle Sehun and Uncle Junmyeon the same way. Jinho also found out every key and password their dads tried to hide. It was because of his skills that they ran away to eat ice cream at night, on their vacations.

“Yes, you do… smell differently,” Eonji inspects her, leaning on the chair. It’s hard to tell what he’s thinking, but Stella sniffs herself. “Did you take a bath today?”

“Oh, shut up,” Stella throws the gloves on him. “What kind of motivation is this?”

“I’m using my lucky pants,” Jinho explains. “You can’t see, but I’m cheering for you under my pants.”

“This is the worst sentence construction ever,” Jiho says, disgusted. “But you’re a kid, so I forgive you.”

“Just because you were born few hours before us—” Eonji starts.

“A day!” Jiho screams.

“Late hours on the nineteenth, and we were born in the first hours of the twentieth, it doesn’t make you much older.” He finishes.

“No, but makes me a Capricorn, which it’s a lot better than an Aquarius.”

“Who said that?” Jinho asks.
“Will I die being obligated to listen to this never-ending discussion?” Stella asks, tired. “Guys, you’re not helping me.”

“I’m using my lucky crutches,” Eonji points. Ah, so that’s the reason he’s not using his prosthesis today. Stella softens, that’s kind of cute. Eonji is an athlete like her, a runner, and it must be uncomfortable to not be able to be as fast as he is normally.

“Ah, thank you,” she says, smiling. “Both of you.”

“Aren’t you going to ask what my lucky thing is?” Jiho asks, jumping off the window into the room again. Stella is not even worried; Jiho did crazier things. Also, Stella witnessed Big Dad being very… reckless too.

Once, when Stella signed up for a summer camp with the Twins and Tiny Dad wanted to go on a Winery Tour to study in the same period, they had to leave in the middle of the night, otherwise, Big Dad wouldn’t let them go in peace. Stella and Tiny Dad packed everything in the middle of the night, while Big Dad slept, and when they opened the car doors… he woke up. Tiny Dad was fast enough to put everything in and start the car before Big Dad left home, but Stella had to watch her Big Dad climbing a car in movement while screaming, Kyungsoo, where are you taking my daughter? Where are you going? Tiny dad had to make a 360° circle so Big Dad would fall. When he did, they waited to see if he was okay, but Big Dad not only was alive and well, but he also ran after the car again. This time, Tiny Dad was faster. It wasn’t very effective because Big Dad sent a thousand messages asking where they are going, if they were going to abandon him, if they hate him… at least a hundred was Kyungsoo!

Stella was only ten and she was really scared that Big Dad was saying the truth when he said, if you two spent three months away from me I’ll die, Kyungsoo. I’ll literally die. So she asked Tiny Dad what they would do if Big Dad died. I’ll find you a better dad, he said dryly. Stella, a poor kid, was scared and told Big Dad where they were hiding. In less than two hours, Big Dad caught them. Nor Stella or Tiny Dad left. Big Dad brought them home and Tiny Dad had to explain I was joking, Chanyeol. Big Dad wasn’t convinced, Stella, I’m your only dad, do not call anyone else like that, especially this man Kyungsoo is cheating on me with.

In the end, Stella went to the summer camp. Tiny Dad explained, Me and your dad will need some privacy and I’ll have to do a lot of things to compensate this. Most of them are adult things, so you will be better away. Travel safety and obey Uncle Minnie, Dad loves you.

“I don’t want to know,” Stella says, tired.

“I wrote GO STELLA on my bra,” she says, lifting her shirt. Eonji and Jinho look away at the same time.

“She has to stop taking her clothes off,” Eonji sighs. It’s a real problem. Jiho was suspended three times because of that. The other ten was for fighting, and Stella helped her, sometimes, so she wouldn’t be beaten down. Eonji would help too, and once he beat a guy with his prosthetic leg so hard that the man lost a tooth. Jinho is a pacifist person and he fights by finding out people’s weaknesses.

“Thank you, Jiho,” Stella smiles, pushing her friend’s shirt down. “I’m very motivated now.”

“Maybe you would be more if your crush came here to cheer you,” Jinho says. The three make a sound of OOOOOOOO, and Jiho sings Stella and her girlfriend under a tree…

“Shut up,” Stella says. She doesn’t have a crush or a girlfriend. She does like Seoyoon. She’s young,
her mothers are cool, and they’re friends. That’s all. Stella wouldn’t be embarrassed if they were dating, but she’s too young. Dating… and mating is a serious thing. But she doesn’t think it is a bad or shameful thing. She loves her dads’ relationship. She likes that Big Dad wakes up early on their mating anniversary so he can make everything ready for them to have a nice day. She likes when Tiny Dad comes home and he brings the things Big Dad likes the most. She thinks it’s cute how they are always holding hands, sometimes unconsciously. In their holidays, they play songs together and Stella never gets tired of how good they sound. When she comes home after Sunday training, they’re watching movies together on the couch or taking naps, and she can’t help but take pictures of them cuddling. They fight a lot; Tiny Dad seems to hate the overexcited Big Dad’s fans and Big Dad wants to kill people who get too intimate with Tiny Dad if they exclude him. Stella doesn’t understand much, but she knows it’s serious.

She wants to mate in the future – but now she has a fight to win.

“Guys, I need to focus,” she warns. “Can you give me some space?”

Stella has been saying this since she was five and they left their beds to sleep over her.

“We will dress you, then.” Jinho smiles. They help her to put on the gloves and each one kisses them for luck. In few minutes, Stella is alone with her thoughts again. For many people this would be a dumb fight; Stella isn’t being paid, she is just a kid. This is not a professional fight, but for her every fight is important, and today her dads will be watching. They’re good dads. Big Dad always taught her things, let her play with his instruments, took her to eat candies and to watch the sea waves. Tiny dad always looked out for her, helped her with any problem, and when Stella was too scared to sleep alone, he would sleep with her, holding her tightly to his chest – and she felt so safe.

She has to prove she’s good too, and the best way to show this is with her talent. She’s good in few things, but she is excellent in being a fighter.

Also, shes’s a beta – but what the hell that means?

Chapter End Notes

(things that some of you may not know)

1. Tides are really caused by the gravitational pull of the moon (and sun). The moon cycle is 28 days, like the reproductive cycle of fertile people (with a uterus). Water is a receptive and feminine element in astrology, and many cultures link female goddess and water. There are many references of 13 months calendar uses (and suggestions) – 28 days each, following the moon and menstrual cycle and dividing the year equally.

2. The “Moon” tarot card drawing (Marselha tarot) shows both dog and wolf. Artemis
and Diana, (greek and roman, respectively) moon goddess, had dog companions.

3. All the books here are parodies of real books/movies/songs, and the book “Omegas are from Neptune and Alphas are from Uranus” is a parody of a famous book “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus”, a sexist/classist hell that funnily meets astrology concepts between (femininity) Venus/Aphrodite and (masculinity) Mars/Ares.

4. Neptune in astrology is the ruler of pisces (modern astrology), based on the god (greek: Poseidon) of the sea, where life began – Neptune is linked with visions, passions, illusions, spirituality, trances and emotional violence. Uranus is the ruler of aquarius (modern astrology), based on the primordial god (sky) who impregnated the Earth (goddess Gaea); his child cut his phallus off to stop him from keep coupling – Uranus is associated to explosions, electricity, accidents, technology and new/weird/eccentric things.

5. Ixion and Nessus are rapists in greek mythology (who isn’t…), punished by their sexual violence. Minos was the first king of Crete, and he had numerous children; there’s a famous painting with a snake biting his penis. Vesta is a greek virgin goddess. Her female devotees, the vestals, were also virgins.

6. Stella is the latin word for star. The root of the word con-stella-tion.

7. Baby blues is a real condition, and it’s not the same as post-birth depression.

8. In astrology charts, the moon represents the mother, the birthing, the family and past; moon worship is strong related to the matriarchy-lines in history. Many female goddess were associated with the moon-nature-occult.

9. There’s no Igarapé people, but it’s an indigenous word (means a type of Amazonian river). Yorubá is a real language, and you will find no coincidences between some omegas references here and some female orishas.

10. Alpha/Omega suppressants are based on birth control pills, and for THE LOVE OF THE MOON, pay attention to its collateral effects, uterus people :(.

11. I used MANY catholic references here. I just want to clarify I was raised by a catholic mother (and I was a church kid), and my criticism is not an attack to the ones who believe in God/Jesus/Bible. No disrespect or my mother will beat my ass.

12. Pinky and The Brain is an animation created by Steven Spielberg, from the 90’s. It shows two lab rats trying to dominate the world. It’s super fun, go watch it, 00’s kids!

13. ABO dynamics and moon-related stuff have always fascinated me, but I was constantly disappointed by the naturalization of some oppressive aspects being invoked – in special, metaphorical heteronormativity and sexism, to create the idea of soulmates. Sometimes, I couldn’t take the similarities between alpha-omega “fitting” and toxic masculinity and misogyny. Also, I wanted to create a cohesive universe, since each ABO writer can create their own rules (like, no alpha females, or just omega females get pregnant… etc…); so this is the result – gender theory, paganism, astrology, science and some other small curiosities to build this world. Any person who wants to create anything based on this AU: go on! (just warn me so I can read/see)

14. I’m a visual person, so I created few moodboards to guide me, and you can find them and some other things related to this UA in my tumblr. I don’t plan to write anything else from this UA. Like… more than 300 pages, people!!! I want to write more, but I also want to die.

15. I have to thank my dear beta London9calling, and my friends (Vero, you too), especially my non-exo-l friends who read this thing (they don’t know what AO3 means…) and send me threatening messages (“let the tall one be happy”, “the alpha and the omega deserve a happy end”, etc…). They helped me finishing this fic after almost 6 months of creation and writing – and I thought I wasn’t going to post this, so they were the ones cheering me.

Please tell me… your impressions. Or anything, really. Just… talk to me… I will… talk
back... I feel like I put many things here, and no one noticed some correlations or... I
don’t know. I’m just scared I may have created something very confusing ahahah. Talk
to me!!!! I’m an insecure Moon Child!!!
Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed the ride.

End Notes

1. Howard Garner's theory exists as described.
2. Astrology too, the content was a mix of internet stuff.
3. Any references to universities as studies or researches are my creation.
4. ABO gender hierarchy is not only similar to our sexism, but also a mix of homophobia and
gender issues.
5. ask me on tumblr (la-bruja-del-mar) anything

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!