Immoral Versus Illegal

by GordandV

Summary

Or in which Viktor Nikiforov is a top Battle Action Magician, Yuri Plisetsky is biding his time in the Magician Agency of Regulation and Control until he can join Russia’s elite wizards as a BAM, and Yuuri Katsuki is Japan’s resident necromancer.

Notes

V does write her own original stories once in a while, and this YOI fanfiction is actually loosely based on one of those stories. Wizards, magic, morals, acronyms, foul language, possible plot holes, uncomfortable situations/ideas ahead. (Hence the M rating. Things get dark and deep.)

V has a bad habit of writing Vicchan as Vi-chan. She also wrote this before the fandom found out Yuri’s cat is called Puma Tiger Scorpion: she called Yuri’s cat Varya and is keeping it that way just for this story.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 1: Welcome to the Magician Agency of Regulation and Control

“MARC’s American division just sent this over for us to look at,” Viktor says while he deposits a large manila envelope on Yuri’s desk beside a stack of flashcards. “I already asked Yakov for permission for you to help me work on it.”

The look Yuri gives Viktor and then the envelope is slightly manic. “Finally!”

Viktor’s smile softens as Yuri snaps his fingers: the top of the envelope rips open in a perfect line. “Yakov wanted to me to remind you that just because you’re MARC’s youngest associate, that doesn’t guarantee you’ll make BAM. You need some diplomatic ability in addition to field skills.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Yuri carefully pulls the stack of neatly packaged documents out.

“This is an excellent first step in showing MARC that you deserve to be a Battle Action Magician,” Viktor continues. “If you don’t light anyone on fire—”

“That was one time and that Canadian asshole deserved it!” Yuri angrily retorts immediately.

“-and manage to complete this assignment without causing any diplomatic incidents, then Yakov might vouch for you.”

Yuri tears his gaze from the topmost paper. “Yakov might what?”

“Vouch for you,” Viktor repeats. “He might be retired, but he still holds some influence in MARC. I also think his ex-wife helps oversee BAM trainees. If you help me with this, he’ll vouch for you and you might be accepted in BAM early.”

Yuri grins.

“But only if you act like a professional the entire time,” Viktor says seriously. “No cursing anyone out, no disrespecting other wizards, and you have to follow protocol. Yakov will have your head if you rile up another MARC division.”

Yuri nods. “I’ll do my best.”

Viktor smiles and claps his hands together. “Excellent! Let’s see what the United States has sent us to look at this time.”

“I bet they got stumped,” Yuri says while he moves the topmost letter, written entirely in English, aside for the matching copy in translated Russian. “Dumb Americans.”

Viktor frowns and snatches the letter away. He frowns at Yuri who scowls before amending his words.

“I mean… We’ll give them another perspective,” Yuri says slowly. “It’s good that they decided to ask for help.”

Viktor nods. “That’s right.” He offers the letter back. “We’re all part of the Magician Agency of
Regulation and Control. We don’t hoard information. We ask other countries for help to avoid conflict.” He’s seen too many almost-tragedies be avoided due to international cooperation.

Viktor is still considered young for a BAM agent. He’s almost thirty, but he has enough experience to also be considered a seasoned pro. That, and he’s ranked as one of Russia’s top magicians: there are very few things that can be thrown at him that he can’t handle by himself.

“The United States has reason to believe that there’s a necromancer in Japan,” Yuri says quietly once he’s finished the letter. He locks eyes with Viktor. “I thought necromancers were extinct.”

Viktor just holds his hands up and shrugs. There are plenty of different synonyms for magicians, wizards, magic users, the like, but necromancer is a term only used for one specific type of magic and usually elicits the same response: fear. They can raise the dead.

“What did MARC have to say about necromancers in your lectures?” Viktor asks. “I’m sure it’s changed since I was in school.”

Yuri shrinks in one himself. Yuri Plisetky, one of the youngest people to ever join the Magician Agency of Regulation and Control with aspirations to become a Battle Action Magician, is suddenly quiet.

“Yuri?” Viktor asks.

“I thought they were extinct,” Yuri repeats. “MARC said necromancers killed one another off during the Slaughtering of the Death Arts.”

Because the only thing that can kill a necromancer is another necromancer. For whatever reason, death is only permanent when necromancer on necromancer action happens. And there had been a time where necromancers went around killing one another for enough years that it got a fancy name: Slaughtering of the Death Arts.

“Not every necromancer died,” Viktor says. “That’s impossible.” The Slaughtering of the Death Arts, from Viktor’s limited understanding and recollection of classes, produced the singular most terrifying wizard the world had ever seen. “What about Abdiction?”

Yuri snorts. “That nut job?”

Viktor raises an eyebrow. “Weren’t you just shaking in fear a second ago?”

“I was not!” Yuri offers the letter to Viktor. “But Abdiction, seriously? He’s more like a legend. An urban legend.”

Viktor just sighs.

“Wasn’t he that necromancer that got shackled to a king just so that he could fuck a seer or something?” Yuri asks distractedly while he begins looking at the other documents.

Viktor bites his lip: trying to explain the Horseman War and politics involved will most likely just go over Yuri’s head since Yuri is still trying to pass Diplomacy 101.

“Uh… yes.” There’s no point in trying to explain all the historical and factual sightings of Abdiction. Or that the fact that he’s been alive since the beginning of time. And that, if Abdiction really wanted, he could walk in MARC and kill every single magician with just a flick of his wrist.

Yuri begins spreading colored pictures across his desk and laminated index cards.
“There was some type of mass death of Jack mackerel near a Japanese beach,” Yuri says while he flicks through the information.

Viktor looks over the silver bodies and frowns. Fish are spread out on the sand in droves. He can’t even begin to imagine how many creatures died, and unfortunately the pictures are crisp and clear, professionally done.

“Experts thought it was just some type of natural disaster,” Yuri continues. “But then this happened.” He pushes a picture of a whale, beached amongst the fish, forward. “Apparently a humpback whale beached itself when people were investigating what happened to the mackerel.”

Viktor feels his heart constrict: he’s an animal lover himself, and seeing the massive creature on the beach is even worse than the tons of fish.

“This is sad,” Viktor says. “But how does some dead Japanese aquatic life make people think there’s a necromancer?” Viktor continues to look through the photos.

“Apparently the whale was being tracked for research.” Yuri pauses and then looks up. “It’s over seventy years old.”

“So?”

“Humpback whales have a lifespan of fifty years.” Yuri pushes another stamped and embossed letter forward. “And this whale had been reported deceased fifteen years ago.”

“Hm.” Viktor sits on the edge of Yuri’s desk and starts looking through the papers and photos/ “Interesting, but not convincing.”

Yuri frowns.

“Correlation does not equal causation,” Viktor reminds. “Maybe the whale trackers made a mistake and this whale never died in the first place and just lived a long and happy life somewhere else before it returned to Japan. Researchers lose track of animals all the time and assume they’re dead before they show up again.”

“They had a funeral for the whale, Viktor,” Yuri says as he shifts in his chair so that he can get at his mouse and keyboard. “The researchers found it floating in the ocean. They sent me a link for the video.”

The entire video is filled with Japanese audio and characters. Viktor recognizes a few common words and phrases and what the whale is called: Sumi. The video is grainy, dated by technology but Sumi is clearly dead. There are birds perched on the still whole carcass.

Viktor watches a few people toss flower wreaths toward Sumi: an appropriate burial at sea he supposes.

“The whale was declared dead fifteen years ago,” Yuri says as he closes the link. “So how exactly does it show up and beach itself with only a few pieces of skin missing as if it had only died the day before?”

Viktor narrows his eyes. “That’s… very interesting.” He shakes his head. “But one strange happening doesn’t mean there’s a necromancer in Japan.”

“How about five?” Yuri suggests.
“What?”

Yuri holds out a piece of paper filled with bullet points. “The whale was declared dead fifteen years ago and beaches itself and dies. A popular Japanese deer in Nara, twenty years past its expected lifespan, drops dead. A beluga, also being tracked for research, is found with half of its tail gone and was expected to perish within days. Same whale is found dead in apparent perfect health despite still missing its tail five years later. Hana, a beloved zoo elephant, breaks the world record for longest lived captive elephant before dropping dead. A Siberian tiger in another zoo, diagnosed with a rigorous form cancer, lives for another ten years then drops dead without any type of decline.”

Yuri shows pictures of each animal to Viktor.

“They died within seconds on one another, Viktor. Literally seconds.”

Viktor’s eyebrows climb his forehead. “That’s… very interesting.”

Yuri nods and skims another piece of paper. “Nothing but necromancy could have kept all these animals alive and functioning as they were.”

“And what does MARC want us to do?” Viktor asks. “They seem to have an interesting case and a good lead.”

“They don’t know what to do next,” Yuri says. “All these animals died within seconds of one another but were scattered throughout Japan.” He frowns. “I think they’re too scared to go investigate themselves. Since, you know, there might be a necromancer.”

Viktor nods. “Good point, Yuri.” That’s the most obvious reason why the American branch of MARC would pass off the case.

Yuri fingers the photo of the Siberian tiger. Viktor knows he has a soft spot for big cats.

“Now what, Viktor?” Yuri asks.

“We do some research of our own,” Viktor supplies. “Verify stories, make sure none of these deaths were just common deaths, and then…”

“Then?” Yuri asks with a hint of excitement.

“Make sure your passport is up-to-date,” Viktor says with a wink. “You’ve never been to Japan before, have you?”

Yuri shakes his head. “Lots of other countries, but not Japan.”

Chapter End Notes

V doesn't have a set schedule for posting, but she's hoping to post every few days.

If you enjoyed, leave a comment or kudo!
And They’re Off!

Chapter Notes

Shorter chapter but we're slowly moving along.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: And They’re Off!

Yakov is loath to let Yuri out of the office, let alone out of the country. Yuri is, according to Yakov, “a very promising BAM agent if he could keep his head on straight when things don’t go his way.”

“Being a little spitfire is good for a Battle Action Magician!” Viktor points out.

BAM agents lead very physical lifestyles: going after rogue wizards requires both perfect control over magic and insane amounts of cardio. Yuri has both. Mostly.

“And diplomacy,” Yakov growls out. “And to know when to stop. We need rogue wizards alive, Yura. You need to know when to fight, when to stop, and when setting someone on fire is an appropriate response. Canada is still cross with us.”

Yuri has a smartass remark on his tongue, but Viktor, top BAM agent, Yakov’s prodigy, who has willingly taken him on as a pseudo-apprentice, narrows his eyes. Yuri would be an idiot to waste this opportunity since, for all his quips about Viktor, Viktor is a world-class magician, and working with him for any amount of time is bound to put Yuri joining the Battle Action Magician program early in a good light. That, and the fact that Yakov has approved of everything Viktor has asked on behalf of Yuri so far. (And, if Yuri is totally honest, he might have all the raw talent in the world, but if he doesn’t pass Diplomacy 101, Yakov will never let him join BAM. Viktor apparently passed Diplomacy 101 with the highest grade on record.)

“I’ll… apologize to JJ. Again.” Yuri might be speaking between clenched teeth, but his tone is mostly even.

“Wonderful!” Viktor holds out two letters for Yakov to sign. “We’re off to Japan, Yakov.”

“I’m glad you asked this time,” Yakov says. “Remember when you flew off to Brazil without telling me, Viktor?”

“It slipped my mind,” Viktor says. “We’ll bring you a present, Yakov!”

“I’d rather you bring me a necromancer.”

Viktor winces. “Let’s not be hasty, Yakov. That’s a tall order, even for me.”

Yakov sees Yuri and Viktor off at the airport. Their bags are packed and Viktor has all necessary MARC paperwork for a hopefully seamless and painless investigation.

“Be good,” Yakov says while he crushes Yuri against his chest. “Behave.”

“I will! I will! Let go!”
Viktor is much more receptive of the hug. When he and Yakov pull apart, Yakov takes a moment to look at the pair. Viktor is the definition of bright eyed and bushytailed despite the designer sunglasses on his face and two shots of espresso in his coffee. Yuri looks like a surly teenager being dragged along for a family vacation given his scowl and leopard print leggings and matching carryon luggage. Yakov would prefer seeing them off in proper attire, a polo shirt at the very least since both refuse to wear proper wizard robes, but the flight is almost twenty hours and he can understand wanting to be comfortable. Even so, Yuri and Viktor are off to represent MARC’s Russian division.

“Take care of yourselves,” Yakov says once Yuri and Viktor are called to board.

Yuri just waves a hand and heads off to lineup at the gate. Viktor lingers when he catches Yakov’s eye.

“I know Yuri is excited, but remember why you’re going to Japan,” Yakov whispers. “I know Yuri won’t ask for help, but you will, Vitya. Please, don’t get in over your head. Ask for help if you need it.”

“I will,” Viktor promises with a smile.

Yuri and Viktor go over their notes on the plane. All the animal deaths, and their rather mysterious circumstances, have been verified and confirmed as factual after multiple calls, e-mails, and video chats. The pair already have interviews lined up with those people who were closest to the animals and MARC’s Japanese branch.

“At least we’ll get to see lots of the country,” Viktor points out as he and Yuri go over their itinerary. “You’re lucky this is an investigation and not a rogue wizard case. You’d never get this much tourist time otherwise, Yuri.”

Yuri just grunts. He might want join BAM for the action, but he can’t help but be a little excited for their investigation and everything that revolves around it. Viktor has worked in tourist time between interviews, and Yuri is impressed by some of the Japanese fashion he’s seen. He may not like wizard robes or every country’s unique take on them which usually embraces some type of cultural flair, but he certainly wouldn’t say no to something with leopard print. That, and no matter how flaky Viktor may be with promises on or off duty as a top wizard, Viktor has never taken Yuri to a single bad restaurant. Ever.

“Viktor, what do we do if we do find the necromancer?” Yuri asks quietly while the rest of the plane dozes off. “Like, if we actually do find it?”

Viktor has pondered the very same question. “Call in the best Battle Actions Magicians Japan has to offer,” he supplies confidently.

Part of him has already wondered if it would just be better to leave the potential necromancer alone since it apparently isn’t doing anything other than animate animals, but Viktor can’t help but remember Abdiction. Abdiction is a villain in most bedtimes stories that parents their tell children, but since joining MARC, Viktor has learned that most things surrounding Abdiction are rooted in fact, and the world can’t risk having another necromancer on the loose. Viktor just hopes that poking around won’t irritate said necromancer.

Chapter End Notes
V doesn't have a set schedule for posting, but she's hoping every few days.

If you enjoyed, leave a comment or kudo!
Welcome to Yu-topia

Chapter Summary

Moving right along!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 3: Welcome to Yu-topia

“Yu-topia Hot Springs,” Yuri reads before Viktor grabs him for a selfie.

“Last stop!” Viktor says before pressing the side of his phone.

Yuri, as usual, looks less than thrilled while Viktor’s mouth curves into a heart.

#Hastesu # Japan #Yuri still can’t use chopsticks after being in Japan for 5 weeks #FAIL. #LOL

“I can use them fine!” Yuri protests as he likes the picture from his own account. “And I’d use them better if you weren’t such a shitty teacher!”

“Is that why I have to feed you every time we can’t find a fork for you?” Viktor teases. “Come on, let’s go check in! I’ll ask if they have a fork you can just keep on your person.”

“Don’t you dare!”

Yuri glances around curiously at the interior of Yu-topia. There are red lanterns hanging from the ceiling. Multiple cacti are strung with lights, and numerous colorful vases stand amongst the mishmash of decorations. A table covered in a purple cloth and what seems to be boxed food with a truly creepy looking naked baby statue sits in the middle of it. It feels welcoming and homey.

It’s certainly not the fanciest place he and Viktor have stayed at, but Yuri hopes that means that he and Viktor will get one last chance to soak up Japan. A few hotels with familiar chain names had been the exact same as the ones in Russian aside from varied vending machine food and room service menus.

Viktor and Yuri stand at what Viktor hopes is the front desk.

“I’ll be right with you!” someone calls in Japanese.

“He’ll be right with us?” Yuri repeats in slow Russian.

“Very good!” Viktor praises.

Viktor’s Japanese is conversational and Yuri has made leaps in bounds in the language department, mostly due to the fact that he had pushed himself to speak nothing but Japanese in order to get better, even if that meant he had to carry a Russian-to-Japanese dictionary on his person. Viktor is impressed by his dedication and has mentioned on multiple occasions that putting that much effort into a language Yuri isn’t likely to use very often is an something that Yuri can add to his “why I’d
made a badass BAM agent” list that he wants to show Yakov when they get back to Russia.

“Welcome to Yu-topia,” a slightly harried man with black hair and blue glasses says. “Thank you for waiting.”

Viktor waits for Yuri to take charge of their check-in since it means Yuri will get more practice speaking.

“MARC,” Yuri says. “Nikiforov. Check-in.” Yuri’s face twists when he fumbles for the words, “can you please make sure we have two beds?”

The man smiles. “Would English be easier?” he asks. “I speak that.”

Yuri frowns.

“He’s practicing,” Viktor says with a smile before Yuri can say something rude. “But thank you. Checking-in for Nikiforov. MARC should have made our reservations.”

The man’s eyes go wide and he stiffens. “As in Russia’s Viktor Nikiforov? Top BAM agent?”

Viktor beams. “You’ve heard of me?”

“I-I didn’t recognize you!” the man gushes. “You cut your hair!”

Viktor nods. The haircut isn’t exactly recent, but he’s taken to wearing his hair over one eye rather than having it tied back away from his face. Yakov calls him an idiot for obscuring his vision and tells Yuri the same thing.

“You’re amazing!” the man continues. “I saw your takedown of that rogue wizard in Moscow and… and… just wow!”

Viktor continues to smile. “You’re too kind. And you seem to know my name. What’s yours?”

“Katsuki. Yuuri! My family runs the hot springs.”

Viktor points. “He’s Yuri too!”

“Your Japanese is very good,” Yuuri compliments, and Yuri frowns but his ears go red.

“Yuuri!” A matronly woman in red rushes over to the desk and grabs Yuuri by his hands. “You should be resting,” she says in rapid Japanese. “Who said you were allowed out of bed?”

“Mom,” Yuuri says with an embarrassed groan. “We have guests.”

“Oh, guests!” The woman suddenly notices Viktor and Yuri.

“We’re from MARC,” Yuri offers in his best Japanese.

The woman blanches for a moment before smiling. “Nikiforov!” she says brightly. “Yes, we have your room ready!”

It takes only minutes for Hiroko (Viktor and Yuri learn) to check them in and lead them to their room. There are indeed two beds. Yuuri tries to takes the luggage, but his mother begins to fret over him with pet names that sends Viktor into a fit of coughing in an attempt to hold back his laughter since it’s obvious that Hiroko has no idea that he can understand every word she’s cooing at Yuuri.
Yuuri goes red at the stream of attention send his way and offers the weakest of, “enjoy your stay,” before his mother is pushing at his back in the direction of his room.

“-will tell your father what you’ve been up to,” she frets. “And poor Mari!”

“Should we go explore a bit?” Viktor asks once their bags are unpacked. “Yuuri did recommend the hot springs.”

“I’m not getting naked in front of other people,” Yuri snaps. “You’re such an exhibitionist. You go.”

Viktor nods. “Maybe I will.”

“I’m going to head out and finish picking up souvenirs” Yuri says. “When should we meet for dinner?”

Viktor puts a finger on his chin. “Six?”

“Sounds good. Down drown in the hot springs.”

Viktor takes his time making his way from his room to the hot springs. There are plenty of little knickknacks for him to admire in Yu-topia, but a toy poodle resting on a red and gold cushion by the front desk takes the cake. Viktor pauses to admire how lifelike the poodle is: it’s old, ancient really, and the brown fur is flecked with grey. It looks like a much, much older of his own brown doodle Makkachin.

“So cute,” Viktor gushes as he looks over the plush. He knows he shouldn’t touch, but Viktor’s been deprived of his own dog for so many weeks. Surely one little pet won’t hurt?

Viktor leaps back when the toy poodle stirs at his touch.

“Are you alright?” Yuuri is back at the front desk.

“I-it’s real!” Viktor gasps out while Yuuri just smiles and then scoops up the poodle. “I thought it was stuffed!”

The poodle licks at Yuuri’s check. “Vi-chan’s not stuffed,” Yuuri says with a little laugh. “He’s just old.”

“How old?” Viktor asks.

“Hm, almost twenty?” Yuuri suggests while he carefully cradles Vi-chan in his arms and then strides over to Viktor.

“Wow!”

“Want to pet?”

“Please!”

Vi-chan’s fur is as soft and light as cotton candy.

Viktor beams. “I have a doodle at home,” he offers. “He looks just like Vi-chan. But bigger. And less grey.” Vi-chan licks at Viktor’s hand. “You’re still very handsome, old man.”

Yuuri places Vi-chan on the floor. The toy poodle stretches and then slowly begins to walk away.
“He’s my best friend,” Yuuri says softly. “I got him when I was little.”

“I hope Makkachin gets to be as old as Vi-chan,” Viktor says. “He’s lovely.”

“Did you need something?” Yuuri asks.

“No. I was just going to try out the hot springs but got distracted by the décor.”

Yuuri smiles. “Don’t spend too long in the water,” he warns. “It’s better to get out before you think you might pass out.”

“Noted!”

Viktor and Yuri order Yu-topia’s specialty for dinner. They go over their notes and final plans for their last days in Japan while they wait.

“Nothing,” Yuri laments. “We did all those interviews and tours and research, and for what? Nothing.”

Viktor samples a tray of sake. “We did what we could,” he notes. “MARC was very helpful.”

Yuri snorts angrily. “Yeah, but now they know they have a necromancer living here and can’t do anything about it.”

Viktor shrugs. “I think it’s better that they know instead of not knowing. I would be upset if foreign wizards came to Russia and didn’t tell us there was a suspected necromancer.”

Ceramic bangs against ceramic. Yuuri just manages to avoid dumping a bowl of katsudon on Yuri’s head.

“N-necromancer?” he stutters.

Viktor nods and admires the bowl set down in front of himself. “I wouldn’t worry about it, Yuuri,” he says distractedly. “Yuri and I are really here on official MARC business, but we have nothing to show for it except for a few dead animals.”

Yuuri frowns while Yuri attempts to dig into his meal with chopsticks.

“Dead animals?” Yuuri asks.

“The United States MARC branch suspected that there was a necromancer somewhere in Japan,” Viktor says while he raises at eyebrow at Yuri who is clearly struggling to get food to his mouth. “Like a pencil, Yuri.”

“I am!”

Yuuri just laughs and holds his hand out. “May I?”

Yuri nods once and Yuuri adjusts his grip.

“And?” Yuuri prompts.

Viktor takes a moment to comment on the delicious food before continuing. “There’s definitely a necromancer,” he says. “All these animals that should have died years if not decades ago, dropped dead at the same moment. But Yuri and I can’t find any leads about where it is.”
“It?” Yuuri asks while Yuri continues to struggle.

“It. The necromancer,” Viktor clarifies. “Not to worry though! It seems to just like keeping animals alive past their prime.”

Yuuri nods once and turns his attention to Yuri. “I think I can find you a fork,” he offers.

“No! I’m eating my last meal with chopsticks!” Yuri declares.

“I think we have training chopsticks,” Yuuri continues.

“I already bought a pair,” Yuri says before realizing what he’s said.

Viktor just grins. “Do you have any suggestions for what a pair of tourists should do in Hasetsu for their last hurrah, Yuuri?” he asks. “Yuri and I leave in a few days and this is our last stop.”

Yuuri adjusts his glasses. “You two have already seen to biggest things in Japan,” he says. “Hasetsu isn’t that famous.”

“Anything local is fine,” Viktor presses.

“It won’t compare,” Yuuri says with a little blush. “I already visited most of the things you did.”

“Really?” Yuri says through a mouthful of food from where’s abandoned trying to eat with anything compared to class and is instead using his chopsticks to shovel.

“Every few years my parents would take the family on a big trip,” Yuuri explains. “Have you and Viktor been to America yet?”

Viktor nods. “I have, but I haven’t had the chance to take Yuri and show him all best parts of the United States. You?”

“I actually went to college in America. That’s why my English is so good,” Yuuri replies.

“What was your favorite part?” Viktor says. “Of America?”

“I took a road trip with my roommate one summer,” Yuuri says with a laugh. “It’s going to sound silly.”


Yuuri shakes his head.


“Canada?”

“That’s not America!” Yuri says.

“West coast? East coast?”

Yuri continues to shake his head until Viktor gives up.

“Taylor ham,” Yuuri says simply.

“The hell is that?” Yuri demands. “Is that like katsudon?”
Yuuri’s eyes go wide. “Absolutely not!”

“Technically it’s pork roll,” Viktor corrects.

“Oh, not you too!” Yuuri moans. “Don’t tell me you call subs hoagies!”

“But they are!” Viktor teases.

Chapter End Notes

If you've never had Taylor Ham before, you're missing out. It's basically just salt and fat and has no nutritional value, but BOY is it tasty.
Chapter 4: Evidence

Viktor looks over a list of “To Do in Hasetsu” he had found slipped under their door in the morning.


Yuri frowns as he looks out the window. “I thought it wasn’t supposed to snow in April,” he deadpans. “Aren’t cherry blossoms a huge thing here?”

“Unexpected storms do happen,” Yuuri explains as he tugs on one boot so that he can shovel.

Vi-chan walks over to him and Yuuri picks him up and settles him on his pillow before putting on the other shoe. Vi-chan spins around a few times before lying down.

“Did you want help?” Viktor offers. He and Yuri are already dressed for going out.

“Of course not!” Yuuri sounds scandalized. “You’re guests!”

“Wizards,” Yuri says before heading out into the snow and snapping his fingers: the walkway up to Yu-topia is immediately clear and dry. “Viktor is better at charming things so that snow won’t stick. I’m better at melting them.”

Yuuri smiles. “Thank you!”

“I’ll clear it again in a bit if it’s needed,” Viktor says.

“The storm should blow over soon,” Yuuri offers. “I suggest ice-skating since that’s indoors and you won’t get as snowy. Or sampling some of the local eateries.”

Viktor starts to drool at the idea of more authentic Japanese food: he hasn’t had a bad meal yet. “Any recommendations?”

Both Yuri and Viktor are pleasantly tired by the time they return to Yu-topia, stuffed with food and exhausted from ice-skating. Viktor is already craving a long soak and even Yuri seems to be debating his “no getting naked in front of other people” rule. They stop just inside and find a crowd of people. Tension fills the air.

“What happened?” Yuri asks the nearest person in flawless Japanese.

“Yuuri,” the woman replies worriedly.

“Yuuri?” Yuri repeats in confusion.

Despite how short Hiroko is, Viktor can see her kneeling on the floor at the center of the crowd.
No, people are slowly backing up to give the woman space. She’s calling for her husband and Mari (Yuuri’s sister) if Viktor can recall. Viktor takes a deep breath and then gently begins to push his way through.

“I’m a wizard,” he offers. “Maybe I can help.”

Yuuri’s glasses are cracked and a foot away from his head. He’s spread out on his side and Hiroko is gently running her hand through his hair.

“No help,” she snaps in English before leaning over her son protectively. “No.”

“I can help,” Viktor soothes while he holds both hands out. “What happened?”

Yuri elbows his way forward and starts talking in Russian in hopes that no one else can understand him. “Some old lady said he’s epileptic,” he offers. “He probably had a seizure or something.”

“Seizure?” Viktor asks gently.

Hiroko shakes her head and then sits up when Yuuri moans and lifts his head. There’s already a bruise blossoming on his forehead which suggests he hit the floor. He raises a hand to his face and continues making distressed noises when two other people in red make their way to the front.

“I told you not to overdo it,” Mari hisses while Yuuri’s father helps Yuuri sit up.

Yuuri winces and then both hands go to his neck. He twists and pushes and then lets out a sigh of relief. The entire room flinches at the cracks and pops.

“Where’s Vi-chan?” Yuuri slurs.

Said poodle is slowly weaving his way around people’s legs to get to Yuuri. He crawls into Yuuri’s lap and then curls up. One of Yuuri’s hands finds his fur while the other probes at the bruise. Viktor risks stepping closer.

“I think you have a concussion,” he says worriedly. “Should we call an ambulance? Doctor? Medi-magician?”

“It’s fine,” Mari says hotly. “This happens sometimes. Yuuri’s fine.”

“I’m alright,” Yuuri offers. “I just need to go lie down.”

Hiroko picks up Vi-chan and Viktor makes a motion to go help Mari and Toshiya get Yuuri to his feet, but Mari glares at him.

“No!”

Yuri grabs Viktor by the wrist and drags him out of Yu-topa at a jog.

“Yuri!” Viktor says in shock. “What’s gotten into you?”

Yuri looks around and then drops his voice. Snow continues to swirl around them.

“Viktor…”

“What? Spit it out!” Viktor cranes his neck to look at Yu-topia’s front doors. “Yuuri was hurt.”

Yuri hisses and shakes his head. “He was more than hurt,” he says. “He was dead!”
“Huh?”

The air shifts. Viktor realizes it as a protective shield as Yuri’s magic flares green around them for a moment before the shield turns invisible. Snowflakes begin to collect on the dome.

“Yuuri was dead,” Yuri whispers. “His neck was snapped.”

Viktor snorts. “Yuri, he had a seizure-”

“And fell and banged his head and snapped his neck,” Yuri says. “Was I the only one who noticed his vertebrae wanting to break out of his neck?”

Viktor rolls his eyes. “And how exactly would you know what a broken neck looks like?”

“You don’t?” Yuri counters. “I’m training to be a BAM, Viktor, I know what snapped necks look like. Yuuri forced his bones back into place once he sat up.”

“Ridiculous,” Viktor says dismissively. “Fine, Yuuri snapped his neck when he fell over. He died. How is it that he got back up and started talking?”

Yuri looks aghast. “Did all that skating melt your brain?” he demands angrily. “It’s the entire reason why we’ve been here! Yuuri’s the necromancer.”

“What?”

“He died and raised himself,” Yuri says firmly.

Viktor inhales deeply and then exhales to calm himself. “I know you wanted this investigation to have a neat and tidy ending, Yuri, but sometimes that doesn’t happen. Just because you think you saw Yuuri’s neck break-”

“Because I did!”

“I think we need some more concrete evidence before we go ahead and accuse someone of being a necromancer,” Viktor finishes. “Imagine how embarrassed MARC would be if we accuse an innocent person.”

Yuri scowls. “It’s him, Viktor! He broke his neck when he fell!”

Viktor purses his lips and rolls his eyes.

“All we need to do make sure he has another accident-” Yuri begins frantically.

Viktor grabs Yuri’s chin with his hand. Yuri stops speaking.

“Do you have any idea what you’re suggesting?” Viktor asks slowly while his hand begins to shake. “If there is any chance that you’re wrong, a person will die, Yuri. And they will not get back up.”

Yuri steps back and brushes Viktor’s hand away roughly.

“How could you even suggest something like that?” Viktor demands softly. “How?”

“I know what I saw!” Yuri repeats. “He’s the necromancer!”

Viktor runs a hand down his face. “Yuuri… we need evidence. Proof. And a plan. If, and that’s a big if, you’re right, we’ll need to call MARC and have backup.”
Yuri shakes his head. “Backup for what?”

“A necromancer is a necromancer,” Viktor says. “We can’t handle Yuuri by ourselves.”

“He’s epileptic,” Yuri grinds out. “He’s not all there, Viktor. We could take him down.”

Yuri’s dome flickers and then disappears. Snow gets dumped on both of them from where it’s collected and Yuri, very rightfully so, tries and fails to not curl in on himself while Viktor stares at him and lets some of his magic loose. It’s the wizard equivalent of flexing, of showing off your power. Yuri, despite his desire to stand up perfectly straight and stick his chin out defiantly and rise to Viktor’s challenge, fails. The snow on Viktor begins to evaporate and then the pressure in the air is gone. Yuri gasps and slowly begins to collect himself.

“I will send you back to Russia this instant if you even think about trying to take down a necromancer by yourself,” Viktor hisses. “Have I made myself clear?”

“Yes,” Yuri grumbles. He knows he’s pushed Viktor too far.

“We need to be realistic about this,” Viktor says quietly as he looks around to make sure they’re still alone. “I’ll call Yakov tonight and tell him what you think you’ve found out. I’ll extend our time in Hasetsu. Our new mission is to find evidence that Yuuri is a necromancer, if he is one.”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter should be up sometime next week. V is off to an anime convention for the weekend and is also unfortunately scheduled to work the moment she gets back.
Chapter Notes

Apologies for the wait, but V went straight from her con to work and today was the first day where she had some free time.

Chapter 5: Get Well Soon

“Come in,” Yuuri calls gently when he hears a knock on his door. He suspects it’s his mother or father checking up on him again, but an unexpected body strides into Yuuri’s bedroom.

Yuuri short-circuits: it’s Viktor.

“I brought you a get well soon present,” Viktor says while he offers an onigiri plush to Yuuri. “How do you feel today?”

Yuuri quickly sets his handheld game aside and tries to sit up without disturbing Vi-chan who is curled up in his blankets beside him.

“B-better,” Yuuri stutters out before accepting the plush. “Thank you.”

“It’s from Yuri and myself,” Viktor says before glancing at Vi-chan. “You’re sure you’re alright?”

“I’m used to it,” Yuuri assures. “I’m sorry you and Yuri had to see that. Most people at Yu-topia know better than to cause a scene like that.”

Viktor smiles and then looks around Yuuri’s room. “Is that me?” he asks excitedly.

Yuuri inhales sharply: having one of his idols casually stroll into his room had never been an issue before. There’s a small collection of posters taped to one of Yuuri’s walls, and Viktor steps closer so he can get a better look.

“I didn’t know my BAM recruitment posters got translated!” he says brightly.

“You’re handsome no matter where you are,” Yuuri chokes out in shame.

And not all the posters are Japanese; Yuuri has access to the internet and international shipping. Viktor laughs when he looks at one of his most recent BAM promotional posters and then turns around and mimics the pose.

“Yuuri, you should come join MARC,” he teases. “Or become a BAM.”

Yuuri continues to flush and busies himself with inspecting the new plush so he can avoid looking Viktor in the eye. “I’m not a wizard, Viktor.”

“No?”

“What would make you think that?” Yuuri asks. “Hasetsu doesn’t have a large wizard population, and no one in my family has magic.”
“Oh. That’s a shame,” Viktor says sadly.

“Why?”

“I think you’d make a lovely wizard.”

Yuuri just begins to sputter nonsense.

“I can sign these if you’d like,” Viktor offers.

“Really?” Yuuri’s head shoot ups. “I mean, would you? Please?”

Viktor nods.

“There should be a marker on my desk,” Yuuri says quietly. “You can sign whichever ones you’d like.”

“I didn’t know I had fans outside of Russia,” Viktor admits while he uncaps a marker and then heads for the posters. “Although to be fair, I don’t understand why I have fans in the first place.” He signs his name in Cyrillic at the bottom of one poster and then carefully begins to repeat his name in Japanese on another.

“You’re one of the world’s most powerful wizards,” Yuuri explains reverently. “And you have some of the most successful statistics as a BAM agent. You hold the record for most rogue wizard takedowns!”

“Do I?”

“Well, officially,” Yuuri corrects. “I think some other magicians claim to have more takedowns rate, but they don’t have the proof to back it up.”

“Oh.”

“You’re amazing!” Yuuri finishes with a sigh. “You can do magic and know how to fight. I wish I could do that.”

“Do you?”

Viktor pauses in his signing and looks over his shoulder. Yuuri has his knees pulled up to his chest and the onigiri crushed between his thighs and stomach. Both arms are wrapped around his legs.

“Yes.”

Viktor can feel the mood sour. He quickly finishes signing the posters and then lingers on one.

“Something wrong?” Yuuri asks.

Viktor shakes his head and stares at the poster of himself in formal purple and gold robes. He thinks it might have accompanied some article about becoming one of MARC’s youngest and most successful BAM agents.

“I look so silly,” Viktor says with a laugh before scrawling his name on the laminated paper. “I can’t believe someone convinced me to put on robes.”

“You and Yuri don’t wear them,” Yuuri notes. “Why not? You’d both look very handsome.”
Viktor caps the marker and then heads for Yuuri’s bed and sits himself on the side of it before Yuuri can protest.

“I tried for a few years,” Viktor admits while he watches Vi-chan sleep. “But the sleeves got in the way when I was fighting and I kept tripping on the hem no matter how short I tried to make it. And Yuri is very picky about his fashion. He thinks robes are dresses.”

“They’re not!”

“You know that and I know that, but Yuri can’t be convinced.” Viktor laughs. “He had to be wrestled into formal robes when he graduated school. He sat the hat on fire as soon as he got his diploma.”

Yuuri laughs and then winces and puts a hand to the purple bruise on the side of his head. “Ouch.”

Viktor fidgets. “Yuuri?”

“Hm?”

“Yesterday, I think I offended your family,” Viktor says. “I wanted to try and help you after your episode. Everyone snapped at me.”

“Oh.” Yuuri prods the bruise. “My family just gets protective over me. We’ve had some… less than nice interactions with medi-magicians who were just trying to help. I apologize on their behalf. I’m sorry.”

“No!” Viktor holds his hands up. “It’s alright. I was just afraid I had done something wrong.”

“You didn’t.” Yuuri assures with a small smile.

Vi-chan stirs. Yuuri drops his legs and the toy poodle moves from the blankets to Yuuri’s lap and accompanying plush. Yuuri helps lift the elderly dog onto the onigiri and Vi-chan paws at the soft material before lying down. Yuuri smiles at his dog. Viktor just eyes the animal and then hesitantly reaches out to pet him.

“He’s warm,” Viktor notes as he strokes the dog’s head.

“He did have a nice sunshine patch,” Yuuri says before setting the plush and Vi-chan aside.

“I should let you rest some more,” Viktor says before getting up. “Get well soon, Yuuri.”
Chapter 6: Take Cover

“Yakov, he’s impossible!” Viktor laments.

He and Yuri are seated in a private conference room at one of MARC’s Japanese divisions on a conference call with their superior. It’s still early, and both are dressed casually to ward off the morning chill.

“I’ve tried every trick in the book, so has Yuri, and nothing! Yuuri is impossible!” Viktor repeats.

“Maybe he’s just not a necromancer,” Yakov suggests. “All your evidence so far has been suggestive, but not compelling.”

“He hasn’t let a single thing slip,” Yuri adds with a grunt. “Not one. He’s either not a necromancer or he’s the most tight-lipped person in the world.”

Viktor grabs his hair in frustration. “Yakov, I don’t know what to do.”

Yuri glances at Viktor. “I had an idea, but…”

“Yuri, we are not going to kill Vi-chan,” Viktor snaps. “Or Yuuri. If we’re wrong, we have a dead dog and or person on our hands. No.”

Yakov hums. “You get credit for thinking outside of the box, Yuri, but Viktor’s right. Murder is not part of MARC protocol. Keep trying. Yuuri will have to let something slip eventually. When he does, you grab onto that opportunity and do not let it go.”

“I have the Japanese MARC on speed dial,” Viktor says. “I’d like to be able to use it.”

Yakov sighs. “Keep me updated. MARC is willing to keep paying your bills for the moment: America, Russia, and Japan are all very invested in the outcome of this. Everyone believes that Yuuri Katsuki is a necromancer, even if you don’t have enough evidence to charge him.”

“Yet,” Viktor adds with a grunt.

Yuri and Viktor are just blocks away from Yu-topia on their way back from MARC when the sirens start. Viktor’s train of thought goes immediately to earthquakes and tsunamis before he belatedly realizes that the Japanese alert system for rogue wizards is the same exact one used in Russia. How many times had Viktor faced down a rogue magician with the same “take cover, rogue wizard in area” mantra and sirens blaring around him?

Viktor’s and Yuri’s phones begin vibrating and pinging with alerts. Yuri looks at the screen of his phone and his eyes widen as he looks around at street signs.
“It’s right by Yu-topia,” he says before breaking into a run.

Viktor thumbs through his own phone as he chases after Yuri. It will still take minutes for the official Japanese BAM to mobilize, and by then, it could be too late. Rogue wizards, unfortunately, are the greatest threat the world faces: all it takes is one misaligned magician to blown up a five-mile radius or slaughter an entire group of people who are at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Yuri nearly loses his footing when he flies around a corner and sprints for Yu-topia. Viktor is close behind and is already shrugging off the light sweatshirt he had worn to MARC in order to call Yakov at a reasonable hour.

The streets are deserted and the sirens and repetition of “take cover, rogue wizard in area” repeats. The noise is already making Viktor’s ears ring and Yuri skids to a halt.

“What the hell are you doing?” Yuri roars in perfect Japanese.

Yuuri rushes out of the front gate of Yu-topia and onto the street. “My parents were unloading trucks,” he says. “I don’t know where they are!”

“They probably took cover like you should be doing!” Viktor snaps. “Go inside!”

Yuuri might be a necromancer, but until Viktor knows that beyond a shadow of a doubt, Yuuri is a civilian that needs to be protected.

“What about you two?” Yuuri demands worriedly.

“Battle Action Magician!” Viktor shouts before pointing at Yuri. “BAM in-training! This is literally our job, Yuuri!”

The ground shakes and the three turn their attention down the street to where a wizard in torn red robes stands. Her pointed hat is tilted to one side and a large rip up the brim leaves an empty chunk of triangle.

“Go take cover!” Viktor shouts. “Yuuri, move!”

It’s too late. Yuri raises one hand the surrounding area flickers green for a moment as a rectangular-shaped shield flickers into existence around the street, locking Yuuri, Viktor, Yuri, and the rogue wizard inside. Viktor nods at Yuri: step one when facing down a rogue magician is trying to minimize the damage. A shield usually does the trick to keep everything contained.

“You have one chance to surrender peacefully,” Viktor warns as he shifts his feet and then raises his hands. “On behalf of the Magician Agency of Regulation and Control, you are under arrest for breaking multiple laws of the Wizard Code. Come quietly or you will be taken in by force.”

The wizard smiles. She replies in English. “Pretty Russian BAM agents shouldn’t talk the talk if they can’t walk the walk,” she says before blowing a kiss.

Yuri bristles and raises his fists. He glances at Yuuri and then sighs loudly. “Move!” he shouts. “I can’t break the barrier, get to the other end!” Yuri’s barriers are a semi-permanent fixture and will take a significant amount of magic and skill to remove.

Yuuri starts to move as soon as the rogue wizard does. Yuuri is, unfortunately, closer to the woman than he is Viktor and Yuri, and Viktor can see tragedy happening when the rogue wizard’s hand is suddenly engulfed in gold flames and she locks eyes on Yuuri. Yuri is already trying to close the distance between himself and Yuuri, but there’s no way he’ll make it to Yuuri’s side in time to either
protect him from the fire or disrupt the magician. Viktor releases the magic that he usually keeps tightly coiled and then disappears into midair.

He reappears beside the rogue wizard, tackles her to the ground, and the gold fire goes wide and slams against Yuri’s pale green shield. Yuri gasps. He wobbles and falls and skins his hands while he forces the shield to remain in place instead of shattering from the impact: his barriers are strong, but they’re not impenetrable.

Viktor rolls off the wizard and pats at his shirt when it catches fire. He gets a foot to his gut when he’s distracted, and the rogue wizard gets up as Viktor clutches his middle and tries to breathe. Viktor narrows his eyes and the fire in the woman’s hand goes out. She seems surprised for a moment and smiles.

“Maybe the pretty BAM agent can walk the walk,” she says.

Viktor’s shirt is burned about the edges and there are a few faint burns on his side. But he’s dealt with worse: much, much worse.

“Hey, bitch!”

The woman turns. Yuri is twenty or so feet away from her.

“Pick on someone your own size!”

Fire meets lightning and Viktor raises his arm when the two opposing forces meet. There’s smoke and heat and Viktor stumbles toward the shield and then bangs his fist against it: the magical barrier shatters and Viktor falls onto his hands and knees while tears stream from his eyes. All the smoke and dust is immediately released into the air, and Viktor coughs to try and get fresh air into his lungs.

“Yuri?” he croaks.

A gentle breeze quickly wafts the worst of the smog away. Yuri and the rogue wizard are locked with their hands together, trying to get leverage over one another. Yuri is still smaller than the woman, and he sweeps her feet out from underneath herself before she can get the advantage.

The woman hits the ground and then reaches out. A single wooden post that stands outside Yu-topia shifts and then flies at Yuri. Yuri dodges the stake and then gets knocked to the ground when Yuuri comes up beside him and pushes.

“What the fuc-”

Yuri gawks for a moment because the stake is punched through Yuuri’s chest. Viktor wants to scream at Yuri about remembering that magic doesn’t have to play by the laws of physics so anything that flies past Yuri is just a likely to turn around and hit him from behind, but he can’t. Yuuri sways on his feet. One hand goes to touch the bloodied tip of wood in apparent confusion before he tips over. He lands awkwardly on his side to accommodate the stake skewering him.

Yuri lets out a quiet cry and he scrambles to his feet. Yuri hits the rogue wizard from the front and Viktor from behind. They all go down in a tangle of limbs and gold fire and crackling lightning.

“I have her,” Yuri gasps. “Go help Yuuri!”

Viktor drops to his knees beside Yuuri and both his hands hover over the wooden post. He has some basic first aid medi-magician training, but nothing for something like this. If he removes the stake, Yuuri could bleed out, but judging by the gore already dribbling down Yuuri’s chin, the damage is
already done. Viktor can’t even begin to imagine what type of internal organs have been pierced.

“It’s alright,” Viktor lies. “It’s going to be alright, Yuuri.”

Viktor can’t even begin to imagine where the other BAM are.

Yuuri opens his mouth, coughs up an astonishing amount of blood, and then smiles at Viktor. He

can’t get any air behind his words, but Viktor recognizes what Yuuri is trying to mouth: it’s alright.

Viktor nods tearfully.

“That’s right. It’s alright. You’ll be alright.”

Yuuri’s head hits the street. Viktor blinks, once, twice, and then his brain processes the fact

that Yuuri has just died.

“Viktor!”

Yuri is wrapped about the rogue wizard in an attempt to keep her from getting up.

“Viktor, help!”

All it takes is one solid punch to the wizard’s temple to knock her out. Yuri lets go of the woman,

breathing hard, and then glances at where Yuuri’s body is still leaking blood onto the street.

“All he… is he…?”

Viktor sits down, coughs, and then nods. “There wasn’t anything… I couldn’t have done anything.”

He sniffs. “It went right through his chest. It probably ruptured organs and pierced his lung. I…

I…”

Yuri drops his head but continues to glance at Yuuri from the corner of his eye. Viktor and Yuri both

freeze when they hear a moan. Yuuri twitches, sits up, and then pulls the stake through his chest and

 tosses it aside. A gaping hole is left behind, and Yuuri lays back down and starts to cough. Again.

And again. Until he stops and the only sound is the emergency sirens.

Viktor and Yuri approach with caution. Yuuri is breathing hard, and they can see the hole in his

chest slowly knitting itself back together. Yuuri’s gone white and there’s blood on his face, on his

hands, and covering his front.

“Yuuri?” Viktor asks. “Are you alright?”

Yuri grabs Viktor’s shoulder. “Viktor, MARC…”

Viktor panics. “Can you get up, Yuuri?”

Yuuri doesn’t seem aware of what’s going on around himself. Viktor bites his lip.

“MARC,” Yuri repeats. “Viktor, are we…”

Going to turn in Yuuri.

“Get him inside,” Viktor says before standing up and grabbing the side of his shirt. He quickly

widens a rip and then drags the tip of his finger up his side. “You’ve been trying to keep everyone

away from the fighting.” Blood begins to pool along the cut and then Viktor holds his hand out to

soak the side of his pants in the liquid. “All this blood is mine. And hers. We’ll figure the rest of this

out later. Find Yuuri’s parents. Or his sister. I’ll take care of MARC.”
Chapter End Notes

The fallout will come next chapter.
Chapter Notes

V knows that most authors using the title of their story for a chapter title is a big "this is it!" moment. Here's V's!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 7: Immoral Versus Illegal

The Magician Agency of Regulation and Control comes and goes without issue. The rogue wizard is taken into custody and Viktor allows a medi-magician to patch him up before he rushes to Yuuri’s room. Yuri is waiting outside and barely lifts his head when Viktor skids to a stop.

"Yuri, is he…"

Dead? Alright?

"His parents are cleaning him up," Yuri replies. “He… didn’t look very good.”

Viktor wants to laugh: Yuuri had been stabbed through the chest and died, Viktor would not expect him or anyone else to look very good after that.

"Viktor, he saved me," Yuri whispers. “He didn’t have to. He could have kept his secret. What are we going to do?"

Viktor shrugs and pulls at the sleeves of his sweatshirt. His t-shirt is burned and ripped, but the sweatshirt is whole and clean and only smells faintly of smoke.

"Let’s talk with Yuuri first,” he says. “Get all the details."

The door opens. Mari pokes her head out and frowns at the pair. “You can come in,” she says with a frown. “Yuuri wants to talk with you.”

Both head for the door but Mari holds her hand out. Her eyes are fierce but Viktor can see the worry in them.

“Don’t rile him up,” she warns. “It can take him a few days to put himself back together. Be gentle. Please.”

Viktor looks down when something brushes his leg. Vi-chan walks through the open door and heads right for Yuuri’s bed. Yuuri’s father is helping him pull a shirt on, and Viktor frowns when he notices the lack of a mark on Yuuri’s chest from the stake.

“I’m fine,” Yuuri tells his parents. “You and Mari should go make sure all the guests are alright. We’re just going to talk. It’s fine.”

Hiroko is obviously loath to leave Yuuri’s side. She finishes fussing with the comforter draped across Yuuri’s legs while Vi-chan makes himself comfortable in Yuuri’s lap.
“Just going to talk,” Viktor repeats while the Katsukis slowly file out of the room.

He shuts the door quietly and then the trio exchange looks. Yuuri breaks first and sighs. The hand in Vi-chan’s fur goes to rub at his chest. “You two should sit.”

Yuri moves Yuuri’s desk chair and Viktor sits himself at the foot of Yuuri’s bed.

“Are you alright?” Viktor asks while Yuuri makes a face and continues to rub.

“Fine. Mostly. The worse the injury, the longer it take for me to heal it,” Yuuri explains. “I’m just a bit uncomfortable.”

Viktor shakes his head. “Not even the most talented medi-mage could do what you did.”

Yuuri offers a small smile. “The most talented medi-mage isn’t a necromancer.”

“So you are one,” Yuri accuses.

Yuuri hesitates before nodding. “I am. I’m a necromancer.”

“Who else knows?” Viktor presses.

“Just my family,” Yuuri replies. He drops to hand to begin stroking Vi-chan. “One or two of my close friends since they found out by accident. And you two.”

“And you’re… not attacking us?” Viktor asks.

Yuuri frowns. “Why would I?”

“You’re a necromancer,” Yuri says simply.

Yuuri rolls his eyes. “Just because I’m a necromancer, that doesn’t automatically make me evil. I’m just like you two, just with different magical talents.”

“Like raising the dead!” Yuri hisses.

“Do you even know what necromancy does?” Yuuri asks. “What is really does? Not whatever was shoved down your throat in magic school or what society claims necromancy is?”

Viktor and Yuri don’t respond. Yuuri picks up Vi-chan and lets the poodle lick his nose. He smiles.

“I don’t really raise the dead,” Yuuri says. “Not in the way you think I do.”

“What?” Viktor says in confusion.

Yuuri settles Vi-chan back in his lap and cups his hands together. “All living things are like eggs. When we die, the yolk inside is gone. Just a shell is left.” Yuuri opens his hands. “I can’t put the yolk back inside the egg, no power on earth can do that. But I can put the egg inside a puppet and become the puppet master.” Yuuri looks fondly at Vi-chan. “Take Vi-chan for example.”

“He’s dead, isn’t he.” Yuri isn’t asking.

“He died a few years ago,” Yuuri admits. “But I couldn’t stand to let him go. Necromancy is keeping him… not alive, but giving the semblance of life.”

“You’re controlling him,” Viktor says softly.
Yuuri shrugs. “Not really. Vi-chan is doing whatever Vi-chan likes to do. I’m the puppet master, but Vi-chan gets to decide what he wants to do.” Yuuri smiles. “He won’t grow any older than the day he died. He doesn’t technically need to eat or breathe or anything like that, but I like pretending he’s alive.”

“How are you not controlling him?” Yuri demands. “I don’t get it.”

“The yolk, what made Vi-chan, Vi-chan, disappeared when he died,” Yuuri says. “I can never really know if Vi-chan would really prefer sitting here with me or if he’d rather be out in the lobby.”

Viktor frowns. “You’re only giving the body a direction,” he says slowly. “But you’re using past memories to guide the actions?”

Yuuri nods. “Exactly!”

“That’s… amazing.” The precise control needed to make Vi-chan appear alive, let alone direct the body’s actions, is beyond anything Viktor has ever contemplated.


Yuuri begins to blush. “I met most of them when I was young,” he explains. “When my parents took me on trips. I found out I was a necromancer when I was really small: young me thought it was a shame to let all these animals die. So once they passed, I brought them back.”

“But the whale,” Viktor says. “Sumi. It migrated.”

“So?” Yuuri asks.

“It must have been thousands of miles away from you at some point,” Viktor deadpans.

“And?” Yuuri presses.

Viktor can’t keep a shield up if he can’t see it. “You mean to tell me that every one of those animals, even the whale, you had control over every second of every day for years? That even when the whale was thousands of miles away, your necromancy was giving it the semblance of life? Your necromancy was subtly shaping Sumi’s decisions?”

Yuuri nods once.

“Then why did they die?” Yuri asks. “The animals? Er, again?

Yuuri leans back against his pillows and goes pink in the face. “I’m, uh, not a very good necromancer. It’s not like I ever had anyone to teach me!” he adds hurriedly.

“You’re not epileptic,” Viktor realizes.

Yuuri shakes his head. “I’m not. If I try to raise too many bodies at once, I… black out?” Yuuri sounds unsure. “My parents had medi-magicians run some tests on my without telling them I was a necromancer. Apparently when I hit my… necromancy threshold? There’s too much electrical activity in my brain and I pass out. And then I lose control over whatever I had raised. I don’t actually know what my limit is.” Yuuri laughs. “That’s why I black out sometimes.”

“Why didn’t you re-raise those animals?” Viktor questions.

“I, uh, was passed out for a few hours,” Yuuri murmurs. “I couldn’t exactly raise the animals after they had been dead for so long. It was the worst episode I’ve ever had.”
“Why don’t you stop raising animals?” Viktor suggests. “That would stop you from passing out, wouldn’t it?”

Yuuri curls himself protectively over Vi-chan. “I’m selfish.”

The room is quiet for a few minutes.

“Now what?” Yuuri asks. “I know you two were in Japan to find a necromancer, and you found him.” He sighs. “I couldn’t fight you two off even I wanted to, especially like this.”

Viktor and Yuri exchange glances. Although part of their strategy had been getting close to Yuuri in hopes of him slipping up, it’s impossible to erase the weeks of time they’ve spent together.


Yuuri frowns. “By who’s laws? A bunch of wizards who are racist against necromancers?”

“Still immoral,” Viktor points out. “What’s dead should stay dead.”

“It’s not black magic,” Yuuri whispers. “I’m not trying to bind souls or bring someone back to life. I’ve never even used necromancy on anything except for animals. I don’t even know if I could make a human body actually move!”

Yuri opens his mouth and then closes it. “Yuuri?”

“Hm?”

“I wanted to hate you for being a necromancer,” Yuri says. “But you saved me. You didn’t have to. You could have kept your secret. Thank you.”

Yuuri’s smile is lopsided. “It’s not like I was risking much. Except my freedom. Not like I could have died.” He laughs. “But you’re welcome.”

Viktor puts his head in his hands. “I never thought we’d find the necromancer and he’d turn out to be so normal. So human. So not needing to be taken in.”

“Can’t we just give up?” Yuri suggests. “Tell Yakov that Yuuri won’t crack?”

Yuuri gasps. “Y-you already told…”

“We had our suspicions,” Viktor interjects hurriedly. “We were waiting for you to make a mistake, Yuuri. I’m not sure Yakov will accept us giving up just like that.”

“What if we change our minds and tell him that Yuuri isn’t a necromancer?” Yuri presses. “That we were wrong?”

Viktor shakes his head. “I cannot, in good conscience, blatantly lie to Yakov. But I also can’t let MARC go after Yuuri. He’s not dangerous.”

Vi-chan crawls over to Viktor and sits by his knee. Viktor stares at the toy poodle in wonder. Despite the bright eyes and warm body, Vi-chan is dead. Yuuri’s magic is the only giving the appearance of life. Vi-chan is dead. Viktor reaches both hands out and scoops up the poodle. He cradles Vi-chan against his chest.

“What can we do to help you, Yuuri?” Viktor asks at length. “What would give you the most
“Having you two leave without mentioning me to anyone except as your new friend in Japan,” Yuuri replies. “But I know that’s not realistic. I don’t want you to lie to your boss. Or MARC.”

Vi-chan climbs Viktor’s shoulder and then suddenly goes limp. Viktor lets out a noise of surprise as he shifts the tiny body to his hands. “Vi-chan?” he asks.

“Yuuri!” Yuri shouts.

Yuuri is still mostly upright but his head is slumped. He gasps, raises his head, and Vi-chan stirs. He goes back to trying to climb on Viktor.

“Sorry,” Yuuri apologizes.

“What was that?” Yuri demands.

“Backlash,” Yuuri replies faintly. “I’ll need a few days to recover.”

Viktor gets up and puts Vi-chan on Yuuri’s lap. “Yuri and I should leave you alone then. We’ll talk again tomorrow if you’re up to it?”

Yuuri nods. “I’d like that.”

Yuri offers a wave and heads for the door. Viktor lingers and stares at Yuuri.

“Something on my face?” Yuuri asks.

“I was just thinking,” Viktor says gently. “When you died, I really thought you were gone for a few seconds. I was scared.”

“I’m sorry I scared you.”

“No, no it’ fine. It’s just…” Viktor shakes his head. “I should let you rest.”

Yuri is waiting by the open door. Viktor leans over and lands a kiss to the side of Yuuri’s head.

“I was thinking that even though I was originally here to investigate you, I would have really and truly missed you if you had died.”

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully this helped clear up why necromancers are viewed as evil: their magic is seen as taboo.
Chapter 8: Past

Yuuri spends the next few days in his room, in bed, with a comforter, Vi-chan, a mug of tea, and handheld games. There doesn’t seem to be anything physically wrong with him, but Yuuri faints midway through a conversation with Viktor about American stereotypes. He simply stops talking and tips sideways. Viktor lunges from his chair and mostly manages to catch Yuuri before he falls out of bed and hits the floor. Yuuri’s mug of tea crashes against the floor and shatters. Viktor winds up awkwardly cradling Yuuri with their faces inches apart. Yuuri comes to seconds later and blushes at how close he is to Viktor’s mouth.

“Sorry,” Viktor says just as Yuuri sputters out an identical but much more frantic, “sorry!”

Viktor helps Yuuri back into bed. Vi-chan starts breathing again from atop his place on the onigiri plush. Viktor tucks Yuuri back in and Yuuri looks sadly down at the mess on his floor.

“I liked that mug,” he says sadly.

“I got it!” Viktor sits back in his chair and snaps his fingers.

The mug pieces itself back together and the tea on the floor disappears. Viktor holds the steaming mug out to Yuuri.

“Wizard,” Viktor reminds gently.

Yuuri sips.

“Do you usually… have effects last this long after an episode?” Viktor asks.

Yuuri shrugs. “I don’t really know. I don’t exactly have a normal baseline to compare pre and post death blackouts.”

“It just doesn’t seem healthy,” Viktor muses. “You fainting this often.”

“I don’t think necromancy agrees with me,” Yuuri admits. “Aren’t there some wizards who can’t use magic because it wreaks havoc with their bodies?”

Viktor nods. It’s rare, but it happens. “Is alright that we’re talking about this?”

“About what?”

“You. Your necromancy.”

Yuuri nods. “There’s nothing for me to hide now. And… it’s sort of nice talking to someone about it.
A wizard, I mean.” Yuuri’s thumb rubs against the ceramic handle of his mug. “You’re not my mom or dad or sister who worry about every little thing. And my friends who know avoid talking about this part of me. Out of courtesy. And secrecy.”

Viktor sighs and smiles. “I’m glad. I didn’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

“I’ll let you know if you do.”

Viktor watches Yuuri’s drink his tea. “Is it… can I ask some more questions? If that’s alright? I’m very curious.”

Yuuri motions: go ahead.

“When did you know?” Viktor asks.

“That I was a necromancer?” Yuuri laughs. “When did you know you were a wizard?” he counters.

Viktor grins. “I was two. I accidentally froze a lake solid because I wanted to go ice-skating and was too impatient to wait for colder weather.”

“I think I was three.” Yuuri closes his eyes. “Mari and I were out for a walk. It was spring. And we accidentally found a baby bird on the sidewalk. It was dead. I remember thinking how sad the mother bird would be if she didn’t have her baby. So I put the baby bird back into its nest. And then it started chirping. Mari freaked out and told our parents. They thought maybe it was some type of fluke.” Yuuri opens his eyes. “It wasn’t. I started raising animals after that just because I thought them being dead and not moving was sad.”

“What was your favorite thing about being in America?” Viktor asks. “When you were in college?”

Yuuri blinks. “And we changed topics because?”

“I want to learn more about you. I’ll answer my own questions so it’s fair.”

Yuuri leans back against his pillows. “Fine. I get to ask a question then.”

Viktor nods.

“What made you want to become a BAM agent?” Yuuri asks.

“MARC is always on the lookout for potential wizards. Potentially powerful wizards.” Viktor stares at his feet. “Yakov said I’d make an excellent BAM and I just sort of went along with it. I was good at everything. It came so naturally. I didn’t really think about doing anything else. I’m a bit old to change careers now.” He chuckles. “If you were a—” Viktor pauses. “A normal wizard, would you ever want to join MARC? The Japanese branch is phenomenal!”

“I don’t know. If I was any good at being a normal wizard, I might.” Yuuri glances at his door. “It’d be nice to get away from my family. Just for a bit.”

“Feel smothered?” Viktor asks.

Yuuri nods. “They sometimes treat me like an invalid. I know it’s scary seeing me just fall down, but it’s not like I can really hurt myself. It doesn’t matter if I break my neck. And I can’t drown in the hot spring. Well, I can, but it won’t last.”

“When was the first time you…”
“Died?” Yuuri supplies.

“I meant to ask,” Viktor says. “You said anything you raise won’t age. They’ll be in the same state they were when they died. But you…?”

Yuuri sets his mug aside and then holds his hand out. He stares at the back of it. “I age. I still need to eat and sleep. I don’t understand why, but I do.” He drops his hand and moves Vi-chan to his lap. “I was fifteen when it first happened. When I died.” Yuuri’s voice softens. “I wasn’t very popular in school, but I did have friends. We all decided it would be a good idea to ice-skating on a frozen lake instead of going to the rink. I wanted to be the brave one, the one who went out first to test the ice. It was apparently much thinner and the lake much deeper than anyone thought. My fat ass broke through and I drowned. Er, mostly drowned. The rescue team got me out an hour later. They thought it was just a miracle and the cold water had slowed my heartbeat and all that. But I knew better. I felt different. It took me two years to tell my parents.” Yuuri raises a hand to push aside his glasses and dab at his eyes. “I was so scared they were going to reject me, throw me out, even though they had done nothing but protect me and support me ever since I raised that baby bird.”

“I’m sorry, Yuuri, I should have never asked.”

“No. I mean it Viktor, it’s nice talking to someone about all this.”

Viktor shifts his chair forward. He slowly rests his hand on top of Yuuri’s. “Can I tell you a secret?” he asks.

“Of course.”

“I’m a world-class wizard, top BAM, MARC’s poster boy, not to mention all the glory and fame that comes with taking down rogue wizards. But I’m not always happy.” Viktor can’t stand to look at Yuuri. “I know I should be, I’m at the height of my career, I should be enjoying it. But… I’m stagnant. I’m already the best. I can’t get better. There’s nowhere to go but down.”

Yuuri’s hand shifts to that he can lace their fingers together. He looks at Viktor who continues to stare at Vi-chan.

“You’ve never told anyone that before? Not even Yuri?”

Viktor shakes his head.

“I admire you, Viktor, you and your career, but not because you’re the best. It’s because you’re the best Viktor Nikiforov you can be.”

“That’s incredibly cheesy.”

“And incredibly true.”

Vi-chan yawns. Yuuri starts to doze.

“I should let you sleep,” Viktor says gently.

“Not an invalid,” Yuuri reminds.

“I know, but you are falling asleep on me. I’ll come back later?”

“Please.”

“Can we talk some more?”
Yuuri nods.
Chapter 9: Realization

“Viktor, I want to go back to Russia. There’s no reason for me to stay any longer.” Yuri curls around a stuffed cat and hides his face. “I miss Varya. I’ll tell Yakov that the longer I thought about it, the more I thought that Yuuri wasn’t a necromancer and that my eyes were playing tricks on me. I don’t want MARC to keep sending money to Japan. I’ll tell everyone that I decided to let the real BAM agent take charge and finish our investigation without any distractions.”

“Yuri…”

Yuri lifts his head and grins. “Sound convincing enough?” he asks brightly.

“You little…!” Viktor throws himself at Yuri. “That was very convincing!”

“I am a little homesick,” Yuri admits. “And there really isn’t a reason for me to say any longer. It’s been almost six months, Viktor.”

“That long?”

Yuri nods. “Would you mind if I went home?”

“Of course not!” Viktor makes himself comfortable on Yuri’s bed. “I’ll stay a bit longer. Say I’m tying up loose ends.”

“What do we do about Yuuri though?”

Viktor bites his thumbnail. “Lie. Tell them we don’t think Yuuri is a necromancer any longer. But I’ll tell Yakov: I can’t lie to him. He’ll keep this a secret if I ask.”

“When will you tell him?”

“Eventually.”

Yuri frowns a bit. “I don’t want to get touchy feely and super mushy, but Viktor?”

“Hm?”

Yuri groans. “This is going to sound so gross, but I haven’t seen you this happy in a while.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’re… just happy. I am the master of fake smiles and telling people what they want to hear,” Yuri says. “I haven’t seen one fake smile since you’ve been in Japan. You should stay for as long as you can. Or take whatever it is you love here back to Russia.”
“I could always ask Mama Katsuki for her katsudon recipe I suppose.”

“Idiot!” Yuri hurls his plush at Viktor. “I know you’re oblivious, but you’re not this dense!”

“Eh?”

“You’ve spent every single day in Hasetsu with Yuuri, you moron!”

“So?”

“You two keep making googly eyes at one another!”

Viktor blinks. “Googly eyes?”

“Figure it out! Idiot!”

Yuri groans when Makkachin drags his tongue against the screen of his phone.

“Ew, gross! Makkachin, down, off!”

Viktor, from their video call, snaps a single Russian word and Makkachin obediently sits. Yuri wipes his phone with his sleeve.

“This is why I like cats,” he says while he props his phone up and away from Makkachin. “Varya would never do something like that.”

Said cat is tucked under Yuri’s chin and held in his arms looking like a perfect angel.

“Makkachin just misses me is all,” Viktor says.

The doodle perks at his name.

“Makkachin, say hi to Yuuri! And Vi-chan!”

Both get squeezed into frame and Makkachin whines. Yuuri takes Vi-chan’s paw and offers a wave.

“I’ll be home soon,” Viktor coos. “Just a little longer, Makkachin.”

“Did you call me for me, or to baby your dog?” Yuri demands.

“A little of both,” Viktor replies. “I told MARC that we were following false leads. Yakov didn’t buy it, but I’ll tell him the truth in person. It seems like nothing will happen if I leave.”

Yuuri begins to fidget. Yuri notices but doesn’t comment.

“I should be back in a few weeks,” Viktor continues. “I would have been back sooner, but Yuuri said there are all these festivals coming up that I should see since I didn’t get to last year.”

Yuri snorts. “Last year,” he repeats. “You’ve been in Japan for a year, Viktor.”

“So?”

“How many plane tickets did you book for the return trip?” Yuri demands with a smirk.

“One?” Viktor replies unsurely. “Yuri, what are you talking about?”
“Not going to bring some extra baggage back with y-”

“Sorry!” Yuuri apologizes. “But Mom is calling us.”

“Is she?” Viktor looks over his shoulder. “I didn’t hear Mama Katsuki.”

“Bye! Talk soon, Yuri!”

The call ends. Yuri’s phone immediately pings.

From: Katsudon

You’re such a little shit.

To: Katsudon

I know that you like Viktor. I also know that Viktor likes you.

From: Katsudon

!!!

To: Katsudon

Do I need to repeat myself? I know you two like each other.

From: Katsudon

We’re just friends!

To: Katsudon

Yeah, friends with benefits.

From: Katsudon

Just. Friends.

To: Katsudon

Doesn’t change the fact that Viktor has been with you literally every day for a year.
From: Katsudon

It was part of your investigation. You two needed to get close to me.

To: Katsudon

Remind me again how long go the “official” investigation ended?

From: Katsudon

To: Katsudon

That’s what I thought.

Viktor should bring you back to Russia.

From: Katsudon

???

To: Katsudon

It’s only fair. He’s been living with you and being obnoxious for a year. You should get the same chance.

From: Katsudon.

!!!

To: Katsudon

Mage up.

From: Katsudon

I can’t! I’m a
To: Katsudon

Still technically a wizard.

You and Viktor need to stop making googly eyes and make a move.

From: Katsudon

???

To: Katsudon

I’m srs. You can’t die. But he can. YOLO.

Yuri blinks as his phone begins to chime. “Incoming call from Katsudon.” “What?” he snaps. “Didn’t your mom want you or something?”

“Y-Yuri…”

“What? Oh my God, are you crying?” Yuri holds his cat tighter.

“I just… I never… you’re right!”

“About what?” Yuri demands. “Where the hell did Viktor go?”

The connection is clear, but Yuuri is sobbing and breathing hard. “You’re right! I can’t die. But Viktor can. Everyone else can. And I just…”

“Yuuri, where the hell is Viktor? Are you alone?” Yuri demands as he puts Varya down.

“I don’t think I can die, Yuri.” It sounds like an admission. A revelation. “I can’t die.”

“Bullshit.” Yuri goes for his official BAM phone and finds Viktor’s work number. He begins texting while he balances his phone between his cheek and shoulder to keep Yuri on the line. “Necromancers can kill one another. You can die, you just need another necromancer to do it.”

“What if I can’t find another necromancer?” Yuuri sobs.

Yuri frowns. “Are you… suicidal?”

“I don’t want to die now.” There’s a thump in the background. Yuri can only hope that Yuuri is sitting down. “But one day I do. I don’t want to be alone. I don’t want to be alone forever.”

“But you’re not alone.” Yuri sends his text.

To: Viktor Nikiforov
Find Yuuri ASAP.

“You have your family. And me. And Viktor,” Yuri continues. “What the hell, Yuuri, why are you freaking out?”

“I can’t die,” Yuuri repeats. He sounds utterly wrecked. “I can’t die, and once everyone else is gone, I’ll still be here.”

“Make new friends,” Yuri says.

From: Viktor Nikiforov

What happened? He ran away as soon as we finished our call.

“It’ll be the same cycle until… until… forever…”

Yuri blinks. “That’s…”

Well, it’s true. Yuuri can’t die. He’ll outlast every person around him in a vicious cycle unless he can find another necromancer to off him.

To: Viktor Nikiforov

Find him. I’m on the phone with him. He’s freaking out. I don’t know what to do.

Yuri can’t think of a single comforting thing to say. Yuuri will either have to watch those he loves die around him until the end of time or actively seek out assisted suicide.

“I can’t… I can’t breathe…”

Yuri almost drops his phone. “Where are you? Yuuri, where are you?”

To: Viktor Nikiforov

He’s having a panic attack. WHAT DO I DO????

From: Viktor Nikiforov


“Yuuri, where are you?” Yuri demands. “Viktor’s looking for you.”
There’s another thump and no reply. Yuri can only suspect that Yuuri has passed out somewhere in Yu-topia. The only comfort is that no matter where he is, Yuuri can’t hurt himself.

To: Viktor Nikiforov

I think he passed out. He’s not talking anymore.

From: Viktor Nikiforov

I’ll find him. Thank you for telling me everything.

Yuri hangs up on Yuuri then calls Viktor. Viktor picks up on the second ring.

“I thought Yuuris’ anxiety had nothing to do with his necromancy,” Yuri says hotly.

“It… doesn’t.” Viktor sounds unsure. “Yuuri seems to get anxious over everything except his necromancy.”

“Do you have any idea what he just freaked out over?” Yuri demands angrily. “You!”

“Me?”

Yuri can hear Viktor moving around, no doubt searching for Yuuri.

“He just realized that you and his family will be gone one day.”

“So?” Viktor replies distractedly. “So will he.”

“No. He won’t.”

There’s no sound from Viktor’s end.

“Yuuri won’t be gone,” Yuri says. “He can’t die, remember? I think he just realized it. Viktor? Are you still there?”

“Thank you,” Viktor says. “I have to go.”

“Did you find him?”

“No.”

Yuri growls. “Find him!”

Viktor slips his phone into his pocket and then forces himself to stop and think. Getting worked up will not help him find Yuuri.

“Vi-chan!” Viktor says when the toy poodle rounds a corner. “Are you going to Yuuri?”

If there’s one thing that Viktor has learned, it’s that Vi-chan, no matter if it’s Yuuri’s will or necromancy, will always gravitate toward Yuuri. Vi-chan stops, looks at Viktor, and then continues on down the hall. Vitkor follows him through Yu-topia, out a side door, and then around some
decorative bushes and rocks. Vi-chan sneaks between two plants and Viktor pushes branches aside.

“Yuuri!”

Yuuri’s curled up between two trees, spread out in the dirt with his phone just out of reach.

“Yuuri! Yuuri!”

Viktor kneels down and lets out a sigh of relief when Yuuri stirs. Yuuri sits up, rights his glasses, and then bursts into tears when he sees Viktor. Viktor holds his arms out. Yuuri immediately launches himself at Viktor and holds him tight.

“Yuuri, what happened?” Viktor asks while he hugs Yuuri. “You were fine a minute ago.”

Vi-chan sits in the dirt. It takes some time for Yuuri to calm down. Viktor thumbs a message to Yuri.

“I just… I realized that… you won’t be here forever,” Yuuri manages to sputter out. “Not you, or Mom, Dad, Mari, or Yuri. You won’t be here forever, and I can’t die.”

“Oh, Yuuri…” Viktor begins to laugh. “Is that all?”

“Is that all?”

“What a silly thing to worry over! That’s a long, long way in the future,” Viktor says. “Let’s just live in the moment now, mhm?”

“But what about when I’m all alone?” Yuuri presses desperately. “What about then?”

“Hm.” Viktor shrugs. “I suppose since you can’t die, we’ll just have to find a nice necromancer to kill you. There, problem solved.”

Yuuri blinks. He smiles and then starts to laugh. He reaches up to cup Viktor’s face and then leans in. “You’re unbelievable, Viktor.”

Viktor goes very still when Yuuri presses their mouths together. The kiss only lasts a few seconds. Yuuri pulls back, licks his lips, and waits for Viktor’s response.

“You… I… Wow!”

“I like you, Viktor,” Yuuri admits quietly. “A lot.”

“I… like you too, Yuuri.” Viktor’s thumb brushes his lower lip. “A lot. More than normal.”

From: Katsudon

[image attached]

To: Katsudon

Who buys rings on a first date?
From: Katsudon

Viktor put a good luck charm on them.

To: Katsudon

Aren’t rings for like eleventh anniversaries or some shit?

Nvm. They’re still dumb.

When is Viktor coming back to Russia?

From: Katsudon

We’re coming back in a few weeks.

To: Katsudon.

Cool.

Wait.

WE?
Chapter 10: Explanations

“I’ve never flown first-class before.”

“Did you like it?” Viktor wheedles while he reaches for overhead luggage and Yuuri stretches in the aisle.

“Yes. But not for that ticket price. Business class only, please.”

Viktor frowns. “MARC paid for our tickets.”

“You mean MARC paid for your ticket,” Yuuri corrects while he grabs his bag.

There’s a chill wind blowing as the pair exit the airport. Yuuri can’t remember (or pronounce) the name of said airport, and all the neon writing on the glass-walled buildings are in Cyrillic. He adjusts his blue scarf to better cover his face while Viktor pauses by the curb.

“Welcome to Russia!” he announces.

Yuuri smiles.

“My apartment isn’t far,” Viktor begins. “We’ll take a-

Viktor stops short and abandons his luggage. He’s by Yuuri’s side in an instant, one arm thrown out in front of Yuuri in an obvious protective stance. Yuuri doesn’t even get the chance to ask what’s going on before people appear out of nowhere and begin shouting in Russian. Viktor tenses and steps entirely in front of Yuuri.

“It’s MARC,” Viktor says. “Russian MARC. They… want to put you under arrest.”

“I haven’t done anything!” Yuuri says in shock. “I just got here!”

There’s more yelling. Viktor growls something and reaches one gloved hand back to Yuuri. Yuuri takes it and then doubles over when something slams against him. Everyone around him has had the same reaction.

“Stop flexing,” Yuuri chokes out. “Viktor, stop.”

No one aside from Viktor is standing up straight.

“Vitya, please!”

Viktor reigns his magic back in and steadies Yuuri with an arm about his waist. People stagger and straighten up.

“I know most of you speak English,” Viktor snaps. “Use it!”

“We need to take Yuuri Katsuki to MARC headquarters,” someone offers weakly. “For questioning.”

“For?” Viktor presses.
'Suspected necromancy.'

"I told Yakov and MARC that my investigation was complete," Viktor says while his arm around Yuri’ tightens. "Yuuri Katsuki is not a necromancer. I was mistaken."

"The rogue wizard in Japan that you and Agent Plisetsky captured tells a different story," another person says. "She says that Yuuri Katsuki should be dead. He isn’t. Obviously."

"Obviously," Viktor repeats through his teeth. "You’re not arresting him. I’ll escort him to MARC. Myself."

"Viktor…" Yuuri begins.

"It’s alright, Yuuri. We’ll go answer a few questions and be on our way.” Viktor’s smile is convincing. “I did say I was going to show you the Russian MARC at some point.”

Yuuri sits as close to Viktor as he can inside the car. There are MARC designations all over the vehicle. The emblems make Yuuri equally nauseous and anxious.

"I’m scared," Yuuri tells Viktor in Japanese in hopes of earning a little privacy for their conversation.

"It’s alright.” Viktor’s hand finds Yuuri’s knee beneath his thick tan coat and squeezes. “We’ll just see what Yakov wants and be on our way.”

"Viktor…"

"I won’t let anything happen to you,” Viktor promises.

Yuuri keeps a firm hold on Viktor’s hand when they’re escorted inside MARC headquarters. There’s little difference between all the international branches that Yuuri has seen in photos and videos: all MARC buildings look like typical office buildings, but most have underground levels dedicated to training in order to minimize potential trainee damage.

"Yuri!” Yuuri smiles when he finds Yuri standing beside an older man in a hat. “What are you doing here?”

"Official BAM,” Yuri replies with downcast eyes. He glances at Viktor and then hangs his head.

"What is the meaning of this, Yakov?” Viktor demands. “I brought Yuuri here for a vacation. He’s the one who took such good care of Yuri and myself in Japan.”

"Vitya…”

"Don’t ‘Vitya’ me!” Viktor says hotly. “I told you my investigation was done, Yakov. I was mistaken. Yuuri’s not a necromancer.”

"Let’s talk privately,” Yakov says.

Yuuri and Viktor remove most of their outer layers once they’re inside a conference room. Yuuri lingers by Viktor’s side as Viktor hangs their jackets and hats and scarves. Viktor holds his hand out and Yuuri takes it gratefully while Yakov makes a show of offering drinks.

"The Japanese rogue wizard you and Yuri captured made some truly remarkable claims,” Yakov says. “MARC thought it would be fair to share them since they knew we were investigating a necromancer."
“Yuuri isn’t-”

“I’m old, not dumb,” Yakov interrupts with a sigh. He motions. “Sit. I know you two had a long flight.”

Neither Yuuri nor Viktor move.

“Don’t make this harder than it has to be,” Yakov continues. “Did you really think a simple, ‘I was mistaken,’ is going to erase everything you and Yuri did, Viktor?”

Viktor remains silent.

“MARC isn’t that stupid.” Yakov shakes his head. “We know about Yuuri. We just didn’t know how to act. But when you said you were bringing him here to Russia… we had to act.”

Viktor bristles. Yuuri beats him to the chase.

“It’s fine.” Yuuri turns a bit to look Yakov in the eye. “It’s true. I’m a necromancer.”

Yuri slaps a hand to his forehead.

“But I’m not what everyone thinks I am,” Yuuri continues. “I’m not evil. Or bad. I don’t bind souls and I don’t raise people. Only animals.”

“He’s an amazing wizard, Yakov,” Viktor gushes. “The things he can do… it’s phenomenal.”

Yakov raises an eyebrow and glances at their linked hands.

“Yakov, his magic doesn’t have a cutoff. There’s no distance cutoff. Count cutoff. All of Yuuri’s bodies have minds of their own.” Viktor shakes his head in wonder. “It’s amazing.”

Yuuri blinks in confusion. “Are you talking about me?” he asks. “Because… be…”

Yuuri goes limp. Viktor, who has grown used to the unpredictable fainting spells, quickly shifts his grip from Yuuri’s hand to his body. He lays Yuuri down on the floor and Yuuri is already blinking by the time Viktor is settling his head on a jacket.

“Because I pass out,” Yuuri finishes dryly as he sits up. “It’s a side effect of my necromancy,” he explains to Yakov. “There’s too much electrical activity in my brain from all the magic. I’m prone to fainting and snapping my neck or passing out at home and drowning in the hot spring.” There’s an edge to Yuuri’s voice.

Either try to arrest Yuuri or let us go,” Viktor says. “We’re tired. I want to go home.”

“Try?” Yuri repeats.

Viktor nods. His eyes narrow and blue begins to leak out when he starts to uncoil his magic. “Try,” he says. “I know I’m the strongest wizard MARC has.”

“Vitya! That’s defying orders!” Yakov says in shock. “You could be arrested and fired!”

“I don’t care! Yuuri isn’t a threat to anyone or anything. Ask Yuri!”

Yuri nods. “It’s why I left Japan. Yuuri is the most remarkable unremarkable wizard I’ve ever met, Yakov. He’s not dangerous. Can’t MARC just leave him alone?”
Yakov shakes his head. “Japan and Russia know Yuuri’s a necromancer. It’s unprecedented territory. We can’t just let it go. I’m sorry. The rogue wizard was very clear that she killed Yuuri and had a very interesting story about it.” Yakov pauses. “Not even the most talented medi-magician can walk away from having a stake punched through their chest.”

Yuuri touches the spot where he had been impaled and frowns. “They can’t. But a necromancer can.” He’s still on the floor.

“Get on with it them,” Viktor growls. “Yakov, I’m not in the mood. Either do something or don’t.”

“It’s not me, it’s MARC.” Yakov suddenly seems very uncomfortable. “I tried to keep them away from Yuuri and give you full responsibility over the investigation and outcome, Viktor, but more than a few people were convinced by your initial findings. They weren’t buying by your sudden turnaround that Yuuri wasn’t a necromancer.” Yakov shakes his head. “It’s you job, Viktor. People are already gossiping that Yuuri is going to receive special treatment and status due to your… Relationship.”

Viktor growls.

“They want to separate you two and take Yuuri for questioning.”

Yuuri holds onto Viktor’s hand desperately. “Viktor, please don’t…”

Yuuri has had as little contact with wizard officials as possible. Being dragged away to be picked apart is not something that is going to go over well with Yuuri. Or Viktor.

“It might be a better idea for you two take a break and figure out how this could work,” Yakov continues.

Yuri’s eyes go wide and he wisely backs away from Viktor and Yuuri.

“It’s your job, Viktor, as a BAM to keep everyone safe. It might be hard to do if you’re distracted by a necromancer. You have a reputation, and being seen with Yuuri might not be ideal for your image. You have a job to do.”

“Fuck the job!” Viktor shouts. “I want to fuck the necromancer! Yuuri is a person first and necromancer second!”

“He’s a necromancer and you’re a Battle Action Magician,” Yakov counters. “It won’t work out, Vitya.”

Yuuri goes red and then gets slammed to the floor. Yuri is forced to his knees and Yakov falls and lands on his backside from the magic that suddenly fills the air.

Most wizards are like generators, batteries, and solar panels: they can store and release energy. Viktor’s magic is like a nuclear reactor. And just like them, he can meltdown.

“Reign it back in,” Yuri groans. “Viktor, pull it back!”

The air smells metallic and sharp. Blue is leaking out of Viktor’s eyes like wisps of smoke, and Yuuri pulls himself up off the floor enough to grab Viktor.

“Stop it. You’re hurting me.”

The pressure and electricity in the air is suddenly gone. Yuri sighs loudly and hauls himself to his
feet while both hands go to his knees.

“Asshole!” Yuri spits out. “I’m going to bruise!”

Yuuri rests his head on the jacket on the floor and lets out a long breath. “Don’t ever do that again.”

“Viktor… you can’t… the entire surrounding area felt that!” Yakov offers lamely from the floor. “You can’t…”

Viktor blinks a few times and his eyes slowly lose their glow. “I’m taking Yuuri home, Yakov. If anyone tries to stop us… that was their warning.”

“You can’t just walk away from this. Please,” Yakov begs.

“Watch me.”

“You can’t…” Yuuri trails off. Take on an entire division of MARC. Break laws for me. “You can’t.” It’s a statement.

“I’d like to see MARC try and stop me,” Viktor replies. It’s a sneer. “You’re not dangerous, Yuuri, and they’re not going to take you away from me. You’re not a thing. You’re not a toy to play with. You’re not some fun little experiment to study.”

“I know,” Yuuri says. “But I can understand the fear. There isn’t a history of good necromancers. Let MARC ask their questions.”


Yuuri can’t argue: being ambushed right off an international flight doesn’t seem right.
Chapter 11: Asphalt

Morning dawns bright and clear and daunting. Neither Yuuri nor Viktor have slept well. Yuuri, despite his earlier declaration that MARC can question him all he wants since he has nothing to hide, has lost his nerve: he’s terrified that he’s going to be thrown into a jail cell for simply existing no matter what he tells the wizards and he’ll never be let out. Viktor seems to have similar ideas about what is going to happen. He clasps Yuuri’s hand in his own, kisses each of their rings, and then helps Yuuri into the sleek black car that is supposed to escort them to MARC.

“No matter what happens, I won’t let them separate us,” Viktor says. “I promise.”

Yuuri is already shaking and tearful. He can’t get his seatbelt to fasten. Viktor pulls the strap across Yuuri’s chest and buckles it.

“They can’t make us separate,” Viktor continues with an edge to his words and smug smile. “No one can. I’m too powerful.”

Yuuri’s known Viktor for over a year now and has spent thousands of hours together with the wizard: Viktor’s never been prone to bragging or exaggerating his abilities, but with MARC looming in front of them, Yuuri wants to remind Viktor to keep his ego in check.

“Don’t get cocky,” Yuuri croaks out. “You’re not immortal, Viktor.”

“I know.” Viktor slides up beside Yuuri and buckles his own seatbelt before glaring into the rearview mirror to signal the driver and escort in the front seat. He laughs quietly and kisses the side of Yuuri’s head. “I’m not immortal, but you are, my necromancer.”

Yuuri’s so used to only hearing the word inside his own head that he almost startles at Viktor’s words. He’s tried to keep the word necromancer from leaving his mouth just to reduce suspicion or chance that anyone would ever find out. Hearing another person say it and with so much affection behind it… Yuuri shivers and gives Viktor’s hand a squeeze.

Viktor points out what he can of the scenery as they drive. Russia is very beautiful this early in the morning despite the traffic already building.

“And this,” Viktor says in his best tour guide voice. “Is a Russian highway. I’m quite sure you’ve never seen anything like this before in your life.”

Yuuri can’t help but laugh as they merge. “Nothing like a Japanese highway at all. Or an American one.”

“America has no left turns and jug handles,” Viktor says with a grin as Yuuri laces their fingers together.
“That’s New Jersey,” Yuuri corrects.

“I’m sure you’ve never experienced traffic before,” Viktor offers with a grin as their car slows. “Is this a novel experience for you, Yuuri?”

Yuuri just rolls his eyes. He appreciates Viktor’s asinine comments and attempt to lighten the mood.

“Can we crack the window?” Yuuri asks when they start to speed up. “I’m… I need air.”

Every second brings them closer to MARC. Viktor lowers both windows enough to let some chill air in. Yuuri rests his head against Viktor’s shoulder. Their driver swears and taps the brakes when another car cuts them off. A pink bulb of light, no bigger than an orange, floats into the backseat and then detonates.

Yuuri slowly picks his head up from the asphalt. The side of his face is on fire while the rest of his body feels numb. Viktor is draped protectively over him and is awake and alert. The entire left side of his body and clothes are torn away and covered in road rash. Yuuri opens his mouth to ask what happened but the wind is knocked out of him. He gasps.

“We’re alright,” Viktor chokes out. “We’re alright, Yuuri. It’ll pass.”

Yuuri doesn’t know where their town car has gone, let alone their MARC driver and escort. Cars are flying by them, horns blaring, and then the sound of brakes pulling hard against the tarmac sounds. The air is hazy is filled with smoke, but a number of cars come to an abrupt halt around the pair. Doors open and people begin exiting. They’re dressed in varying outfits: robes, jeans, but no one has their face exposed.

“Give us the necromancer!” someone shouts in Russian. “And no one gets hurt!”

The idea that he and Viktor are already hurt crosses Yuuri’s mind, but he can’t get enough air into his lungs to voice it.

“Stay down,” Viktor whispers. “It’s not MARC. I’ll protect you.” He stands up slowly, rolls his neck, and then thumbs at the thin dribble of blood leaking over his lower lip from where he’s bitten the inside of his mouth. “You all get one chance to leave in one piece,” Viktor warns in a low growl. “Get the necromancer!”

Yuuri tastes the ozone before he feels the pressure. All the people around them step forward and then pause when a strong breeze wafts the smoke away and lifts Viktor’s hair from over his eye. They’re blazing, leaking blue into the air, and both hands are clenched into fists at his sides. Yuuri wisely curls up to make himself as small as a target as possible when Viktor steps away from him.

“I’ll protect you,” Viktor repeats gently before stopping and raising his hands.

What scares Yuuri the most about Viktor as a wizard isn’t his power: Viktor is a nuclear reactor that can melt down at any given point of time. Yuuri knows it and has seen Viktor get serious, and it’s terrifying getting a taste of something so much stronger than himself. But what scares Yuuri the most, what frightens him more than the nuclear reactor, is what makes it tick. Being a magician and having power is useless if you don’t know how to use it. What make Viktor a top BAM isn’t just power, it’s how he uses it. Applies it. Viktor is frightfully creative when it comes to magic and how to use it, and that’s what makes him dangerous.

Fireballs of varying colors and sizes fizzle out before they even come close to Viktor. The asphalt beneath Viktor’s feet jumps up like crocodile mouth in an attempt to crush him, but the road never
meets Viktor’s skin: it stops inches from Viktor when he conjures up a shield. The asphalt crumbles and Viktor throws a hard right hook at the magician foolish enough to approach him.

Being BAM goes beyond magical talents: it’s extremely physical, and Yuuri knows that both Viktor and Yuri have hand-to-hand skills to rival even the most seasoned fighters. In some magical battles, knocking out the other wizard with a fist is the only way to end things.

Viktor grapples with the nearest masked wizards and then grinds his teeth together when someone darts for Yuuri: the person screams when they catch on fire. Yuuri can physically feel Viktor forcing magic to fizzle out before it touches of either of them. It makes him nauseous.

The fighting seems to go on and on. Viktor, sweating and breathing hard, spits a particularly nasty swearword out in Russian, rubs one hand over the back of his bruised knuckles, and then inhales deeply and holds it.

“No more magic,” Yuuri hears him whisper. “No more.”

The sudden pressure around Yuuri makes his ears ache and sets his teeth on edge. He can hear people shout in surprise and curse when their magic simply… vanishes. Viktor takes advantage of the shock and confusion and tackles the nearest wizard to the ground, knocks them out, and then moves to the next. The magicians quickly regroup and the fighting goes totally physical.

It’s amazing to watch Viktor using only his body to fight without magic, but it’s also terrifying. There’s nothing to shield anyone, including Viktor, and one lucky punch bloodies Viktor’s lip. Yuuri scrambles to his feet when someone starts heading for him: Viktor can’t reach out to stop the person without magic.

“Viktor!” Yuuri shouts.

“Yuuri!” Viktor gets caught inside a circle of bodies. “Yuuri, fight!”

Viktor has taught Yuuri the basics: thumbs on the outside of fists to stop them from breaking when he throws a punch, elbows to noses, and heels to shins. Hair pulling and groin shots are fair game, and running away is always preferable to fighting. But Yuuri isn’t into cardio, and he doesn’t know if could outrun the person dressed in a plain white mask for any distance. That, and Yuuri thinks his ankle might be twisted from the bomb (fireball?) going off inside the car. He can stand on it, but he’s not moving far or fast. More feeling is seeping back into his mostly numb body, and all the road rash he has is starting to burn.

“Corner the wizard and get the necromancer!” someone shouts.

Yuuri faces down the person in the white mask. He slides into what Viktor always called his “go to” fighting stance. Legs shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent for easy movement, upper body loose to duck and dodge but hands raised, head up, and confident. Confidence is key Viktor always said: why even bother trying to fight if you don’t think you have a chance of winning?

Yuuri doesn’t trust himself enough to make the first move, so he waits for the magician to dart for him. Yuuri shifts his weight to the balls of his feet and easily ducks under a punch, back peddles because he also doesn’t trust himself enough to actually throw a punch, and then nearly wipes out when someone tries to sweep his legs out from underneath himself. It’s the wizard that Viktor had set on fire, badly singed and still smoking, who kicks out and nearly sends Yuuri to the ground. Yuuri only just manages to regain his balance.

“Viktor, help me!” Yuuri shouts.
But Viktor’s surrounded. Yuuri can feel his body start to freeze up in fear before someone grabs his wrist. Yuuri reacts instinctively. He turns and slams his forehead against the person in the white mask. Yuuri stumbles back, both hands going to his bruised forehead, but the person drops. Yuuri is beyond dazed, now possibly concussed since the mask was ceramic, and he can feel blood running down his forehead and across the bridge of his nose from where the shattered mask has sliced him.

Yuuri sits on the asphalt when the world won’t stop spinning. Someone grabs ono his ankle, and Yuuri kicks. His foot connects with something solid, and then the pressure is gone. He tries to crawl. He knows he needs to keep moving, to get away, but Yuuri can’t see straight.

“Yuuri, help me!” Viktor’s cry is agonized, and Yuuri blinks hard enough to clear his vision for a few seconds.

There are bodies surrounding Viktor, and Yuuri can only make out Viktor due to his silver hair. He’s being overwhelmed by sheer numbers, and Yuuri gets to his feet, sways unsteadily, and falls back onto his hands and knees when his ankle gives out.

“Use magic!” Yuuri shouts. “Viktor, magic!”

“I’ll hurt you!”

“I can’t die!” Yuuri can hurt, yes, but he can’t die. “Viktor!”

The pulse that bursts out from Viktor when he allows magic back into the immediate vicinity knocks Yuuri back almost six yards. He tumbles sideways as if buffeted by a strong wind, adds more scrapes to his already abused skin, and both lenses in his glasses crack. The bodies around Viktor are on the ground, and Viktor stands up straight. Even without his glasses, Yuuri can still see Viktor clearly. Unrestrained magic is whipping Viktor’s hair around his eyes which are blue, glowing, and leaking color. The road beneath his feet is cracking and disintegrating, and Viktor takes a single step forward. The ground shakes and fissures, and bodies begin falling into the gaps. One body doesn’t, and Yuuri screams when Viktor turns with a snarl: there’s a dagger in his back, hilt decorated in gold and ornate gems. Viktor just holds one hand out and the body goes flying.

The pressure in the air disappears and Viktor stagers a few feet before falling facedown. Yuuri, already sobbing and unable to put any weight on his ankle, crawls over. Viktor still breathing, but there’s a hitch in his chest every time he takes a breath. Blood is pooling under his mouth, but Yuuri doesn’t know if it’s from the dagger still lodged in Viktor’s back or just blood from a split lip. Yuuri knows enough to not touch the dagger since removing it might do more harm than good, but he doesn’t know what else he can do. Yuuri doesn’t know any useful healing magic, and he doesn’t know how soon MARC will arrive. (Because they will, Yuuri knows, but maybe not soon enough.)

“Viktor, stay with me,” Yuuri begs.

His head hurts. He doesn’t know if he’s speaking English or Russian or Japanese. He hears engines revving and Yuuri closes his eyes. MARC. Finally.

“Help Viktor,” Yuuri says when he hears feet rushing over the broken asphalt.

There’s a sudden sharp pain in his side, and Yuuri’s eyes fly open. There’s a matching dagger buried between his ribs, and Yuuri looks up in confusion. A masked face looks back at him.

“Grab the necromancer! Leave the wizard!”
The next chapter may also be delayed: V is going on vacation for a week and is hoping to immediately start her new job when she returns.
Chapter 12: Other Options

“Viktor’s going to be pissed when he wakes up,” Yuri deadpans from outside of Viktor’s hospital room.

The blinds are half drawn, doing nothing to hide MARC’s most powerful agent lying prone and unconscious beneath off-white sheets.

“Which is why he’s not going to wake up,” Yakov says in a quiet voice.

Yuri turns his head sharply, face a mask of calm despite the worry he suddenly feels. “But the doctors said-”

“He’ll be alright,” Yakov assures. “But the doctors are going to keep him drugged until he’s more than mostly healed. I know he’s going to be pissed when he wakes up, and I know the second he’s awake, he’s going to try and get out of that bed and try to find Yuuri. Nothing is going to stop him, not even if only a handful of stitches are keeping him together.”

Yuri nods. There are no leads on Yuuri, no ransoms, and based on what the MARC driver and escort had managed to offer in their debriefings, it seems like Yuuri has been kidnapped on purpose. Yuri doesn’t want to know why: he’s already heard whispers about scientists interested in what makes Yuuri tick as a necromancer, his magic, how he raises the dead. While all that seems innocent enough, understandable enough, Yuri can’t help but think about deranged rogue wizards torturing Yuuri and killing him again and again. Yuuri can’t die, but he can feel pain. And while his body might be immortal, his mind certainly isn’t. It can break. And magic can’t fix that.

“What about Yuuri?” Yuri asks gently.

“I have every MARC agent and BAM out,” Yakov assures. “Go sit with Vitya for a bit: the doctor said that even if he’s drugged off his ass, he’ll know if he has visitors.”

One day passes. Then two. Yuri splits his time between MARC chasing leads and the hospital where he sits and talks with Viktor. Viktor looks marginally better after two days, and then on day three Yuri turns the corner with a cup of coffee in hand and children’s book about poodles to read to Viktor to help pass the time and finds chaos. The door to Viktor’s room is open and doctors and nurses are rushing in and out. No one pays any mind to Yuri when he pulls out his BAM badge and demands to know what’s going on.

“His magic is eating away at the drugs quicker than we can give it to him,” one harried nurse says as she pushes something into the IV.

Viktor’s eyes are closed but he’s straining against the cuffs that are keeping him in bed.

“Just give him more,” Yuri says simply with a frown.

“He might be a phenomenal wizard, but he’s still human,” the nurse snaps. She hesitates before sliding another needle into the IV line.

Viktor moans a bit and then his eyes flutter open.

“I don’t care what you do,” another doctor says. “Just keep him calm and in bed. He’s not fully
healed and he’ll tear his back to pieces if he gets worked up. Keep. Him. Calm.”

Yuri nods and then pounces on the bed. The doctor puts a hand to her head and clicks her tongue.

“Oi, Viktor, the doctors say your ass needs to stay in bed,” Yuri says.

Viktor mumbles a bit and he shuts his eyes for a few seconds before opening them again. He blinks slowly.

“You got stabbed in the back,” Yuri continues while people continue to hurry to and fro. “Keep it together.”

Viktor pulls at the cuffs around each wrist and then rolls his head and opens his eyes fully. His hair might be a mess and more than a few strands are draped over his left eye, but there’s no mistaking the blue leaking out of both of them.

“Where’s Yuri?” Viktor asks. His voice is just above a whisper, but it’s deadly.

“We can’t find him,” Yuri admits. “But we’re doing everything we can. Don’t do anything stupid, you’re still hurt.”

Viktor growls. Yuri yelps when he’s unceremoniously dumped off the bed. Viktor rubs at his wrists, pulls his legs up with a hiss, and then begins tearing lines and IVs.

“BAM,” Viktor hisses out. “MARC. I’ve been out for who knows how long, and no one has done a damn thing to find Yuuri.”

“We’re trying,” Yuri bites out as he sits up. “Viktor, Yakov is going to kill you if you leave.”

Viktor ignores him.

“How are you going to find Yuuri when MARC can’t even do that?” Yuri demands.

Yuuri comes to with blood in his mouth, heat in his side, and without his glasses on his face which means everything around him is a blur. There’s a buzzing in his ears that Yuuri thinks means he’s hit his head, and he aches all over. Burns all over. He hurts. Yuuri starts to cry, and that makes his side burst into agony.

“You. Necromancer.”

Yuuri gags on the blood that works itself up his throat.

“I thought your wounds were supposed to heal themselves.”

Yuuri starts to shake. He thinks a lung might be punctured.

“A-after I… I die…” Yuuri can’t breathe. “I have to die f-first.”

“Oh.”

Something twists in Yuuri’s side. He doesn’t even get the chance to scream.
“You’re an idiot.” Yuri adjusts his grip across the front of Viktor’s chest. “The biggest idiot I’ve ever met.”

Viktor just grunts in reply and lets Yuri lean him against the inside of the stainless steel elevator to rest.

“If Yuuri was here, he’d call you an idiot five different ways,” Yuri continues before pressing floor 17.

Viktor smiles faintly and then winces. Yuri tries to help him straighten up, but there’s only so much they both can do with Viktor’s back the way it is: apparently getting stabbed in the back with a magical dagger is much, much worse than getting stabbed with a normal dagger.

“Remind me again what your addled brain thinks it’s doing to help,” Yuri presses as the elevator begins to move.

“Yakov’s temporarily suspended me from MARC, pending medical leave” Viktor says. He has to stop and catch his breath. “Which means I’m no longer a BAM. I’m acting under my own devises.”

“You mean gone rogue,” Yuri bites out.

“Always with the technical terms, Yuri,” Viktor says with a faint smile. “But, yes: I’ve gone rogue. I’m not going to let some rules dictate how I find my Yuuri.”

“Which means what, exactly?” Yuri asks.

Viktor opens his mouth and then lets out a soft cry. Yuri is at his side in an instant and frowns at the spots of blood already showing through the back of Viktor’s oversized cream-colored sweater.

“Idiot!” Yuri hisses. “The doctors said this was even worse than they initially thought, and three days wasn’t enough time to do much healing. Medi-magicians aren’t miracle workers, Viktor! You’re going to end up killing yourself before you even find Yuuri.”

“Just give me my pain pills.”

“They’re not even your pain pills!”

So Yuri might have interrogated a doctor about Viktor’s injury and swiped some narcotics on the way out of the hospital per recommendation. He certainly wasn’t condoning Viktor breaking himself out, but he also wasn’t going to keep Viktor company if he was going to be bitching every five minutes.

“Yuri, I am tired and in pain,” Viktor bites out. “Give me a damn pill and then I’ll tell you what my addled brain is doing to help find Yuuri.”

Viktor dry swallows the pill. The elevator dings. Yuri lets Viktor put an arm around him shoulder and then they both shuffle out.

“Remember when Yuuri said that just because he was a necromancer, that didn’t make him a bad person?” Viktor asks.

“Uh, sort of?”

“That being a necromancer was only seen as immoral and illegal because of society?”

“Eh.”
“That made me start to think: what other options could we be using to find Yuuri that I normally wouldn’t look at because it was illegal?”

“Hacking and wiretapping?” Yuri suggests.

Viktor laughs a bit. “You’re not thinking big enough.”

“Lots of hacking and wiretapping?”

“Blood magic, Yuri.”

Yuri almost lets go of Viktor. “Viktor, what the fuck did you look at when you stopped at MARC this morning?”

“Yuri…”

“I’m serious.” Yuri stops walking. “I’ll leave your ass to bleed out right here, Viktor. Spill.”

“Blood magic. I looked into it.” Viktor shakes his head. “Some of it is downright evil, but, Yuri, some of it isn’t as bad as I thought it’d be.”

Yuri snorts. “Yeah, sure, like sacrificing people or slitting your wrist isn’t totally horrible.”

Viktor just sighs. “I don’t understand why all of it needs to be banned: it’s not all evil. I found a spell that should be able to find Yuuri, or at least point us in the right direction.”

“And let me guess: you need someone familiar with blood magic to use it,” Yuri says.

Viktor nods and then offers a small scrap of paper with Viktor’s handwriting on it. “He found me, Yuri. He wants to find Yuuri.”

“Great, so we’re going up to some stranger’s apartment in a foreign country. This is the opening to every horror film ever. If we get murdered, I’m blaming you.”

Viktor pauses outside a door and knocks. There’s a faint response of “just a moment!” and then the door opens. Yuri looks down when a furry white cat twines about his ankles and he smiles: if this stranger owns a cat, they can’t be all bad.

“Chris?” Viktor demands in shock. “You’re the all-powerful blood mage?”

“Well, I might have laid it on a little thick to look good, but yes. Hello, Viktor.”

Viktor shakes his head. Chris steps back and holds his arm out to welcome them inside. His cat leads the way.

“Yuri, this is Christophe Gia-”

“I know who he is,” Yuri bites out. “The fuck?”


Yuri helps Viktor sit on the couch and then forces the older wizard to lean forward. There’s even more blood staining the sweater and despite the pain pill, Viktor is starting to shake and sweat.

“Can you help?” Yuri asks.
“No playing Twenty Questions about why a Swiss wizard is also good with blood magic?” Chris asks as he stands in front of the pair and then scoops up the cat.

“If I can change my mind about necromancers after meeting one, I can change my mind about blood magic,” Yuri says. “Also, you have a cat: you can’t be all evil.”

Christophe raises an eyebrow and then his features relax. He smiles and nods. “Get that godawful sweater off and let me see the damage.”

“It’s soft,” Viktor says with hurt. “It was Yuuri’s.”

It takes some maneuvering to get Viktor out of the sweater. His entire torso is swathed in bandages, and Chris begins unwrapping them with care.

“You know, anyone can use blood magic,” he begins while his cat jumps onto Yuri’s lap and begins nudging his hand for attention. “I just happened to actually take the plunge. I don’t do anything dirtier than a little blood here and there. I’m a deviant, but I’m not deranged.”

That earns a chuckle from Viktor.

“Everyone’s heard about Yuuri Katsuki,” Chris continues as he sets aside soiled bandages. “Once Russian MARC knew… well, it’s sort of hard to keep that sort of thing a secret. Viktor, I can’t believe you didn’t tell me you were in a relationship with one of BAM’s Most Wanted!”

“He wasn’t wanted when we left Japan,” Viktor murmurs.

Chris shakes his head. “But to answer all your questions, Yuri, Viktor put out a little feeler for blood magic and I figured I’d be better than the sketchy other blood mages hanging around.”

“You can help find Yuuri?” Yuri demands.

“I can try.” Chris unravels the last bit of bandages and turns Viktor so he can look at the man’s back. “Oh, Vitya… that’s horrible.”

The wound is packed with bloodied gauze. Chris rolls his sleeves back and then begins to gently touch. Viktor flinches and hisses in pain. He can feel blood drip down his back to his pants.

“You should have never left the hospital,” Chris chides. “This is beyond bad, Viktor.”

“Can you help or not?” Viktor snaps.

The pain pill clearly isn’t doing much to help.

“I can help,” Chris says with a sigh. “But it’ll be blood magic.”

“I don’t care.”

“Don’t get used to running to me when you get hurt,” Chris warns. “It’s a quick and efficient fix, but don’t let being mostly bulletproof go to your head: consider this your only freebie.”

Yuri buries his face in the cat’s fur when Chris begins picking out gauze and packing material from the wound. He can hear Viktor grinding his teeth together and swearing under his breath. Yuri offers another pill. Viktor takes it.

“Alright, let’s get rid of this unsightly thing,” Chris says.
Yuri watches Chris reach out for a small red rectangle on the nearest nesting table. No, not just a rectangle: a Swiss Army Knife. Chris opens a small blade, drags it across the back of his hand, and then closes the knife and sets it aside with a quiet murmur that he needs to remember to clean it. He uses his uninjured hand to dip his pointer and middle finger into the shallow wound.

“This might be uncomfortable,” Chris warns. “Blood magic is effective but not usually comfortable. It might… sting. Take a deep breath.”

Viktor does. Chris drags his fingers down the rawest part of the wound. Viktor grabs the nearest decorative pillow and screams into it. The wound begins to sizzle and steam. Chris’ cat leaps to the back of the coach and sits.

It seems to take forever, but in reality, it takes less than five minutes for Chris to stop touching the wound. It takes another twenty for the injury to heal over, and then another half hour for Viktor to stop shaking.

“You’ll be a little shaky for a bit,” Chris admits while he offers a cup of water to Viktor. “But it’s healed.”

Viktor drains the glass and holds it out for a refill. Chris has a pitcher of ice water on hand and he refills.

“That was amazing,” Viktor says. “And you said anyone can do that?”

Chris shrugs. “Might be hard to believe, but I’ve been studying this for years. It takes pages upon pages of seals and symbols to do what I just did: I’ve been practicing long enough to know the safe shortcuts.”

“Safe?” Yuri repeats.

“There’s a reason why blood magic is banned,” Chris says darkly.

He sits himself in a plush chair. Viktor remains spread out on his stomach on the couch, legs over Yuri’s lap.

“Some of it is very, very dark. Downright evil.” Chris sips at his glass. “We have enough trouble with regular wizards going rogue: we don’t need to add rogue blood mages to the mix. Or wizards crazy enough to sacrifice other wizards for power.”

“Yuuri?” Yuri prompts. “Other Yuuri? Can you find him?”

Chris shrugs. “I can try. Do you have something of his, Viktor?”

“I think I found a spell-”

“I already have a spell to use. Do you have something of his?”

Viktor frowns and then raises one hand. “He has a matching ring. I put a good luck charm on them. Does that help?”

Chris smiles and nods. “This will also sting, but less.”

It’s a pinprick to the finger, some strange smelling herbs that Chris swears double as cooking ingredients, and then a command.

“Think of Yuuri.”
“Think of Yuuri?” Viktor says.

“Just think of him. A nice memory.”

Viktor does. Of when he knew Yuuri was a necromancer and still went out to get him a get well soon present. Of Yuuri’s smile after receiving the onigiri plush. His oh so lovely smile.

Chris pulls out his phone and then a world map. “Yuuri’s here.”

“He’s still in Russia,” Yuri notes breathlessly. “Viktor, he’s still in Russia!”

“He may not be there forever,” Chris reminds. He sinks into the chair, waves a hand in front of his face to dissipate the herb smell, and then sighs loudly. “Sorry, but two blood spells in one day is my limit. Especially after that back of yours, Viktor.”

Viktor looks manic. He throws himself at Chris, kisses his cheek, and then grabs Yuri by the wrist to stand him up.

“You’re sure that’s where Yuuri is?” Viktor demands.

Chris raises a hand and shakes it. “More or less. Mostly sure. Blood magic is useful but not always precise. Viktor, your back is better but it still needs rest. Do not overdo it.”

“He’s going to overdo it now!” Yuri snaps. “Viktor, you crazy fuck!” Yuri tries to pull his wrist free, but Viktor’s grip is tight. “You can’t seriously think you can teleport us all the way to Russia from here.”

Chris’ eyes widen. “Viktor, that’s suicide. I know you’re one of the few wizards who can appear and disappear, but we’re in Switzerland! The most you can do is a few feet.”

“Yuuri may not be there forever,” Viktor whispers. “He could get moved at any time. Chris, call MARC? Mobilize them? Yuri and I are going in first.”

“Just wait for MARC,” Yuri snarls.

“Youuiri could be being tortured this very moment. You don’t have to come, Yuri.”

Viktor lets go. Yuri grabs Viktor.

“Like hell I’m letting you go alone!” Yuri smirks. “If we’re going to die, dying by suicidal teleport sounds cool. But maybe let me help a bit?”

Chris doesn’t get a chance to try and persuade them. Viktor’s and Yuri’s hair starts to wave a bit in some sort of breeze, and Viktor’s eyes start to leak blue while Yuuri’s glow green. They vanish into thin air.
V’s survived her new job (for now). Unfortunately, she’s been coming home, catching up on fanfiction other people have written, and then passing out for a few hours before repeating.

Chapter Notes

Chapter 13: Right Here

Yuuri considers himself lucky insofar as the fact that no one has tried to do anything to him. Yet. He had come to, fully healed but still intensely woozy, in a large room with a full-sized bed and en suite bathroom. Yuuri’s not even sure he can consider the hotel-like room a cell aside from the door that seems to be locked from the outside and lack of windows. Everything is plain and sparse, but Yuuri has been left alone to his own devices and is fed four times a day with varying results: he had been too sick with worry to eat the first few days (days? He isn’t sure the fancy clock on the nightstand beside the bed is accurate, but it’s the best he has), but then someone in a black robe with a blue and black bird mask had knocked and come in and ever so gently suggested that Yuuri eat something before he was forced to.

Aside from that interaction, Yuuri hasn’t seen anyone else. He considers himself lucky. So far. He spends most of his time in bed stretching his necromancy as far as he can reach it and purposefully forcing himself to black out; he has a feeling that whoever had kidnapped him wants him to recover from being stabbed and killed before the experiments start, and he hopes that giving himself fits will buy him some time. He knows Viktor is looking for him, and it’s just a matter of when he will be rescued rather than if.

Yuuri doesn’t have the energy to pick his head up from his remarkably plush pillow when there’s a knock at the door. He doesn’t even bother to reach for his magically-fixed glasses: he just squints when a number of differently clothed and sized bodies file into his room.

“See, he’s fine.”

“He’s been like this for days!”

“How long are we going to wait?”

It’s a mishmash of accents and tones. Yuuri feels a bit offended that he’s being talked about like he isn’t there, but then he remembers that technically he’s been kidnapped.

“Something’s not right. He keeps having fits.”

“We need a steady baseline before we begin.”

Yuuri lifts his head a bit. “I’m not a good necromancer,” he offers. “I’m… defective. Necromancy makes me sick.” Not entirely true since it only makes him pass out when he tries to do too much, but not entirely false.

“Elaborate.”
This is the most interaction Yuuri has had in days. He forces himself to sit up even though he wants to curl up and go to sleep. He grabs his glasses so can see.

“I know you kidnapped me because I’m a necromancer.” There’s a bite to Yuuri’s words that he didn’t know he was capable of. “But I’m not a good necromancer. If I use my magic, it makes me sick.”

There’s a murmur.

“You won’t get any secrets or knowledge from me since I don’t have any.”

“True, but we can study your body and see what happens when you die.”

Yuuri freezes up.

“You were dead.” Someone sounds extremely intrigued: Yuuri wishes he could tell who was speaking, but the masks and hoods make it impossible. “Well and truly gone, but then your wound started to heal. And you started to breathe again!”

“And now you’re awake and carrying on a conversation as if nothing has happened.”

“Do you have idea how valuable you are? As a necromancer? We could learn so much from you!”

Necromancers are rare. Yuuri knows this. Most people, wizards and non, think that necromancers are extinct because of how rare they are.

“You could hold the secrets to immortal life!”

Yuuri shrinks back. “I’m a person, not a thing to be studied!”

“Well, you don’t have a choice.”

“If he’s defective, there’s no harm in starting things since he won’t get any better than he already is.”

Yuuri had seen a story on the news when he was seven about a mad scientist being caught who took pleasure in dissecting wizards to see what made them tick: Yuuri hadn’t been able to sleep for a week following the feature and it had taken another week before he admitted to Mari that he was terrified that people would come after him to see what made him tick as a necromancer. Mari had assured him that it would never happen, that Yuuri was safe, but Yuuri still had nightmares of what would happen to him if people, aside from his family, ever found out he was a necromancer. All his nightmares revolved around being strapped down and poked and prodded. For the greater good. For science. For magical advancement.

“Let’s go.”

Yuuri’s clothes might be torn and frayed from the auto accident days ago, but all his injuries are healed. Yuuri thinks he might freeze up because this isn’t a nightmare, it’s real life, and he’s going to be strapped down and poked and prodded, but then he thinks about Viktor and his, “Yuuri, fight!” Viktor hadn’t doubted Yuuri for a second, and Yuuri is going to be damned if he doesn’t at least try to fight.

Yuuri scrambles off the bed, on the far side, and then waits for one person to dash around to cut him off. Yuuri tackles the person to the floor, sinks his teeth into a wrist when a hand grabs his shoulder, and kicks out when he feels more hands on himself.
“Don’t hurt me!”

Yuuri knows that if Viktor was here, he’d be able to take every single person down in a non-magical fight without even breaking a sweat. Viktor has years of hand-to-hand experience, and Yuuri has nothing but a few scant lessons of self-defense which have flown out the window. Yuuri can feel panic starting to take over as he’s hauled to his feet. People are grabbing his arms and pinning them to his sides, and Yuuri resorts to twisting and flailing when he’s pulled to the door. Yuuri would rather spend the rest of his life in this mockery of a hotel room rather than leave. He has no idea what’s on the other side of that door, but he has a guess, and it terrifies him.

“Please, don’t! Don’t!”

Yuuri is propelled from his room and his shoes squeak on the tiled hallway floor as he tries to get purchase and stop his forward motion.

“Please, don’t hurt me! Don’t hurt me!”

The hallway is white and bright.

“I’ll do anything!”

Every turn and elevator ride takes Yuuri farther and farther away from his room. He’s thoroughly turned around by the time a heavy door creaks open, and Yuuri knows that he’d never be able to make it back on his own. He’s been struggling the entire way, but then a heavy door creaks open and Yuuri begins to fight with renewed strength. He’s had nightmares and watched too many scary movies, and what lies before him lives up to every expectation he’s ever had.

It’s a massive space, brightly light, and people stand in front of tables and beakers with clipboards and laptops while different colored liquids bubble and sit in test tubes. It’s a humungous lab, and normally such a space would peak Yuuri’s interest because there are screens with information and white boards with mathematical formulas scrawled across them and there’s so much going on and there’s so much knowledge in the room, but at the center of everything is an upright padded bench with straps and chains hanging from the sides. Yuuri can already see seals and sigils carved into the metal and leather, and he flips both legs up and plants them on either side of the door to keep himself from being led in.

“Please, don’t!”

It’s not so much a shout as it is a shriek. Every single person in that room wants to see what makes Yuuri tick. No matter their intentions, good or bad, they mean Yuuri harm. Everything seems very scientific at first glance, but Yuuri can see needles and knives and scalpels the longer he looks. Bottles are labeled with skulls and as chemical hazards. There are drains on the floor and hoses are hung on the walls which are lined with shelving filled with books and jars.

“Don’t! Please!”

Yuuri manages a few seconds before people grab his ankles. They don’t let him put his feet down, and Yuuri is carried into the lab while he continues to scream and buck. He’s sobbing now. He’s scared. Terrified. All he wants is to be back in Hasetsu with his parents. With Mari. With Viktor and Yuri who don’t care that he’s a necromancer and don’t try to force him into telling them things about his necromancy. Who don’t force him to do anything with his unreliable necromancy.

“Don’t hurt me! Please, don’t hurt me!”

Yuuri’s drowned, broken his neck, and been stabbed to death. The damage might not last, but it still
hurts. He’s not immune to pain or a slow, agonizing death.

“Stay still!”

Yuuri is held in place against the padded board while straps and chains are wrapped around his limbs. Each wrist and ankle gets shackled in turn. When the hands finally let go, Yuuri can’t move an inch. He’s still shaking head to toe, sobbing openly, and quite possibly on the verge of passing out while he hyperventilates.

“Don’t,” Yuuri begs when someone widen a hole in his shirt so that they can get to the back of his hand. “Please.”

Things are being clipped and stuck to his skin. Yuuri hears someone make a comment about needing a resting heart rate and recording time of death. Yuuri jerks when a needle is inserted into his hand, he screams, and the entire board, despite being bolted to the floor, rocks.

“Calm down!”

“No, no, no! Don’t! Please! I can still feel pain!” Yuuri is desperate for everyone to understand that even though he might be a necromancer, but he’s still human. “I can still feel pain!”

There’s a slight burn by his hand when liquid begins flowing through the needle. It’s a momentary discomfort, and then slowly, ever so slowly, Yuuri starts to calm down. The tears slow, his breathing begins to even out, and then Yuuri starts to sag a bit. His eyes are sore and puffy, but each blink comes slower and closer together until he’s just shy of dozing off.

“There, nice and calm-”

Yuuri jerks awake when thunder explodes inside the lab. Yuri and Viktor appear, and Viktor blinks, once, twice, and then both blazing blue eyes roll to the back of his head and he keels over. He lands mostly on his side with one arm tucked under his body. There a massive red stain on his sweater. Yuri rolls his eyes and then flicks his wrist: every single body in the room stiffens, including Yuuri.

“Dumbass,” Yuri spits out as he keeps one hand raised and then bends over.

He brushes Viktork’s hair back away from his eye and frowns. Viktor is breathing quicker than normal, but Yuri can’t blame him since they were in Switzerland seconds ago and are now in Russia. If all Viktor gets out of teleporting himself and Yuri thousands of miles in the blink of an eye is a fainting spell, Yuri will take it.

“Yuuri!” Yuri stands up and rushes over to the necromancer, one hand outstretched. “It’s alright, Viktor and I came to rescue you. MARC has already been alerted. They’ll be here soon.”

Between the drugs and sudden adrenaline rush, Yuuri doesn’t know how to feel. He starts to cry. Yuri tries to start removing the straps and chains onehanded.

“Viktor should be alright,” Yuri says. “He just teleported us from Switzerland. I tried to help, but…”

Yuuri strains.

“Hey, don’t fight it!” Yuri snaps as he struggles with a buckle. “Everyone in this entire building is frozen for the moment. I’d rather leave it that way until MARC comes.”

Yuri gives up on the straps when he realizes he won’t be able to get them undone with one hand. Yuuri starts to shake.
“You’re alright.” It almost hurts to hear Yuri trying to be gentle. “Hey, calm down, you’re alright.”

Yuuri can’t. He’s sobbing and shaking.

“Hey, hey!” Yuri blanches. “You’re turning blue!”

Yuuri’s chest is heaving.

“Stop, you’re turning blue!” Yuri sounds panicked. “Yuuri, what’s wrong?”

Yuuri can’t respond or shake his head.

“What the hell is this?” Yuri demands in fright when he notices the IV. “What are they feeding you?”

Yuri isn’t exactly gentle when he removes the needle. He waits a few minutes, but Yuuri’s breathing only worsens. It’s already too late.

Yuri still has one hand outstretched, but he uses the other one to drag Viktor across the floor when the wizard begins to make distressed elephant noises in an attempt to let Yuri know that he’s awake.

“He’s dying,” Yuri admits.

He drops his hand just long enough to haul Viktor to his feet and lean him against Yuuri before freezing everyone again. The pair are centimeters away from one another’s face. Yuuri is steadily going purple but Viktor blinks a few times and tries to convey as much emotion as he can while Yuuri stares back at him, eyes slightly glazed over.

“I can unfreeze you a bit,” Yuri says. “But make it quick.”

Viktor nuzzles the side of Yuuri’s face as soon as he can move. He starts working at the straps and chains while Yuuri’s breaths slow. He’s clearly dying, suffocating, but there’s no panic in his eyes.


Viktor isn’t sure how long he can remain upright: his head is pounding and his back feels like it’s on fire.

“Just go to sleep,” Viktor encourages as he lets Yuuri lean against him and then slowly brings both of them to the floor. “I’ll be right here when you close your eyes and right here when you open them.” Viktor wraps Yuuri in his arms and can feel Yuuri’s chest continue to heave. “Just let go. It’s alright. I’ll be right here when you wake up.”

It takes a few more minutes for Yuuri to still and even longer for Yuri to realize that he’s wasting magic and energy on a dead body. Viktor doesn’t relinquish his hold, and he snarls when a BAM tries to take the body.

“You can’t hold onto him forever,” Yuri says while he sinks to the floor in relief: MARC is rounding up bodies and no longer needs Yuri to hold everyone in place. “Viktor, he’s- Viktor!”

Viktor keeps a firm hold on one of Yuuri’s wrists. His other hand touches his nose. There’s blood streaming from both his nostrils. He blinks a few times as a MARC agent kneels down and feels his forehead.

“All the blood vessels in his eyes are popping,” the agent notes with worry before Viktor slumps. “What did he do?”
“Teleported us from Switzerland,” Yuri replies automatically. “I tried to help, but…”

More wizards are swarming Viktor.

“Probably a delayed reaction. That idiot…”

Chapter End Notes

A few people have asked about Viktor's magical powers, the extent to them, rules, etc.: in simple terms, Viktor isn't just a wizard, he's THE wizard. (Also, V still hasn't quite decided the parameters, so she's just winging it. Viktor does as Viktor wants.)
Chapter 14: Again and Again

Yuuri blinks back tears when he comes to, but he can’t for the life of him remember why he feels such a crushing sense of disappointment. He doesn’t have his glasses on, and his tears are making everything even blurrier than they already are.

“Viktor makes promises he can’t keep all the time,” comes Yuri’s curt voice somewhere to Yuri’s left. “It’s not just you: he does this to everyone. Don’t feel bad.”

Yuuri turns his head. Tears continue to snake down his face. “Yuri?”

Yuri puts his phone back into the pants pocket of his dark washed jeans and then flips his hood of his jacket back. He scoots his chair closer to Yuuri’s bed and then prods a button with a shrug.

“The doctors wanted to talk with you when you woke up,” Yuri says. “At least I think that’s why they said: either that or they wanted to take you out for lunch. I’m not quite sure.”

There’s a teasing tone to Yuri’s words and slight smile on his face. Yuuri frowns, raises a hand to wipe his face, and then freezes when he notes a needle taped down to the back of it. He immediately starts to pull at the IV in a panic and then claws at Yuri when he grabs him.

“Fuck!” Yuri falls out of his chair with scratches across his face but both eyes intact while blood wells at the marks. “Yuuri, stop, you’re safe! You’re in a hospital! You’re safe!” He repeats it in Japanese since he thinks Yuuri’s brain might have short-circuited in fright, but Yuuri ignores him.

Yuuri rips open the back of his hand, but he gets the needle out. All the other leads and wires are next, and soon machines are shrieking and beeping. A nurse rushes in, hesitates between Yuuri and Yuri, and then goes for Yuuri first. Yuuri ducks under one of her arms, turns around, and then plants a foot on her back and kicks off. She winds up in the bed, and Yuuri manages one step before his muscles lock up.

“Stop it!” Yuri shouts while he slowly picks himself off the floor. “I told you he should have been cuffed!” he snarls at the next doctor who jogs into the room. “He’s freaking out!”

Understandably so. Yuuri is fighting tooth and nail against Yuri’s magic, and Yuri wipes his free hand across his face: he smears the drops of blood but doesn’t seem concerned.

“Can’t you give him a shot or something?” Yuri demands. “I can’t keep him like this forever.”

“His magic will probably eat right through anything we give him,” the doctor explains.

“Yuuri’s a shitty wizard,” Yuri snaps. “Try it. Just something to take the edge off so he doesn’t claw anyone else in the face. Fuck! This stings!”

Yuuri isn’t comforted by the doctor remaining at an arm’s length from him.

“You’re alright,” the doctor offers softly. “I know you’re scared, but you’re safe. Just try and take a few deep breaths.”

Yuuri’s chest aches. He knows that he suffocated in some fashion and died, and it’ll likely take a few more days before his innards finish healing. In the meantime, he’s not keen on anyone coming near
him, with or without needles. Especially strangers. And why is everyone speaking Japanese? He’s in Russia…

“Can you hold him here for another minute?” the doctor asks.

The nurse is picking herself up off of Yuuri’s bed. Yuri nods. The doctor turns and leaves the room.

“You’re safe,” the nurse whispers. “I know you were kidnapped, but you’re safe now. No one wants to hurts you.”

The doctor returns with a single needle in hand. Yuuri lets out a barely muffled shriek and begins to struggle in earnest against Yuri’s magic. Yuri goes pink and then red in the face from the effort of keeping Yuuri still. Yuri gasps and lunges forward when Yuuri suddenly goes limp, and Yuri is only just able to keep him from falling onto the floor while his magic adjusts.

“I didn’t do it!” Yuri says while the nurse goes for Yuuri’s neck.

“He’s… dead,” she offers blankly.

The doctor abandons the needle and starts feeling for a pulse as well.

“Of course he’s dead,” Yuri snaps. “He’s a necromancer! It’s sort of his thing.”

The doctor shakes his head. “He suffocated before,” he says. “What killed him this time?”

Yuri opens his mouth and then closes it: that’s a good question.

“Yuuri, look, we’re roommates!” Viktor sounds especially cheery despite the fact that he’s talking to a body. Or maybe that’s why he’s putting in the extra effort. “We can stay up late and tell each other embarrassing stories and braid Yuri’s hair!”

The body doesn’t move.

“You two are not coming anywhere near my hair,” Yuri snips.

“I could French braid it,” Viktor insists. “I used to be able to do it to myself without a mirror.”

Silence stretches in the room. Viktor hangs over the side of his bed in an attempt to get closer to the other one in the private suite. There’s too many wires and IV’s stuck to Viktor for him to even think about getting out of bed and also to serve as a reminder that “teleporting more than a handful of feet is suicidal! What were you thinking?” Yakov hadn’t been pleased. Viktor is still sore and woozy and continuing to bruise in random spots all over his body, but apparently delayed reactions to massive amounts of magic being used isn’t uncommon. Viktor is just pleased that his eyeballs remained in place since popping out is apparently an extremely common reaction.

“When is Yuuri’s family supposed to get here?” Viktor demands as he flops against his pillows, winces, and then turns his head to keep an eye on the other bed.

“Just a few more hours,” Yuri replies. He’s focused on his phone, either playing a game or sending an e-mail for work, although Viktor can’t be sure which. “They’re closing down Yu-topia for a few days so they can all come.”

Viktor winces: although he’s thankful he and Yuuri had been transferred to Japan upon Yuri’s insistence than Yuuri would feel better waking up at least in his own country, the circumstances
aren’t good. Viktor might be recovering slowly from the teleportation and backlash, but Yuuri doesn’t seem to be recovering at all. Every time he wakes up, his heart gives out and he dies. Again. And again. He hasn’t been awake for more than a few minutes at a time, and none of the doctors or wizards can figure out the trigger. It’s definitely his heart, but beyond that, there’s no information or even suspicions.

Yuri snaps his head to the side when Yuuri sucks in a deep breath, coughs a few times, and then goes quiet. Judging by the monitor that is counting heartbeats, Yuuri is alive again given the flat line that has just started spiking. Yuri frowns and looks at Viktor.

“He’s alive.”

Viktor shakes his head a bit. “I don’t understand what’s wrong,” he says. “Yuuri’s never had an issue… staying alive before.”

Yuuri would be out of it for a few days following a death, but Viktor had never seen or heard of anything like this happening before. The blacking out, yes, but his heart constantly giving out?

“Maybe his parents have an idea,” Viktor continues. “Or Mari. She’s known about Yuuri’s necromancy the longest. Maybe this has happened before?”

Yuri shrugs. It’s comforting to watch the muted heart monitor and now steady rise and fall of Yuuri’s chest. “Doesn’t seem likely. The blackouts happen when he tries controlling too many bodies, but I don’t understand what keeps killing him. I thought his body healed itself every time he died?”


Yuuri’s eyes are open, but all it takes is one glance at the little clip on his finger before he’s flat lining again. Viktor feels like crying in frustration.

Having the Katsukis present at the hospital is simultaneously the best and worst thing Viktor has ever experienced. On the one hand, they’re friendly faces that have nothing but kind words and thanks for Viktor and Yuri. They’re kind, attentive, and have no other motive to visit except to see Yuuri and Viktor better. On the other, watching Yuuri wake up just enough to look at is mother before dying again, in her arms nonetheless, is heartbreaking in every sense of the word. No one in the family has clearly ever experienced Yuuri dying, and it takes more than a few hours to console Hiroko and Toshiya while Mari stands in the corner of the room with tears silently streaming down her face.

“He’ll wake up again,” Viktor offers gently while Yuuri’s parents sob beside the bed. “It may just take some time.”

“I don’t want him awake,” Mari hisses. “I want him breathing!”

There’s a collective sigh of relief and more tears when Yuuri’s heart starts to beat again. It’s a vicious cycle, and Yuri, in a moment of true tenderness, suggests he take everyone to the cafeteria for a little break when Yuuri dies again and no one can muster any more tears. Viktor demands to see a medi-magician once the Katsukis are gone.

“I’m sorry, but no one knows what’s happening.” The doctor is kind enough to speak slowly for Viktor. “I’ve sent out all the tests and information we have to MARC and other specialists, but no one has any answers. It’s possible that it’s just his necromancy. You did mention that he’s prone to passing out.”
Yuri had offered that tidbit of information when Yuuri had died the first time around.

“Passing out from your brain going haywire from too many electrical signals is different than your heart stopping,” Viktor points out. “Yuuri’s only ever died when something actually killed him. You’re sure he doesn’t have type of heart defect or something?”

The doctor nods. “Aside from, er, being dead, he’s perfectly healthy.”

Viktor hopes Yuuri will start breathing again soon: it’s a bit creepy trying to talk to a dead body, even if that body is just Yuuri.

“When can I be discharged?” Viktor asks instead.

The doctor frowns. “Not for some time. The backlash from overtaxing your magic with that teleportation stunt is going to take some time to heal, and your back still needs to finish knitting itself together.”

No one has mentioned Viktor’s miraculous recovery from the stabbing and he hopes it’ll stay that way: he doesn’t want to have to explain that when he went rogue he found a talented wizard who knew how to use illegal blood magic.

“That’s it!”

If Christophe can heal such a devastating wound with just a little bit of blood, then surely he can cure Yuuri of whatever keeps killing him.
Chapter 15: Ice

Christophe just shakes his head. “There’s nothing physically wrong with Yuuri,” he says in confusion from where he’s sat himself on the bed.

Yuri has convinced the Katsukis that he’s suddenly lost the ability to speak Japanese and needs a group of translators to help him explore the surrounding area. Everyone knows it’s just an excuse to get Yuuri’s family out of the hospital for a bit, but no one says anything.

“How can that be?”

Viktor is allowed out of bed now, but dragging the IV pole filled with fluids and painkillers and all types of other nonsense is exhausting. But getting out of bed means he can sit with Yuuri, at least for a bit, so Viktor lets Chris help him up and slowly walk him over. There’s already a couch and padded chairs for the Katsukis to help keep them comfortable while they keep their vigil, and Viktor sinks into the chair closest to Yuuri’s bed.

“Out of shape?” Chris teases while Viktor leans over a bit, panting: the short trip from bed to bed has left him breathless.

“I’ll never teleport again,” Viktor swears.

“You’ll never teleport more than five feet at a time,” Chris corrects. “I find it hard to believe you’ve never pushed yourself beyond your limits before.”

Viktor just shakes his head, accepts a cup of water from Chris, and sips. “I have, but not like that. Not like this.”

“I hope you learned your lesson.”

Viktor rolls his eyes and waits to catch his breath. “How can Yuuri not be sick?”

Chris retakes his chair once he’s tucked a blanket around Viktor’s shoulders and spread out another across his lap. “I’m not a doctor,” he reminds a tad irritably. “I’m not even a medi-magician! I’m just a wizard.”

“Who can use blood magic!” Viktor reminds desperately.

“Still not a miracle worker,” Chris says. “Blood magic can be more effective than normal magic, but it’s still not a miracle.” He sighs and shakes his head. “The doctors can’t find anything wrong with him, and neither can I. I’m sorry, Viktor, but there’s nothing for me to fix.”

Viktor sets his water aside and puts his head in his hands. Yuuri had mentioned that unlike the bodies he controls, he still functions like a living creature. And while magic can keep him comfortable and from wasting away, it’s not a life Viktor wants for Yuuri.

“How? Hector asks from across the bed.

Viktor sniffles. “I just… Yuuri can’t die.”

Chris nods. “So?”
“He’s stuck like this until we find out what’s wrong,” Viktor says while his wipes his eyes. “What if he’s scared, Chris? Or in pain?”

Viktor knows that magic isn’t a miracle, that it can’t fix everything. It’s not a pleasant thought, but Yuuri can’t even be put out of his misery if he’s suffering. He can’t die.

“Oh, Viktor, I—”

“Yuuri!” Viktor almost jumps out of the chair when Yuuri cracks his eyes.

Yuuri’s pupils are blown, his eyes more black than brown. And he’s terrified. So far beyond alarmed that it’s no surprise that his heart rate immediately jumps to a rate that will kill him in seconds if left unchecked.

“Yuuri, you’re alright!” Viktor says quickly. “You’re safe! No one’s going to hurt you!”

Yuuri’s trembling from head to toe. He scrunches his eyes shut.

“What’s wrong?” Viktor asks dumbly, because he knows Yuuri is going to flat line again.

“I can feel pain!” Yuuri blurts. “Please don’t hurt me! Don’t hurt me!”

And then he’s gone. Chris has a hand over his mouth while he tries to fight back tears.

Viktor just groans. “Yuuri, I don’t know how to help you if you don’t tell me!”

“Viktor, I think… I think he still thinks he’s in the lab,” Chris says softly. “Remember what Yuri told us when Yuuri first woke up? He freaked. I don’t think he knows he’s safe.” Chris rubs his chin. “I said there’s nothing physically wrong with him. What if I was right?”

“Eh?”

“Viktor, he was kidnapped and possibly tortured. What if Yuuri doesn’t want to wake up?” Chris motions to Yuuri. “You said his necromancy wasn’t very good?”

“It’s… temperamental,” Viktor corrects.

“What if it’s trying to protect him?” Chris sits up a bit. “I’ve seen magicians lose control of their magic, and it’s saved their lives. What if Yuuri’s just trying to protect himself?”

“From who? How?”

“He still thinks he’s in the lab,” Chris says slowly. “If he’s dead, he can’t be… he won’t be able to feel any pain.”

“How do we snap him out of it?” Viktor asks.

“I’m not sure we can just snap him out of it.” Chris shakes his head. “He’s probably traumatized.”

Viktor is released from the hospital almost six weeks after the stabbing. He has permission from every single doctor and medi-magician to rejoin active BAM duties, but Viktor submits paperwork to MARC’s Russian office to take a short leave.

“You’ve been gone for two months!” Yakov had shouted over the phone. “You’ve been
complaining for weeks about being stir-crazy. What could you possibly need more leave for?"

Yuuri hasn’t woken up for more than a few minutes at a time for the past two months. No doctors or wizards have been able to explain why he keeps dying, although the suggestion from Chris that Yuuri is just trying to protect himself does seem plausible.

“This is the dumbest idea you’ve ever had,” Yuri mutters. “This is even dumber than you teleporting us from Switzerland to Russia.”

Viktor doesn’t seem deterred.

“Did you even ask Yuuri’s parents if this is alright?” Yuri presses.

Viktor pauses, shifts Yuuri on his back, and then nods. “I have their permission and blessing.” He smiles faintly. “It’s not like this can make things any worse.”

Yuri nods. “True. Then how come they’re not coming?”

“I don’t think watching a loved one die becomes any less traumatizing the more it happens,” Viktor says somberly.

There are very few lakes in and around Hasetsu, but there’s only one that locals have ever tried to skate on when it’s frozen over.

“This is dumb,” Yuri repeats. “Why the hell do you think this is going to work?”

“Because this is the only idea I’ve had,” Viktor replies simply.

That, and he had gotten tired of seeing Yuuri in the hospital. Too many wizards and MARC employees had begun trying to get access to Yuuri’s room, and even a few doctors had suggested letting them see “what made Yuuri tick” in hopes of finding a way of helping him. Viktor had put a stop to everything with some none too subtle flexing and hinting that he wouldn’t mind spending another six weeks in the hospital if he got to beat whoever tried to hurt Yuuri or turn him into a spectacle. That, and letters from MARC had arrived declaring Yuuri a legal necromancer.

“This is dumb,” Yuri mutters.

Yuri stops at the edge of the lake. There’s no one around, and for that, he’s thankful. Viktor looks suspicious piggybacking a limp body, but what Viktor is about to do goes beyond suspicious. Viktor heads right for the water and takes one step: the water freezes immediately beneath his feet and he walks out until he’s definitely over his head.

“You look like Elsa and this is still dumb!” Yuri calls.

Viktor pauses. Ice continues to spread out around him.

“Yuuri, you told me the first time you died was because you fell through the ice,” Viktor says. “The first time I did magic was when I froze a lake.”

“Hurry up!” Yuri shouts. “Stop the poetic bullshit!”

Viktor rolls his eyes. He smiles. “Yuuri, I love you.”

“Stop chickening out! Do it!”

Viktor turns so he can face the shore. The entire lake is iced over and chilling quickly. Viktor makes
sure he has a good hold on Yuuri before shifting his weight. The ice cracks and then they fall through.

Viktor would be a poor magician if he couldn’t do something as simple as get himself out of a frozen lake. But, for the moment, he has no intent of getting out. Once he and Yuuri are under the ice, Viktor lets go and turns himself around so that he can look at Yuuri through the dark water. He keeps one hand on Yuuri’s wrist to keep him from floating away. Yuuri had been dead for most of the walk, but he had come back to life not too long ago. Viktor hopes that the familiar sensation of falling through the ice and the cold water will help snap Yuuri out of whatever cycle his mind has created.

Viktor’s magic can keep him from freezing to death, but it won’t help with him holding his breath. He’s debating heading to the surface, but then Yuuri jerks in his grasp, opens his eyes, and inhales a lungful of water before making a desperate swim for the little hole above them. Yuuri breaks the thin film of ice and immediately drapes himself over the nearest sheet, shivering, coughing, and dripping. Viktor’s head pops up above the water seconds water, and he clings to the ice beside Yuuri.

“V-Viktor! What the h-hell?” Yuuri demands as he tries to pull himself out of the hole.

The ice breaks as soon as Yuuri puts more weight on it while he tries to climb out. Viktor, shivering slightly, just cocks his head. The water beneath them propels them up and onto the ice and the hole freezes over. Yuuri slides a few feet, spreads himself out on his stomach, and then slaps Viktor’s hand when he reaches out.

“One second,” Viktor says before grabbing Yuuri’s wrist.

Yuuri stops shivering immediately. He’s still soaking wet, but at least he isn’t cold. He glares at Viktor. “What did you do?” he hisses.

Viktor just throws himself at Yuuri with a sob. “You’re back!”

“I’m back?” Yuuri repeats in confusion.

“You were… you kept dying!” Viktor is crying. “You wouldn’t wake up. You kept dying on us. No one knew what to do to help. I just… I hoped… it worked!”

“Viktor, I’m wet,” Yuuri deadpans. “And I’m hungry. Get off me.”

Viktor reluctantly lets go of Yuuri and stands up. He pulls Yuuri to his feet and then they head for shore. The ice behind them begins to melt, and by the time they step onto land, it’s all gone.

“It worked?” Yuri asks.

Viktor nods. He’s still smiling and crying and his hair is plastered across his face.

“Huh. Nice.” Yuri reaches both hands out and prods Viktor and Yuuri in the middle of their chests. They’re both instantly dry.

“What happened?” Yuuri asks while he leans over and begins shaking his head to try and get water out of his ear.

“You kept dying on us,” Viktor explains tearfully. “Your heart kept giving out. And… let’s walk and talk. I’m sure your family wants to see you.”

Yuuri looks a little sick by the time the trio makes it back to Yu-topia and things have been
explained.

“I wasn’t doing it on purpose,” Yuuri mumbles. “I just didn’t want to be awake if I was going to be tortured.”

Yuri snorts. “Dumbass. You should have woken up for a bit to see if you were actually still kidnapped.” He smiles a bit.

The Katsuki reunion is tearful, joyful, and sobering. Over dinner, Yuuri notes the lack of guests and questions Viktor and Yuri’s presence.

“We had to expand our circle of who knew you were a necromancer,” Viktor explains while he pokes at his katsudon with a chopstick. “We tried calling in specialists and foreign medi-magicians to try and help. MARC tried to have them sign documents to keep it quiet, but, Yuuri, people are… wizards are…”

“People blabbed,” Yuri says. “And then your family came, and it wasn’t too hard to do an internet search of Katsuki Yu-topia and find an address and picture of Yuuri. Everyone knows. There’s even been stories on the news about you being a necromancer.”

Yuuri doesn’t stop eating: he just starts eating faster.

“I’m here as a bodyguard,” Yuri supplies. “No one is going to screw with your family or onsen.”

Viktor knows that Yuri had requested the transfer, that all the months in Japan had left a more lasting impression on Yuri than he was willing to admit.

“I’m here for you,” Viktor says while he looks at Yuuri.

There’s a tense silence. Yuuri finishes his bowl, pushes the empty dish aside, and then curls in on himself a bit.

“So business is suffering because people know there’s a necromancer here,” he says. “And now the whole world knows.”

Viktor smiles nervously. “It’s just a phase: once everyone finds out how normal and nonthreatening you are, this’ll all blow over. You’re only interesting because you’re the first named necromancer in a few thousand years. The shock and awe will wear off.”

“But how long will that take?” Yuuri asks hotly: it’s true that he’s genuinely concerned about Yu-topia and business, but he’s also concerned about his own wellbeing. People know that he’s a necromancer now: how long until another bunch of crazed scientists try to take him away to see how he works?

“No one knows.” Viktor fiddle with his napkin. “Yuuri… I’m sorry I tried to bring you to Russia. This is all my fault.”

Yuuri shakes his head. “You wanted to go home just as badly as I wanted to see your home. It’s not your fault.”

Viktor hesitates. Glances at Yuri who motions. “Yuuri, MARC has tried to quell everything, but it’s out of control. All of this.”

“I know.”
“Would you… that is to say…” Viktor trails off.

“Come to Russia,” Yuri says firmly.

The entire Katsuki family stares at him.

“If you leave, no one is going to bother your family or Yu-topia. Business will pick back up, and anyone who wants you will have to go through Viktor and me.”

“What am I going to do in Russia?” Yuuri asks.

Everything for him is in Japan. His family. His life. Everything he knows. Sure, the United States had been an adventure, and it had become his home away from home, but it had been temporary. Just a few years of late nights and road trips with Phichit for taylor ham and diners and shitty American pop music blasting while they did dishes or stuck their hands out windows.

“Join MARC,” Viktor says softly.

“Eh?”

“You’re still a wizard, Yuuri, you can take classes and learn how to use your magic,” Viktor explains. “You may not ever become a Battle Action Magician, but you can learn how to defend yourself. And you’d be with me.” Viktor has enough grace to flush.

Yuuri’s bowl is empty, but the katsudon in his stomach suddenly goes sour. “I need… I need to think about us. That! Moving to Russia! I need to think about that!”

“May I join you?”

Viktor technically doesn’t need to ask permission to join Yuuri in the onsen, but it seems like the polite thing to do. Yuuri is the only occupant, but he looks up, nods, and then makes room despite the fact that the pool is empty and Viktor could sit anywhere he’d like. Viktor slips in, sinks up to his shoulders, and then clears his throat.

“Yuri didn’t mean to spring all of that on you at dinner,” Viktor apologizes. “I’m sorry. We didn’t mean to overwhelm you.”

Yuuri just shrugs. Drifts a little closer to Viktor. “No, it’s fine. I like how honest you two are.” He smiles faintly. “It’s just… when I went to college in America, I knew it wasn’t forever. But this…”

There’s no graduation date, no “time to come home, Yuuri.” No timeline. No deadline.

“It’s not forever,” Viktor says gently. He leans over a bit so that his and Yuuri’s arms can touch. “It’s not forever, Yuuri. It’ll just be temporary until everything dies down.”

Yuuri lets out a bitter laugh. “How can anything die down if I can’t die?”

Viktor brightens. “You made a joke!”

“Not a very good one,” Yuuri admits.

He hesitates and then leans his head on Viktor’s shoulder. Viktor sits up a bit so that Yuuri won’t touch the water.
“People will lose interest eventually,” Viktor offers. “It may take a few months, but you’ll be old news in no time.”

“Unless some other group of so-called scientists try to find out what makes me tick and MARC decides to release my medical information,” Yuuri reminds bitterly. There’s a slight pause and a hiccup. Then snifflle. “I’m scared, Viktor. I don’t want anything to happen to me or my family. I just…” Yuuri starts to sob. “Why couldn’t I have just stayed a secret? Everything was fine when I was a secret.”

Viktor leans his head on top of Yuuri’s. “You’re too wonderful to keep hidden away. No one deserves to live like they don’t exist.”

“I wish I didn’t!”

It’s the closest Viktor has ever heard of Yuuri admitting that he feels suicidal. Viktor had initially dismissed the idea since Yuuri couldn’t kill himself even if he wanted to, but hearing Yuuri voice his innermost thoughts is disturbing.

“Yuuri!” Viktor turns around and puts both hands on either side of Yuuri’s face. “I don’t care what the rest of the world says: you deserve to be in it just as much as any other person or wizard. You’re Yuuri.”

“Yuuri the necromancer.”

“Just Yuuri.” Viktor blinks back tears. “Just Yuuri. The world doesn’t deserve you. Not the other way around.”

Viktor knows that he hasn’t been in the water long enough for the heat to go to his head, but he leans in to kiss Yuuri anyways. Yuuri flinches and stiffens, and Viktor pulls back, afraid that he’s made the wrong decision, but Yuuri chases after his mouth. They linger for a few seconds before pulling back.

“I don’t deserve you,” Viktor corrects.

Yuuri shakes his head. “I don’t deserve you.”

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!