party tattoos
by endearings

Summary

For a fleeting second, Yoongi doesn’t do anything. His features settle into an expression of softened worry, pretty eyes bleeding questions, the smooth line of his jaw cut sharp.

Then, just as if he’d been doing it all along, Yoongi is hugging him.

Alternatively: Yoongi finds Jeongguk having an anxiety attack in the middle of a party, and manages to catch a few feelings along the way.

Notes

Ive been feeling really squicky about sex stuff lately and I feel like we dont have enough cute fics about asexual characters so. here we are I suppose. this deals with anxiety attacks and insecurities about asexuality, so if this stuff is triggering for u, maybe dont read?

this was my thing for yoonkook week bc hi I love sugakookie with my whole heart and I really hope everyone likes this ffs pls drop me a kudos and a comment if u do, they make my day :')
There’s music playing in the background; something low and bass heavy, the kind Jeongguk resolutely avoids just because of how much it grates against his consciousness. The beer in his hand shakes with the force of it, and if he concentrates, he can feel the beat in his chest, humming through his veins to skitter along his bones.

Carefully, Jeongguk sets his beer down. He looks around, taking in the mass of writhing bodies, the haze of smoke coming from upstairs, the low hum of conversation that isn’t quite discernible.

It’s a relief, realizing that he’s been left to his own devices for the time being. Jeongguk lets out a loose breath and tugs his beanie low over his eyes before he walks towards the door, keeping his head down.

“Gukkie!”

Jeongguk stiffens. In the back of his head, he knew he’d been asking for a little too much, but still, he can feel the disappointment washing over him again.

“Hey, hyung,” he mumbles, internally flinching when he feels the hand settle over his shoulder, a familiar touch. “I was just -”

“Leaving,” Jimin finishes for him, damp hair hanging in his eyes, a choker settled in the curve of his throat. There’s a bright grin spread over his features and his eyes are cut into folds of mirth, arms folded across his chest. “C’mere, Gukkie, lets go dance.”

“But-” Jeongguk falls quiet at the glare Jimin throws him. “Okay, hyung.”

Dancing with Jimin, Jeongguk learns, is a bit like dancing with the sun. Everyone watches them, jealous and yearning but still captivated, and it’s strange, to have so many eyes on him when he’s like this. Jeongguk isn’t good in crowds, isn’t good in terms of socializing, and if it were up to him, he would be in bed with his laptop, rewatching Kimi No Nawa for the hundredth time.
But sometimes, sometimes, Jimin manages to convince him.

“It’ll be fun,” he had said, beaming at Jeongguk with his signature grin, eyes curved into pretty half moons. “C’mon, Gukkie, you can’t live like this forever. Please? We can go home whenever you want, and I’ll even buy you lamb skewers if you -”

“Lamb skewers,” Jeongguk mutters bitterly. “It’s always the fucking lamb skewers.”

Jimin cocks his head to the side, sweaty and disheveled, but in a graceful sort of fashion that only he can ever be. “What was that?”

“Nothing,” Jeongguk shakes his head, brows furrowed. The music is just as loud as before, just as obnoxious and annoying, and Jeongguk doesn’t want to do this anymore but they’ve barely been here an hour, and he’s not about to ask Jimin to come home with him. “I’m just - I’m not feeling too well, hyung, give me a few seconds.”

Without waiting for a reply, Jeongguk ducks out from the middle of the room, letting loose a sigh of relief when he finally reaches the kitchen. It was so crowded in there, so overwhelming and loud, that the bubble of constant anxiety under his skin had reared its ugly head again, beckoning with a sardonic grin.

He can feel it now, too. Can feel it just by the tips of its nimble fingers, catching at the strings of his heart and cackling when the air from his lungs disappears, leaving behind anxious panic.

Hissing through his teeth, Jeongguk checks his wrist for the rubber band he always has there. He flicks it against the skin of his wrist, focusing on the sting instead of the heavy thump of his heart, a habit he’s developed since he started college. He has constant cuts because of it; a wrist kissed red, broken skin moving haphazardly across prominent bones, but it helps.

The breath he takes in next is deep. His head is swimming, fingers plucking with increasingly panicked force, and it’s a little bit difficult, in this second, to keep himself from falling apart. The rubber band isn’t much of a distraction. It snaps at his skin, a resounding shtick that echoes in his ears, and it’s with a faint thought that Jeongguk realizes he needs to get out before he breaks.

He hasn’t been here before, but he lets his feet carry him up the stairs and out of the kitchen, into an empty corridor where a still sort of quiet resides; low and fuzzy and just barely brushing against his conscious, but it’s still too much.
Jeongguk isn’t quite sure how he manages to do what he does next. He’s at his wits end like this, with anxiety clawing at his brain, with it nitpicking through the letters of his thoughts, but still, finding his way into a room that isn’t his wasn’t in his best interest.

It’s dim. There’s a lamp in the far corner, washing the walls in warm light, and an open window just beside it, a windy breeze whistling through the curtains.

Jeongguk sags against the wall in relief when he hears how blissfully quiet it is.

He curls into himself under the sill of the window, focusing on his breaths, the shallow rise and fall of his chest, the sting in his wrist, but even then, he can feel the emotions brewing under his skin.

They hit him with a vengeance.

When Jeongguk has anxiety attacks, he usually expects them. It’s been years since his first one, and now, he’s learned his lesson; he doesn’t eat before exam days, because if he does, it will inevitably come back up an hour later; he keeps to his comfort zones, keeps to himself, branches out only if he has to, because otherwise, he’ll end up like this.

And this -

This is a nightmare.

He doesn’t know when he started shaking. He doesn’t know when he tucked into himself, knees against his chest and arms wrapped around them. He doesn’t know when he realized that he couldn’t breathe, when the walls between his head and his thoughts started pushing together, when he started rocking back and forth in time to the rapid beat of his heart.

There’s a noise coming from somewhere. High and whiny and a little choked, it echoes in the small room, bounces off the dark blue walls until Jeongguk realizes, distantly and without much fanfare, that it’s him.
He’s crying.

“Hello?”

Jeongguk, in this second, in this aching, terrible second, doesn’t register anything. In the far back of his head, he passes it off as his imagination, as a panicked hallucination of sorts, but when a hand settles over his shoulders, a pair of pretty, narrow cut eyes staring into his, he realizes it isn’t.

Instead, Yoongi, Min Yoongi, with his bleached hair and his inked skin and his glimmering piercings, is staring at him.

Jeongguk’s breath catches in his throat.

“Hey, are you -”

Yoongi stops himself when he catches sight of Jeongguk’s face. His lips push out into a small 0 of surprise, brown eyes wide, the words in his throat stuttering out in a string of expletives. “Shit, shit, hey, don’t cry - I didn’t - are you okay? Fuck, I’m not-”

“I’m fine,” is what Jeongguk tries to say. Instead, what comes out is something of a sob, ripped from his throat, loud and uneven and a little pathetic. “I-I -”

“Shit,” Yoongi presses a hand against his forehead before dropping to his knees, fingers folding over the shoulder of Jeongguk’s jacket with quiet hesitance. “Did anyone hurt you? Can you tell me who it was? What it was?”

“N - N -” it’s a hiccup. The words in Jeongguk’s throat get caught there, among the pins and needles of too little breath, but still it seems, in that second, Yoongi understands.

“Oh ,” he breathes.

For a fleeting second, he doesn’t do anything. His features settle into an expression of softened
worry, pretty eyes bleeding questions, the smooth line of his jaw cut sharp.

Then, just as if he’d been doing it all along, Yoongi is hugging him.

Jeongguk isn’t quite sure how it happens. Distantly, he feels Yoongi’s arms wind their way around his shoulders, his face buried into the crook of Jeongguk’s neck, words dancing across his skin in waves of warmth. “It’s okay,” he mutters quietly, rubbing up and down Jeongguk’s arms. He doesn’t let go, not even when he feels Jeongguk stiffen, not even when Jeongguk squirms and hiccups and gasps. “You’re going to be okay. Breathe, kid. Breathe.”

So Jeongguk does. Instead of his wrist, instead of his breath and his worries and his insecurities, he focuses on the feel of Yoongi wrapped around him, his low voice, the satoori staining his syllables. “Breathe,” he repeats, tightening his grip to rock Jeongguk back and forth. “Breathe. I know it sucks. I know it feels like you’re drowning, but - but you’re not. I promise. It’s going be okay.”

Jeongguk listens. His chest feels tight, his throat tighter still, but the echo of Yoongi’s words sound in his ears, a firm, quiet sort of voice. He takes in a deep breath, air settling in his lungs the way it should’ve been doing all along, and when Yoongi catches his gaze, he nods in encouragement. “Again,” he says, calm and unwavering. “Do it again.”

With a nod, Jeongguk lets his eyes flutter shut, tipping his head back to rest against the window sill. He breathes, counting to ten in his head and then back again, until his heartbeat is steady, until he can hear his thoughts, until a pair of dark, pretty eyes come into focus.

It’s quiet.

For a few minutes, Yoongi doesn’t say anything. He’s still clinging to Jeongguk, limbs threaded around his shoulders, jaw set but features unsure. Jeongguk lets out a heavy breath, hands curling into loose fists.

If he listens closely, he can hear Yoongi’s heart beating just as fast as his.

“Sorry,” Yoongi mutters suddenly. He’s watching Jeongguk with his bottom lip caught between his teeth, features tight. “I - I probably should have asked before I did that, but I didn’t, and um. Sorry. You don’t know me --”
“I know you,” Jeongguk interrupts. His voice is soft, still a little hoarse and uneven, raspy. He clears his throat and tries again. “I know you.” he repeats.

Yoongi pauses. He stares at Jeongguk, sleepy eyes narrowed. “You do?”

Jeongguk nods. “Min Yoongi,” he recites dutifully, hands clasped together in his lap. Yoongi’s shifted away from him, still kneeling on the floor, but a little farther than before. “You major in music production?”

“Um,” Yoongi shakes his head a little, as if to clear it. He doesn’t look at Jeongguk, eyes trained on the carpeted floor. There’s a faint blush rising on his cheeks. “Yeah, that - that’s me.”

Pleased, Jeongguk gives him a shy grin. “See? I know you.”

This time, Yoongi laughs. It’s a low sound, feathered out and endearingly raspy in the way that Jeongguk can tell, even after just a few minutes, that it’s rare. “Okay,” he agrees, lips turned up at the corners. “But, still. I should have asked.”

Jeongguk, instead of answering, shifts a little closer. He wraps his arms around his knees and settles his chin there, a stray strand of hair falling into his eyes. “No,” he shakes his head, tired and a little unsure, but for the most part, firm. “I’m - It was really good, what you did. That’s the fastest I’ve ever calmed down before, so - thank you.”

Yoongi stares at him, surprise etched into his features. The tips of his ears burn red, silver piercings winking prettily in the dim light, and when he grins, a small, shy thing, Jeongguk can tell he’s pleased. He doesn’t say anything, ducking his head and pushing his hands through his hair, the ring wrapped around his index finger glinting silver.

A few seconds later, after a comfortable quiet has settled between them, Jeongguk clears his throat again. Yoongi startles, looking up and blinking when Jeongguk sticks out his hand, eyes crinkled into half moons. “Hi,” he says, giggling a little at Yoongi’s confusion. “I’m Jeon Jeongguk and I major in vocal training. I’m a sophomore this year.”

Yoongi is still staring at him, and this time, the laugh that leaves Jeongguk is a genuine one. “I figured it wasn’t fair,” Jeongguk grins, his hand still hovering in the air, fingers loosely curled. “That I know you, but you don’t know me. So.”
For a minute, Yoongi doesn’t say anything. His gaze wanders over Jeongguk, lingering on the cut of his jaw, the width of his shoulders, his boyish grin and his crinkled eyes.

He smiles.

“Hi,” Yoongi takes Jeongguk’s hand in his, fingers threading together. He’s still grinning, but this time it’s different; a little gummier, a little wider. Jeongguk’s breath catches in his throat. “It’s nice to meet you, Jeongguk. Call me hyung.”

♬

Yoongi is pretty.

The first time Jeongguk sees him is after a lecture, walking underneath the trees at a languid pace. He has his hands stuffed into his pockets, blonde hair falling delicately into his eyes, the silver stud in his nose catching under the sun to glitter. There’s a black jacket settled over his shoulders, and it collects at his knees to give way to a pair of torn jeans, his timberlands scuffing along the concrete with every step he takes.

His features are delicate - narrow eyes and pouty lips bitten red, the soft slope of his nose endearing. He has a lithe frame, curled into himself underneath the bulky jacket the way he is, but it’s what Jeongguk sees next that has him taking in a harsh breath.

Ink is stitched into Yoongi’s skin; it’s stark against his arms, his throat, even a wisp of what looks like a flower tattooed where the neck of his shirt dips into a v. But instead of looking excessive, Yoongi’s ink gives off an impression of care - even then, without knowing him, Jeongguk could tell each design, each blot and prick and stain, had a meaning behind it.

Somewhere deep in his heart, Jeongguk aches to find out what they could be.

But he’s shy; he’s shy and uncertain and terribly hesitant, and in the end, that’s what it all comes down to - not if yoongi is pretty, not if it’s what he wants, but that Jeongguk doesn’t know what to do, or how to do it.

Instead, Jeongguk watches and listens and learns and then, after months have passed and Yoongi finds him in the middle of an anxiety attack at a frat party, he falls.
“Hyung!” Jeongguk giggles into his hand, arms wrapped around his knees. They’re still at the party, sitting in the room upstairs, the spaces between them full of laughter and want and not much else.

Yoongi grins. It’s pretty, the way his eyes curve upwards to crinkle into laugh lines, just the barest hint of his gums peeking through from between his lips. He tilts his head to the side and nudges his foot into Jeongguk’s, tucked into himself a little bit aways.

“Don’t laugh, it was terrifying. I was literally just sitting there, trying really fucking hard not to hiccup, and at first I think it’s okay, right? That Professor Kim, freakin’ baldy, head-ass Professor Kim must’ve not heard me-

“But if it was in the middle of an exam-

“- Hush, I was sleepy and tired.” Yoongi’s grin widens, the moonlight spilling across his face highlighting the gentle slope of his nose, the sharp line of his jaw. “So Kim keeps walking around the room and -”

“Jeongguk?”

Jeongguk turns, eyes widening a little when he catches sight of Jimin leaning into the open doorway. His clothes are sticking to his skin, hair falling thickly into his eyes, and it’s clear from his expression that he’s relieved.

“Oh, thank fuck,” he breathes, sagging where he stands. “Do you know how long I’ve been looking for you? It’s been hours, I called you at least five times, I even cornered Taemin and -”

“Jimin,” Jeongguk says quietly, cheeks pink with embarrassment. “I was just - I was with Yoongi hyung up here.”

“Yoongi hyung?” Jimin’s gaze cuts to Yoongi, who’s been sitting curled into himself since Jimin interrupted them.
“Me,” Yoongi confirms, sending a small smile Jimin’s way. He stands, brushing his clothes off before helping Jeongguk to his feet, expression a little more guarded than before. He sounds stiff. “I’ll see you later, Jeongguk, yeah? I had fun.”

Jeongguk nods, the touch of Yoongi’s hand against his a phantom warmth. “Yeah,” he agrees quietly, letting himself smile at Yoongi the way he’s wanted to from the beginning, shy and timid but sure. “Me too.”

Yoongi waves before he walks out, narrow eyes soft. He brushes past Jimin with a nod, shoulders slouched low, but before he can round the corner, he turns back one last time.

His features are twisted into an expression of hesitance, arms folded tight across his chest, but he straightens to his full height, the set of his mouth determined. “Jeongguk,” his voice is firm; quiet and low and endearingly raspy, but still firm. “You know the Sweet Shoppe just behind the fine arts building?”

At Jeongguk’s confused nod, Yoongi takes in a deep breath. “Okay. Um -I’ll be there from twelve to four tomorrow, would you - can I take you out?"

He stands there with his hands tucked into his pockets, rocking back and forth on his heels. A facemask Jeongguk hadn't noticed before is pulled up to his chin, covering half his face, but even through it Jeongguk can tell he’s nervous, the worry in Yoongi’s eyes giving him away.

Jeongguk grins. “Sure,” he acqueises, distantly aware of Jimin watching them from where he’s still standing against the doorway, lips pursed in surprise. “But only if you pay, hyung.”

Yoongi stares at him, the tips of his ears burning red, before he lets out a laugh, loose and low and relieved. “Okay,” he agrees easily, sending Jeongguk a smile again, but this time it’s wider; gummier. “It’s a date.”

And then he’s off, the tips of his fingers curled in a half-hearted goodbye, as if he doesn’t quite want to go but has somewhere to be. Jeongguk watches as he disappears around the corner, the sound of his footsteps thudding down the stairs until all that’s left is the echo of his laugh.

“So,” Jimin says eventually. His gaze is heavy, lips parted in an unasked question. “What was that about?”
“That,” Jeongguk says quietly, leaning against the wall with a giddy expression, a thrum of excitement fluttering through his bones. “Was Min Yoongi.”

Min Yoongi, as Jeongguk tells Jimin on their walk home, is an enigma. He’s somewhat famous among the music majors, a prodigy caught in the very throes of his own passion, a mess of angry words, rapid-fire beats, too little sleep and a thirst for success.

“He’s…” Jeongguk searches for the words, his arm linked with Jimin’s as they amble down the street. It’s windy outside, but it’s a pleasant sort of chill, the kind that skims their skin in gentle breezes. “A genius.”

Jimin laughs a little, low and endeared and utterly fond. “Sure,” he agrees, ignoring Jeongguk’s pout in favor of teasing him, smile impish. “Or you just have a crush.”

Jeongguk shoves him. Jimin bats his hands away, still laughing, but this time it’s louder. “Did I say anything wrong?” he asks, amused. “You talk about him like he hung the stars in the sky, Jeongguk, don’t look at me like that.”

“Shut up.” Jeongguk tells him, but it’s half hearted at best, a little pathetic at worst. “He’s just -”

Warm, is Jeongguk wants to say. He’s warm and kind and sweet. He has pretty eyes and a raspy laugh and his piercings catch on the light when he talks. He’s smart and he listens to me even when I don’t have much to say. I like him.

“Nice,” is what Jeongguk settles on. He shrugs his shoulders and tugs on his beanie, feeling small and for a reason he doesn’t want to admit, upset. “He’s just really nice, hyung.”

“Gukkie,” Jimin edges closer, catching Jeongguk’s hand in his. His touch is familiar, fingers short and chubby and warm, voice gentle. “Don’t do that.”

Jeongguk shrugs. “I’m not doing anything.”

“You are.” Jimin grabs him by the shoulders, a tired sort of expression lingering in his features. His lips are twisted into an frown, eyebrows knitted together in what could be either frustration or
concern, but what Jeongguk can tell is both. “Stop feeling like - like you’re unlovable. Like you have this problem that keeps you from dating, like you’re some kind of freak-”

“But I am,” Jeongguk says quietly. He’s had this discussion with Jimin countless of times before end every time, it gets a little more difficult to remember why he even lets himself fall at all; why he lets himself get hurt in the first place.

Jimin looks helpless. “You’re not.” He runs his hands through his hair, pushing back his fringe before it flops over his forehead, frustrated. “Just because you’re asexual-”

Jeongguk flinches, but Jimin carries on, words echoing in the still night. “Just because you’re asexual doesn’t mean you shouldn’t date. Not everyone treats it like a deal breaker, Jeongguk, and that’s because it’s not. For fucks sake, there are plenty of people who wouldn’t care, who don’t care. You just need to find one. “

It’s quiet.

Jimin stands under the streetlight just outside of their apartment, jaw set and arms crossed. He looks a little bit upset, eyes dark with emotion, expression so very earnest and genuine, but Jeongguk -

Jeongguk is so tired.

“Are you done?” asks Jeongguk uncomfortably. The air outside is chillier now, clingy and relentless, and Jimin looks ruffled in the breeze, as if he’s unraveling at the seams.

“Yeah.”

“Good.” Jeongguk says. He turns on his heel to walk up the stairs, shoulders slouched under the heavy material of his jacket. The thump of Jimin’s footsteps behind him is faint but sure, and Jeongguk doesn’t have to look to know that he’s frustrated.

It’s a testament to their friendship that they aren’t fighting.

When they reach their apartment, Jeongguk taps in the passcode and waits until Jimin has shut the
door before settling onto the couch, a pillow hugged to his chest. Jimin putters around, grabbing cups and filling them in preparation for the hangover he will inevitably have tomorrow, and as Jeongguk watches him, he feels something warm and aching turn over in the pit of his stomach, a little bit like regret.

His next few words are quiet. “Hyung.” Jeongguk keeps his face buried in the couch pillow, legs tangled in the afghan that’s normally thrown over the arm of the sofa. Remorse bubbles low in his gut. “I like him.”

The sounds of Jimin padding over are soft. The tap of their sink shuts off, the clink of glass in the dishwasher settles, and even though Jeongguk keeps his face buried in his pillow, he can feel Jimin’s shadow fall over him. “I figured.”

Jimin sounds amused, if not still a little bit miffed. Jeongguk nods slowly, clutching the pillow tighter, fingers curled over the threaded edges. His throat feels tight. “Um. Yeah.”

The couch dips when Jimin curls up next to him, unceremoniously yanking the pillow out of Jeongguk’s hands and into his own, peering at him through critical eyes. “So? What are you going to do about it?”

Jeongguk takes in a deep breath. He pretends he doesn’t see Jimin’s lips curving upwards in a smile, ignoring the hand that dances forward until it’s twining into his own, Jimin’s touch a familiar comfort. “I’m going to get up and go to the Sweet Shoppe, but at 12:30 instead of 12 so I don’t come off as desperate. I’m going to look cute as fuck. I’m going to get a boyfriend.”

Jimin grins. It’s his mischievous one, but there’s a hint of pride in it, as if he feels personally responsible for the choices Jeongguk makes, as if he’s raised Jeongguk himself. It’s cute. “There we go, bub. I knew you had it in you.”

Jeongguk reaches behind him and throws another pillow at Jimin, pretending he doesn’t feel as apprehensive as he is, instead letting hope settle into his heart as it so rarely does in situations like this.

Because Yoongi is kind and sweet and he has cat-like eyes and a pretty mouth, and Jeongguk is asexual and in like and he wants.
In the past, all of Jeongguk’s broken relationships can be narrowed down to one factor - sex.

“We’re in college,” Taehyung had said. He looked at Jeongguk with hopeless eyes, fringe brushed off of his forehead, slouched over in a loose red sweater that had belonged to Jeongguk not even two months ago, when they first started dating. “I like you. I - I love you, but Jeongguk, I can’t keep doing this.”

“I wasn’t asking you to,” Jeongguk replied quietly. He kept his gaze down, his hands in his pockets, ready to leave and be done with it, but Taehyung wouldn’t let him until he had finished his piece, it seemed.

“I know you weren’t,” Taehyung said. “But I did it because I felt like I needed too, and that’s not your fault - Jeonggukkie, hey, it’s not your fault -”

“Yeah,” Jeongguk sniffled, keeping his hand pressed over his eyes, palm wet with tears he didn’t want Taehyung to see. He’d been humiliated enough for one day as it was “It’s not. But you’re not staying, right? You never planned on staying, Taehyung, so just - don’t make excuses. Pity doesn’t suit you.”

Taehyung had nothing to say to that. He rubbed a hand tiredly over his face, caramel hair and sunkissed skin and red sweaters gone, just like that.

Jeongguk hasn’t seen him since.

Before that, there were others; Yugyeom, Seungcheol, Minho - they had all ended it the same way, with the same expressions, with the same sad, empty words thrown into the air to fade into the remains of what was, and what would no longer be.

In the end, it’s just Jeongguk.

Just Jeongguk and his broken heart and too much love, left alone with nowhere to put it all.
“Hey,” Jimin stands in the doorway of his bathroom, amused. “You look good, Jeongguk, you can stop that now.”

Jeongguk stares in the mirror distractedly, brushing his hands through his hair before throwing a beanie over the hour-long blow-dry and gel style he’d just perfected. Behind him, Jimin groans.

“What was the point,” he demands, throwing his hands up in the air, cheeks puffed out like an angry chipmunk. “If you were just going to wear a hat?”

“It’s not a hat,” Jeongguk replies, fixing the edges until his fringe can be seen peeking out, a few dark strands falling into his eyes. The silver hoops in his ears glint and he considers wearing his gauges, the small black ones that aren’t nearly as nice, but decides against it. He feels prettier in these.

“Then what is it?”

“It’s a beanie,” Jeongguk doesn’t turn around, carefully applying kohl to his waterline as a finishing touch. He’s already feathered out the shadow at the very corners of his eyes, concealer dotted in his problem areas, Victoria’s Secret perfume sprayed and settled along his clothes. “It’s stylish.”

Jimin lets out a playful scoff, but he doesn’t say anything else, choosing instead to lean against the doorway to watch. He knows it’s more about the process for Jeongguk than it is the end result; looking pretty is always a plus, but there’s something calming about fixing the blemishes and filling in the cracks, because even if he’s falling apart on the inside, Jeongguk can look put together on the outside - it’s routine and it helps and at the very end, he feels better about himself than he did before.

“Okay,” Jeongguk places the pencil down, zipping his makeup bag shut before he studies himself in the mirror again, appraising himself critically. He doesn’t notice Jimin coming up behind him, but he does startle when a pair of familiar arms wind around his middle, a comforting touch.

“You look great,” Jimin says sincerely. “If Yoongi doesn’t want to date you after you tell him, then he’s not worth it, Gukkie, okay?”

“Yeah,” Jeongguk nods, turning around and dropping his head onto Jimin’s shoulder, a familiar feeling of anxiety bubbling low in his stomach. “But it - it would be nice, if he does. Want to date me, I mean.”
Jimin hugs him tighter. “I know, kookoo,” he murmurs, the special nickname from back when they were kids leaking out. “But on the off chance that he doesn’t - on the off chance that he’s an asshole, you shouldn’t feel bad about it. It’s a him problem.”

Jeongguk lifts his head to give Jimin a smile, a bundle of shy bunny teeth and pretty piercings and red beanies. “Thanks, hyung.”

Jimin has to stand on his tiptoes to ruffle his hair, but he does it fondly, with his eyes folded into slits of mirth before he pushes Jeongguk gently out the door. “Good luck, Gukkie. You’ll be just fine.”

Jeongguk nods his thanks. He leaves with a soft goodbye, hands tucked into his pockets, heart heavy as he walks towards what could be a new beginning.

♬

Yoongi is already sitting there when Jeongguk reaches.

He’s tucked into a corner, a pair of thick, black framed glasses balanced delicately on his nose. His fingers flit across the keyboard of his laptop, a gentle tap-tap that doesn’t let up even when Jeongguk settles into the seat across from him, headphones fit over his ears.

Yoongi doesn’t say anything, doesn’t even glance at him, clicking away at his laptop with the kind of energy only a sleep-deprived college student has. Strangely enough, Jeongguk feels endeared. He watches him, admiring the way light catches on the soft slope of Yoongi’s nose, spilling across the curve of his lips and the cut of his jaw. He’s paints a hazy scene, settled the way he is, with sunlight slanting over him, faded at the edges but clear in the center, a lovely contradiction of sorts.

Jeongguk doesn’t want to look away.

But just a few seconds later, their quiet corner of calm is interrupted. A shadow falls over their table, and Jeongguk startles to find a waitress standing beside them, a notepad in her hand and a smile fit across her face. “Would you like to order anything?”

Yoongi jerks, moving one headphone so that the other is still covering his ear. His eyes widen when
he catches sight of Jeongguk, a hint of pink blooming in the tips of his ears, a flush that steadily spreads to his cheeks. He looks a little lost sitting there, lips parted in an unsaid apology, but Jeongguk waves him off with a shy grin before turning to the waitress.

He orders what he usually does, a hot chocolate with extra whip cream and a shot of peppermint, the feeling of Yoongi’s gaze lingering on his skin heavy. When the waitress leaves, Jeongguk turns back around sheepishly, but before he can apologize, Yoongi does it for him.

“Sorry,” he blurs.

They stare at each other for a few seconds, the flush in Yoongi’s cheeks colouring darker before he says it again, quieter this time. “Sorry,” he repeats, taking his headphones off completely, features resigned. “I have a bad habit of, um, zoning out, and to be fair, I didn’t - I didn’t think you were actually going to come.”

Curiously, Jeongguk cocks his head to the side. “Why?”

Yoongi purses his lips quietly. He stares at Jeongguk before slouching where he sits, the sleeves of his black turtleneck folded up, inked skin printed dark under the sun. “You really don’t know?” he asks, quiet.

“No,” Jeongguk answers honestly. He fiddles with his beanie again, a nervous habit, and doesn’t notice Yoongi following the movement, the fond quirk of his lips. Uncertainty floods his head, and Jeongguk’s stomach churns at the sudden thought that Yoongi’s invite had been empty. “But, um, I can leave if you want to work -”

This time its Yoongi who interrupts. “Hey,” he sits up straight and takes his glasses off, dark, pretty eyes coming into focus. “Hey, no, that’s not what I want, I just meant that - that you’re really cute.”

Jeongguk blinks. Yoongi seems to realize what he said and he flushes deeper still, but he doesn’t move to take it back, squaring his shoulders instead. “You’re really cute,” he repeats softly. “And I’m - not.”

Yoongi doesn’t look at him but he has his hand palm up on the table, fingers loosely curled, and in Jeongguk’s eyes, it’s an invitation. Carefully, Jeongguk reaches forward and lets his fingers thread together with Yoongi’s, offering a gentle squeeze when Yoongi turns to him, surprised.
It occurs to him then, that he’s not the only one with insecurities - Yoongi has his doubts too, has his worries, and he’s been nothing but kind to Jeongguk for the short while they’ve known each other.

Jeongguk *likes* him.

“You are.” he squeezes again, Yoongi’s hand warm in his, fingertips spanning against his knuckles. He feels a little bit shy. “You, um - your smile. The other day, at the party, it was really - really gummy, hyung. Your eyes did this thing where they kind of -” Jeongguk ignores the loss of warmth when he takes his hand out Yoongi’s, instead gently curling Yoongi’s index finger until it’s touching his palm. “-kind of like this.”

For a fleeting second, Yoongi doesn’t do anything. He stares at his hand, at Jeongguk’s fingers wrapped around his, at the tangle of bracelets that clink together whenever Jeongguk moves his arm.

And then he laughs.

It’s just as pretty as it was the first time. Yoongi’s lips curl upwards, revealing a hint of his gums, and his eyes fold into crescents of mirth, button nose scrunching as he throws his head back to let out a low laugh. Jeongguk feels warm just watching him, something quiet and pleased and a little hopeful unfurling in his chest.

When Yoongi’s laughter fades, he turns to Jeongguk, one eyebrow raised in amusement. He moves, shifting closer, and the medley of flowers stitched into his arm catch under the sunlight, the lines traced elegantly in black. “Are you telling me I have small eyes, Jeongguk?”

Jeongguk has to physically tear his gaze away. He aches to see the rest of Yoongi’s tattoos, to discover the plethora of secrets he’s sure to have hidden beneath his turtleneck, to touch and feel and find. “Well,” Jeongguk begins, offering Yoongi a half smile from where he’s sitting, words letting themselves out of his mouth without permission. “The more we laugh, the less we see.”

It takes a few seconds for Jeongguk to register what he said. He stiffens at the sudden quiet, mentally berating himself until he feels Yoongi’s fingers curl around his, lips parted in silent laughter. Yoongi shakes, shoulders slouched down, half his face buried in the shoulder of his jacket to keep from being too loud.

(Jeongguk *wants.* )
“Oh my god,” Yoongi says, laughter lingering in the low tones of his voice, half exasperated and half fond. “Oh my god, I cannot believe you just said that, I-”

H doubles over again, a mess of bleached hair and silver piercings and pretty tattoos. His fingers are still threaded with Jeongguk’s, one of his rings a steady reminder that Jeongguk is here, with a small, delicate-looking boy he’s been crushing on for a few months.

It feels like a dream.

Their conversation flows easily after that. They sit there, tucked into the corner of a small cafe, the scent of coffee and chocolate comforting. Yoongi keeps his hand in Jeongguk’s, listens to what he has to say, asking questions here and there every so often. His piercings glimmer whenever he tilts his head to the side, his tattoos dark under the sun, and Jeongguk is endeared and in like and happy.

He doesn’t realize how much time has passed until Yoongi tells him. “Shit,” he mutters, voice raspier than usual because of how much he’d been talking, unfinished Americano sitting across from him. “Jeongguk, its been 3 hours.”

“What?” Jeongguk is sipping at his third hot chocolate of the day, none of which he’d paid for. He surfaces from his cup with a whip cream mustache, pausing a little when Yoongi reaches across the table to wipe his top lip, the pad of his thumb a fleeting touch. He does it naturally, leaning back in his chair without a second thought, and Jeongguk feels warmth in the very tips of his fingers. “It, um - it’s really been that long?”

Yoongi stands, rubbing his shoulders and stretching. The sleeves of his turtleneck fall forward to hide his tattoos, and when he cracks his neck, the last dredges of sunlight catch on his nose stud, sending an array of colours over his features.

He helps Jeongguk up with a sweet grin curving his lips. A facemask Jeongguk hadn’t noticed before hangs around his neck, and when Jeongguk stands, he reaches over to hook his fingers into the material, a rilakkuma face emblazoned where Yoongi’s mouth would otherwise be.

“I didn’t know hyung liked cute things,” Jeongguk teases, beaming at Yoongi with a bright grin. He doesn’t notice Yoongi pausing, instead turning around to clean up the mess he’d left on their table.

“Well,” Yoongi says when he turns back around, a hint of red already blooming in his cheeks. “Why do you think I asked you out?”
Jeongguk blinks. Yoongi is watching him for a reaction, but he doesn’t seem too worried, hands tucked into his pockets and lips turned up in a small grin. “Um. What?”

“I like you,” Yoongi says simply. His grin turns wider, gummier, narrow eyes soft and dark and endeared. “I want to take you out again, if - if you’ll let me.”

The proper response in this situation would be to tell Yoongi - calmly, quietly, like an adult - that yes, Jeongguk would let him. But Jeongguk isn’t proper, has never really been proper, and as he understands approximately two seconds later, will never be proper.

“I’m asexual.” Jeongguk blurs.

For a few long, quiet seconds, Yoongi doesn’t do anything. But then, almost as if he’s amused, he raises an eyebrow. “That’s not synonymous with aromantic, is it?”

Jeongguk looks at him suspiciously. “No,” he ventures, fiddling with his own piercings, another one of his nervous habits. Idly, he wonders if Yoongi’s managed to pick up on any of them. “Not for me, at least.”

Yoongi nods. His fingers curl over the strap of his backpack, pretty and nimble, nails painted an opaque black, cut even and short. “Okay. So tomorrow at six, then? There’s a new Mexican-Japanese fusion place just a few blocks from where I live, if you want to-”

“You-” Jeongguk interrupts, tucking into himself the way he does whenever he has something to say, but doesn’t quite know how to get it out. Yoongi is staring at him curiously now, lips parted in unsaid words. “You’re okay with that? Because if you’re not, then - then don’t do this.”

“Hey,” Yoongi says quietly. He steps forward and takes Jeongguk gently by the arm before walking him out of the coffee shop and into the warmth of a summer evening, the trees outside dancing in the light breeze. Under the cotton candy sky, he looks softer; hazy and faded out, like a pretty polaroid. “Can you take a deep breath for me, Jeongguk? Please?”

Jeongguk nods. Yoongi can tell he’s panicking, and its odd, he realizes, that Yoongi had the sense to take him into an open space, a place where its easier to breathe without wanting to collapse. His other friends wouldn’t have known to do that.
Yoongi is still touching him, fingers wrapped endearingly around Jeongguk’s elbow. He nods when Jeongguk takes in a deep breath, asking him to do it again, and then again until Jeongguk isn’t panicking quite so much anymore, the knots in his chest having unraveled into threads.

They stand there for awhile, the sun low in the sky, the only sounds audible those of the cars rushing past them. It’s a quiet evening, the kind where everything is still and nothing seems concrete, a bit like a dream that’s bound to be forgotten.

“Okay,” Yoongi says eventually. His voice is low and purposefully so, glasses perched on the very tip of his nose. He looks small and soft and awfully delicate like this, with most of his tattoos hidden, the worry in his eyes evident. “Can I say something?”

Jeongguk nods.

Yoongi takes his hand, threading their fingers together the way they had been back in the coffee shop. “I like you,” he says again, kind and unbearably firm. “I want - I want to take you out. Fuck, I want to date you. I didn’t know you were asexual, but I don’t care that you are; it’s not something I’m particularly focused on, Jeongguk, yeah?”

Tentatively, Jeongguk squeezes Yoongi’s hand. It’s bigger than his, warmer and more calloused, the feel of his palm against Jeongguk’s a steady comfort. “Really?”

Yoongi shakes his head. “Really.”

“Because-” Jeongguk begins, peering at Yoongi through anxious eyes, bottom lip caught nervously between his teeth. “Because people have said that before, and , and they don’t mean it, hyung. No one ever really means it.”

In the back of his head, Jeongguk is aware of how pathetic he must sound. But the worry sitting in his stomach is louder, and when Jeongguk sniffs, wiping miserably at his face, he hears Yoongi’s sharp intake of breath.

“Hey,” Yoongi steps closer, carefully catching Jeongguk’s wrists in his hands. He has a gentle touch, the tips of his fingers barely more than a light pressure against Jeongguk’s skin, sweetly fleeting. “Baby, no, hey, don’t do that.”
Jeongguk sniffs again. Yoongi has to reach to touch him, has to lean forward to until he can thumb away the tears staining Jeongguk’s cheeks, dark eyes soft and full of warmth. “Listen,” he murmurs, keeping his hands pressed to Jeongguk’s face. “I can’t vouch for others, but I can definitely vouch for myself, alright? I mean it, Jeongguk, it doesn’t matter for me.”

Jeongguk, teary and still sniffling, wraps Yoongi in the tightest hug he can. Yoongi is small against him, thin and delicate, but he pets Jeongguk’s hair, brushing his fingers through the strands the way he would a child in need of comfort.

Eventually, Jeongguk pulls away. He’s sure he looks a mess, sure that his eyes are red and his face swollen, but Yoongi is watching him with kind eyes. “You okay?”

“Yeah.” Jeongguk nods and shuffles closer again, still shy but wanting to be near. “You, um, - you said six? For tomorrow?”

Yoongi blinks at him, surprised. “Yeah,” he grins then, wide and gummy, pretty lips curving upwards. “I can pick you up, if you want.”

Jeongguk nods. “Yes, please.” he says, and then he’s taking Yoongi’s hand in his, keeping his grip loose on the off chance that Yoongi wants to pull away. He doesn’t. Tentatively, Jeongguk nudges him. “Can you walk me home?”

Yoongi’s grip in his hand tightens, his fingers twining around Jeongguk’s easily, as if he’s been waiting for him to ask. “I would love to.” he says sincerely, turning his catlike eyes on Jeongguk again, pretty and soft and kind. “Lead the way.”

Chapter End Notes

was that shitty?? I felt like it was a bit shitty but that might just be bc I hate myself and my writing and all that jazz wooO. but yeah for those of u who follow me on twt, the first hand holding scene was inspired by my cute gay crush so yep im lowkey whipped at this point.

also about the more we laugh the less we see comment - pls dont take that as me being racist bc i swear its not!! my best friend actually posted a really cute pic of her with her gf with that caption and it made me laugh for the longest time (theyre both asian) so I thought it would be funny if I put it in here ;)

with that being said, follow me on sns if u want fic updates and other miscellaneous shit ^~
Tumblr

Twt

curiouscat
Jeongguk lies in bed, curled into himself under the covers. He’s huddled next to Yoongi for warmth, one of his arms flat against Yoongi’s abdomen, fingers tracing delicate patterns into the skin of his stomach.

Yoongi lets him, huffing out a laugh when Jeongguk nips lightly at his shoulder. A blush spreads over Jeongguk’s cheeks, pink staining the tips of his ears, and even if Yoongi has his back pressed against his chest, Jeongguk can feel him shake with quiet laughter.

“Sorry,” he whispers, hiding his face in between Yoongi’s shoulder blades, pressing his lips to the skin there. “Just - you’re soft, and I, and I -”

“Hey,” Yoongi interrupts, amused. He shifts, turning in Jeongguk’s arms to poke his cheek, finger pressing into the dimple there with familiar ease. “You’re fine, bun.”

Jeongguk sends him a grateful grin, small and shy and warm, a hint of like blooming in the corners. Yoongi’s chin is tucked under his head, and he looks so small like this, curled in and around Jeongguk, bleached hair tickling his throat. His tattoos are softer under Jeongguk’s bedroom lights, hazy and faded out, a melody of colours leaking from Yoongi’s skin.

Carefully, Jeongguk hooks his fingers into the collar of Yoongi’s shirt. The material falls easily, and Yoongi shivers under the chill, but he doesn’t say anything, content to let Jeongguk trace his tattoos as he’s done so many times before.

Jeongguk finds his favorite one easily. The butterfly drawn into the back of Yoongi’s shoulder greets...
him in swirls of elegant ink, black pricked carefully along the curve of his shoulder blade. Its wings flutter when Yoongi presses into him, antennas quirking and skin shuddering, rippling across the muscle gracefully.

“It’s so pretty,” Jeongguk curls over Yoongi’s shoulder, bodily pressing him into the mattress. Yoongi doesn’t do much other than let out a fond noise of exasperation, running his fingers through Jeongguk’s hair, his touch fleeting.

“*You’re* so pretty,” Yoongi murmurs easily, kissing the space under Jeongguk’s jaw, the delicate shell of his ear. Jeongguk blushes, but he doesn’t move, instead letting out a feeble whine of protest.

“No.”

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Yes.” Yoongi grins. His narrow eyes glitter under the warm light, soft and dark and full of an emotion Jeongguk can’t quite place. “The prettiest.” he refutes, knuckles brushing against Jeongguk’s cheek, watching him with quiet adoration. “Can’t believe you’re all mine, bun.”

A noise, small and embarrassed but happy, spills out of Jeongguk. He covers his face with his hands and flops onto his back, the low hum of Yoongi’s laughter settling over him like a warm blanket. “You’re so cute,” Yoongi pries Jeongguk’s hands off his face, still giggling, a little bit raspy, a little bit in love.

Sometimes, when Jeongguk sees Yoongi, a feeling flares up in his stomach. It begins at the very base of his spine, travels in tendrils of warmth until it settles into his chest, unfurling into his veins, his bones, his heart - all of him.

Jeongguk aches with it.

With the way Yoongi is looking at him, the soft pink of his mouth, the blur of his tattoos, the hair falling endearingly into his eyes, Jeongguk feels it again, emotion rippling through him. “m’ not cute,” he mutters, but it’s half hearted at best and he buries his face into Yoongi’s shoulder after he’s said it, feeling Yoongi curl around him in response.
A comfortable quiet settles between them. Yoongi’s words still hang delicately in the air, and if Jeongguk strains his ears, the beat of Yoongi’s heart happens in tandem with his, as if they’re one. It’s a nice thought and Jeongguk can’t quite believe he’s here, with Yoongi wrapped around him the way he is.

“You know,” he says suddenly, fingers curling into the hem of Yoongi’s shirt. Yoongi drags his nose along the curve of Jeongguk’s throat in answer, breathing him in, fingers threading together, the weight of his rings a steady reminder that he’s here; that Jeongguk isn’t alone. “This is my longest relationship yet.”

Carefully, as if he doesn’t want to startle him, Yoongi lifts his head, sitting up in bed with a curious expression. “Really?”

“I mean,” Jeongguk sits up too, and he can feel the warmth flood his cheeks, is sure he must be coloured pink by now. He hides his face in his hands, Yoongi’s gaze heavy and even if he doesn’t mean for it to be, judging. “Yeah. It’s been like, what, 4 months now? That’s my longest by far, hyung.”

Yoongi doesn’t say anything, but Jeongguk can still feel his gaze, knots settling uncomfortably in his stomach. He peeks through his fingers when the quiet stretches on longer than he expects it to, and finds Yoongi watching him, lips pouted in thought.

“Fuck,” Jeongguk huffs, bottom lip bitten cutely between his teeth. He clutches a pillow to his chest, curling around it in a sad attempt to make himself smaller, shoulders hunched and head tipped back, too afraid to look Yoongi in the eye. “I just made it weird, didn’t I? I meant, like, yeah, this is my longest relationship, but that doesn’t have to mean anything if you don’t want it to? I just kinda thought you.”

Jeongguk pauses when he hears Yoongi let out a strained nose. “Hyung?”

“Sorry,” Yoongi lifts his face from where it had been buried in his hands, shoulders shaking with raspy, unrestrained laughter. His cheeks are pink, the stud in his nose glinting mischievously, and it’s all Jeongguk can do to not pout, lips pursed in annoyance.

“Stop,” he whines, pushing at Yoongi’s shoulder a little, red with embarrassment. “This is bullying.”
Yoongi snorts, leaning forward in bed with his knees curled into his chest, a mess of bleached hair and silver piercings and delicate features. “Yah,” he’s breathless still, alight with a quiet kind of humor. “Gukkie, you - hyung likes you a lot, you know that?”

Jeongguk blushes. He doesn’t answer, burrowing under the covers to scream into his pillow instead, feeling frustrated and warm and giddy. Yoongi cuddles into him not a minute later, arm threading its way around Jeongguk’s waist, settling into the curve there with easy familiarity. Jeongguk screams a little louder.

“What was that?” Yoongi sounds amused.

Embarrassed, Jeongguk lifts his face, dipping forward to press a quick kiss to the tip of Yoongi’s nose before diving under the covers again. “I like you a lot, too, hyung,” he repeats, a little louder, a little whinier, but just as genuine as before. “Thank you for taking care of me.”

There’s a rustle as Yoongi shifts, his limbs threading into Jeongguk’s with practiced grace, voice a breath of warmth. “Thank you for letting me take care of you.” he replies, sincerity leaking through his words as he nuzzles into the curve of Jeongguk’s throat, tucking into his side again.

“Yeah,” Jeongguk whispers, pressing into Yoongi tighter, throat tight with unsaid thoughts. “No problem.”

♬

Sunlight floods the kitchen, Yoongi’s broad shoulders filling out his shirt nicely, unfairly attractive. Jeongguk lets out a small noise of distress when he sees him, too sleepy to register what he’s done, and slumps against a chair, pawing at his eyes in frustration.

Yoongi turns around, spatula held in hand. He has an eyebrow raised suspiciously, but Jeongguk is too busy staring at his apron to notice it, studying the kumamon icon embroidered on the front pocket, letting out the same, small noise of distress as before.

Like this, Jeongguk finds it hard to believe anyone can find Yoongi scary. Soft, faded mint hair wisps around his nape, fringe falling lazily into his eyes. His lips look pouty and full, bitten pink out of habit, and the apron he’s wearing clings to his narrow frame, flowing at his knees in cottony threads. He’s drowning in too-big joggers, the kind that swallows his ankles in folds of material, hanging off his hips in a loose, comfortable way.
Yoongi looks so delicate.

“Good morning,” he says cautiously, waving a hand in front of Jeongguk’s face, concern etched into his features. “You okay, baby?”

The endearment has Jeongguk shaking awake, heat flooding his cheeks. Yoongi’s taken to calling him baby lately, likes to tuck Jeongguk into his lap and pet his hair when they have lazy afternoons, Jeongguk leaning against his chest, self conscious and timid but pleased.

“Yeah,” Jeongguk answers quietly, stretching his arm across the table between them, a wordless plea for affection.

Yoongi laughs, fingers finding Jeongguk’s easily, sunlight coloring him in soft warmth. He stands there for a few seconds, lets Jeongguk turn his palm over in his hand, lets him trace the pattern there, before letting go to turn around and flip their pancakes.

Jeongguk mourns the loss of warmth for a split second before he perks up again. “Hyung,” he asks, leaning back and yawning, Yoongi sending him a disgruntled glare when he hears Jeongguk’s spine pop. Jeongguk giggles. “You have big hands.”

If Jeongguk wasn’t watching him, he would’ve missed it. Yoongi’s shoulders rise just a little, not unlike a cat raising its hackles. “What about them?”

“I dunno,” he grins, cheeky and a little mischievous, missing the way Yoongi’s pale cheeks turn pink. “Just,, giving you a few hints.”

Carefully, Yoongi turns off the gas. He turns around, stares at Jeongguk, then down at his crotch, then back at Jeongguk again, voice utterly deadpan. “You’re not funny.”

“Ew,” Jeongguk bangs his head against the table, groaning when he hits it harder than he meant to. He can hear Yoongi settling across from him, the thump as he sets a plate of pancakes down, the sweet, warm scent of sugar and blueberries and whipped cream. “That’s not what I meant, you perv.”
Yoongi tsks under his breath as he brings Jeongguk’s face up to rub across the red mark staining his forehead. “You’re such a baby,” he mutters, but its said fondly, Yoongi’s lips turned upwards in a small smile, the kind where his teeth just barely manage to peek out. A flush works its way across Jeongguk’s cheeks when Yoongi presses a soft kiss to his forehead.

Jeongguk lets out that noise again, somewhere between a whine and a keen, not quite able to look Yoongi in the eye. He curls into himself on the chair, tucking his feet under his body before leaning over to wordlessly pluck a fork from the pile of silverware between them.

Yoongi huffs. “Jeon Jeongguk,” he reaches over to push Jeongguk’s hair off his forehead and Jeongguk unintentionally leans into his touch, sighing when Yoongi’s fingers run through the strands in the familiar way he’s become addicted to. “You’re my favorite character, you know that?”

Jeongguk wrinkles his nose. “What do you mean, character? I’m not even a human now? Is that how far the bullying’s come?”

“A kid,” Yoongi rubs across the bridge of his nose tiredly, but Jeongguk can see that smile again, the same fond, small one as before. He wiggles around in his chair, secretly pleased, even if he pouts at Yoongi’s next few words. “I’m dating a literal kid.”

“You love me,” he refutes, framing his face with his hands, grin almost too big to fit his face. “I’m your favorite.”

Yoongi hums, reaching across the table to bop his nose. “You’re a menace,” he laughs when Jeongguk tries to bite his finger, sunlight washing across him in soft waves, a shower of gold. “But you’re my menace.”

As they eat, Yoongi brushes his foot along Jeongguk’s ankle. There’s a lot of quiet between them in the mornings because Yoongi is nocturnal at best, an insomniac at worst. Jeongguk doesn’t mind it though, because a sleepy Yoongi is a soft Yoongi, and a soft Yoongi is his favorite Yoongi.

Yoongi lets out a quiet noise of complaint when Jeongguk reaches across the table to grab his hand, jarring him out of whatever daydream he was having. Jeongguk studies his fingers, the width of his knuckles, his delicate veins and his even nails. The skin of his hand is warm and bare, not unlike a blank canvas.

“Why don’t you have anything here?” Jeongguk asks, threading their fingers together again, feeling
Yoongi takes a while to answer. He chews his food thoughtfully, foot still brushing gently along Jeongguk’s calf, until he swallows and sets his fork down. “To be honest,” Yoongi answers, offering his other hand to Jeongguk too, mouth turned upwards in a half smile. “I’ve been asking myself that same question, bun.”

“Really?”

“Why,” Yoongi grins, but this time it’s a full one, gums and teeth and a whisper of mischief. “You like my tattoos that much, Jeongguk-ah?”

Jeongguk splutters. He can feel his cheeks grow hot, Yoongi’s laugh echoing through him and filling his chest with something warm, undeniably soft. “Maybe.”

He keeps his head low, still blushing, still cursing himself for being so sensitive, when he feels Yoongi cup his cheek. “You’ll go with me, yeah?”

“What?”

“To the tattoo shop,” Yoongi elaborates, thumb swirling a delicate pattern onto Jeongguk’s cheekbone. “I was planning on getting it done sometime soon, and if I book now, I can get an appointment in a few weeks. You’ll come, right?”

Jeongguk hesitates, and he can see Yoongi’s face fall, his grip loosen, just a little. “You don’t have to, of course,” Yoong says quietly, the half hearted smile coming back out. “I know it’s not everyone’s scene, and you shouldn’t feel obligated just because we’re dating-”

“Hyung,” Jeongguk interrupts, flustered. “Of course I’ll come, I just - I have a condition.”

Yoongi raises an eyebrow.

“Let me draw it,” Jeongguk rushes out, squeezing Yoongi’s hand in his, too afraid to see Yoongi’s reaction, too nervous to ask again. “I just - I minor in art, and I’ve had an idea for ages, and I’ve been
sketching stuff out for a while-”

“Bun-”

Jeongguk ignores him. “It kind of ties in with what you have on your shoulder? I’ve been working on it for weeks and, and it has colour, hyung, but I mean - if you don’t like it then, then of course you don’t have to do it, and obviously I’ll still come with you, that was just a joke-”

“Jeongguk, baby, breathe.”

Yoongi’s voice is concerned, but his features are twinkling. His eyes are cut into folds of mirth, and his button nose is scrunched from the force of his grin, lips parted over pink gums. Jeongguk peeks at him from between his fingers, and he feels a hopeful kick in his stomach at the smile Yoongi is sending him, chin settled delicately in his palm.

“I’m breathing,” Jeongguk mumbles, and when Yoongi’s lips curl into a grin, he moans in embarrassment.

Carefully, Yoongi leans over to pry Jeongguk’s hands from his face, pecking him on the nose when he succeeds. “I’m so lucky,” he breathes, and it’s soft, muttered under his breath, a quiet admission meant for who, Jeongguk doesn’t know.

“Hyung-,” Jeongguk begins, but he’s cut off when Yoongi kisses him full on the lips, tasting of whip cream and maple syrup.

“You can draw it, Jeongguk,” Yoongi murmurs, cupping Jeongguk’s face, thumbing over his cheekbones with a soft grin. “I was going to ask if you would do it anyway, but I guess I won’t have to anymore, huh?”

Jeongguk turns crimson. He stabs embarrassedly at his pancakes, and smiles into his milk when he feels Yoongi’s laugh echo through him, warm and bright and full of like.
The next day, Jeongguk sits on the couch next to Yoongi, sketchbook clutched to his chest.

He’d spent the entire night before revamping it, hashing out lines and tracing them over, kneading his eraser until it was a useless lump of grey. Truthfully, Jeongguk has been working on this for a while. There have been countless rough drafts, warm afternoons where he would sit curled into himself on the loveseat, drawing and erasing and dreaming.

All of Yoongi’s tattoos have a meaning behind them. Jeongguk hasn’t heard even half, but sometimes, when Yoongi can’t fall asleep and Jeongguk doesn’t have a morning class to attend, he’ll whisper a few words, until one of them drifts off to sleep.

Jeongguk wants this one to have a meaning, too.

He tells Yoongi as much. “It’s for your song,” he says shyly, passing over his sketchbook, desperately praying Yoongi won’t notice how much his hands are shaking.

Yoongi takes it from him wordlessly. He flips to the bookmarked page, studying the sketch with an impassive face, hands steady and even. Jeongguk watches him, bottom lip between his teeth, and takes a deep breath when he realizes Yoongi still hasn’t said anything.

Meekly, he pokes Yoongi in the shoulder. “It’s okay if you don’t like it, hyung. I can always do it again, or, or if you want, you can just get your usual artist to draw it. It’s not a big deal, promise.”

“Jeongguk,” Yoongi begins, words gruff. It’s a little bit like his morning voice, deeper than usual, stained with satoori and a whisper of want. “C’mere.”

Jeongguk looks at him, raising an eyebrow. “What?”

“C’mere,” Yoongi repeats, but when Jeongguk doesn’t move, he shifts closer until he’s seated fully in his lap. Like this, with warm sunlight pouring over them, Yoongi looks soft and pretty, as if he could be part of a polaroid. “I love it, bun.”

Heat floods Jeongguk’s cheeks. He grips Yoongi’s waist, fingers pressing into the divots there, and studies him carefully, searching for even a hint of a lie. But Yoongi’s eyes are alight with something warm, his lips dipped into a pretty grin, and when he nuzzles into Jeongguk’s throat, Jeongguk can tell he means it.
“You sure?” Jeongguk asks carefully, feeling giddy and warm all over. Yoongi is an affectionate person, but Jeongguk hasn’t ever seen him act quite like this. “You don’t have to lie to make me feel better, hyung. I’m not that sensitive.”

Yoongi shoves his nose into the crook of Jeongguk’s neck. “Shut up,” he mutters fondly, placing a kiss behind Jeongguk’s ear, another on the curve of his jaw. “It’s better than I could have ever imagined, Guk. Fucking - fucking look at it.”

He climbs off of Jeongguk’s lap to flip to the open page again, and Jeongguk blinks down at it, flustered. The drawing had taken him days - literal days. He’d even taken out his prisms, swaddled in blankets and a nest of pillows, before he could deem it done, properly done. Looking at it now, through Yoongi’s cat-like eyes, he kind of understands the appeal.

It’s a butterfly; Jeongguk hadn’t been lying when he said it tied in with the tattoo on Yoongi’s shoulder, the dark, elegant ink stitched there painted in monochrome. This one is stark in contrast, bursting with colour at the edges, pools of green and red and orange, thick strokes of black keeping them from bleeding into one another. The wings are full of geometric shapes, shaded to look like stained glass, and the antennas quirk up in delicate strands of black, symmetrical.

“I like it too, hyung.” Jeongguk admits shyly, rubbing his arm in an attempt to give himself something to do. “It took me awhile to - to finish it, but the end result was worth it.”

It’s difficult to keep his voice steady with Yoongi looking him like this. He’s seated less than a foot away, and even then he shifts closer, moving until he’s tucked comfortably into Jeongguk’s side. “It was definitely worth it,” Yoongi agrees, head against Jeongguk’s chest, fingers curled into the hem of his shirt. “Thank you for doing this for me.”

Jeongguk shakes his head. “Thank you for letting me do this, hyung. I’ve wanted to since I found you in the qu- party. Since I found you at the party.”

Yoongi hums a little, clearly noticing the slip-up, but he takes it in stride and instead turns on the tv, settling on an old rerun of a ghibli movie. Jeongguk puts an arm around him, and when Yoongi’s legs end up in his lap, all he does is cover them with a blanket, lost in thought.

Truthfully, Yoongi still doesn’t know just how long Jeongguk has liked him for. He links their first meeting back to the party, and that’s okay because for him, it was their first meeting. But for Jeongguk, it happened months before that, back when his anxiety was at an all time high and getting
through the day was more of a chore than anything else.

Seeing Yoongi in the quad then had made him - not fall in love exactly, but something a little softer, more trusting. The sun was bright, the breeze mild, and Yoongi, with his dark tattoos and his bleached hair and his glittering piercings, seemed like part of a distant dream. He was a contrast of soft and rough, a divergence of jagged fragility, and even now, Jeongguk sees him like that.

It’s a little difficult to believe, sometimes, that Jeongguk is here with him at all; it feels like a dream more often than not, to be curled into this pretty boy with sleepy eyes and a delicate grin, and the longer Jeongguk spends here, the more he realizes he doesn’t ever want to leave.

♬

Yoongi books the appointment for the first week of May.

Jeongguk watches him as he talks, takes in the way Yoongi’s lips shape over his satoori stained syllables, the soft wrinkle in his nose when he has to decide the time and the artist.

“What day are you free?” he asks Jeongguk, covering the receiver with a hand, an eyebrow raised in question.

Jeongguk pretends to think about it before he frames his hands with his face, feeling cheeky. “I’m always free for you, hyung.”

Yoongi scoffs, but Jeongguk can see the way his lips flit upwards, hear the fondness in his voice. “May 7th is good, yeah. Is Namjoon available?”

The answer has Yoongi grinning, all parted lips and pink gums. He ends the call with a quick thank you and ambles over to join Jeongguk, flopping onto his bed and pouting when Jeongguk doesn’t immediately cuddle him. “Yah.”

Jeongguk sticks firmly to his side of the bed, more out of necessity than anything else. He has a project due for his art class, a harmonization to write for his music theory, and even an interval by ear quiz, all the next day. “What?”

“You know what.” Yoongi grumbles, but when he catches a glimpse of the pages of staff paper
Jeongguk has scattered around him, he softens considerably. “Shit, is that for music theory?”

Jeongguk blinks at him, dazed from all of the minors and majors and sharps and god knows what else. “Um, yeah, I think so? To be honest, I’m not really sure at this point.”

Yoongi tsks under his breath. “Professor Park’s class?”

“Well, why not.”

At Yoongi’s deadpan glare, Jeongguk lets out a giggle, waving him off with a hand. “Yes, yes, it’s him, hyung. We’re doing secondary functions right now, but I can barely remember what a diminished seventh is, and what does phrygian mode even mean? What does mixolydian mean? What do any of these words mean?”

“Don’t you have a harmonization due tomorrow?” Yoongi asks dryly.

“Well, maybe.”

Wordlessly, Yoongi plucks the pencil out of Jeongguk’s hand. “Here,” he says, taking a crumpled piece of paper from off the bed and smoothing it out, nimble fingers curling around the edges gracefully. “Write out the notes first, okay? I know it seems mundane, but it helps, especially in the beginning. The seventh of the fifth is the first note of the chord you want…”

As Yoongi explains, Jeongguk finds himself listening. Yoongi’s voice is soft, brimming with patience and steady information, and with each sentence, he looks at Jeongguk, asks if he’s following along, if there’s anything else he needs Yoongi to go into detail for. Jeongguk shakes his head each time.

There’s that feeling again - the warm one, flaring up in the base of his spine, languidly spreading until Jeongguk can feel it in his bones, his heart, all of him. “Okay?” Yoongi asks, and his smile is full of the same warmth, an easy acquiescence.

“Okay,” Jeongguk whispers, and it is okay. Yoongi does this sometimes, when Jeongguk is having trouble with his theory classes, and he knows from experience that even if it wasn’t okay, that if he were just as confused as before, Yoongi would go over it again. As many times as he needed. “Thanks, hyung.”
Yoongi gifts him with a grin. “Sure, bun. Ask me if you need help again, yeah? Plodding through material you don’t understand by yourself is useless.”

Jeongguk nods, sends Yoongi a shy smile, and in the warm afternoon with just each other, Yoongi and him set to work.

♬

As they tend to in university, the days trickle by quickly. In between all of his coursework and Yoongi’s lectures, they barely manage to find time to see each other.

But they make it work; Jeongguk will stay in Yoongi’s apartment sometimes, and when he can’t afford to, Yoongi will drop by after his last class, holding one banana milk and one strawberry, a bright grin stretching his eyes into twinkling crescents.

It’s why Jeongguk isn’t surprised to see him after his lecture lets out. “Hey, bun.” Yoongi hands Jeongguk a banana milk, ruffling his hair with gentle fingers. He looks pretty today, wearing a black beanie and one of his baggy sweaters, the cuffs trailing over his wrists. “How was the test?”

“Aawful,” Jeongguk groans, stopping in the middle of the quad to bury his face in Yoongi’s shoulder for a fleeting second, exhaustion from a sleepless night still lingering in his bones. Yoongi pats his back in comfort, letting out a small noise of sympathy. “How the fuck am I supposed to notate the melody from a four part harmony? Who can do that? Can you do that?”

“Um.”

“Oh my god,” Jeongguk frets, pushing back, banana milk clenched tightly in hand. “You can, can’t you. Fuck.”

“Calm down,” Yoongi’s words lilt with amusement, humor leaking from his voice. “It takes practice and a lot of time, trust me. I was shit when I started, too.”

Jeongguk snorts, but he still lets Yoongi thread their fingers together as they walk down the street, up until they reach the bus stand. He glances at Yoongi then, confused. “Hyung, where are we going?”
Yoongi blinks up at him from beneath his pretty lashes, eyes twinkling. “I knew you would forget! Today’s my appointment at the tattoo shop, remember? I’m getting the butterfly done.”

“Shit,” Jeongguk does remember. He’d been so caught up in all the tests he had this week, busy cramming half-assed projects and eating crappy convenience store food. “That’s today, isn’t it.”

“ ‘mm.’

Jeongguk huffs when Yoongi flicks his forehead, an endeared smile spread across his features. “You’re not nervous?”

Yoongi looks at him, and raises an eyebrow, and it takes Jeongguk a few seconds to realize that it’s an understandable reaction. “Sorry,” he mutters, eyes trailing over all of the tattoos Yoongi has, from his arms to his shoulders to the one that can barely be seen peeking out from the collar of his shirt. “That was a stupid question, wasn’t it?”

“Not really,” Yoongi shrugs. “I still get nervous, but it sets in later, you know? I’m fine right now.”

Jeongguk nods, and when the bus finally comes, they spend the ride in a comfortable kind of quiet, hands tangled together. The bus drops them off a little bit aways, and they amble along the streets, Yoongi guiding him until a shop, sleek and dark, comes into view.

*Cypher Studios* is scrawled along the awning, and the windows glint red-neon, light shining through the glass. It looks a little intimidating from the outside, and Jeongguk tells Yoongi as much, voice hesitant.

Yoongi laughs, a low, raspy sound, ruffling Jeongguk’s hair again. “You’ll be fine, bun. All I need you to do is hold my hand, and you don’t even have to do that if you don’t want to. It’s really not that bad, promise.”

Jeongguk swallows and nods, following Yoongi inside with his head bowed low. A bell rings when the door opens, and the cashier looks up, grinning when he sees Yoongi, waving. “Hey, hyung. Long time no see.”
Yoongi waves back, and Jeongguk does his best to hide behind his smaller frame, tucking into himself a little. “Hey, Jaebum, and yeah, it has actually. I wasn’t feeling anything new for a while. Namjoon here?”

Jaebum nods in understanding and jerks his head, gesturing behind him. “Yeah, just head on back, he should be ready for you.”

Yoongi murmurs his thanks and Jeongguk follows dutifully behind him. The shop gets darker the further they go, but when Yoongi takes a sharp left into a room, sunlight floods in from the open window. There’s a man already in there, tall and lanky, cleaning needles and organizing bottles of ink with a look of concentration.

“Namjoon-ah?”

Namjoon jumps. He places a hand over his heart, but grins when he sees Yoongi, a pair of dimples popping out, a pretty contrast to his bleached quiff. “Hyung, hey!” he bounds over, and funnily enough, Jeongguk is reminded strongly of an overeager puppy.

Yoongi huffs out a tired breath when Namjoon bends down to hug him, but Jeongguk can see his grin, the happy way his cheeks flush. “You’re so big,” Yoongi complains, fond and exasperated, still wrapped in all of Namjoon’s limbs. “But yeah, I missed you too.”

Namjoon separates with a sheepish grin. “Sorry, hyung.” He seems to take notice of Jeongguk for the first time then, eyes alight with curiosity. “And who is this?”

Yoongi moves to the side and gently pushes Jeongguk in front of him. “Namjoon, this is Jeongguk. He drew the design I sent you the other day.”

“Shit, that was you?”

At Jeongguk’s hesitant nod, Namjoon grins, and if anything, his dimples are deeper than before. “It was fucking gorgeous, dude. Yoongi hyung doesn’t normally do colour, but I can see why he wants to get it done.”

Jeongguk preens a little under the praise. He murmurs a quiet thank you and pretends he doesn’t notice Yoongi’s fond grin, instead settling on the black leather couch to watch as Namjoon begins
setting up. A pair of gloves go over his hands, and after he’s finished sanitizing his needles, he asks Yoongi to lie back on the chair in the corner.

Yoongi follows his instructions easily, rolling his sleeves up and settling back with a soft yawn. His hand goes on a ledge balanced next to Namjoon’s chair, and when Namjoon sits, the blue ink is stenciled in first, before anything else can be done. Jeongguk watches the process curiously, leaning forward from where he’s sitting before Namjoon notices him and calls him over too.

“Pull up a chair,” He nods towards chair in the far corner, grinning when Jeongguk hesitantly walks over to retrieve it. “I already know Yoongi hyung wanted you here to hold his hand, there’s no use acting shy.”

Jeongguk sputters, but Yoongi doesn’t say anything, instead offering a half-hearted sigh and shaking his head. Namjoon smirks, going back to pressing the stencil into Yoongi’s skin, asking if the placement is okay, and if it isn’t, where Yoongi would like for it to be moved.

“It’s fine,” Yoongi hums, eyes fluttering shut when Namjoon pulls out his tattoo gun, the sharp tip glinting wickedly. “Get on with it, Namjoon-ah.”

Jeongguk gingerly sits himself down in the chair, bunny teeth peeking out when he sees Yoongi’s hand, palm up, fingers unfurled. It’s a clear invitation, and he accepts it easily enough, watching quietly as Namjoon begins the process, a pair of specs balanced precariously on his nose.

It’s still in the studio, quiet but for the gentle hum of Namjoon’s tattoo gun. Jeongguk watches him as he works, studying the press of the needle against Yoongi’s skin, the drops of blood surfacing in hints of scarlet. Yoongi doesn’t make a sound, eyes shut and face open, almost as if he’s asleep.

“Talk to him.” Namjoon says suddenly.

“What?”

Namjoon doesn’t look up, grabbing a cloth and carefully dabbing away the pinpricks of blood. “Talk to him,” he repeats, beginning the process again, needle and ink and a gentle buzz. “It helps distract him from the pain.”

Jeongguk blinks at him, and then looks at Yoongi. For the first time he notices how shallow
Yoongi’s breathing is, the steady rise and fall of his chest, the small beads of sweat on his forehead. “I, um-”

Yoongi answers for him. “Jeongguk isn’t the biggest talker,” his eyes are still closed, but his words are soft, as if he’s breathing through the pain. “He’s just here for moral support, and because I’m really into holding his hand. I’m fine like this, Namjoon-ah, don’t worry about it.”

Namjoon tsks under his breath, dabbing at the blood again. “If you say so.”

The quiet returns, but Jeongguk pays more attention to Yoongi than he does Namjoon this time. Every so often, Yoongi’s nose will scrunch up, crease lines appearing at the very edges of his eyes, and Jeongguk can almost feel the twinges of pain, an uncomfortable feeling of remorse bubbling low in his stomach.

“Namjoon-ssi?” he asks, gripping Yoongi’s hand a little tighter, nervous. “Is it okay if I sing instead?”

At this, Yoongi’s eyes flutter open. He has to blink against the light a few times before he can look at Jeongguk completely, but Jeongguk steadily avoids his gaze, turning towards Namjoon instead.

“Uh, yeah,” Namjoon says, and he looks to Yoongi for guidance, answer a little firmer when Yoongi nods. “If you’re fine with that, then I don’t have a problem.”

Yoongi turns to him, then. “You sure, bun? I meant what I said before, you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to.”

“But I do want to,” Jeongguk murmurs, sending Yoongi a small smile, warmth flooding his veins. “If it’s for you, then I want to do everything.”

He doesn’t give Yoongi a chance to answer before he begins singing. Jeongguk can feel Yoongi’s eyes on him, can hear the stutter of Namjoon’s needle when he lets the first note out, the melody leaking from his chest easily.

Despite majoring in vocal performance, Jeongguk has never really been fond of performing in front of his friends and family. It feels more intimate than if he were doing it for strangers, and Yoongi is aware of this because even now, after months have passed, Jeongguk rarely sings for him.
Sometimes, when he’s taking a shower and he accidentally slips, he’ll come out to find Yoongi sitting on the edge of his bed, eyes fluttered shut and humming along.

“You sing really well,” he’ll murmur, and Jeongguk will blush and tuck into himself, mumbling a soft thanks and scrambling away before he can humiliate himself further.

As it is, he feels embarrassed enough to be doing this here, voice barely audible, even in the quiet of the studio. Jeongguk keeps his eyes shut, fingers threaded together with Yoongi’s, and with each note, Yoongi’s grip loosens, the sound of his breaths steadier than before.

The melody he’s singing is the one he modeled Yoongi’s tattoo after. *Butterfly* is sad and soft, easily Jeongguk’s favorite song out of all the ones Yoongi’s written. It had taken a while for Yoongi to tell him the story behind it, the inspiration, the harmony.

Even then, it had been half-hearted. “You’re not the only one who’s gone through a shitty relationship, bun,” he’d said, sending an empty smile Jeongguk’s way, all kinds of ruined beauty. “But I’m happy you like it.”

Jeongguk has been hesitant about singing it since, but in this second, he decides he doesn’t quite care anymore. As he sings, he feels his own nerves unraveling, threads spooling around in a puddle of lost anxiety. It’s a little bit relieving, because singing has always been a form of expression for him; not being able to let it out around Yoongi was giving him more stress than he thought it was.

Like this, time passes quicker. The buzz of the needle seems softer than before, Yoongi’s breaths even and deep, and before Jeongguk knows it, an hour and a half has passed. His voice is hoarse by the end of it, barely more than a whisper, but Yoongi gives him the sweetest grin when his eyes flutter open, gummy and wide and so, so warm.

“Thank you,” he murmurs, sitting up on the chair as Namjoon wraps his hand in a clear bandage, cupping Jeongguk’s cheek with his other. His eyes are bright, glittering like the sun on a summer day, narrow and cat-like and pretty. “You didn’t have to do that, baby, I would’ve been fine without, but - thank you.”

Jeongguk huffs out a timid thank you, carefully leaning forward to study the tattoo. Namjoon has his back to them, cleaning his needles and storing his supplies a few feet away, and Jeongguk isn’t too worried about being overheard.
“Did it hurt?”

Yoongi hums, darting forward to press a quick kiss to the tip of Jeongguk’s nose. “Not too much. A 5 on a scale of 1-10, max.”

Jeongguk nods, gingerly picking up Yoongi’s hand to take a closer look. Yoongi lets him, limbs loose in Jeongguk’s grip, and like this, Jeongguk can see his design come to life, the bursts of colour spilling from Yoongi’s skin in bright shades.

“It’s pretty,” Jeongguk whispers, hushed. He turns Yoongi’s hand over and over in his palm, mindful of the wrapped area, being careful despite Yoongi’s quiet assurances.

“You’re pretty,” Yoongi says easily, and Jeongguk is reminded of that night again, where Yoongi said the same thing and instead of responding, Jeongguk had buried his face in his pillow and screamed.

Character development, he realizes. “Thank you,” Jeongguk mumbles, accepting the compliment with little more than a warm blush and a shy grin, a far cry from his usual stuttering.

Yoongi blinks at him, surprised. A grin curls his lips upwards, nose twitching and eyes curved, pretty and jagged and warm. “You’re welcome.”

A few seconds later Namjoon comes back, giving Yoongi firm instructions on tattoo care despite his deadpan expression. “Leave the bandage on for 24 hours, and when you take it off, wash it and pat it dry. Put a layer of the antibacterial cream on twice a day.”

“Namjoon-ah,” Yoongi interrupts tiredly, swinging his feet from where he’s still sitting on the chair. “You tell me this every time I come here. I know the drill, okay? I’ll be fine.”

Namjoon hmphs before rounding on Jeongguk, giving him a stern glare. “and you. I know you two are dating, but please, for fuck’s sake, don’t hold his right hand for a few days.”

Jeongguk nods meekly, Yoongi’s left hand warm in his. He can feel Yoongi shaking with laughter next to him, the quiet, endearing kind, all teeth and pretty sounds. Namjoon sends them on their way after that, pushing them gently out the door and waving until they round the corner, his dimples steadily disappearing from view.
“I like him,” Jeongguk says conversationally, taking care to avoid the cracks on the sidewalk. Yoongi snorts when he notices what Jeongguk is doing, but he doesn’t say anything, instead letting out a fond sigh. “He was nice.”

Yoongi hums, taking Jeongguk’s hand in his, being careful not to jostle his other. They spend the walk to the bus stop in relative quiet, watching the sunset and listening to the crickets, hands swinging together between them.

By now, the sky has turned dark, the clouds above them wisping away into evening fog. There’s a slight chill in the air, but Jeongguk doesn’t notice it, not with Yoongi pressed into him the way he is, catching the bus with their hands threaded and voices quiet. Jeongguk tucks into Yoongi’s side on the seat, head resting in the crook of his shoulder, and listens to the steady beat of Yoongi’s heart, the rise and fall of his chest.

He falls asleep like that, the quiet rumble of the engine beneath them acting as an anchor. Yoongi shakes him awake twenty minutes later, coaxing Jeongguk out of the bus with soft words, gentle touches, fleeting hands.

“C’mon,” he murmurs, Jeongguk shuffling sleepily behind him as they take the elevator up to Yoongi’s apartment, eyes droopy. “You worked hard today, huh? Hyung is so proud of you, bun.”

The praise does something to Jeongguk, sinks into his bones and trickles into his veins, honey sweet and tender. Jeongguk curls his fingers into the hem of Yoongi’s shirt and nods in agreement because fuck, he did work hard today. He took his test running on two hours of sleep, hasn’t eaten much of anything, and then he sang for an hour on end, until his voice was hoarse. It’s nice to be acknowledged, and he tells Yoongi as much, mumbling it into his shoulder as Yoongi boils ramyun for them.

“Thanks, hyung.”

“For what?” Yoongi sets a steaming pot of ramyun on the table before spooning the majority of it into Jeongguk’s bowl, hands steady and even, a look of concentration spread over his delicate features.

Jeongguk settles into his chair heavily, accepting the pair of chopsticks Yoongi hands him with a tired grin. “Just, you know. For taking care of me.”
Yoongi hums, sitting in his own chair with his legs crossed, looking small and pretty and dream-like, chin balanced in his palm. “Eat,” he murmurs, and pushes his own bowl towards Jeongguk after he finishes the first.

Jeongguk takes it from him, too sleepy to argue at this point. Yoongi hums as he eats, a soft, soothing melody, and it takes Jeongguk a few seconds to realize it’s *Butterfly*. He’s admittedly not the best singer, but his voice is brimming with warmth, leaking with sincerity, and Jeongguk finds himself listening along, giving Yoongi a shy grin.

When he finishes eating, Yoongi ushers him towards the bedroom, taking the bowls from the table and stacking them in the sink. “Go,” he says, lips twisted into a half smile. “I’ll be there in a minute.”

Jeongguk nods and shuffles into Yoongi’s bed, falling into the covers easily. He’s not sure how long he lies there before Yoongi pads in, pulling the blankets over him and perching on the edge of the bed, patting Jeongguk’s back in rhythmic beats.

“You’re not going to sleep?” Jeongguk asks, voice barely more than a whisper. His head feels heavy, and it’s a struggle to get the words out, tongue thick in his mouth.

“No,” Yoongi keeps patting his back, gentle and sweet and caring. “I still have some work to do, but I’ll be done in an hour, tops.”

“Don’t stay up too late,” Jeongguk mumbles, and he can hear Yoongi’s hum of acknowledgement, his quiet assurances. “Goodnight, hyung.”

Yoongi doesn’t say anything else, but just before he drifts off to sleep, Jeongguk feels his lips brush over his forehead, a fleeting kiss. “Goodnight, bun. Thanks for taking care of me, too.”

Chapter End Notes

ok so like, tbh i kind of have this plan where i want to add two more chapters but also im not sure if I'll ever get around to it (which is why this ends on such a finished note heh) bc im working on a shit ton of other things and i dont have much patience. but anyway, yeah!! if u liked it, leave me a comment I love them so MUCH and also follow me on sns if u like fic updates and random stuff about my life <3
Tumblr
Twt
curiouscat
Sometimes, Jeongguk has dreams.

They’re hazy, and he doesn’t remember them very well in the morning, but this time he doesn’t have to; it’s a memory.

“Hyung?” Jeongguk stares at Jinwoo, taking in the harsh line of his jaw, the curt shape of his lips. “What - what’s wrong?”

Jinwoo laughs. It’s an empty sound, a little mean, a little low. Unpleasant. “Blow me,” he says, and when Jeongguk blinks at him, Jinwoo moves closer, hands lingering uncomfortably on his waist. “C’mon, we’ve been dating for what, a month now? And all we’ve done is fucking kiss.”
“I - I mean, -”

“Don’t be a pussy.” Jinwoo pushes him and Jeongguk stumbles a little, the back of his knees hitting the bed. Panic is bubbling low in his stomach now, clinging to his veins, sifting through his bones. “It’s just a blowjob, Jeongguk. You can’t tell me you’ve never sucked a dick before.”

Jeongguk’s breathing is heavy, heartbeat uneven. He’s anxious and nervous and hesitant, but he’s - he’s not a pushover. He refuses to be a pushover.

It takes him a while to find his voice. “I haven’t,” Jeongguk whispers.

“What?”

“I haven’t sucked a dick before.” Jeongguk repeats, a little louder this time, a little firmer. Jinwoo’s hands are still on his shoulders and Jeongguk shrugs them off before taking a step back, fingers threaded together anxiously. “And I’m not going to suck yours.”

“Why’re you being such a fucking wuss about this? It’s not that big of a deal-”

“Either you listen to me,” Jeongguk says carefully, curling in on himself, voice low but still firm. “Or you get out. Your choice.”

There’s an eerie kind of quiet before Jinwoo scoffs, final and mocking and full of resentment. “Always knew you were a fucking tease, Jeon.”

and then he’s leaving, the door fluttering shut behind him with a final thud, the end of another chapter.

Jeongguk isn’t quite sure what happens next. Back then, he remembers sitting on his bed, staring at the wall, taking in deep breaths, counting to ten in his head and doing his best to keep from falling apart. But this time, it’s a dream.
and dreams always end.

“Bun?” Yoongi’s voice is soft, eyes concerned. He’s painted in soft light, hazy and dim, shadows dancing across his features. “You okay?”

Carefully, Jeongguk reaches forward. Yoongi doesn’t flinch, instead letting Jeongguk trace his features, the soft slope of his nose, the sharp line of his jaw. “What time is it?”

Yoongi catches his hand, pressing a butterfly kiss against Jeongguk’s palm. “4:03,” he murmurs, voice muffled and a little groggy. “You were shaking in your sleep.”

“I’m sorry,” Jeongguk says quietly. He shifts closer, pressing a knee in between two of Yoongi’s, face buried in his chest. “Did I wake you?”

“Maybe,” Yoongi admits. “But that’s not what I’m really concerned about right now. You were shivering and mumbling and it - I’ve never seen you like that before.”

When Jeongguk doesn’t say anything, face still stubbornly pressed into Yoongi’s chest, he lets out a quiet sigh. “Are you okay?” asks Yoongi again, tired and sleepy but concerned.

Always so, so concerned.

“It happens sometimes,” Jeongguk confesses, the quiet between them full of unasked questions. “It’s not a big deal, I just - sometimes I have nightmares.”

“Jeongguk,” Yoongi whispers, pressing him close, breathing him in, voice steady. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Jeongguk finally mumbles, the lie getting caught in his throat, a rasp more than anything else. “Don’t worry about it, hyung. I’m fine.”

Yoongi doesn’t say anything. Instead, he hums, quiet and low and reassuring, letting Jeongguk press into him, thread their limbs together, the narrow spaces between them full of warmth.
“Hyung,” Jeongguk eventually murmurs, words muffled into Yoongi’s throat. He’s small like this, curled in and around the spaces of Yoongi’s body, tucked firmly into his chest. “You don’t mind, right? That we don’t - that I’m not -”

Yoongi cuts him off with a quiet kiss. “I like you,” he whispers, as if it’s a secret, the words pressed sweetly into Jeongguk’s skin. “I like you so, so much, Jeongguk-ah. So much.”

*I don’t care,* is what he means. *I don’t care if we don’t have sex. It doesn’t matter to me.*

He’s said it enough times for Jeongguk to almost believe him. But almost isn’t enough, and Jeongguk feels his chest lurch when he remembers Jinwoo, his ugly words, his harsh touches, the way he’d pushed Jeongguk around, features twisted with anger.

Yoongi’s voice is soft. “Hey? You still awake, bun?”

Jeongguk keeps quiet. He lets his breathing even out, still even when he feels Yoongi press a kiss to his ear, words a murmured confession.

“I wish you would tell me,” he whispers, lips dancing across Jeongguk’s throat, fingers tracing patterns into skin. “If you weren’t. Okay, I mean. I wish you would tell me if you weren’t okay.”

♬

Yoongi’s been a little distant lately.

It’s not much - but sometimes, he’ll push Jeongguk away, tell him he needs to focus on his music, his studies, his *whatever* - just not Jeongguk.

It’s not often; and even if it was often, even if Yoongi didn’t hug him afterwards and apologize, it would still be okay. It needs to be okay.

“I’m okay.” Jeongguk stabs moodily at his cereal, staring at the soggy lumps in his bowl. He can hear the clock ticking in the background, an unending *tuk - tuk - tuk* that echos in his head, around and in between his thoughts. “It was just a nightmare, hyung. It’s chill, don’t freak out.”
Yoongi leans against the counter, unimpressed. The morning outside is grey, dreary and a little rainy, thin drops of water splattering halfheartedly against the windowpane. On days like this, Jeongguk usually tucks into Yoongi’s side, buried in blankets with his sketchbook propped open on his lap, full of warmth and hot tea and Yoongi.

But today, he just feels empty. A little alone.

“It’s fine.” Jeongguk emphasizes. He takes a deep breath before standing, pushing past Yoongi to the sink, letting his bowl clatter against the metal. “I’m fine.”

“I never said you weren’t.” Yoongi mutters, fingers grazing Jeongguk’s wrist, hesitant and unsure. “I just asked -”

“Well I want you to stop asking.” Jeongguk bites, putting his bowl in the dishrack with a little more force than necessary. “It’s annoying. I don’t need you to treat me like a fucking kid, hyung, you’re not my parents.”

In the stunned quiet that follows, Jeongguk wants to take it back. He turns around to apologize, to tell Yoongi he didn’t mean it, but before he can, Yoongi clears his throat.

“You’re right.” It’s stiff, low and thrumming with hurt, rough at the edges. “I didn’t mean to be annoying, I was just - worried, I guess.” Yoongi takes in a deep breath, features tight. “I won’t ask again.”

No, Jeongguk wants to tell him. No, I don’t want you to not ask because you were right. I’m not okay, not even a little bit. I’m scared and overwhelmed but I don’t want to annoy you, I don’t want you to leave, because you’re the only one who hasn’t left yet. Please stay.

"You're fine." is what Jeongguk says instead. He whispers it, soft and not very confident, because he wants Yoongi to know he doesn’t mean it; Yoongi isn’t fine, what he just did wasn’t fine, and they need to talk about this. "I was - that's not how I meant for it to come out, hyung, I-

"Forget it." Yoongi rubs tiredly at his eyes, shoulders low, face buried in his hands. "It's been a rough night, Jeongguk, it doesn't matter."
The rejection stings. Jeongguk watches as Yoongi gathers himself, gradually straightening to his full height, joggers slung low on his waist, shirt hanging loosely from his frame. His features are arranged carefully in a neutral expression, but Jeongguk can see the tightness around his eyes, the thin line of his lips.

"Sorry," Jeongguk whispers, and when Yoongi turns to him, an eyebrow raised in question, he presses back against the counter. "For the rough night, I mean. I didn't mean to wake you, hyung."

Yoongi blinks at him. "Don't worry about it," he says gruffly, moving further away, leaving Jeongguk behind by the counter. "I don't get too much sleep anyway, it's not a big deal."

But it is a big deal. Yoongi doesn't sleep very often, takes a few pills for when he has trouble sleeping at all, and Jeongguk can see how tired he is now, how each step Yoongi takes is heavy, as if he’s trying to walk through water.

"I know you don't."

"Jeongguk." Yoongi's voice is low, an ache in his words, as if he desperately wishes he were anywhere but here. "Can we talk about this later? I have studio time booked with Hoseok at ten, I really need to get going."

Jeongguk’s throat feels tight. Yoongi isn't looking at him, has his head in his hands again, frayed silver hair falling into his eyes. He seems tired.

“Yeah,” Jeongguk finally mumbles, squeezing his eyes shut, a tiny waver in his voice. “I'm - yeah, that's fine, hyung. I'll see you tonight?”

“Tonight,” Yoongi agrees. He’s already moving towards the bathroom, the door fluttering shut behind him, the sound of the taps turning on echoing in the still quiet. “We’ll grab dinner at that Ramen place you like and talk it out then, okay?”

“Okay,” Jeongguk nods. He pushes his hair off his forehead and moves to find his backpack, regret still churning uncomfortably in his stomach. “It's a date”
The Ramen place is a little ways away from campus, a solid ten minutes away by drive. Jeongguk walks there, the cotton candy sky streaked with lavender, watching as pale peach bleeds into cobalt.

He’s a little nervous; he spent hours in the library working on his music theory paper, another few sketching out a concept for his final project, but even now he feels restless, on edge.

**To: dumpling hyung ☼**

*Hyung!!*

*I’m already here, do u want me to order for u?*

The inside of the shop is glowing with buttery light, red lanterns hanging from wooden rafts in the ceiling. It’s full to the very brim, loud and crowded and pleasantly warm, fairy lights hung along the ceiling. Jeongguk picks a booth tucked into the wall, quiet and out of the way, and checks his phone periodically, anxious for Yoongi’s reply.

**To: dumpling hyung ☼**

*Hyung?*

There’s a waitress staring curiously at him now, a notepad clutched in her hand, and when Jeongguk sends her a tentative grin, she takes it as an invitation.

“Hi! My name is Jieun, and I’ll be your server for today. Would you like to order now or…”

She drifts off, head tilted at an angle. Her voice is kind, soft and mellow, and when she asks, Jeongguk feels himself wilt a little.

“Actually, I’m waiting for someone.” he mumbles, picking halfheartedly at his nails, embarrassment heavy in his voice. “Can you give me a few more minutes?

Jieun nods, a flicker of understanding passing over her features. “Of course.”
But a few minutes trickle into ten, then twenty, until finally, Jeongguk realizes he’s been sitting here alone for close to half an hour. He can see Jieun glancing over at him, her expression full of pity.

Jeongguk lets out a quiet sigh.

To: dumpling hyung ♡

You have 10 minutes before I leave

Ten minutes pass. and then another ten minutes, because Jeongguk is weak and a little in love, and he can’t quite believe this is happening.

“Sir?” Jieun’s voice is hesitant, and Jeongguk startles when he notices her, the way she keeps her head down. “I’m afraid we’re going to have to ask you to leave if you’re not going to order anything.”

Jeongguk bites his lip. He checks his watch, the arrows pointing at half past nine, and feels a funny little lurch in his stomach when he realizes he’s been waiting here for well over an hour now.

“Yeah,” Jeongguk nods, helpless. The heat in his cheeks is spreading to his ears, staining his skin pale red, a distinct feeling of humiliation flooding his bones. “That’s fine, I was going to go soon anyway. Sorry for the inconvenience.”

She lets him leave easily enough, taking a step back as he shuffles out the door. It’s windy outside, the kind of chill that clings to his skin, gets lost in his hair, burrows into the narrow spaces between his limbs, lonely and a little mocking.

For the first time this week, Jeongguk doesn’t go back to Yoongi’s apartment. Instead, he wanders home, following along with the wind until he’s standing in front of the door, resting his head against the wood for a brief second.

Jimin is curled into himself on their couch when Jeongguk shuffles in. He lets out a soft sound of surprise, sitting up and raising an eyebrow in question, a blanket puddling around his shoulders. “I didn’t know you were coming home today, Gukkie.”

Jimin’s voice is soft, a little curious. He startles when Jeongguk falls into him, but instead of asking,
all Jimin does is wrap the blanket around him too, humming under his breath, a soft melody. Jeongguk melts into him, letting himself be cuddled, Jimin’s arms familiar, his touch comforting.

“You okay?” Jimin asks a few minutes later, his fingers brushing through Jeongguk’s hair, parting the strands and rearranging them carefully.

“No,” Jeongguk mumbles, voice muffled from where he has his face pressed into Jimin’s chest. “I don’t think so, hyung.”

Jimin is quiet. He plays with Jeongguk’s hair, hums under his breath, threads their fingers together, skin warm and familiar. He doesn’t push.

Jeongguk takes in a deep breath. “Hyung?”

“Yeah?”

“What would you do if - if you had a fight with your boyfriend?”

Jimin turns to look at him, a little surprised. “I would want to talk it out,” he says carefully.

“Okay.” Jeongguk burrows deeper into Jimin’s warmth, desperately trying to keep his voice steady. “And if he doesn’t want to talk it out? What then?”

“Hey,” Jimin’s hand curls around Jeongguk’s shoulder, voice soft with muted concern. “What happened, Gukkie? Did Yoongi hyung do something?”

“No.” Jeongguk mumbles miserably. He hiccups, a sad, quiet sound, cheeks damp. “We just - we kind of fought. He’s been a little distant lately and I got anxious and I snapped.” Jeongguk’s voice turns softer. “We were supposed to talk it out over dinner but he didn’t show and he didn’t answer his texts and he left me, hyung, he just - he left me.”

Jimin clucks his tongue, sympathetic. “I’m sorry.”
“It’s okay.” Jeongguk presses his hands to his eyes, a breath shuddering through him. “They always leave eventually, hyung. He just took longer than I expected.”

“Jeongguk.” Jimin’s voice is firm. “Listen to me, okay? It’s just one fight. You guys have been dating for close to half a year now, and it’s obvious he loves you-”

“He hasn’t said it yet, you know.”

“What?”

Jeongguk turns, pressing himself into Jimin’s side again, aching for comfort. “He hasn’t said he loves me yet. I look at him sometimes and it’s like I’m bursting at the edges with how much I’m feeling and I want to tell him so badly, hyung.”

Jimin presses his lips to Jeongguk’s hair. “Why haven’t you?”

“Because,” Jeongguk sniffles, a small, pathetic sound. “What if he doesn’t say it back? What if he thinks it’s too soon, or, or what if he doesn’t feel the same and he doesn’t know how to tell me-”

“Hey, baby, sweetie, no.” Jimin fusses, taking Jeongguk’s hands in his, words firm. “Listen to me, okay? Yoongi seems sensible, and just because he stood you up one time doesn’t mean he’s leaving. If he hasn’t said he loves you yet, it’s for a reason.”

Jeongguk hiccups again. “Okay.”

“I’m not done yet. If you snapped at him, then he’s probably scared too - I’m not saying it’s an excuse, but it could definitely be a reason.”

Jimin’s words hang delicately in the air, soft and sincere and honest. Jeongguk huffs out a tired breath, pillowing his head on Jimin’s shoulder before he tucks the blanket tight around them, words quiet. “He wouldn’t do that to me.”

“No?”
There’s apprehension in Jimin’s voice, a hint of curiosity. “No.” Jeongguk says firmly, curling his fingers into Jimin’s. “Just because hyung has tattoos and piercings doesn’t mean he’s an asshole. I know you haven’t talked much with him and I know a lot of people don’t see him the way I do, but he - he’s the sweetest person I’ve ever met, hyung.”

Jimin is quiet and it sinks in, a few seconds later. “Oh.” Jeongguk breathes, feeling a little dumb, a little warm.

“Oh.” Jimin echos, lurching forward with a giggle when Jeongguk groans into his skin. “And fyi, I’ve talked to him enough to be able to tell he’s not an asshole, Guk. I’m actually a little offended at the lack of faith you have in me sometimes.”

“Shut up.” Jeongguk mumbles, but it’s half hearted at best, the corner of his mouth already curling upwards. “Thank you, though. For being here for me.”

“Don’t worry about it.” Jimin ruffles his hair, laughing a little when Jeongguk scowls at him. “Besides,” his voice turns softer, words leaking sincerity. “Even if you can’t see it, the rest of us can. He loves you, Jeongguk. You shouldn’t let your insecurity come in the way of that.”

Jeongguk pillows his head on Jimin’s shoulder again, letting out a quiet sigh before he reaches for the TV remote, an old rerun of Mulan flicking on. “I know,” he mumbles. “I’m just scared, I guess. I’ve never felt like this about anyone else before, hyung.”

It’s true; Jeongguk feels as if he has an ocean in his chest, threatening to overflow. As if he’ll drown if he’s not careful.

“It’s okay to be scared.” Jimin hums thoughtfully. He’s brushing his fingers through Jeongguk’s hair again, familiar and comforting and warm, words soft, voice earnest. “But it’s not okay to push someone away because you’re scared.”

Jeongguk nods, tired. Jimin leaves it then, turns the sound higher and sings under his breath to the discography. It’s peaceful and familiar and warm, and Jeongguk falls asleep tucked into the curve of Jimin’s body, drifting off with the thought that if it’s for Yoongi, maybe it’s okay to drown.
This time, the dream is a little different.

It’s dim still, red lanterns and soft music, Yoongi sitting across from him, lips parted in a grin. His head is thrown back in laughter, silver blonde hair falling languidly into his eyes, and Jeongguk is warm and endeared and in love.

“Hyung,” Jeongguk breathes, and he reaches across the table for Yoongi’s hand, faltering when his skin passes through Jeongguk’s fingers. Panic bubbles through him, and it seems now, that Yoongi is fading away, chipping at the edges. “Hyung?”

Yoongi’s head is still thrown back in laughter, but parts of his face are slipping, cracking into pieces, features rearranging themselves until -

Jinwoo.

“No.” Jeongguk whispers, chopsticks clattering to the table, fingers curled around air. “No, no, no, no-”

“Always knew you were a fucking tease, Jeon.” Jinwoo sneers, and it’s like Jeongguk is back with him again, back in his freshman year of college, young and naive and believing in the best.

“Can’t believe you’ve never sucked a dick before.”

“It’s been a month and all we’ve done is fucking kiss.”

“Always knew you were a fucking tease, Jeon-”

It’s on repeat in Jeongguk’s head, but he’s hearing it in Yoongi’s voice, in his low, sleepy Daegu drawl, the syllables slurring over themselves with satoori.

“Stop,” Jeongguk whispers, curling into himself at the table, listening to Jinwoo’s words, hearing Yoongi’s voice. “Stop, I didn’t mean to, I - I’m not, I swear I’m not-”
Jeongguk jerks awake, clutching the blanket to his chest. Jimin is sound asleep next to him, one of his arms tucked under Jeongguk’s head as a makeshift pillow, features soft with exhaustion. The TV is still on and it flickers across them dimly, shadows hitting the walls in sporadic splotches of light.

Jeongguk fumbles when he hears it, heart thudding loudly in his ears. His phone is buzzing on the coffee table, uncomfortably rattling the glass, the screen lit with a flurry of missed calls and notifications. Hurriedly, Jeongguk grabs it before padding into his room, careful not to wake Jimin.

“Hello?” Jeongguk whispers, leaning back against the door, tired. From here his clock reads 2:06 a.m and Jeongguk can feel it in his bones, the lingering anxiety from before, the insecurity.

“Hello? Jeongguk, baby, I’m so sorry -” Yoongi sounds frantic, words panicked, voice higher than usual. “I swear I didn’t do it on purpose, fuck, my battery ran out and I was in the studio with Hoseok and we were so caught up in it, bun, I’m - god, I’m so fucking sorry, I know it’s not an excuse-”

“Hyung,” Jeongguk interrupts quietly. Yoongi’s breathing is harsh, and Jeongguk can imagine him, the flush on his cheeks, silver hair wisping into his eyes. “Breathe, hyung. It’s fine, I’m not mad.”

“There’s a certain kind of exhaustion lingering in Jeongguk’s bones. He feels worn out, as if he’s a piece laundry strung out to dry, flying in the wind, unpredictable and a little violent. “Hyung. It’s two in the morning, baby, can we talk about this later? It’s been a rough day, a rough night.”

It feels good, Jeongguk realizes, to throw Yoongi’s words back at him. A small part of him wants to yell, wants to be angry and indignant and inappropriately upset, but the better half of him is okay with this.

“I know.” Yoongi sounds just as tired, voice sandpaper rough. “But, bun, I’m outside.”

Jeongguk pauses. He clutches his blanket tighter around himself, the edges dragging along the ground. “What?”
“I’m outside.” Yoongi repeats quietly, and Jeongguk can imagine him now, leaning his head against the door, silver hair glimmering under the moonlight. “You weren’t there when I came home and it took me a few minutes to remember, to remember where I was supposed to go, and Gukkie, baby, I’m so sorry. It’s not an excuse but I panicked and came here and it’s fine if you’re too tired to talk now-”

“Shut up.”

This time, it’s Yoongi who pauses. “What?”

“I’m coming outside,” Jeongguk mutters, creeping out of his room as quietly as he can, blanket dragging along behind him. He can feel how puffy his eyes are, is certain his hair is a mess and his lips bitten red, but Yoongi is here and it’s a little too late for Jeongguk to care.

He opens the door gently, letting it flutter shut behind him before he steps outside. Yoongi is watching him, and even if he’s quiet, his body still, Jeongguk can see the apology in his eyes.

Yoongi moves first. “Jeongguk.” his voice is small, a little desperate. “I swear I didn’t do it on purpose, Guk-ah, I just -”

“It’s okay.” Jeongguk interrupts. He shuffles closer and bends, burying his face in Yoongi’s shoulder, breathing him in, cotton and summer and a hint of strawberries. “I meant what I said before, hyung, I’m not mad. But I am tired.”

“Oh.”

“Oh.” Jeongguk echoes, nipping lightly at Yoongi’s shoulder. “Come back to bed with me? We can talk about it in the morning, when I don’t feel like falling asleep on you.”

“Oh.” Yoongi’s hand hovers, as if unsure, but when Jeongguk nips at his skin again, he lets his fingers card through Jeongguk’s hair, petting him. “You’re sure your not mad? Because I wouldn’t blame you if you were, bun.”

“I’m sleepy.” Jeongguk grumbles. “And if you keep biting my head off at two in the morning then yes, I’m going to get mad and it’s not going to be pretty. But as of right now, I just want to cuddle. Can we do that? Please?”
“Of course we can.” Yoongi murmurs.

Jeongguk sighs in relief. “Thank you.” and then he’s taking Yoongi by the hand, twining their fingers together as he leads them into his room.

It’s familiar, curling into Yoongi’s side, burrowing under the covers in a tangle of limbs. Yoongi’s face is pressed between Jeongguk’s shoulder blades, and Jeongguk can feel each breath he takes, the soft warmth of Yoongi’s skin against his.

“This okay?”

Jeongguk wriggles in Yoongi’s arms, nodding with his body, and Yoongi’s laugh, raspy and low and relieved, echoes through him.

“Good.” Yoongi mumbles, voice muffled from where his lips are pressed against Jeongguk’s back. Despite being smaller, Yoongi insists on being the big spoon, and it’s cute, a little endearing just how adamant he is about it.

(But sometimes, in the middle of the night, Yoongi tucks into himself, all curled into the sheets with his hands between his knees, and Jeongguk, fond and in love, gets to be the big spoon. It’s nice.)

“We’ll talk about it tomorrow?” asks Yoongi, hopeful.

Jeongguk smiles a little, half his face hidden in the pillow. “Yes.” he mutters, reaching back behind him, threading their fingers together again, rubbing over Yoongi’s rings. “Tomorrow for sure.”

♬

They don’t talk about it.

It’s not that Jeongguk doesn’t want to; but he’s busy and Yoongi is busy and in the grand scheme of
things, it’s easy to forget.

( Jeongguk doesn’t actually forget about it. Rather, he pushes it to the back of his head, tells it in a very firm voice to stay, and then, when he’s sure he’s made his point, he avoids it to the best of his abilities. It’s not a bad way to be, all things considered.)

The weeks trickle by as they do, in flashes of lectures and friends and Yoongi, although less Yoongi than before.

“I’m putting in more time at the studio.” Is Yoongi’s excuse, muttered into his cereal bowl in the early morning, half-awake with bleary eyes. “Me and -” a yawn, filtering out lazily “-and Hoseok-ah have a project we’re working on, we’ll finish soon enough.”

Hoseok-ah.

( Jeongguk’s met Hoseok a few times. He’s Yoongi’s Jimin, his best friend, his platonic soulmate, beaming bright, a heart shaped smile and twinkling eyes. He’s nice and he’s pretty and he has a laugh spilling sunlight, and it’s a little rude, Jeongguk fumes, for him to snaffle Yoongi away like this. The audacity of some people.)

“That’s fine.” Jeongguk clears his throat, knocking his spoon around in his bowl. “Take your time, hyung, I was just curious.”

Yoongi’s grin is sleepy, curling up at the edges. “I’ll be done soon, bun. Just for a little while longer, okay?”

It’s soft, brimming with warmth, and Jeongguk curls into himself a little, aching with how much he feels. “Sure.” he swallows, feels it churn through him, this odd, unnamed emotion. “As long as you’re here, I’m okay.”

And he is okay. Yoongi coming home late, leaving in the early a.m, dropping exhausted kisses on Jeongguk’s forehead before he disappears for hours on end, is all okay.

But lying isn’t.
It’s late on a Saturday evening, nearing 6, and Jeongguk is wandering around campus aimlessly, searching for a coffee shop to study in. Yoongi texted him a few hours ago that he was working late in the studio again, that Jeongguk would be better off eating dinner with Jimin, and okay, Jeongguk replied, that’s fine, I’ll see you over the weekend.

But instead, Jeongguk sees him at the Sweet Shoppe, with -

With Hoseok. Yoongi is grinning into his coffee, cat-like eyes crinkling at the edges, pretty lips parted in laughter. Hoseok is sitting across from him and even from here, Jeongguk can see his hands fluttering in the air, head tilted at an angle, features full of warmth, bleeding affection.

Jeongguk feels a little sick. He doesn’t understand why Yoongi would lie to him - if he has plans with Hoseok, then why did he tell Jeongguk he was going to be in the studio instead? Wouldn’t it just be easier to tell him the truth, to tell Jeongguk he wants to spend time with his best friend?

It’s all a little muddled in Jeongguk’s head now, what he’s seeing. He feels odd standing here, as if he’s a third wheel, as if he’s a stranger looking in on a pair of boyfriends, as if he’s suddenly baseless.

Maybe it’s just a misunderstanding, whispers a voice in the back of his head, a little desperate. Maybe he’s just here because he’s taking a break, maybe they were working together on that project and they wanted coffee, maybe, maybe, maybe.

Jeongguk doesn’t consider himself impulsive. He’s level headed, practical and quiet and observant, and none of this can be construed as definite. It’s fine, he tells himself, turning back on his heel and walking away, breaths quick and uneven. It’s fine because it has to be fine.

The sky is turning dark now, thin clouds wisping away into a deep blue, streaks of burnt orange haphazardly littered around. Jeongguk curls his thumbs under the straps of his backpack and walks, taking the long way back home, counting his steps and wishing he were anywhere but here.

It only occurs to him later, after he’s eaten dinner with Jimin and rewatched Ponyo for the nth time, that this feeling - the strange, unnameable one - is loneliness.

Jeongguk is lonely. He’s lonely and uncertain and anxious, and he feels like a little kid again, desperately chasing after someone who’s already long gone.
From: Dumpling Hyung
2:16 a.m

Goodnight bun
Miss you
Love, hyung.

“So Hoseok-ah is throwing a party tonight.”

Jeongguk glances up, chopsticks clattering half heartedly into his bowl. “Okay?”

Yoongi huffs out a tired laugh. The circles under his eyes look darker than ever and he seems dim lately, as if he’s fading at the edges. “I was wondering if you would come with me? He’s releasing his mixtape soon, it’s an early celebration.”

There’s a pause. “I’m not much of a party person.” Jeongguk mutters, stilted.

“I know you aren’t.” Yoongi’s voice is soft, his touch warm. He traces words into the sensitive skin of Jeongguk’s wrist, humming low in his throat, the butterfly inked into his hand coloured bright under the sun. “But we haven’t talked in a while and I miss being with you, bun. Please?”

“Who’s fault is that?”

Yoongi’s mouth opens a little in surprise, fingers stilling. “What?”

Jeongguk shoves his chair back from Yoongi’s kitchen table, carrying his half empty bowl to the sink. He can feel Yoongi’s gaze, curious and confused and a little upset. “Who’s fault is it that we haven’t been able to spend much time together lately? You’re barely here, hyung, and even when you are, I feel like you don’t want to be.”
Yoongi blinks at him, helpless. “Ok, first of all, no? I definitely want to be here, otherwise I wouldn’t be. Second of all, you said you were fine with how many studio hours I was putting in -”

“And it is fine.” Jeongguk interrupts tiredly. “I just - I miss you.”

_I miss you_ feels like an echo of what it really is. There’s been an ache in Jeongguk’s chest lately, lingering just under his breastbone, heavy and quiet and full of longing. On days where it gets to be too much, when Jeongguk is alone and anxious and sad, he takes his sketchbook, curls into the overstuffed armchair in his apartment and lets loose tens of butterflies across the pages, wings poised in flight.

_I miss you_, he writers under their bodies, along their antennas, hidden in the curve of their wings. _I miss you, I miss you, I miss you._

(Yoongi is lying to him. Jeongguk checks sometimes, when Yoongi tells him he’ll be at the studio until late, but he never is. Instead, he’s at the sweet shoppe with Hoseok, a grin stitched into his features, piercings winking prettily under the fairy lights.)

“I miss you.” Jeongguk repeats quietly, the words hanging delicately in the air between them. “But yeah, hyung, just - forget I said anything, okay? I’ll go with you, it’ll be fun.”

He offers Yoongi a smile, the corner of his mouth curling upwards half heartedly.

“If you’re sure.” Jeongguk hums, nodding a little, lips still curled into a half smile.

He keeps quiet.

“I’m sure.” Jeongguk hums, nodding a little, lips still curled into a half smile.

The air between them feels still, unfinished. Jeongguk ignores it, but he startles a little when a pair of arms slip around his waist, Yoongi’s breath playing warmly across his skin.

“I wish you would tell me what I’m doing wrong.” he whispers, pressing the words into Jeongguk’s
skin delicately, lips brushing against the nape of his neck.

Jeongguk takes in a deep breath before falling back against Yoongi, letting himself be held. It’s been so long since they’ve done anything like this, and it feels nice, Jeongguk remembers, to be touched and held and comforted.

“We’ll talk about it later.” Jeongguk mumbles, pausing when he feels Yoongi stiffen against him, the arms around his waist falling away.

“You keep saying that,” Yoongi’s voice sounds rough, a touch frustrated. “But every time I bring any of it up, you just - you push me away and give me excuses and it’s already late, Jeongguk.”

Jeongguk feels himself wilt under Yoongi’s words, the truth behind them ringing a little too true for comfort. “I know.” he whispers, turning around to catch Yoongi’s hands in his, threading their fingers together anxiously. “I know, I’m just - I’m so scared, hyung. I’m so fucking scared.”

“Of what?”

*Of you leaving, Jeongguk wants to say. Of you leaving, of you picking Hoseok over me, of not being able to give you what he could.*

Instead, Jeongguk bends, burying his face in Yoongi’s shoulder, breathing him in, suddenly tired “After Hoseok’s party.” he mumbles, and he can feel Yoongi’s body turning loose in defeat, his quiet sigh. “I promise, hyung, okay? As soon as we leave, I’ll tell you what’s been bothering me.”

It takes Yoongi a few seconds to find his voice, but eventually, he lets his lips press into Jeongguk’s hair. “Yeah,” he agrees, a little soft, a little unsure. “Okay, bun. Whatever you want.”

♬

They get to Hoseok’s place a little after 11. Jeongguk is dressed half-heartedly in a pair of cuffed jeans and his timberlands, hair tucked under a beanie, silver hoops glimmering under the dim lights.
Yoongi has an arm around his waist, pressed into his side, body warm and familiar. He seems tired still, a little on edge, his eyes flickering across Jeongguk’s features every few seconds, studying, analysing, considering; as if Jeongguk is a problem he’s having trouble with.

Jeongguk shakes the thought away. “How long do we have to be here?” he asks, apprehensive.

Yoongi hums quietly before he leads them in, fingers circling Jeongguk’s wrist. “Not long. An hour or so, just so Hoseok-ah knows we came and that we’re happy for him.”

_Hoseok-ah, Hoseok-ah, Hoseok-ah._ Yoongi’s voice is fond, his lips quirked up in a pretty smile, and Jeongguk feels himself wilt all over again.

It takes a bit of effort to keep the bitterness at bay, the disappoint. “Okay.” Jeongguk mutters, moving a little ways away, leaving a fair amount of distance between him and Yoongi, the air between them stagnant. “Just… I’m kind of tired, hyung. An hour is fine but any longer would be pushing it, if - if you still wanted to talk.”

Yoongi’s hand is still curled, his fingers bent at the knuckle, as if he hasn’t realised Jeongguk’s long since let go. “Sure.” he agrees easily, but his smile is worn at the edges, tight. “And I do want to talk. More than I want to be here, I want to talk to you, bun. We can leave whenever you want.”

Jeongguk feels himself loosen a little at Yoongi’s words, the sincerity with which he said them. “Thank you.” he mumbles, softening at the grin he’s sent in return, small and quiet and full of like.

It’s a fragile second, the kind that hangs in the air, delicately fleeting. The music around them is loud, but Jeongguk doesn’t hear it; instead, he’s looking at Yoongi looking at him, and there’s a certain kind of warmth in his gaze, full of trust and longing and a hint of hope.

Jeongguk lets out a quiet breath. “Hyung-”

“Yoongi hyung!” Hoseok’s voice is loud, tipsy and inebriated, and Jeongguk flinches when he drapes himself over Yoongi’s back, planting a sloppy kiss on his cheek. “Yoongi hyung, Yoongi hyung, Yoongi hyung!”

Yoongi grumbles under Hoseok’s weight, but Jeongguk can see his smile, the crinkles at the corners of his dark eyes. He’s happy. “Seok-ah, get off me, you’re so fucking bony-”
“Hyunggggg,” Hoseok trills, breathless and giggly, face flushed red from alcohol. “Hyung loves me, right? If hyung loved me he would give me a piggyback ride.”

Yoongi splutters. Hoseok’s apartment is crowded, people milling around aimlessly, warmth from too many bodies spilling over, suffocating. Jeongguk feels his breath hitch in his throat.

“Hyung,” Hoseok whines, twisting his fingers into the hem of Yoongi’s shirt, material bunching haphazardly in his grip. “Hyung, please? I’ll cry if you don’t, please, hyung, please-”

“Fine.” Yoongi throws Jeongguk an apologetic glance. “Get on, Seokie.” he mutters, staggering under Hoseok’s weight, hands wrapped around his thighs, fingers pressed into the lean muscle there.

Faintly, Jeongguk realises they look good together. Hoseok is pretty, with his dark hair and his thin choker, shoulders filling out his shirt well. His cheekbones are sharp, the strong line of his jaw dancing with shadows, and when he presses himself against Yoongi, he does it with an easy kind of grace, as if he’s familiar with Yoongi’s body.

(Maybe he is.)

Jeongguk watches as they stagger out of the living room, bits of laughter puddling between them. His chest feels tight, an ocean threatening to overflow, pushing at his heartstrings, twisting them into knots, loose threads fluttering forlornly in his veins.

Hurt, Jeongguk realises. He feels hurt. He feels hurt and he feels sad and he feels a little like he’s tumbling through the wind, aimless and unwanted.

Mostly though, Jeongguk just feels alone. As if he’s been abandoned.

(In the back of his head, he realises that it’s Hoseok’s party and that Yoongi is his best friend and that if anything, Jeongguk should be okay with this. But instead, all he feels is upset, restless and in need of a drink.)

There are too many people in here and it’s uncomfortably warm, the kind of fog Jeongguk wants to
step out of, thick enough to suffocate in. The drinks are in the kitchen though and tiredly, he decides he doesn’t want to deal with these kinds of feelings sober.

It’s difficult, to find his way through the crowd, but he manages. Jeongguk mixes his drink carefully, adding a little bit more vodka than he should and by the time he finishes, clutching his cup to his chest, he’s found a spot on the couch.

It’s quieter here, and Jeongguk nurses his drink appreciatively, tucked into the corner by himself. He’s not sure how long he sits there for but eventually he notices a familiar figure, a pair of figures, dancing a little bit away from him, pressed together tightly. Their bodies move in sync, and even from here Jeongguk can see Hoseok’s hands on Yoongi’s hips, back against front, Yoongi’s silver hair glimmering under the lights.

A languid, gradual feeling of dread begins unfolding in Jeongguk’s belly, thick and almost tangible. Jeongguk does his best to ignore it, tentatively leaving his corner to move closer until he’s in the throng of shifting bodies, pushing against the sway for a glimpse of silver hair, of dark tattoos and glimmering piercings.

Eventually, he sees them again; but this time, they’re closer than before, both of Hoseok’s hands caught in Yoongi’s. The soft slope of Yoongi’s nose catches under the light, his face tilted at an angle, and even from here Jeongguk can see the annoyed set of his jaw, the budding irritation in his eyes.

They’re arguing, exasperation unfolding between them in waves. But suddenly, Hoseok seems to be falling forwards, hands finding their place on Yoongi’s hips, and Jeongguk feels as if he’s watching them through a fog, trapped in another dream, Hoseok’s lips pressing against Yoongi’s in a sloppy kiss.

and then he leaves, turns on his heel and walks out the door, heart breaking a little with each step he takes.

♬

From: Dumpling Hyung

12:01 a.m

Baby hey where’d u go?
You’ll never believe what happened 😱😢😢😢

In any case hoseokie owes u an apology 😊

From: Dumpling Hyung

12:33 a.m

Gukkie are u at home???

I’ve searched everywhere but I cant find u :( 

If ur home its ok I just wanna make sure ur safe

From: Dumpling Hyung

12:47 a.m

Ok this isn’t funny anymore

It’s been an hour since u disappeared

Did u really not want to talk to me that much??

I’m coming home

Dumpling Hyung: missed call, 12:48 a.m

Dumpling Hyung: missed call, 12:59 a.m

From: Dumpling Hyung

1:11

I called jimin and he said he said u weren’t there

And you’re not here

And u weren’t at Hoseok’s

So where the fuck are u Jeongguk

Dumpling Hyung: missed call, 1:24 a.m

Dumpling Hyung: missed call, 1:36 a.m
By the time Yoongi finds him, the words are already on the tip of Jeongguk’s tongue.

Hyung, let’s break up. I’m tired and scared and lonely and Hoseok fits you better than I ever have. It’s okay if you like him, I’m not mad, I couldn’t ever be mad, not when he can give you what I can’t. Let’s break up, hyung. Hoseok is pretty and tall and warm and you call him Hoseok-ah and grin so fondly, and he’s lovely. Let’s break up, hyung. It’s almost been six months and I feel so much for you, but it’s okay because you don’t feel the same and I don’t want to keep you here when you could be somewhere better. Let’s break up, hyung.

Let’s break up.

Let’s break up

Let’s break up-

“I don’t want to break up.” Jeongguk sniffs, burying his face in his knees, Yoongi’s shadow falling across him. “I, I, I don’t want to break up, hyung, I like you so much-‘

“Baby, hey,” Yoongi sounds a little lost for words, anxious and confused. “Who said anything about breaking up?”

His voice is soft, unsure. It’s a little after three in the morning, street lights flickering half-heartedly across them, but Yoongi is taking Jeongguk’s hands in his, peering at him through concerned eyes, and Jeongguk -

Jeongguk is so in love.

“I don’t want to break up.” he repeats miserably. They’re sat in the alleyway behind Yoongi’s apartment building, and it’s windy and dark and sort of damp, lonely feeling. Jeongguk draws the strings of his hoodie tighter, hiding his face. “I really, really don’t want to break up, hyung.”
Yoongi tsks, crouching on the ground to pry Jeongguk’s hands from his face. “We’re not breaking up,” he says firmly, touching his forehead to Jeongguk’s, noses brushing. “Are you listening to me, Jeongguk? We’re not breaking up, baby. I don’t want to break up with you.”

This late at night (early in the morning?), the exhaustion in Yoongi’s face is obvious. He’s wearing a snapback, all of his hair pushed off his forehead, and one of Jeongguk’s cardigans is swallowing him, folds of fabric bunched up around his frame. He looks tired.

(He looks sweet.)

“You do.” Jeongguk insists wetly, still sniffling every few seconds. “O-otherwise you, y, you wouldn’t have kissed Hoseok hyung like that.”

Yoongi sucks in a harsh breath before dropping to his knees, taking Jeongguk into his lap with ease. “Look at me, bun. Are you looking?” he cups Jeongguk’s face in his hands, delicate as a dream, eyes warm. “Hoseok was drunk. I pushed him off less than ten seconds later, and to be fair I should’ve seen it coming - he’s touchy even without the alcohol, but. He was drunk.”

Yoongi presses his lips to Jeongguk’s hair, apologetic. “He was drunk.” Yoongi repeats, whispers it, quiet. “I’m sorry, bun. I shouldn’t have let Hoseok kiss me and I shouldn’t have left you alone and I shouldn’t have taken so long to find you, but - but I did, and I’m so, so sorry.”

Jeongguk is quiet.

He can feel Yoongi against him, the sensitive place where his hands rest against Jeongguk’s waist, the steady rise and fall of his chest, the press of his lips and the dance of his fingers.

“Ohkay?” whispers Yoongi, breath tickling Jeongguk’s skin. “Are we okay?”

Jeongguk takes in a deep breath before pushing himself off Yoongi’s lap, wobbly on his feet. “No,” he says, a tiny waver in his voice. “We’re not.”

Yoongi blinks at him, lips parted in surprise.
“We’re not okay.” Jeongguk sniffles, shifting a little ways away from Yoongi, playing anxiously with his fingers. “Y, y, you keep lying to me and telling me you’re at the studio w, when you’re with Hoseok instead. A-a-at the Sweetie Shoppe. Where we had our first date.” he adds, voice small.

“Oh,” Yoongi breathes. He reaches a hand out but Jeongguk flinches backwards, afraid of Yoongi’s warm touch, his earnest eyes. “Baby, hey-”

“No.” Jeongguk stresses. “You wanted to talk, so let me talk. I’m sick of this. I’m so sick of being lied to and pushed away and, and cheated, you cheated on me, hyung-”

“I didn’t-”

“You cheated me on.” Jeongguk mutters, folding his hoodie down, covering his face. He doesn’t want Yoongi to see him cry. “You cheated on me, hyung. With Hoseok hyung, you, you met him instead of me and you were laughing and giggling and, and loving, and you. You cheated on me.”

It’s been rotting in his chest for a while now, these terrible, heavy feelings, clinging to his veins, lingering between the spaces of his bones. Jeongguk feels a little more free now, a little more loose, like he can breathe without gasping for air, like he can find a place for the puddles of anxiety he’s accumulated, drain them away and live again.

The breath he lets out is relieved. “You cheated on me.” Jeongguk repeats, and it feels like a revelation, like a secret he’s been harboring for far too long, tucked away to be remembered in the dark. “Fuck, hyung, you-”

“I didn’t cheat on you.” Yoongi interrupts, and he’s curled into himself against the wall, snapback held limply in his hands, nimble fingers worrying the edges. “Could you give me 10 minutes? Just 10 minutes, Jeongguk, please, and then you can tell me to fuck off, or, or whatever it is that you want me to do.”

Jeongguk doesn’t want to tell him to fuck off, but he keeps that to himself.“5 minutes.” he mutters petulantly.

“5 minutes.” Yoongi agrees quietly, shifting closer, hand hovering tentatively near Jeongguk’s. “Can I touch you?”
Jeongguk wants to shake his head, move away; instead, he gives a tired nod, all sorts of defeated want. Yoongi hands are familiar, his fingers warm when they weave through Jeongguk’s own, like a patch of sunlight on a damp day.

“Thank you.” Yoongi says gratefully, and then he’s taking Jeongguk by the hand, leading them back to his apartment, fingers woven together tightly.

Jeongguk follows along behind him, slipping in through the door carefully. The quiet between them is unnerving, and on Jeongguk’s past, tense. Yoongi’s footsteps are quick, and when he leads Jeongguk to his room he seems to curl in himself a little, as if he’s -

Scared. As if he’s scared.


Yoongi shakes his head, throwing Jeongguk a nervous smile before dropping to his knees besides the dresser. He searches through the drawers for a few seconds, emerging with his fingers curled around the edges of small velvet case. “Here.” Yoongi’s voice is quiet, sure. “For you.”

Jeongguk takes it from him carefully, the velvet soft against his fingers. There, nestled comfortably in the black satin, sits a tiny butterfly pendant, the size of his thumb nail, glimmering in the dim light. Jeongguk’s breath catches in his throat.

“Yoongi-”

“I wasn’t cheating on you.” Yoongi interrupts, words an apologetic whisper. “It, um - next week is our 6 month anniversary, and I, I wanted to give you something special.” he’s still curled into himself, nervous. “It was supposed to be a surprise.”

Jeongguk feels a little lost, a little out of control. The necklace was clearly expensive, the pendant made from silver, delicate lines within the wings embedded with glinting sapphires (his birthstone, a voice in the back of his head reminds him. Yoongi remembered his birthstone.)

“But,” Jeongguk begins, grasping for threads, confused and overwhelmed and unsure. “Every time you said you were at the studio you were with Hoseok instead at, at the Sweet Shoppe.”
“Ah.” Yoongi rubs the back of his neck, embarrassment colouring his features. “The necklace was, um, a little out of my budget. Hoseok let me fill in a few shifts for him over the week so I could get it on time.”

Jeongguk’s throat feels strangely tight. “Hyung. You didn’t have to do that for me-”

“I wanted to.” Yoongi says easily, looking at Jeongguk for the first time since he handed him the necklace. His eyes are dark, sincere and firm. “It was expensive, yeah, but you mean a lot to me.”

Then, as an afterthought, he adds “Go on. It’s yours, you should wear it.”

Jeongguk takes in a deep breath, already turning before he hands Yoongi the necklace. “Could you put it on me, please?”

Yoongi’s fingers are delicate when they brush against his skin, fastening the clasp with a small click. The pendant gleams under the dim light and Jeongguk picks it up, turning it over in his palm to study it before he catches sight of a few words on the back, stiffening.

There, scrawled in Yoongi’s familiar handwriting, is written: Love you, bun

Jeongguk feels all of his breath leave him again, but this time for a different reason completely. He turns, surging forward until his face is buried in Yoongi’s shoulder, until Yoongi is stumbling backwards from the sudden weight, the two of them falling on the bed.

“I love you, too.” Jeongguk whispers, curling himself around Yoongi’s body, trembling a little at the gentle kiss Yoongi places under his jaw. “I love you so, so much, hyung. I’m sorry for, for avoiding you and yelling at you and calling you a liar and a cheater and -” he hiccups, a small, sad thing - “I’m just. I’m really sorry, hyung.”

“Hey,” Yoongi fusses, and even like this, squished under Jeongguk with his hair in a silver, elfin mess, he’s still the prettiest thing Jeongguk’s ever seen. “None of that, okay? I’m not mad at you, bun, I couldn’t ever be mad at you when I can see where you’re coming from. I would’ve been upset too, if I saw you kissing jimin.”
“Although,” his voice turns quieter now, hand stilling from its place on Jeongguk’s hip. “I do still want to talk about a few things. Can we do that?’

Jeongguk lets out a sigh of relief, curling tighter into Yoongi’s body. “We can,” he agrees readily, breathing Yoongi in, lemongrass and sleep and tea. “Let’s talk, hyung. Whenever you want, let’s talk. I have so much to tell you.”

♬

Later, after Jeongguk’s calmed down a little and Yoongi’s dried his tears, they’re huddled in bed, tucked into each other under the covers.

“Talk to me,” Yoongi breathes, and so Jeongguk does.

“Do you remember when I had a nightmare and you asked me if I was okay, and I said I was fine?”

Yoongi nods, fingers brushing through Jeongguk’s hair.

“Okay.” Jeongguk presses his face into Yoongi’s chest, words coming out muffled. “I wasn’t fine, hyung. I still don’t really think I’m fine.”

A kiss against Jeongguk’s collarbone, and Yoongi’s voice, soft and whispered. “I thought so.”

Jeongguk wriggles in his arms, tucking his knees into his chest, curled into a ball against Yoongi. “There was a guy, in, um, my freshmen year of college. He was really sweet, hyung; helped me with all my work, called me pretty, said he wanted to date me because he’d never met anyone so perfect.”

Yoongi is still against him.

“So we dated.” Jeongguk whispers. “And I didn’t tell him I was ace because I didn’t want - I didn’t want to break up, hyung. He was so nice to me and he took me out wherever I wanted, and, and it was just really, really good.”
Jeongguk laughs, a little self-deprecating. “Until it wasn’t.”

“Jeonggukie, hey, you don’t have to tell me-”

“I want to.” Jeongguk mutters, fingers curled into the hem of Yoongi’s shirt. He feels small, protected. “It’s been in me for a while, hyung, kind of just festering. But I’m letting it now, okay? I want to let it out.”

Yoongi breathes out against him, sweet and soft and sure. “I’m listening.”

Jeongguk grins, just a little, feels the edges of his lips curl, content. “Thank you. He was just - he was the best, and I thought this much could be enough, you know? Maybe he would be okay with me as I am, maybe he wouldn’t want more, but it - he wasn’t. It wasn’t enough, hyung.”

_I wasn’t enough._

There’s a hand in his hair suddenly, brushing through the honey strands, rearranging them carefully, soothing. “Anyway.” Jeongguk takes in a deep breath, nudging up into Yoongi’s hand like a puppy. “He started being pushy. Kept asking me why I wouldn’t do anything else with him, wouldn’t leave me alone until - until -”

Yoongi’s voice is soft, broken. “Jeongguk, baby -”

“It’s fine.” Jeongguk snifflies, Yoongi’s shirt damp against his skin. “’m fine, hyung, just give me a second.”

A kiss against his cheek; another by the corner of his eye, and then again where his eyebrow curves, a fleeting brush against bone.

It’s difficult, to let all of this out when he’s been keeping it in for so long, letting it pool into his bones, cling to the spaces in his veins. But Yoongi is here and he’s warm and solid and comforting, listening even when Jeongguk is quiet. It’s nice.
Yoongi is nice.

Jeongguk sighs, rubbing his nose against Yoongi’s chest, breathing him in again, sweet and sleepy. “He just - kept pushing, because he thought I would give in. But I’m not a pushover, hyung.” His voice turns quieter now, firm. “I wasn’t going to let him do that to me, and we, we broke it off. It wasn’t enough for him, I guess.”

Then, a few seconds later, Jeongguk adds, in a small, quiet voice, “I wasn’t enough.”

Yoongi is quiet for a long time. He has his knees tucked into his chest, hands between them, the way he does when he’s feeling conflicted, thoughtful.

“C’mere,” Yoongi says eventually, a little low, shifting until he has Jeongguk’s back pressed against his chest, hands linked over Jeongguk’s belly. “I want you to listen carefully to me, okay? You’re enough.”

He kisses the space between Jeongguk’s shoulder blades, letting his lips linger before biting gently along the bumps of his vertebrae, damp, open mouthed kisses. “You’re enough, Jeongguk. You’re so much more than enough, bun; every time I look at you, I feel like I’m burning from the inside out, and it’s so, so much, baby. I feel like a firecracker on the loose, burning too bright, too much, a second away from cracking.”

Jeongguk feels Yoongi curl around him tightly, fingers splayed across his belly. “I feel so much.” he repeats, sounding as small as Jeongguk feels. “It scares me a little, bun. Just how much I feel.”

“I feel like I’m drowning.” Jeongguk whispers, feeling Yoongi still against him.

“What?”

“When I see you.” Jeongguk turns, pulling Yoongi into him, pressing a kiss to the nape of his neck. “I feel like there’s an ocean in my chest, hyung. Like’ll drown if I’m not careful, like I’m being pulled under with how much I feel.”

Yoongi is quiet, his body soft in Jeongguk’s arms. “But sometimes,” Jeongguk continues, nosing into Yoongi’s warmth, leaving lazy nips across his jaw, the curve of his throat, “I think it’s okay, hyung. That if it’s for you, maybe I wouldn’t mind drowning.”
“Jeongguk,” Yoongi breathes, and he’s twisting and turning and wriggling, until he’s shifted himself around to face Jeongguk, on equal footing with each other. “Baby, hey.”

And in the dark, at near 5 in the morning with the first streaks of day spilling through the curtains, Jeongguk curls up small, presses himself into Yoongi, words soft. “I love you, hyung,” he mumbles, sleepy and content and full of warmth. “Love you so, so much.”

Yoongi curves forward, pressing a kiss to the crown of Jeongguk’s head. “I love you too, bun.” he whispers, and it’s so fond, so quiet and endeared and lovely, that Jeongguk feels himself ache a little, full to the very brim.

He feels asleep with the thought that if it’s with Yoongi, maybe he doesn’t have to drown; maybe they can swim, instead.

Chapter End Notes

leave me a comment or kudos if u liked it, they make my day <3 also i realize its been a while since ive responded but its SUMMER so im gonna get on top of that asap *shoots finger guns* also if u havent, pls read the authors note at the beginning too before u wanna say anything negative to me (if u want to that is. Im not rlly sure what the response is gonna be oof.)

follow me on sns babes, im friendly I promise!!

Tumblr

Twt

curiouscat

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!