WCKD's Most Wanted

by BigBadLittleRed

Summary

After all they worked for, all they lost, it seems that Paradise isn't all that it's cracked up to be. The post-traumatic stress is difficult to cope with, which sets them farther apart from the others than anyone would like. They decide to set out on the world again, start new somewhere else on their own. But it seems that a certain organization has yet to give up on their most precious resource, Thomas.

Notes

( Hey there! This is my first work posted for Maze Runner, I just hope this comes out as well as I'd like it to! )

See the end of the work for more notes.
Misfits

It becomes painfully obvious after the first month and a half in Paradise, that while the others are settling in and becoming accustomed to life in one place, they aren’t. The stagnation, the repetition, after so much time on the run and so many things happening, it feels strange. It causes the stirring of an impulse to take off, constantly, never at rest. At every loud noise, every fast movement, the urge to break into a sprint and not stop or to reach for a weapon is stronger than anything else.

Thomas hadn’t sat still in months, he had woken up in the maze and barely spent a few days there before they were out in the Scorch. Then they were with the Right Arm, then they were looking for Minho, and after that they had to travel even more. The only life he could recall so far had been sprinting, fighting, rebelling for his survival. And now that it was just over, it unsettled him.

What he didn’t expect, were his friends feeling similarly. He finds Minho pacing in their shared hut on a regular basis, too restless, too accustomed to heading out at dawn and running for hours. He goes for runs sometimes, but he claims it isn’t the same, he’s got nothing to search for anymore. There was a distinct difference between sprinting, navigating through a deadly maze on a clock that could lead to the end of your life and a leisurely jog.

Newt was supposed to be used to life like this, building or growing food, participating in civilization. However, there’s a difference in his social skills now, a gap between himself and those that weren’t in the maze trials. He could barely tolerate most of their small population, outside of Minho, Thomas, Frypan, and sometimes Gally. It wasn’t just that though, Newt had been strange for a while now, since his time with the Flare. Most noticeably, he had more of a temper than ever, and while the Flare was gone, the damage stayed behind.

They had eventually just secluded themselves, spent their free time in their hut and talked about everything and nothing at all. They talked about people they missed, the runners (Minho), Alby (Newt), and Chuck (Thomas). But after a little while, they began to joke and tease the others behind their backs, creating a tight-knit group nobody else could even begin to try and be a part of.

Things quickly went from uncomfortable to explosive as tensions rose between trio and the others. Thomas was rather friendly, Minho was a little sarcastic but easygoing, however it was mostly Newt that caused the problems.

“That crank attacked me!” The man they pull Newt off of shouts angrily as he’s helped to his feet. He’s got a bloody lip and his eyes burn with rage as Minho and Thomas each hold one of Newt’s arms to keep him from lunging forward again. He’s one of the gardeners, Newt spent a lot of time with those guys, he had quite a green thumb. But he was always complaining about one person or the other getting on his nerves, no doubt this was one of those people.
“Don’t call me that!” Newt tries to lurch at the man, only to be held back by his two friends.

“That’s all you are, a filthy crank! Everyone know you got the serum too late, the Flare baked your little brains out!” The man points a finger at Newt, Minho lets go of the younger man and steps forward, pushing the man’s outstretched hand away.

“You best watch your mouth talking about my friends around me, guy.” He warns quietly, the man scowls but offers no other complaint. Minho wasn’t too tall, but he was strong, he could easily take this guy out without breaking a sweat.

“All right, everyone break it up.” Vince steps through the gathering crowd, hands up in a calming gesture. “We’re all friends here.” He says to the man, who scoffs quietly and crosses his arms. At Vince’s presence, the others start to disperse, which leaves the trio, Brenda, Vince, and the guy that Newt had attacked.

“Maybe the Flare was here for a reason,” He says suddenly, glaring daggers at Newt. “To kill off the filth.” Thomas pushes past Vince in a burst of rage, punching the man in the face and shouting obscenities as Vince and Brenda yank him back.

“I won’t listen to this shit!” Thomas insists angrily, pointing a finger at the man who was slandering his best friend. “We fought too hard to survive, to get here, to help people like you!” He clenches his fists, breathing heavily through his nose.

“Nobody asked,” The man simpers, Thomas grits his teeth.

“I did,” Vince snaps, growing fed up with the man’s attitude. “Paul, go back to your hut.” He says, voice low and warning, the man grumbles under his breath and turns away, storming off.

“He’s not worth the clunk in a bucket,” Newt mutters under his breath, but Thomas can see that the words affected him. It’s not personally damaging his confidence or anything of the sort, if anything Newt was the one out of the three of them that was the least self-conscious. However, he seemed uneasy now, glancing over his shoulder warily. If this guy felt like that, who’s to say more didn’t feel the same? Thomas understood that line of thinking, the urge to flee growing stronger like hot coals being stoked in his stomach.

“I know you three have been through a lot,” Vince starts, looking between them. “But I can’t have
fights breaking out every other day.” He crosses his arms, not angry, calm and collected. He was a
good leader, had lots of good qualities to him, and one of those was calm under pressure. And right
by his side was Brenda, strangely enough, with her own vibrant attitude. She had quite a bit of charm
in her when she needed it, and not to mention the strength to kick a man’s ass if it didn’t work.

“He should learn to keep his trap shut, and then maybe we wouldn’t have this problem.” Minho
insists, Vince turns his head slightly to look at the young man and squints slightly.

“I’d understand if this was the first time, but I’d like us all to recall how many fights there have been
here… And how many of them were started by one of you three.” He explains quietly, the trio shares
uncomfortable looks.

“It’s not just the fights, you three are like pariahs around here.” Brenda adds, not accusingly, just
stating a fact. They were trying to shake some sense into the boys, but there was nothing to come to
terms with. This was how they were, they had their lives scooped out of them and then thrown into a
strange place with stressful events that warped their minds and thought processes. This wasn’t
something you just moved on from, they just… are... As simple as that.

“We’re friends with you guys, Frypan, Gally, Jorge.” Thomas pitches in, awkwardly shifting
backwards. His shoulder brushes with Minho’s as he peers down at the ground.

“Other than us… You keep to yourselves, people don’t trust you, it creates animosity.” Vince tries
again, Newt shakes his head.

“We don’t trust them,” The ‘we’ is solid, without hesitation. Minho and Thomas don’t object to
Newt speaking for them in the slightest, he was better with words than they were despite not using
them very often. It gives Thomas the realization that even though they were three different people,
they were one whole, a unit. It literally was them against the world, Thomas would take a bullet for a
few people in this world, it was just the kind of person he was. But for Newt and Minho, he’d do
anything, if it meant crossing the world, torture, pain, death… He’d do it, just to help them.

“You’re a good guy, Vince. But to be honest, this is out of your league of understanding.” Minho
says quietly, the man stares at them for a moment, before slowly nodding.

“A lot of this is,” He agrees humbly, and Thomas can’t even be angry with the man. Paradise wasn’t
the problem, they were, it felt uncomfortable to dwell on so openly in that moment. “I can brush this
one off, Paul’s confrontational and from that display of behavior, I’m sure your actions weren’t
completely unjustified.” He says to Newt, who stares blankly at the man.
It was strange, actually taking note of how they all interacted with Vince now that he was in charge. They all had their arms crossed defensively, expressions as neutral as possible, like they were sizing up the man that had helped them time and again. It was ridiculous, and yet these behaviors had been branded into them like a hot iron. No authority figure could be trusted, not even those you knew.

Thomas’s gears are turning in his head as they’re dismissed to go back to their hut, walking beside his two friends as Newt talks quietly about how the fight had started up and how Paul had spent the preceding minutes complaining and then decided to pull Newt into it. They reach their abode, a small shack with three beds and a dresser crammed in. Usually it was two people to a hut, but Vince didn’t complain when Minho and Newt asked to have another bed moved into their place because Thomas was sleeping on their floor most nights.

Minho and Newt had bunk beds, Minho on top and Newt on the bottom, with Thomas nearby in his own cot. However, he didn’t always use his cot, he had a habit of crawling into Newt’s bed some nights, and sometimes Minho’s if he was feeling brave enough. He had to admit he was scared to sleep alone sometimes, had nightmares that had him waking up disoriented and afraid. It was better to wake up with Newt or Minho, who always made sure he knew where he was and what was going on.

Thomas kicks off his shoes near the door and climbs onto his cot, turning away to face the wall and laying down against his pillow with a silent exhale. He listens to Newt sit down, Minho starting to pace already, but it’s not much of a bother, they’re used to it. The squeak of the floorboards is soothing in a way, he blinks at the wall as he tries to sort through his thoughts.

“You mad at us, Tommy?” Newt asks gently, not sad but maybe a little bit wary, expecting some form of rejection probably. Nobody could hurt Newt but Thomas and Minho, and the same went for Minho with Newt and Thomas. Thomas was a little more sensitive than his counterparts, but only their opinions really mattered to him in the long run.

“It’s not like you get into fights that often, you’d fit in if it weren’t for us.” Minho says thoughtfully as he moves back and forth across the floorboards rhythmically. He wasn’t exactly wrong, Thomas got along with people, he just didn't feel like he belonged. He felt like he was meant to be with Minho and Newt, they understood him, the others were almost like they were from a different planet. With Frypan and Gally it was hard to notice, they had been through so many similar things, they were like brothers to him now somehow.

But it didn't matter, because there was something about this place that just set him on edge. Every person he bumped into seemed wrong, every conversation he had seemed like an act. Thomas was constantly glancing over his shoulder, trying to control his breathing because someone said something that reminded him of someone that had died. The worst part was, a lot of these people...
didn't know, they didn't even know what WCKD was up to before they had collapsed. They didn't know Thomas from Joe Bob, didn't understand that Minho had been tortured, Newt had tried to kill himself, that Thomas couldn't bear regular old social interaction for longer than a few minutes without starting to shake nervously.

“I don’t want to stay here anymore.” Thomas finally says after a moment of quiet, Minho stops in his tracks and the silence consumes them tenfold this time around.

“In our hut?” Newt questions, almost forlornly, but still accepting nonetheless. He’d never be angry with Thomas it seemed, he respected him too much. He cared too much.

“In this place, I want to leave…” He sits up, turning and dropping his socked feet over the edge of the cot. “I want you two to come with me.” He says, barely able to meet their widened eyes as he folds his hands together in front of him.

“Where?” Minho questions, Thomas shrugs his shoulders quietly, listening to Newt get up and slowly walk over to Thomas’s cot. He drops down onto the makeshift mattress next to the younger, wrapping an arm around his shoulders.

“I’m here because you’re here,” Newt confides in them, glancing between the other two. “Wherever you go, I go.” He says certainly, Thomas leans into the older boy as Minho sighs quietly.

“So we’re gonna head out into the dangerous world together? That’s the plan?” He asks, Thomas looks up at him.

“We could make a better one,” Newt suggests, Minho walks over and sits down on Thomas’s other side, slinging an arm around his waist and squeezing gently.

“All right,” He agrees, and there’s a soft release of tension in Thomas’s bones. As long as he had Minho and Newt, he was happy, but he knew they could be better, happier.

"Good that," Thomas says in a mimicry of his friend, the other two snort quietly in return.
“Leaving?” Brenda demands from Thomas as he helps her lug some stones from the beach into a pile at the edge of their colony. He nods his head and starts walking back through the sand, she follows him. “Where are you going to go? After we worked so hard to get here!” She insists, Thomas picks up a rock, she smacks it out of his hand.

“I wasn’t working for Paradise like Vince or any of these other people, I was working to take down WCKD, to stay alive and protect my friends.” He leans over and picks up the rock again, grabbing some others. “Anyways, like you said, we’re pariahs around here.” He turns, pacing back towards their pile.

“Not to me!” She says without hesitation, grabbing his arm and turning him to face her. “You can’t leave… I-I thought that…” She looks a mix of angry and sad, Thomas reaches out carefully and pulls her into a hug.

“We’ll be back, drop in and stay for a little while at some point maybe.” He offers, she squeezes him tightly.

“What about the Flare? What if Newt gets it again?” She asks, Thomas shakes his head and leans back.

“He got the cure, the only way the Flare can get him is if a crank kills him. Minho and I won’t let that happen.” He assures her quietly, she looks lost, he feels mildly guilty.

“It’s always been you three, hasn’t it?” She asks softly, he shrugs his shoulders and sighs.

“It was Minho and Newt for about three years, I got lucky they let me tag along.” He smirks just a bit, Brenda smiles back sadly and nods her head.

“You’d better not run off and get killed, I expect you to return here at some point.” She pokes him in the chest, he agrees with a laugh.

“Of course!”
"If this is about what happened the other day, I didn’t mean to make you feel unwelcome.” Vince says as he stands in their doorway, they still had a little while to prepare because they didn’t want to just steal supplies from the colony. Minho was fixing up a boat for them that had broken down weeks ago, Newt and Thomas had been crafting certain other things that might come in handy on the trip.

“It’s not you,” Thomas dismisses quietly, unscrewing the back of a radio to get at the wiring. He had been learning from a guy named David that was good with electronics, if he did this right he could create a receiver and some walkie-talkies from scraps.

“It’s hard enough out there in a group, how’s it going to be with only three people?” Vince says, trying to convince him.

Thomas pries open the radio and casts a glance over to where Newt was polishing a handgun. He had become the weapons expert of the trio somehow, Gally seemed to know a thing or two and Newt was eager to learn from him. Thomas had to admit, it was intimidating to see him blankly staring at Vince as he wiped down his gun with a rag.

He had a habit of staring nowadays, not anything like before. He used to observe people, that was different, sizing people up. Now he just stared, gazed through people. Thomas eventually figured out at one point that Newt’s brain had been damaged or altered in the slightest because of the Flare. But he’d never say that to Newt, and he’d never say it to anyone else either, that wasn’t anyone’s business but Newt’s.

“We work better alone,” Thomas says, when Newt just continues to stare, not offering any words of his own. “This place is beautiful, but we can’t stay here.” He looks down at the radio again and clips one of the wires.

“Why not? You could build a home here with the rest of us!” Vince protests, Thomas sighs and reaches up to rub his fingers over his temple.

“My home is with Newt and Minho,” He states boldly, seeing Newt’s steadily moving hand cease at the words. “End of story.” He shrugs his shoulders and grabs the pliers, connecting two wires and starting to interlock the copper wiring insides.
“Think about it for a while, huh?” Vince urges, Thomas nods slowly.

“We aren’t leaving yet, Minho’s still working on the boat.” He says quietly, Vince seems mildly soothed by this, turning and heading out of the hut.

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Thomas is helping Frypan haul some crates of fresh fruit towards the stock hut when he sees Newt come racing through a few huts and skidding to a stop at the sight of Thomas. He can already tell something is wrong by the older boy’s expression, he sets down the crate and quickly walks over.

“Minho’s having another fit again,” He explains, Thomas’s chest tightens slightly, and they hurry back to their hut. Thomas steps into the room and spots the eldest of the three curled up in the corner of the room, trying to make himself look as small as possible. “Min, I got Tommy.” Newt says, Minho barely registers his voice, only twitching slightly.

“Can I sit next to you?” Thomas questions as he steps closer, Minho glances up at him, eyes glassy.

“They won’t let me go,” He says hoarsely, Thomas sighs and sits down in front of the young man. Minho presses his back tighter against the corner of the room, fingers gripped tight against his biceps.

“Min, you’re not there anymore, all right? Newt and I, we came to get you, remember?” He says quietly, holding out his hand and watching the young man flinch. “We’d never let those ugly shuckfaces get you again, we’d never let that happen.” He promises, Minho takes in a deep inhale and sighs out shakily.

“Sometimes it feels like I’m still there,” He admits softly, voice trembling as he starts to release his tight hold on his arms. “Like I never left, like none of this is real.” He murmurs, eying Thomas’s hand warily. “What if it’s not real?” He whispers.

“It is real, Min.” Newt assures, moving closer now and lowering himself carefully next to Thomas. “You got us as proof.” He quirks one side of his mouth up in a small smirk, Minho hums half-heartedly and then shifts up onto his hands and knees to shuffle closer to the other two.

Thomas pulls the older boy into his arms, grunting quietly at the solid weight that collapses into his lap. He wraps his arms around Minho, squeezing him tight and hooking his chin over the young
man’s shoulder as Newt slides closer to join them. Minho’s arm snakes out, Thomas shifts and tugs Newt into the hug with them.

They sit on the floor together for a little bit, just breathing and taking in the comfort. Thomas smiles just a little when Newt’s hand finds the back of his neck, stroking at the hairs there with his thumb. It felt perfect somehow, just the three of them, safe and sound. Leaving would take that from them just a bit, but they could find new places to stay safe, without anyone else to look at them funny or try to talk to them. They could just be, three guys in a sun-scorched world, just trying to survive. And maybe, trying to create something that gave them a reason to keep going.

“One thing I am definitely going to miss is Frypan’s cooking,” Thomas says as they sit under torchlight in the middle of the colony in a huddle of tables that span out to hold over a hundred people.

Tomorrow was the day of their departure, they had planned it all out to a T, gathered supplies, and now they were ready. The rest of the people at their table were sullen and quiet, none too happy about their friends’ sudden leaving. The same couldn’t be said for the trio, who were rather tensionless because of their upcoming trip.

“If you stayed, you wouldn’t have to.” Frypan comments quietly, not angry, just sullen. He had supported their decision and even discussed setting them aside some provisions from the beginning, but now it seemed to be setting in for him.

“We’ll be back, you act like we’re dying.” Minho grumbles, shoving a spoonful of stew into his mouth.

“Did you finish restoring that stun gun, Newt?” Thomas asks, switching the subject, the older boy nods his head and takes a sip of his drink.

“Should work just fine, especially with the solar charger you and David set up.” He says, nudging his arm into Thomas’s, the younger grins proudly.

“This is ridiculous, you know that, right?” Vince says quietly, Thomas purses his lips and sighs through his nose loudly.
“Vince,” Jorge clicks his tongue in a quiet scolding noise, Vince raises his hands up in an angry gesture in response.

“I’m just saying, leaving because you’re afraid to trust people is childish.” He insists, Jorge rolls his eyes but offers no argument.

“Childish, I’m childish?” Thomas demands quietly, nodding his head as he eggs the man on, growing fed up with this passive aggression.

“You’re goddamn right, the three of you are acting like a couple of children!” Vince’s voice rises, drawing some attention to their table from the others nearby.

“Newsflash, we kind of are, or did you miss that?” Thomas’s eyebrows scrunch together, he grips the table. “Minho, how old did Janson say we were?” He asks, turning his head to the one person who was inside WCKD long enough after the memory wipe to actually retrieve information.

“Tommy,” Newt says quietly, tense between Minho and Thomas.

“Minho is nineteen,” Thomas spits, rage flowing through him. “Newt is eighteen and I’m seventeen fucking years old, Vince!” He prods a hand at his own chest for emphasis, eyes watering. “So I’m allowed to be childish because I didn’t get to be a child, okay?” His voice trembles just a bit and he falls quiet, glaring down at his food.

“We’re all orphans in the Scorch, Thomas.” Gally reminds him quietly, not arguing, just a try at sympathy he supposes.

“Gally’s right, so why do you three act like you’re so damaged? Frypan’s fine, so is Gally, not to mention the other immunes we saved from WCKD.” Vince continues on, Thomas snorts, shaking his head.

Gally shoots the man a glare, Frypan is decidedly silent, but he doesn’t look too happy either. Vince didn’t know everything, he didn’t understand that even though Minho, Newt, and Thomas were struggling to fit in that the others were dealing with their own shit. Gally was a take-charge guy but he was also dealing with depression, guilt, stuff he only really trusted Newt with nowadays. Frypan had terrible insomnia, sometimes he went on runs early in the morning with Minho, who also had a case of restlessness that left him unable to sleep.
“Can’t we just enjoy a damn dinner together?” Brenda snaps, Vince rolls his eyes but falls quiet.

“I’m not hungry anymore,” Thomas pushes his half empty bowl away from him, slipping out from the bench at the table and brushing his fingers over Newt and Minho’s backs as he passes to leave. He knew they’d join him soon, could never last long with the others except Frypan and Gally without Thomas around.

He decides to head down to the water, checking on the boat that Minho had so carefully reconstructed a motor for. It had taken him a couple of weeks to get some direction from Gally, who had picked up quite a many skill in his time outside the walls of the city. Most of it was Minho, Gally insisted that, apparently, he had a knack for that sort of stuff.

Thomas sits down in the sand, which was cool now that the sun had set. He lays back, staring up at the warped stars and planets that glowed brightly against the dark blue night sky. It’s only a few minutes before footsteps come swishing through the sand towards him, and then Newt is dropping down next to his head.

“They don’t get it,” Thomas mutters, shaking his head and sighing. “We can’t stay here.”

“You don’t get it, or did you just suggest this because you were worried about us?” Newt questions, his voice holds no accusation, just mild intrigue.

“Of course I get it,” Thomas says quietly, turning over onto his side. “You don’t think I do?” He asks, Newt reaches over and buries his fingers in Thomas’s hair.

“The only real disagreements you have are when someone starts something with me or Minho.” Newt says casually, Thomas scowls and shifts himself closer to Newt, resting his head on the older boy’s thigh.

“When it was just a few of us it was different, but now there’s over a hundred people.” Thomas confesses, worrying at a thread in Newt’s pants. “The city was too much, the colony is too much, I just want solitude.” He explains, Newt’s fingers don’t pause in their gentle stroking as he hums to signal that he’s listening.

“You’re anxious and paranoid,” Newt states, Thomas sighs.
“So are you.” He grunts, Newt chuckles softly.

“You do get it, then.” He jokes, Thomas smacks his leg gently in retaliation. “Back in the Glade, we all had something in common but this place… These people don’t even know the half of what’s been going on behind WCKD’s doors.” He says quietly, pensive as he stares out at the water.

“You’d think after the world went to hell, people would have a little sympathy.” The voice startles them both, their constant vigilance having lowered slightly at the calm of being together, but Thomas doesn’t move because he recognizes the voice.

“Most of them don’t even believe us anyway.” Thomas sits up when Minho drops down onto his knees, allowing the eldest to slip between them before crawling over both of their lap to make himself comfortable again.

“Excuse me,” Newt snorts, Thomas smirks as he stretches out, head on Newt’s right thigh and the rest of his torso resting along the rest of their laps. Minho rests his arms on Thomas’s stomach and upper thighs, pushing his elbow into Thomas’s gut a little rougher than necessary just to tease him.

“So, no regrets then, Thomas?” Minho asks, he keeps his voice light, but there’s a seriousness behind it. If Thomas said right now, or even tomorrow morning that he didn’t want to go, they would unpack and go back to their lives. Minho and Newt would follow him anywhere, and it was that sort of stability that solidified his decision.

“I have you two, there’s nothing to regret.” He moves his hands up from his stomach to grab Newt’s hand that rests on his chest, gripping it gently. There’s a resounding silence that follows, nothing awkward, just thoughtful as the waves lap at the shore and the distant noise of the people in the colony going about their evenings.

They had never discussed what this was or what it meant, they knew it was beyond friend limits, but it wasn’t quite clear how far any of them meant to go. They could sleep in a pile of limbs together, cuddle, hold one another in a way that other friends couldn’t. But they never kissed, never said ‘I love you’ or called one another any terms other than ‘friend’. Part of Thomas liked the simplicity of it, but another part of him was a bit sad that they couldn’t find the courage to push at that boundary.

“We set sail after dawn,” Thomas says, the other two don’t argue.

They retreat back to the hut, Thomas pulls off his shoes and pants before watching the other two get
ready for bed. Minho hauls himself up onto the top bunk, Newt settles himself down in the bottom. Thomas stands there for a moment, just watching the both of them before they notice he’s still standing there.

“C’mon then,” Newt offers, scooting over a little on his small bed. Thomas shakes his head, looking down at the floor for a second and biting the inside of his cheek. “Min, you got him?” Newt says, not skipping a beat as he gets back into the middle of his bed and gets comfortable.

“Yeah, sure.” Minho leans over the edge of his bunk and Thomas steps forward. He hauls the younger up with him, they adjust the blankets and squeeze together on the mattress. “Good?” Minho asks as Thomas gets on his side, coming up behind him and wrapping his arm around his waist.

“Yeah,” He nods his head, sighing in tired content as Minho rests his forehead on the back of Thomas’s neck.

“Wherever we go, no more bunk beds.” Minho grumbles, Thomas smirks and he can hear Newt snicker quietly below them.

“No more bunk beds.” Thomas agrees quietly.
Thomas wakes up to an empty bed and the sound of the waves crashing in the distance. He didn’t sleep with Minho that often for a few reasons, the first being that Minho was a little broader than Newt, so it was a tighter fit. However, he liked the feeling of them squeezed up together, so waking up alone pretty much every morning was a bummer. He leans his head over the edge of the bed, finding Newt still in his bed and gazing up at the bunk above him tiredly.

“He woke me up when he left,” Newt grumbles, always the light sleeper, Thomas smirks.

“Look out below,” He sits up and slides off the top bunk, his feet thudding quietly as he hits the floor. Newt moves over and holds out his arms, Thomas climbs under the blankets and embraces the older boy with a small smile. Newt usually presses Thomas’s head to his chest at night, or lets Thomas spoon him, but in the mornings, he likes to curl up in Thomas’s chest and hide his face against his neck.

“Min’s right, no more bunkbeds.” He says quietly, breath tickling Thomas’s throat as he cuddles up close. Thomas hums his understanding, pressing his nose to Newt’s hair with a soft sigh. He didn’t smell the greatest, hadn’t showered since yesterday morning. He smelled a little like dirt, ocean water, and sweat, it wasn’t the best, but it was Newt.

“Do you and Minho ever talk about us?” He questions softly, unable to help himself, Newt tenses up slightly and leans back. His eyes are scrunched in confusion, a small frown marring his face.

“Us as in, you and me, or us as in, you and Minho?” He asks, Thomas adjusts his head on the pillow.

“Us, all three of us.” He replies, Newt adjusts himself further up, realizing that it’s probably not the best time for sleepy cuddles unfortunately. “Why, do you talk about you and me or me and Minho?” He continues on, mildly concerned.

“Well I think we talked a few times about this whole thing, because we never talked it out together.” Newt explains, Thomas can feel his cheeks burning slightly, they really hadn’t talked about anything. “It’s a bit of a strange situation, eh?” Newt reaches up and brushes Thomas’s bangs out of his eyes, they were getting long like the rest of his hair but he kind of liked it, so he was thinking about keeping it.
They’re quiet for a moment, and Newt is rather pensive as Thomas lays comfortable but not exactly content with the older boy’s words. Maybe there was some sort of misunderstanding, maybe this was all just his friends feeling sorry for Thomas’s clingy nature and taking pity on him.

“We always talked about finding a home for us, somewhere safe.” Newt says after a minute or so, Thomas bites his lip as Newt meets his eyes. “After all this, are you sure you want to give it up?” He questions, Thomas stares at him a moment, suddenly unsure.

“Do you and Minho want to leave?” He questions in reply, Newt sighs and grabs Thomas’s ear, tugging on it gently. “Ow, hey!” He pushes Newt’s hand away, his smile betraying him as he rubs at his ear, which didn’t really hurt all that much.

“I asked you if you wanted to leave,” Newt insists, Thomas nods his head.

“I want to leave,” He assures, Newt wraps his arm back around Thomas.

“I’ll go wherever you two want, because this place ain’t all that and a bag of chips.” He says quietly, Thomas grins at the strange use of words. “But I’m worried that going back out there will put you both in danger, put us all in danger.” He explains, Thomas worries his lip between his teeth again.

“We can always come back,” He offers softly, reaching out and brushing his fingers over Newt’s shirt. “If it doesn’t work.” He elaborates, and Newt hums in quiet agreement. After a few minutes, they’re settling back down into sleep when the door squeaks open.

“Min, you’re banished to the top bunk for waking us up.” Newt says tiredly, Thomas snickers sleepily.

“Not without my prize first,” It’s like a syringe of ice water in their veins, Thomas sits up fast and Newt topples off the other end of the bed, sinking in the space between the bed and the wall. Thomas’s eyes meet Janson’s, his chest constricting and his eyes blinking rapidly to comprehend what he’s seeing.

The man looks pretty bad, he’s got fresh scars along his face and arms, some bite marks and others not. But most remarkably, he doesn’t show any sign of the flare like he had all those months ago.

“Y-You…” Thomas’s brain is starting to malfunction, there’s an alarm in his head that’s shrieking
for him to run, but he has a dozen other instincts lighting up at once. He sits frozen, watching Jansen step casually over to the mirror. Thomas looks to the door, then slowly turns his head to look at Newt.

“Go,” Newt mouths, starting to pull himself back up onto the bunk as slowly as possible. Thomas shakes his head, he wouldn’t leave Newt, not in a million years. Newt’s hand slips into his, squeezing far too tight and yet not tight enough, then the older boy is standing up.

“Need something, Newton?” He’s barely gotten the words out when Newt lunges and tackles the man to the floor with a grunt.

“Run, Tommy!” He snaps, Thomas races for the door and swings it open, eyes widening when a gun points at his face. Jansen is laughing from just inside, Newt makes a hurt noise and there’s a fumble, when he looks back Newt is laying on the floor with Jansen’s foot pressing on his bad leg.

“Leave him alone,” Thomas demands quietly, Janson smirks and steps back, the man with the gun forces Thomas backwards into the hut again.

“I’ve learned from my mistakes, Thomas.” Janson explains, crossing his arms with a sigh. “I won’t repeat them.” He points to Newt, looking at the man with the gun. “Kill him.”

“No!” Thomas lunges at the man, the gunshot turns into a shrill and piercing ringing in his ears as he stumbles back. Everything is like it’s in slow-motion, he steps back, disoriented. Then suddenly, Minho is in the door and slamming his foot so hard into the soldier that he topples forwards onto the ground.

Thomas is yanked from behind, led over to the door, Minho grabs his arm and then they’re running. He can hear Minho and Newt shouting, alerting the others most likely, but it’s all muffled from the blood roaring noise in his ears. He hears more gunshots, but all he can see is Minho’s hand trapped around his wrist and all he feels is Newt’s hands on the back of his shirt pushing him forwards.

They reach the boat at the edge of the beach, Thomas turns and sees chaos consuming the colony. A fire has already started back near the housing area, and there are people running around and screaming. He spots Jorge gun down a soldier, turning his head and looking right at them. Thomas is yanked back, thrown into the boat, the metal vibrates with the starting of the motor. Thomas sits up, eyes wide and pointing out towards where Jorge is still standing.
“We have to help them!” He turns his head towards Newt, who’s in the boat with him, grabbing a gun from the bags they had left on the boat. Minho pushes the boat away from the shore and into the water, only briefly getting his shoes damp before leaping in and grabbing the steer.

He sees Janson race out onto the beach when they’re a little ways out, shouting angrily as soldiers come to his aid. Newt starts to fire, Minho grabs Thomas and yanks him down onto the floor, his fist tight in Thomas’s shirt sleeve as he uses his arm to press him down against the metal bottom of the boat.

The ringing in his ears is starting to fade away, he can hear the echoing of gunshots, the screams. All he can think of is Brenda, Frypan, Jorge, Gally, all of his friends... All of the people, the children who had done nothing wrong... All of them under fire because of Janson, WCKD, worse, because of Thomas.

Newt stops firing, then there’s only the water splashing against the boat and the motor humming. Thomas stays on the floor, breaths harsh in his ears and goosebumps on his skin from the cold dawn air. Minho still has a tight grip on him, but then he can feel movement and two other hands are reaching down to retrieve him. He sits up, sitting on the floor between the benches Newt and Minho are seated on.

Newt’s hands are gentle on his face, checking him over. He’s not shot, his head hurts because of how close the gun was when it went off. He’s tired too, and cold, but he doesn’t have the current mental capacity to say anything. They shouldn’t have left, they should have stayed to protect their friends. He can still see the island behind Newt, there’s smoke…

Newt is talking, Minho is quiet, and Thomas realizes it’s him he’s talking to when Newt shifts to block Thomas’s vision of the island. His hair is being swept back by the wind, forehead wrinkled with worry and eyebrows drawn together. He looks gorgeous, and all Thomas can think is that the life could have been gone from those dark brown eyes if he hadn’t been lucky enough to grab that gun.

“We can’t help them right now, Tommy.” Newt tells him over the rush of wind, brushing his fingers through Thomas’s hair.

“He’s after me,” He murmurs, feeling heavy and hollow at the same time. “I’m not safe, I’ll get both of you killed.” He leans back, his back knocking into Minho’s leg. Newt doesn’t seem to have heard him, he’s making that twisted up quinot of a face that he makes when someone says something stupid or he doesn’t understand something. Maybe it’s both this time.
Newt adjusts himself so that he has one leg on either side of Thomas’s lap, bracketing him in between himself and Minho. Thomas drops his head to the side, resting his cheek on Newt’s good knee and closing his eyes, at least he was mostly out of the wind. Newt starts to pet his hair, staying quiet because of the intensity of the noise at the moment. The water isn’t too rough, which is good, they could make it there in one piece then.

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After a few minutes, Newt seems to come to the realization that both himself and Thomas are in pajamas. He fetches them some socks and shoes, which Minho had luckily been putting in the boat when they were attacked. Thomas positions himself in the back once he’s dressed, watching the horizon start to fill with oranges and pinks as the sun rises.

He’s left alone for a good while but eventually Newt comes and sits next to him, wrapping an arm around his waist and leaning his head over on Thomas’s shoulder. The wind is still too loud, Minho hadn’t slowed in the slightest in the past hour, he seemed agitated and on edge. It was strange that they hadn’t been hunted down by WCKD yet, a little boat shouldn’t be too hard to track, but he supposed it was harder to do so with less people around. WCKD was supposed to fall, but maybe there were other resources scraped together. Maybe Janson was all that was left, along with some soldiers at his command, that seemed even more dangerous than Ava Paige to be honest.

It wouldn’t be long until the sun was high in the sky, threatening sunburns and blisters. Thomas grabs a jacket from Minho’s duffel bag, then climbs carefully over the benches to reach the eldest of the trio. He reaches out, taking the hand on the steering stick and gently squeezing it. Minho turns his head, his grip letting up, the boat slows to a stop.

“Put your jacket on, shank.” He says quietly, the water lapping a little raucously at the metal siding and rocking the boat gently. Minho slips the jacket on, Thomas can see the way his hands are shaking. They’re all silent for a moment, just listening to the ocean.

“I was on my way back, and I heard the gunshot and I just knew…” Minho tells them, glaring out at the water. “I don’t think I’ve ever been so scared in my life.” He turns his head to look at them, expression stoic but eyes gleaming with unshed tears.

“He wanted Tommy,” Newt’s hand curls over Thomas’s shoulder, squeezing gently.

“Well he’s going to have to pry him from our cold, dead hands.” Minho insists, deadly serious, and Thomas swallows roughly at the knowledge that it’s a genuine possibility.
“The only person who knows how to make the cure is Teresa, she was one of the last analysts left.” Thomas says, thinking about Janson’s scars. “Janson had the Flare last time I saw him.” He confesses, watching Minho look behind Thomas at Newt, having a silent conversation.

“Someone else knows how to make the cure then.” Newt says.

“He wouldn’t want me if they had the cure, and if he was just looking for revenge he could have shot me.” Thomas says softly. “He wanted to shoot you, to keep you from coming after me, I guess.” He turns his head to look at Newt, whose lips quirk up slightly.

“I’ll admit, Rat-Man might not be too bright, but he had a good point there.” He nudges his knuckles against Thomas’s chin, who can’t help but smirk just a little.

“So someone knows how to stave off the Flare, like the injections we had, but they need the cure.” Minho mutters, reaching out his arms. Thomas frowns, confused as Minho takes him by the arms and hauls him over between his legs on his bench. He rests his head on Thomas’s shoulder, squeezing him tightly, and Thomas realizes that the older boy really was shaken up at the prospect of losing him.

“I’m okay, Min.” He promises quietly, Minho sighs softly and squeezes him a little tighter. Newt moves onto the bench with them, Minho maneuvers one of his arms to wrap it around Newt’s shoulders.

“I thought I lost you two,” He leans over and kisses Newt, their lips meeting in a gentle press. It looks so natural, Thomas is shocked, had they been doing that all this time? Newt looks mildly embarrassed when he catches Thomas looking, glancing out at the water and squinting one eye shut against the rising sun.

“I want a kiss,” He says without thinking, sound like a child petulantly demanding something he’s not supposed to have. Newt’s head snaps around, Minho’s nose almost knocks into Thomas’s cheek.

“Really?” Minho tips his head, smiling just a little.

“Yeah, yeah I want a kiss.” He says, more certainly this time.
“From who?” Newt questions, leaning his elbows on his knees, eyes squinted and head tilted to look up at them.

“Both of you,” He decides, Minho’s hand rests on his hip and squeezes.

“All right,” Newt agrees, sitting up, Minho shifts in his seat. Thomas turns to the eldest first, glancing down at his lips

“Just do it?” Thomas asks, Minho nods his head with another grin and then they’re both leaning in.

Minho’s lips are cold from the wind, but his hand is warm when it reaches up to cup Thomas’s cheek. It ends when Newt slides closer on the bench, trying not to look too eager but not exactly succeeding either. Newt’s kisses are different, his lips are thinner and a little dry, but he makes up for it in the way he’s exceedingly gentle. He tucks a hand around the back of Thomas’s neck, it ends too fast in his opinion. Minho’s hands don’t move from him, and Newt drops his hand down to rest it on Thomas’s forearm, rubbing gently at his skin with his thumb.

“We should get moving, still have a couple more hours until we get there.” Minho tells them softly, Thomas and Newt nod their agreement and Thomas grudgingly gets up from his place between Minho’s legs.

Newt and Thomas slip between the benches to escape some of the rough wind, Thomas drops his head on Newt’s shoulder. Their hands find one another, fingers lacing together as the boat motor starts up again. Newt’s lips press to the top of Thomas’s head, then he shifts and rests his cheek on the younger’s hair. It would be a long ride, but at least they had one another.
For Three

By the time they arrive the sun is halfway up into the sky, Thomas helps Minho pull the boat up onto the shore. The mountains are just like they were when they left, empty buildings rotting away in the sun where there once held so many people. Newt is sitting in the sand, digging through his ammunition duffel. He had gotten quite a few weapons, some he helped rebuild and others were gifted to him from Brenda.

Thomas takes a pistol when Newt offers it, and while Minho drags the boat somewhere out of sight near the sheds, they walk ahead. They walk up to the main building, a big warehouse that had been filled with cots and supplies at one point. There are still a bunch of bed frames, some cots, but most of it is cleared out.

“Stay close,” Newt murmurs as he scans the perimeter with his gun held close to his chest. They go from door to door, peering inside, checking nooks and crannies to make sure there are no hidden attackers. As they circle back around, Newt starts to lose his tension, lowering his gun.

“Anything?” They both startle, spinning around to find Minho standing before them.

“Bloody hell, don’t do that!” Newt snaps, Minho holds his hands up in apology with a mildly guilty look on his face.

“We should stay somewhere sealed up, just in case.” Thomas suggests, nodding over at the staircase across the room that leads up to a large office. He had spent many nights in there planning to get Minho back, Newt and himself had fallen asleep next to each other at the table and on the floor quite a bit.

“Sounds good, I’ll go get the stuff.” Minho says, Newt pats his shoulder.

“I’ll help.” He offers, Thomas watches them walk away, then turns back to the staircase and starts walking towards it. He keeps his gun ready as he reaches the top of the metal stairs, his feet making rather loud noises that could alert anything or anyone inside.

He pushes the door open, realizing how dark it is inside and that he doesn’t have a flashlight. Thomas stands at the opening, staring into the pitch black. He thinks of the dark tunnel he went through with Frypan and Newt, the mall they ran through back before Minho went missing, all the cranks pooling like a flood of teeth and claws. A shiver runs up his spine, he reaches out for the
doorknob, having the anxious urge to shut it.

“Teach us a lesson, old chap.” The voice sends his heart into his throat, he yanks his hand back and staggars to the side right as a large, skinny man comes barreling out. Thomas pulls up his gun and fires, it misses, the man turns to him to show off the sores and decay on his Flare-infected face. “Come now, let us have a taste!” He lunges, Thomas lurches back and then suddenly he’s tumbling down the metal staircase.

He hits the bottom, everything is spinning and the air is knocked out of him. There’s another gunshot, and then the sound of a body hitting the floor, Thomas sits up. Footsteps race over, Thomas startles when he’s grabbed, looking up to find Minho gazing at him with raw concern.

“You all right?” He asks, Thomas nods just as Newt turns away from the body on the ground and grabs the younger’s shoulder.

“He surprised me,” He says hoarsely, letting out a deep sigh now that his heart is starting to slow.

“Up you get,” Minho helps him to his feet, they all return to the entrance together this time, to retrieve the supplies. Minho brings a lantern and they leave the bags at the bottom of the staircase, with a shine of the light it’s revealed that the place is covered in trash and other things that don’t seem too cleanly.

“Bloody hell,” Newt grimaces at the sight of what looks to be a dead half-eaten animal near the door.

“Okay, new place to stay.” Minho turns and they head back downstairs.

After a cursory search of a few other rooms, they find one with a lock and a big metal door with no windows near the back. They pull in some cots, set down their stuff, and then get to work settling in. They wouldn’t have time to get anywhere, because according to Minho the few trucks they left here had been vandalized.

“We’ll have to start rebuilding, I can combine some parts, there’s enough for me to get one of them running.” Minho tells them, taking a drink of water from his canteen as Newt starts putting down their sleeping bags along the three cots that are pushed together.

“How long?” Thomas asks, digging into a protein bar. When Newt sits down next to him, creating a
triangle of the three of them, he offers the other half to him. Newt takes a piece, popping it into his mouth and looking over at Minho.

“A couple of weeks, maybe.” Minho sighs, Thomas and Newt glance at each other hesitantly.

“What if Janson comes to find us?” Newt questions, but there’s a heavy underlying inclination of Thomas’s name in the place of the word ‘us’.

“We have no other mode of transportation,” Minho shrugs uncomfortably, then glances around the room. “But we could rig this place up if we wanted, alarms or something.” He offers, Newt nods his head and glances around the room.

“We really don’t have anywhere else to go,” Thomas says quietly, earning the older boys’ attentions. “We could just stay here.” He explains, Minho and Newt give each other skeptical looks.

“We’ll see, eh?” Minho reaches over and pats Thomas’s shoulder.

“Move over, shuckface.” He climbs in beside Minho, Thomas spits into a bucket and puts his toothbrush away, heads over to the bed with the lantern in hand. He sets the lamp down on a crate nearby and then climbs into the sleeping bag on the other side of Minho. Thomas and Minho giggle quietly as they shift and move under the blanket together, Newt zips up the side.
“Ever been to a sleepover, Thomas?” Minho jokes, Thomas snorts quietly.

“Not that I can recall.” He smirks, Minho snickers and Newt huffs from the other side of them.

“We’ve been sleeping in the same beds for weeks,” Newt tells them quietly, Minho turns his head and grins.

“A permanent sleepover, then.” He says with an exaggerated gasp, ignoring Newt. Thomas turns over onto his stomach, burying his face in his arms to smother a laugh.

“You’re an idiot, Min.” Thomas grins, Minho rolls over onto his side and wraps an arm over Thomas’s back.

“Comedic relief is an important job, you know.” He insists with a smirk, Thomas nods his head.

“If you two clowns are finished, could we go to sleep?” Newt’s arm wraps around Minho’s waist, whose smile turns a lot more soft and affectionate at the movement.

“Course,” He agrees, then nods at Thomas. “Go on, turn off the lamp.” He urges, Thomas turns and leans off the bed to switch off the lantern, curling back into the warmth of the sleeping bag as the room turns dark.

Thomas shifts into Minho’s embrace when the older boy reaches for him, their chests brushing and knees knocking together gently, humming under his breath in content as Newt’s fingers brush his side. Minho tips his head into Thomas’s, their noses colliding in an awkward smash before the younger leans back.

“Newt and I used to kiss goodnight,” He murmurs, Thomas smiles softly.

“Back in the Glade?” He questions, curious, Minho nods. “What happened?” He questions, feeling Newt hitch his chin over Minho’s shoulder.

“A certain little greenie popped up in the box, Min thought I was into you.” He explains, Thomas’s next question is cut off by Minho’s lips on his own.
“I was right,” Minho says quietly, but he doesn’t sound all too broken up about it.

“Took Min a little longer to fall for you, I guess.” Thomas grins at the sound of Newt’s lips smacking against Minho’s, then leaning in when Newt grabs his face and pressing their lips together too. Oh yeah, he could get used to this.

“I don’t fall for looks, that’s obvious with Newt, ain’t it?” Minho teases, yelping when Newt hits him.

“I think you’re handsome, Newt.” Thomas promises, ever the schmoozer.

“Thank you, love.” The words send a harpoon of absolute infatuation through him, he’s glad they can’t see his face in the dark the way he’s grinning like a lovesick loon. “At least someone appreciates me.” Newt lets out a grunt when Minho rolls over on top of the scrawnier boy and starts to wrestle him.

It goes from quiet cursing to soft kisses, heavy breaths, Thomas just lays back and listens. He doesn’t feel threatened, or jealous, he just feels weightless. Minho is chuckling under his breath, Newt letting out the occasional quiet giggle, Thomas grins and rolls onto his side. He slips a hand onto Newt’s chest, feeling the gentle rise of ribs against his palms.

“Thomas,” Minho is suddenly collapsing on top of him, Thomas laughs loudly in amusement. There’s a moment of stillness right after, and Thomas realizes it’s the most content and real laugh he’s had since…. Well, since he can remember. Minho leans over and kisses him sweetly, then tumbles over onto his other side, Thomas now in the middle of the other two.

“Thank you,” Thomas says into the dark, feeling the older boys shift. Newt turns over onto his side, reaching over to take one of Thomas’s hands into his own. His fingers are thin and cool, slot nicely between Thomas’s.

“For what?” Minho questions, Thomas frowns as he debates this himself.

“For being the most important people in my life,” He decides quietly, feeling Newt squeeze his hand and hearing Minho’s quiet intake of breath. “And for giving me a reason to keep going.”
“You really are a sap, you know that?” Minho says quietly, Thomas smirks as Newt reaches over to smack the eldest in his arm. “Ow, you shank, that hurt!” He complains, but the whine in his voice is all for show.

“You saved us, Tommy.” Newt presses a kiss to his cheek, slinging his arm over Thomas’s chest and resting his forehead against the younger’s temple. “That’s all the thanks we need.” He assures, Thomas smiles tiredly and reaches his arm up and over Minho’s head.

The young man is faced away, but with a simple tap of Thomas’s forearm to the top of his head, he lifts his neck. Thomas slides his arm underneath Minho’s neck, the older boy scooting back so he can rest his head on Thomas’s arm.

They’re finally quiet, growing more tired by the minute. Thomas’s eyes slowly close, calm at the feeling of being surrounded by two people he cared so dearly for. There’s the distant sound of metal clanging, someone screams from outside, Thomas’s eyes open wide. He can feel Minho tense, his own body started to grow taut, ready to run. There are a few more noises, people talking, cranks talking.

“The door is locked, it’s all right.” Newt says softly, moving the arm on Thomas’s chest to gently grab Minho’s shoulder, rubbing it. “Try to sleep, yeah?” He kisses Thomas’s jaw, who sighs softly in an attempt to relieve his sudden tension.

Minho turns over to face them, still laying on Thomas’s arm, his arm drapes over the youngest’s abdomen and squeezes his hip gently. Thomas shuts his eyes against the dark, they were safe, without a doubt.
He’s running in the dark, the only sound being his loud gasping breaths, his footsteps, and those echoing behind him. Thomas takes a sharp turn, racing through a similar tunnel just as dark as the first, he has to skid to a stop to avoid hitting the dead end.

“Tommy,” He turns his head, his body locking up in fear, eyes squinting as a dark figure steps further into focus. “Bloody hell, mate, you look awful.” Newt rasps, one eye gone from its socket and face sprawling with dark veins. His mouth is dripping with blood, teeth bared ravenously as he steps forward.

“Newt, please…” He whispers, pressing his back to the wall. “We can fix this.” He pleads.

“Too late, Tommy, time’s up.” He lunges forward, Thomas throws his hands up and screams.

“Tommy, wake up!” He curls his face into his arms and tries to get away, he needed to run, Newt looked so terrifying he couldn’t stand it. He’d let this happen, he’d let Newt down, let everyone down. “Tommy!” He hits the cold floor, disoriented as he sits up and scrambles back from where he’d heard Newt’s voice.

“Please, Newt, it’s not you!” A light fills the dim room with a soft click, and he realizes that he’s not in a dark tunnel. Newt is kneeling on the edge of the mattress, there’s no rot, no Flare, he’s still in one piece. Minho walks around the bed and crouches down in front of him.

“You’re all right, c’mere.” He takes a gentle hold under Thomas’s arms, pulling him to his feet. “You okay?” He wipes a hand down Thomas’s sweat-slick cheek, Thomas turns mildly disoriented eyes to Newt.

“I was too late,” He says, voice hoarse, Newt’s eyebrows draw together in a mix of concern and confusion.

“Come back to bed, Tommy.” Newt shuffles back on the mattress, holding his arms out. Thomas crawls onto the bed and into the older boy’s embrace, breathing in his earthy smell and feeling the gentle press of Newt’s hand on the back of his neck and the arm across his back. “Min?” Newt says quietly, Thomas turns his head to watch the young man approach the steel door quietly.
“I don’t hear anything.” He murmurs, leaning his ear against the door. They wait, Thomas buries his face against Newt’s neck without shame, the older boy rubs his back quietly. “I think we’re good.” Minho says after a minute, stepping away from the door and walking over to the bed again.

“You were screaming, we thought you might attract some attention.” Newt says softly, Thomas squeezes himself tighter to Newt’s chest and sighs out shakily. “What’d you mean, too late, Tommy?” He questions, Thomas shakes his head and continues to hide his face.

“Just don’t leave,” Thomas rasps, the light clicks off and Minho crawls in at his back. He’s cushioned between the two of them, safe and alive. Newt wasn’t dead, he had to repeat that in his head, Newt wasn’t dead.

Thomas wakes up with Minho sprawled over his back, the younger pressed chest down against the mattress with his head resting on Newt’s arm. He blinks against the dark, there’s a sliver of light coming in from underneath the door when he adjusts his head to look over Newt’s chest. He shifts just a little and Minho immediately latches onto him and grumbling quietly against the nape of Thomas’s neck.

“Awake?” Newt’s voice gains his attention, he nods his head against the elder’s arm. “Any more nightmares?” Newt turns over onto his side facing them, reaching over and stroking Thomas’s cheek.

“No,” He mumbles, turning his head and kissing the palm of Newt’s hand hesitantly. It was an urge of his, one he had never acted on before, but the older boy doesn’t seem to mind.

“Was it me?” He questions, Thomas hums under his breath, not exactly agreeing or disagreeing. “I don’t remember a lot of that night, I’m sorry it ever happened.” He says softly, Thomas shifts over onto his side slowly, Minho rolls off his back and lets out a quiet snore.

“I’m just glad you’re alive, I’m glad you’re okay.” He lets Newt pull him into a tight cuddle, slipping his leg between Thomas’s and meshing their bodies together in a twine of limbs. “I’d be living a nightmare if I woke up without you and Minho.” He admits, voice almost inaudible.

“I know the feeling,” Newt agrees, and Minho lets out another loud snore, they both snicker quietly.
“You two must be good luck, I found spare nails and scrap wood.” Minho greets when he reenters the building later in the day. Thomas and Newt had been scrounging up the remains of the building while Minho searched the building next door where they used to build and repair things.

“I’m guessing you didn’t find any new material in there, from the sound of that.” Newt jokes from where he’s trying to repair the rolling front doors of the warehouse. If they had to sleep here for a while, might as well spruce the place up a bit, make it fortifiable.

“Don’t sass me, my material is gold!” Minho insists as he walks over to where Thomas is moving metal bed frames and stacking them out of the way.

“The fake, spray painted kind, right?” Thomas deadpans, Minho lurches forward and grabs him around the waist, spinning him in the air. “Let me go!” He laughs, Minho releases him and the younger practically slides on the smooth stone from the intense velocity.

“That’ll learn you.” Minho says cheekily, Thomas points to Newt in faux outrage, who has paused in his tinkering to watch them fondly.

“He did it first!” He objects.

“Min knows better than to handle me like that,” Newt says with a smirk, turning his eyes back to his work. “He wants to keep his cock intact.”

“Very true,” Minho says with a wag of his finger, pats his crotch for good measure with a bright grin. “Come on then, Tomboy, help me carry some klunk back in here.” He urges with a wave of his hand, Thomas glances back at Newt before nodding and following him out.

They work sifting through the debris and the materials that could actually be used. Minho hums happily, occasionally brushes a hand over Thomas’s back when he passes around him. The air around them is hot, sweat beading down their faces and dampening their clothes.

“Are you all right?” Thomas looks up, finding Minho leaned back against the wall and wiping at the sweat on his face with his already damp t-shirt.
“Wh… Yeah?” He frowns, leaning over and picking up a piece of plywood, adding it to the good pile.

“You were losing it last night, didn’t seem all right.” He says quietly. Thomas shakes his head and averts his eyes, wiping sweat slick palms on his pants. “You were saying Newt’s name,” He insists.

“I don’t remember what it was about, and it doesn’t matter.” Thomas dismisses, using his foot to shift some trash towards the bad pile.

“We have them too, it shouldn’t be a secretive thing, not when we’re…” Minho gestures between them vaguely, he glances away and lowers his arms with a sigh. “I’ve watched a lot of people die, for three years before you came up in the box. We were scared and confused, too dedicated for our own good.” He explains weakly, Thomas pauses in his working and wrings his hands together awkwardly.

“I know,” He says, unsure of what else to say.

“Newt and I didn’t get on too well in the beginning, but after a while some stuff happened, and we just started getting on better.” He says, keeping the details vague, but Thomas knows what that stuff was.

“Newt’s leg,” He replies quietly, unable to say anything else. Minho stares at him for a long moment, and then he slowly nods.

“Yeah,” He agrees. “I was starting to think I’d spend the rest of my life in the Glade, running the Maze like a rat in a trap. We talked about living our lives, about moving on even if we couldn’t get out.” He steps closer to Thomas, carefully reaching out and taking one of the younger’s hands. Their palms are uncomfortably hot and damp, but Thomas doesn’t hesitate to fit his fingers around Minho’s.

“And then I came.” He mumbles, Minho smiles sadly.

“Then you came, and you freed us, you know? We kept getting out of close calls, scraping by with our lives.” He pulls Thomas closer, their chests brushing. “Newt and I used to talk in the Scorch, we hadn’t talked about us growing apart because it didn’t feel like we had. There was just you, it confused the hell out of us.” He grins, more genuinely this time around.
“Didn’t mean to be so charming,” Thomas jokes weakly, Minho snorts and shakes his head, eyes scrunching up in amusement.

“We made a promise, that if something happened to me or Newt… The one of us left alive would keep looking after you, like we always have.” He leans in and kisses Thomas’s dry lips gently.

“Who says I need looking after?” He questions with a twitch of his lips, Minho kisses him again.

“You’re a trouble magnet, shank, you need all the help you can get.” He lets go of Thomas’s hand and sighs, stepping back. “I might not be too great with words like Newt is, but I’m a good listener. Don’t feel like you have to hide things from me, or him.” He points towards the door, Thomas looks back but finds it empty. And strangely, he’s disappointed that Newt isn’t there.

“What do you have nightmares about?” Thomas asks, Minho leans down and turns over a metal sheet, observing it for a moment before nodding to Thomas to help him move it.

“That lightning storm was shucking awful.” Minho mutters, and Thomas nods his head. He knows that Minho still has an occasional bout of tinnitus from being struck, his ears ringing in the quiet. “WCKD’s serum methods, to watch you and Newt and whoever else die repeatedly.” He pauses in his steps, Thomas stops as well, watching the older man stare down at the wall, stuck in his thoughts.

“I’m not dead, neither is Newt.” He says quietly, Minho looks up and meets his eyes, smiling weakly.

“Course not.” He agrees, but his voice trembles just a little when he says it.

“I dream about Newt a lot,” He shakes his head as they set the metal sheet aside. “Flare ravaged, rotting away, insane…” He says, biting his lip at the memory of his dream. “Sometimes I dream of Janson cutting your brain out of your head.” He confesses, his chest tight at the admission.

“Yeah, Rat-Man’s got a way of sticking in your head.” He runs a hand through his sweat damp hair. “He won’t get us, I won’t let it happen.” He promises, not to Thomas, almost to himself.

“If he gets me…” Thomas starts, Minho flinches almost violently and then immediately starts to
shake his head. “If he gets me, you take Newt and run.” He insists, raising his voice near the end where Minho starts to protest over him.

“What, just forget about you? Let him dissect you, use you?” Minho demands, Thomas smirks just a little.

“You’re too hardheaded for that.” He allows, Minho blinks at him. “Just retreat, you can come find me later.” He says with a small smile.

“That sounds a little more like us,” Minho smirks.

“You two done chatting yet? I’m starved.” They both turn as Newt steps in the doorway, sweat damp with his hair pushed back messily.

“If I can eat off your stomach, we’ve got a deal.” Minho quips, Newt rolls his eyes as Thomas snickers.

“Sweat soaked protein bars, sounds too good for you.” Newt replies easily, Thomas’s mouth drops open in a loud teasing croon, Minho punches him in the arm.

“Come here,” Minho steps past Thomas and pulls Newt into his arms almost possessively, kissing him with a passion. Newt leans into him, hands firmly grasping Minho’s shirt, Thomas watches in awe. When they lean back, they’re both smirking.

“Like riding a bike,” Minho says quietly, Newt huffs in reply, Thomas shuffles over to them warily. Newt doesn’t hesitate to reach out and pull Thomas into the strange huddle of overly warm skin and sweat, kissing the younger on the side of his mouth. “Weak!” Minho crows, then pulls Thomas into a rough kiss that has the youngest of the trio seeing stars behind his eyelids.

“It’s not a competition.” Newt scolds, Minho makes a noise that suggests he thinks otherwise.

“Can we go eat now?” Thomas says as they start to squabble, Minho and Newt grumble their agreements and the youngest grins as Newt takes him by the hand and leads him out of the room.
(Thanks so much for reading, make sure to leave a comment telling me what you thought!)

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