Baby we both know that the nights were mainly made for saying things that you can't say tomorrow day...

by myheartandsoulbelongtonamjoon

Summary

Jeon Jungkook was looking for something to give his life meaning. Granted, the mafia may not have been the best option, but he was desperate and desperation leads to decisions we shouldn’t make. When he joins Kim Namjoon's crime organization he finally feels like he has a home, though his attraction to the mob boss makes things more dangerous than he could have foreseen.

Add in Park Jimin, one of the heads of a rival crime family--and Namjoon's ex-boyfriend--and you have more drama than any soap opera could ever offer. Love can be deadly and all three of the actors involved will learn this firsthand.

Notes

I know I am way behind on updating my vampire au and I have to finish a three-shot I've only posted one-shot of, but this multi chapter story idea snuck up on me and I am weak okay!!!
It's my first time writing a love triangle, so bear with me everyone. The ending is not decided yet. I'll let the plot and the characters lead me there. This is only a small introduction to the story, to meet the protagonists a.k.a the love triangle at the center of it all lol.

Hope you like it darlings! Please comment and let me know what you think

*title comes from Do I Wanna Know? by the Arctic Monkeys
Part I.

Jeon Jungkook was in way over his head, even he could admit it. He was a pathetic college dropout, desperate to find his purpose in life (and simultaneously piss off his holier than thou parents). He’d heard through a friend of a friend about this “organization” that took in the rejects and the misfits if they were able to prove their worth. Now Jungkook may have been young and reckless, but he wasn’t stupid. He knew a euphemism when he heard one and considering that friend of a friend was a guy who had been convicted for arson more than once he was pretty sure he’d be auditioning for a shot in a gang.

However, from the looks of the place where he’d been told to show up at precisely 12:15 PM this wasn’t your typical petty thieves, united only to further their delinquency and wreak havoc on the locals. In fact, if Jungkook hadn’t been invited there under such shady circumstances, he would have felt honored to be admitted into such a classy establishment.

The Magic Shop was the name detailed in thick cursive over the entrance of the nightclub. It was a Friday night and as could be expected the line stretched two blocks down, packed with men and women dressed impeccably, clearly looking for a night of more than just dirty, sweaty dancing in a crowd.

Jungkook had given his name to the bouncer, who side-eyed him as he let him through, telling him to stop by the bar for a drink. When Jungkook feebly tried to protest that he wasn’t too fond of alcohol the burly man shot him a look of pure disdain and repeated the order, the subtext screaming You’re a fucking idiot. Do what I say if you know what’s good for you. So he did. Dutifully, he pushed through beautiful people wearing beautiful things that cost more than what Jungkook paid every month for his shitty apartment.

“Um, g--good evening? My name’s Jeon Jungkook. The guy by the door told me to, uh, come see you,” he approached the bartender nervously and was surprised when the man burst into laughter.

“Really? You’re the new recruit? Namjoon’s certainly lowered his standards, so much so I’m worried they don’t exist anymore.”

Jungkook blushed at the affront on his part, unsure who this Namjoon was, but knowing it was someone he’d need to impress in the near future.

“You don’t even know me. First impressions aren’t everything.”
The bartender raised an elegant eyebrow, chuckling as he cleaned a glass. His hair was so blonde it was white, as white as his snowy skin, and despite his small stature he was intimidating, radiating superiority with every breath. Jungkook wondered if bartender was his only profession. Probably not.

“Can’t refute that, kid. Mine certainly wasn’t the best and look at me now. Well, you wouldn’t know being completely new to this.”

“This organization you mean?”

“No, I meant adulthood.”

Jungkook glowered at him and the man only shot him a gummy smile.

“Kidding. I’m sure you’re of age and if you’re not I don’t really give a shit. Head towards the back of the club until it seems like there’s nothing but the bathrooms and the back alley. There’s going to be a velvet curtain with another bouncer in front. Give your name and tell him you spoke to me. Once he lets you through, the adventure truly begins,” he snorted.

“And what’s your name?”

“Not pertinent. Not to you. Unless you make it in.”

Jungkook blinked confusedly.

“Just tell him you talked with the sexiest bartender in the world. He’ll know who you’re talking about,” the pale man winked and dismissed him, moving down the bar to attend to a group of giggling girls.

Jungkook took a deep breath, heading towards the back of the club, darting through the people dancing and meandering through the space simply throwing back shots and talking. It was a type of club Jungkook had never been exposed to and he wished he had more time to explore it, but he was here for a reason.

He reached the velvet curtain and yet another overgrown bouncer, who let him in wordlessly once he
pointed towards the bartender. And then he was alone, making his way down a hallway that never seemed to end. His Converse squeaked along the floor and he stopped in front of a pair of heavy wooden doors. He wasn’t sure if he should knock or push them open without fanfare, but he figured the former made him seem more polite and he had been raised with good manners...Would the head of a criminal organization appreciate that? Jungkook didn’t know but he knocked and waited until a smooth, deep voice answered.

“Come in. You certainly took your time,” the man sounded amused, but Jungkook entered with his shoulders drawn and his gaze trained on the floor, hoping that lingering for too long by the bar hadn’t cost him the job...or his life.

Would this be enough to get him shot?

“I’m s--sorry, sir,” he stammered, immediately cursing himself for the show of weakness.

“Sir?” the man laughed, a pleasant rumble that made Jungkook curious as to what the owner of it looked like. “Your formality is unnecessary but endearing. Pick your head up, little one, we’re meant to be meeting face to face after all.”

Jungkook’s cheeks flushed partially at the nickname and partially because the tall man lounging behind an ornate desk covered with folders, books, and electronic devices all in a sort of organized chaos, was heart stoppingly, breathtakingly gorgeous. In the two decades that Jungkook had spent on this earth he had never had his eyes graced by such physical perfection. Golden skin, perfectly styled hair the color of pure silver, a regal nose over a pair of sinfully thick lips, elegant cheekbones and a strong jaw, and dark eyes that narrowed in on him with a force so powerful Jungkook felt vibrations in his bones. This man epitomized authority and dominance and Jungkook felt an aching need to get on his knees and happily submit.

“What rosy cheeks you have, little one. You certainly are a cutie. What was your name?”

“Jeon Jungkook,” his throat was dry and he thought he spoke too softly, but the man stood up, rounding his desk and striding forward until he was directly in front of Jungkook near the still-open door.

“Jungkook,” he repeated, syllables gliding over his tongue. “My name is Kim Namjoon and I run this entire operation. Excuse the cliched line, but...what’s a pretty thing like you doing in a place like this?”
Jungkook gulped as Namjoon seemed to come closer, towering over him despite the fact that there were only a few inches between them.

“I heard through, uh, a friend that you were, well, hiring and I thought I should see if...if you wanted me. Wanted to hire me, I mean!” he corrected, hands raising placatingly, face turning redder.

Namjoon grinned, a pair of adorable dimples presenting themselves, grabbing Jungkook’s attention and making him curse the heavens for making this man that much more immaculate.

“Oh, I want you. Want to hire you, of course,” his smile turned predatory, but he backed away, moving back to his imposing desk and sitting down.

“Wait, really?”

Namjoon nodded.

“But, we haven’t even done an interview or anything!”

“Jungkook-ah--I can call you that can’t I?--this isn’t the type of job that requires you to email me your resume and answer questions about why you’re the best fit for our company. The fact that you got this far is telling. Yoongi sends most of the poor souls who stumble in searching for me away. He weeds out the riff raff as he’s so fond of saying.”

“Yoongi? Wait...is that the bartender’s name? He wouldn’t tell me when I asked!”

Namjoon laughed again.

“Sounds about right. Some of Yoongi’s preferred personality traits are skepticism and paranoia. Though he is right in not running his mouth off to any stranger that walks in. In this business, that’s a death sentence,” his voice lowered dangerously, features tightening, making and Jungkook’s eyes widen.

“I--I would never s--say anything about you or whatever it is that y--you really do here.”
Namjoon’s dimples reappeared and he tapped the younger’s nose a couple of times.

“I know you wouldn’t, little one. I’m the best judge of character, it’s basically a superpower of mine. I have a perfect record and I intend to keep it that way. Don’t let me down,” he warned, smiling at Jungkook’s hasty nod. “As for what I do here? This is a top-rated nightclub with expertly mixed drinks at the hands of mixologists Yoongi picked out himself.”

“But, there’s…you know more underneath the surface right?” Jungkook lifted his eyebrows suggestively, as if Namjoon himself wasn’t aware he led one of the biggest crime syndicates in Asia.

*What an innocent creature he is. Like a sweet bunny rabbit,* Namjoon thought to himself, extending his hand to gesture towards the empty chair across from him. He wondered if he should feel guilty for wanting nothing more than to corrupt that purity and bring out the beautiful darkness every human attempted to bury deep within them. He could imagine the dark-haired boy (because man he was not despite the surprising amount of muscle evident in how his white t-shirt strained against his chest) by his side, helping him expand his empire and establish his rule over the scum that tried to oppose him. He could also imagine him in his bed, legs tangled in Namjoon’s silk sheets, whining and whimpering underneath him. *Truly a heavenly sight…*

“Oh, Namjoon-ssi o--or sir?” Jungkook squeaked, slightly uneasy with the way the silence stretched as the striking mafia boss practically undressed him with his eyes.

Jungkook wasn’t blind. He could tell that Namjoon felt a physical attraction to him, perhaps it was a contributing factor to how he’d obtained a position in his organization without doing much more than knocking on his office door. However, his last relationship (if friends with benefits with his in-the-closet TA counted as such) had been disastrous and more messy than Jungkook would ever want to deal with again. What could he expect from a relationship with his boss, who was a criminal and maybe a pervert because who knew? He also looked like the type of man who didn’t believe in serious relationships or monogamy itself. He needed to be careful here.

“How about you call me hyung, Jungkook-ah?” Namjoon leaned across the table, chocolate eyes gleaming with something that both frightened and enticed the younger.

“Isn’t that a bit informal for a subordinate you *just* hired?”

“Would you rather call me Master?”
Jungkook could barely sputter out an answer, making Namjoon laugh out loud.

“Relax, little one. I’m not hiring you to be my sex slave nor am I forcing you to join my harem.”

“You have a harem?” Jungkook’s jaw dropped.

“No, that was a joke. Ever heard of those?” he raised an elegant eyebrow and Jungkook blushed.

“Right, sorry. I’m, uh, nervous. And maybe I shouldn’t be telling you that ‘cause it makes me look young and stupid, but I have to be honest.”

“I don’t judge honesty, Jungkook-ah. I wish everyone practiced full transparency but, sadly, those who do are few and far between. It doesn’t make you look childish. Don’t worry. I’m pleased by all I see,” his grin was loaded with a double meaning Jungkook didn’t pretend he didn’t understand.

“Are you this flirty with all your employees?”

“Only the sexy ones,” he purred nonchalantly.

“Ah, I see,” he said unsteadily, praying his face didn’t look as red as it felt.

Jungkook didn’t have much experience with fatally gorgeous men coming on to him. He’d had a total of two one night stands and a shitshow of a fuck buddy arrangement, so here he was infinitely underwhelming when compared to Namjoon, who only needed to breathe in someone’s direction to have them falling at his feet.

“If it makes you uncomfortable I can stop,” Namjoon tilted his head, studying his expressions carefully.

“No!” he said, immediately embarrassed at his shout. “No, you don’t have to do that,” he cleared his throat. “I don’t, uh, mind.”

“Oh?”
“This is...strange because you’re my boss I think? I don’t really know what I’m being hired to do, but despite that I find myself interested in knowing more. About you, about this place, about all of it.”

“Do you think you can handle the truth, little one?”

Jungkook took in Namjoon’s glossy gray hair and that stunning, masculine face. The way his eyes were completely focused on him like he was important and valuable. He knew it wasn’t healthy to let a stranger, no matter how handsome, validate his existence, but he literally had nothing else in his life and no one else to turn to. College had kicked his ass and the people he’d met there had probably brought him closer to an early death. Assholes the lot of them. His parents were pricks and his younger brother told him he wished he had never existed because he brought their family shame.

Is it that wrong for me to want this? A new life playing in the shadows Namjoon controls? Turning to the wrong side of the law for purpose?

Namjoon waited, the picture of patience, until Jungkook met his gaze again with a confident smirk.

“You have no idea what I can take, hyung,” his words were veiled with innuendo, clearly surprising Namjoon whose eyebrows raised.

“Well, well. The bunny has bite. Unexpected. You’re something special, Jeon Jungkook. Has anyone ever told you that?”

Jungkook wished he could lie.

“No. No one has.”

“Hmm,” Namjoon took in the melancholia in Jungkook’s doe eyes and the soft way he bit his lip. “Then you’ve been in the company of fuckwads. Welcome to the family,” he extended his hand.

“Don’t you mean welcome to the mafia?” Jungkook shook it, playful smile shining through.
“We don’t like to put labels on ourselves,” Namjoon joked. “Now, it’s time to tell you exactly what you’ll be doing for me and for the organization.”

Park Jimin was sprawled out on the cushioned window seat that gave him a marvelous view of Seoul at night. The city was illuminated by its restless inhabitants. The clock had already struck half past one, but outside people moved to their destinations without a care. Jimin wished he could be outside, living like the rest of them.

Unfortunately, he was under a sort of house arrest, imposed on him by his older brother and the head of the crime syndicate his family had been running since Jimin’s grandfather was alive and at the top of the underground food chain. Now, the Parks had to contend with two other organizations, who had pushed into their territory with a strength that rivaled their own. One was led by Kim Namjoon. Or as Jimin referred to him “My Joonie.” Of course, his brother, Seokjin, preferred the nickname “Fucking Arrogant Jackass Douchebag,” which just didn’t have the same ring to it.

It had been this animosity between their families that led to Namjoon and Jimin parting ways. Six months had passed and Jimin wasn’t even a little bit over his ex-boyfriend. In fact, he felt like his love had grown stronger, fiercer. He kept his phone number in his contacts and he couldn’t count how many times his finger had hovered over his name, desperate to hear his voice again or simply message him to see how he was. Superficially, he knew he was fine. He was still raising hell and pissing off Seokjin, but Jimin wanted to know more than statistics about where Namjoon’s drug runners were stealing their business or how famous his nightclub had gotten, raking in incredible figured every weekend.

Mainly, Jimin wanted to know...if Namjoon still loved him. If there was anyone else in his life. And if there was? Oh, Jimin would sweetly ask for the name of this person and then he would slit their throat of course.

Namjoon was Jimin’s soulmate, the man he was meant to spend the rest of his existence with. If anyone else dared to come in between them, Jimin wouldn’t hesitate to remove the threat. The only reason he didn’t stab Seokjin with a kitchen knife was that they shared blood and his brother had always been good to him, practically raising him after the death of their father and how it caused their mother to harden and withdraw into herself. Anyone else though? Jimin would not show mercy.
Part II.

Chapter Summary

A trip down memory lane makes Namjoon reflect on where his life has gone and where his future may go.

*I wanted to show another side of the big bad mafia boss in this chapter, as well as lay out more backstories for the characters. Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Six Years Ago...

“This is such a bad idea, Namjoon. I swear to God if this gets us shot in the head, I will spend our ghostly eternity haunting you,” Yoongi hissed at him.

The taller boy rolled his eyes, bringing a finger to his lips and shushing him. Yoongi continued to grumble under his breath, but he focused back on the matter at hand, that being their attempt at sneaking in to Paradise, one of the most popular bars in Gangnam. It was a very exclusive scene, though that wasn’t what made it a challenge for Yoongi and Namjoon.

“If your father knew we were trying to sneak in to this place he’d ground us both.”

“Hyung, we’re not kids anymore. We’re too old to be grounded. He can’t do anything to us anymore.”

“He can’t do anything for us in this situation either. We are literally waltzing into enemy territory of our own volition!”

“Shh! Okay, this is our chance. The bouncers are busy with that party group. We’re heading towards the side entrance. Come on,” he ordered, jumping up from behind the car they’d been crouching near and running to the left of the building, Yoongi reluctantly following.
“I don’t think they saw us.”

“Good. It would look highly suspicious for two men to be sprinting away from the main entrance and into the bar’s alleyway.”

“Men?” Yoongi snorted. “You wish, brat.”

“I’m 18!”

“And still the same idiot I met in kindergarten.”

“I’m the dumb one? You were the one who did kindergarten twice.”

“Fuck you that wasn’t on me. There were issues with paperwork and I started my first year nearly halfway. Blame my parents!”

Namjoon huffed a laugh, feeling along the wall for the handle of the side entrance. It was nearly invisible in the darkness of the alley, but he had seen it earlier that morning when he’d scouted out the building, planning for this exact moment.

“I still don’t understand why you have such a hard-on for this place. Is it simply the adrenaline rush of saying you made it out alive after a night in the Park’s biggest moneymaker?”

“They make way more from strip clubs, but I get your point. I don’t know, it’s curiosity. And the recklessness of youth if I’m being honest.”

“Ah, finally some honesty from you.”

“Hey, no one forced you to come.”

“I wasn’t very well going to let you prance behind enemy lines by yourself.”
“Prance? Is that a word you’re using because I’m gay? Hyung, that’s offensive,” he quipped as his hands finally gripped the metal doorknob. “Aha!”

“I’m gay too, you jackass. Did you find it?”

“Yep. I just need to pick the lock. Shouldn’t take too long,” he took out the small kit he kept in his jacket pocket, complete with miniature flashlight and everything.

“I feel kinda guilty about lying to Taehyung.”

“I don’t. Tae’s a loose cannon. Plus, he isn’t even legal yet and that’s just asking for trouble.”

“Yeah because legality is the biggest problem we’d be facing if we were caught tonight,” he rolled his eyes. “The kid’s a handful but he practically worships the ground you walk on.”

“Not true. He looks up to both of us.”

“Namjoon, I swear he’s in love with you.”

“You sound bitter, dude,” Namjoon chuckled. “Is there something you want to tell me?”

“Are you insinuating that I have feelings for that escaped mental patient?”

“Your words, not mine. Alright, we are in!” He whooped, swinging open the door.

“It smells like stale sex and booze,” Yoongi wrinkled his nose. “Reminds me of home.”

“Gross. The music sounds good. I’ve heard they rotate their DJs every week and they’re all top-class, like the best of the best. Major Lazer and Swedish House Mafia have performed here in the last three months,” he informed him as they closed the door behind them and casually walked into the main space, acting as if they’d only come from the bathrooms near the back.
“There’s a decent dance floor. You better not have brought me here to try and get me to grind to dirty hip-hop songs with you.”

“What? Ew, no! I’m a shitty dancer and there is no part of me that wants to rub up against your scrawny middle-schooler body.”

His comment earned him a slap to the back of the head from his friend.

“Have some respect for your elders, especially when those elders have proved to be highly superior to you in the bedroom.”

“Fuck you.”

“You wish,” Yoongi sing-songed, displaying his signature gummy smile. “But I don’t do charity fucks, sorry.”

“If I haven’t lost my virginity it’s because I haven’t wanted to. I’ve had the opportunity.”

“You’re full of shit,” he scoffed as they chose an empty table near a hidden corner of the bar, which kept any prying eyes off of them.

“Oh yeah? Last month Taehyung snuck into my bedroom after midnight, butt naked, and offered to make all my dreams come true.”

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed and Namjoon wondered if he should feel bad for playing with his friend’s fragile feelings like that. He had realized that Yoongi felt a special type of affection for their younger friend, but Taehyung was fixated on Namjoon and had been for years. Namjoon never encouraged this “crush,” but he hadn’t done enough to let Taehyung know he should move on.

“I need a drink,” Yoongi snarled.

“Wait! I’ll get us drinks,” Namjoon jumped off the stool and put a hand on his friend’s shoulder. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that. Tae was drunk that night--it was after his parents’ anniversary dinner and he’d been downing champagne glasses under the table--but nothing happened. I let him
have my bed and I slept on the couch in my closet. I swear.”

Yoongi continued to glare at him, but he retook his seat.

“Scotch. On the rocks. I need two.”

“Got it, hyung. It’s on me!” he tried to smile charmingly, showing off his dimples, but hurried off towards the bar when Yoongi seemed not only unaffected but more enraged.

Namjoon was forced to push and shove his way through the throngs of people dirty dancing on the makeshift dance floor, so it took him an entire song to reach the other end of the space where the bar was. It was an impressive set-up with a long mahogany counter and a display of more liquor that Namjoon had ever seen amassed in one location. There were several chalkboards along the wall listing a few cocktails for the “adventurous” like one concoction called the “Jaeger Beast,” which made Namjoon queasy just looking at the long list of ingredients. Yeah, he was looking to get pleasantly buzzed not blackout drunk.

There were three bartenders attending to the many patrons, but Namjoon noticed the one on the far right was finishing up with a couple of women, who had ordered frozen margaritas, so he slipped into an empty bar stool and leaned across the counter. The bartender had turned back to the cash register, so Namjoon hadn’t gotten a clear glimpse of his face, but from behind he was already left with a million questions.

_How old is he? He’s shorter than Yoongi, yet that ass is like sculpted on. Is that real? Do men get ass jobs? Is that a thing? Also, why is his hair the color of cotton candy?_

“What can I get you, sir?” a mellifluous voice made him blink and realize that the tiny bartender was facing him now and...oh, what a face.

Fair skin, pretty brown eyes, dainty nose, elegant cheekbones, soft pink cheeks, and the most luscious pair of plump lips. Namjoon wanted to write poetry for those lips. He wanted to tell the bartender that he’d never seen a sight as beautiful as the one in front of him and a hundred similar sappy sentiments came to mind, but what came out was

“How old are you?”
The bartender raised an eyebrow.

“That’s my question. How old are you? I’m gonna need to see ID before serving you anything.”

“What?” Namjoon blinked owlishly.

“It’s my right to ask for proof of identification.”

“Um, yeah, I know, but—but you…”

“I what?”

“You just don’t look old enough to be working here or old enough to be in a bar.”

The bartender’s chocolate eyes seemed to darken in anger.

“And you’re a major fuckface, so how about I call one of the bouncers to kick your ass out and make my life easier?”

Namjoon couldn’t hold back the laughter and it spilled out, making the bartender’s mouth open in surprise.

“Are you laughing at me?”

“I’m sorry, you’re just so cute,” Namjoon gasped between guffaws. “Your cheeks puffed up and you looked like a grumpy puppy!”

“This is unbelievable. Some pogo stick of a person waltzes into my bar and sits here making fun of me? Not how I want to spend my Friday night,” he growled.
“Whoa, wait did you say this was your bar?” Namjoon sobered at the words.

“Yep, my family owns this place and most of Seoul, so congratulations, fuckface, you’ve earned a spot on a dangerous blacklist.”

“Please stop calling me fuckface,” Namjoon frowned. “And I didn’t mean to offend you. I’ve never seen a bartender as adorable as you, that’s all. I mean, your hair reminds me of falling cherry blossoms.”

The bartender’s expression softened and he seemed almost shy as he played with the rings on one of his small hands.

“Oh...thank you.”

“I, uh, I think I should get going,” Namjoon stood and was prepared to dart away, back to Yoongi, who would probably curse him out when Namjoon told him who the bartender had been, but was stopped by a gentle but solid grip on his right forearm.

“I didn’t catch your name and I don’t want to keep referring to you as Fuckface in my head...I don’t think that’s fair after the nice things you said,” the pink-haired bartender was staring up at him placatingly.

And Namjoon knew it was a mistake, of course he did, but for some reason those deep brown eyes sucked him in and he was lost in the beautiful bartender, despite not knowing anything about him. If he were psychic he could have said that the boy in front of him would become the focal point of his existence, the reason behind his every breath. As it was what he did say was his name. His real name.

“Kim Namjoon.”

The bartender’s eyes widened, but he didn’t release the grip on his arm. Instead, he leaned further across the bar, making the distance between them almost null.
“I’m Park Jimin.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” Namjoon responded in a careful whisper and Jimin tilted his head.

“Likewise...Would you like a drink Namjoon-ssi?”

“Is it going to be laced with rat poison?”

Jimin threw his head back in body-shaking laughter.

“Ye of little faith.”

“Can you blame me? This is a strange situation we find ourselves in. At any moment you can choose to call your thugs over to beat me to death.”

Jimin released his arm and gestured for him to sit again.

“Instead, let me make you my signature drink. On the house.”

Namjoon sat, watching Jimin mix several liqueurs and syrups to create a drink that smelled like strawberries and was the color of velvet.

“Interesting. What is it?” Namjoon asked, lifting it to his nose and leaving it hovering over his lips.

“I call it Interzis .”

“That sounds like…Latin?” Namjoon inquired as he tentatively took a sip, his taste buds assaulted with sweetness, spice, citrus and everything in between; it was a gustatory masterpiece.

“It is. It translates as Forbidden .”
Namjoon’s eyes jumped up from the drink in his hand to meet Jimin’s.

“Forbidden?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“A dangerous concept that.”

“I’ve never thought so. The forbidden, the prohibited is something we need to explore. What’s the point of limiting human beings with words like those? I’ve always thought they were used to stifle creativity and keep us from experiencing all life has to offer.”

Namjoon gulped as Jimin’s voice lowered, the sweet timbre becoming huskier and reaching into the very depths of his soul. He took another sip of the potent drink.

“Do you like it?” he asked, reaching out to him again.

This time when Jimin’s dainty hand moved towards his arm, Namjoon reacted quickly, flipping his palm over and gripping it in his larger palm. Jimin didn’t seem surprised. He easily relaxed his hand and let Namjoon intertwine their fingers.

“It’s incredible,” Namjoon murmured, putting the glass down.

Time and space faded away as they edged closer and closer together until Namjoon’s torso ached from being pressed against a hard surface. Not that he cared. Not with his mouth pressed against Jimin’s plush pout, feeling his wet tongue explore every inch of his mouth.

Later he’d deal with Yoongi’s heavy slaps and curses (he never came back with his scotch on the rocks), but in that moment he was more than content to lose himself in Park Jimin.

_Present Day…_
“Namjoon? Namjoon? Yah, Kim Namjoon you overgrown jackass!” an irritated voice forced Namjoon out of his own mind and back to the empty conference room they were sitting in.

“You know, words hurt, hyung.”

“The meeting ended 15 minutes ago and you’ve been sitting there, wasting my time, for what reason?”

“I was thinking about something else.”

“Something else or someone else?”

“If you already know the answer, why do you ask?” he sighed.

“You’re playing with fire, Namjoon. When will you realize that?”

“You do remember me breaking up with him, right? Tearing out my heart and stomping all over his for the good of our organization?”

“Don’t lay out your sob story to me and expect to receive my sympathy. You made the right decision. When Seokjin discovered the truth, he put a hit on you and all those close to you. Taehyung was almost blown up in that car bomb!”

“I know, hyung. I know,” he groaned, rubbing a hand over his face tiredly. “We let it go on longer than we meant it to. It started off as a naughty game. We were stupid teenagers, you know? Fucking with the enemy like that was exciting.”

“There was also plenty of fucking the enemy since you lost your virginity like the day you met Jimin.”
“Excuse me, we waited a week before going all the way.”

“You’re truly a model of demurity and dignity;” sarcasm dripped from every word.

“Whatever. I don’t want to talk about Jimin. I missed the second half of the meeting. Can you fill me in on what I need to know?”

“Business is booming--both legal and otherwise--and overall the numbers show an increase in profit.”

“Which is doing better? Our media conglomerate or our drug trade?”

“It’s actually secret option number three: arms sales.”

“Really?”

“People love violence, Namjoon. They thrive on it. Humanity wouldn’t know what do with itself if true peace existed.”

“What a morbid perspective.”

“Oh please, especially for individuals like us with the lives we live, you know we get off on the thrill of danger. We never taste our own supply, but we’re junkies for the adrenaline rush this business gives us. We would do perfectly fine running the media conglomerate. All the T.V. stations, recording studios and film companies we own are more than enough for financial accrual.”

“Basically, you’re saying we’re twisted and broken and being crime lords is all we can ever allow ourselves to be?”

“Now who’s being morbid?”

Namjoon groaned, running a hand through his hair.
“I’m not in the best state right now, I’ll admit it.”

“I know what today is.”

“Yeah, well, you’re not supposed to celebrate anniversaries when the relationship has crumbled apart, but the memories haunt me.”

“Take the rest of the day off. Go get drunk in your ridiculously expensive penthouse and I don’t know jack off to feature-length pornos.”

“Hyung,” he made a face of revulsion. “That’s not how I spend my free time and it doesn’t seem appropriate for the occasion.”

“There’s no way to please you.”

“I’d rather not be alone drowning my sorrows in booze. That’s a downward spiral waiting to happen. Besides, there’s work to be done. Tonight’s the meeting with the new drug runners right? I should be there for that.”

“You assigned Taehyung to take point on it. I wasn’t planning to be in attendance and have already made other plans.”

“What, you got a date or something?” he snorted.

“...Or something,” he smirked.

“Wait, seriously? Min Yoongi, are you getting some ass tonight?”

“Fingers crossed.”
“Alright, well I’ll just call Tae and let him know I’ll join him. Could be fun. If things go well I’ll treat the crew to drinks at a good bar.”

“As long as that bar isn’t Paradise, I say go for it.”

“I’d never go back there,” Namjoon glared at his best friend.

“You’d better not, Joon. If Seokjin sees you even attempt to go near Jimin again he’ll set his pet tiger on you. I’ve seen pictures of that thing. It’s fucking massive. Is that how you want to die?”

“It wouldn’t be the worst way to go, but I’m not ready to be six feet under yet. And I won’t be going near Jimin anyway. I learned my lesson.”

“Good. The Parks are poisonous. On the surface they seem ethereally beautiful, but it’s a facade that hides how rotten they are underneath.”

“That’s poetic.”

“Shut up.”

Namjoon chuckled, checking his phone to see it was nearly 6 P.M.

“The meeting’s at 10 right? Do you know who the crew Tae chose is?”

“Yeah, he selected 8 heavy hitters as back-up in case things head south and everyone’s going to be packing. I don’t have the names memorized, but he texted me earlier so I can pull it up.” Yoongi scanned through the conversation thread with the younger and suddenly laughed out loud.

“What’s funny?” Namjoon frowned.

“You know, I think you being there tonight is a great idea. It’ll certainly keep your mind off of your
“Hyung, I hate mind games.”

“I was just building up the suspense,” he rolled his eyes. “Guess who’s on the roster for tonight? I’ll give you a some hints: dark brown hair, deer in headlights eyes, body of an Olympic athlete but the face of a toddler.”

“That is not an accurate description of Jungkook.”

“And yet you knew exactly who I was talking about,” he shrugged unapologetically.

“I’d almost forgotten he was going on his first assignment tonight. It’s been a week of training with the crew and I assume it went well if Tae chose him. I saw a great potential in him.”

“You also want to put your dick in him, so there’s that.”

“Do you always have to be so crass?”

“Oh please because you’re so pure.”

“I don’t claim to be pure, but I am classy.”

“Okay, then you classily want to find a way to put your dick in the kid. Am I wrong?”

“He...interests me, but it’s not only physical attraction.”

“For God’s sakes are you catching feelings again? For a child?”
“Stop making me sound like a pedophile, Jungkook is 20 years old and I’m only 24.”

“Do you want him to call you daddy, though?”

Namjoon shoved his friend and his greasy smile away.

“Get the fuck away from me. You get increasingly more perverted when you’re tired and this has been a long day for both of us. Go home.”

“Fine, fine. I’ll leave you alone to touch yourself to the baby-faced new hire. You realize you have a type right? Pretty boys with surprisingly ripped bodies? Sickly sweet voices and a thirst for the forbidden.”

“That’s not true,” Namjoon protested, though upon further reflection...it kind of was.

“You and Jimin were literally reenacting a gayer version of Romeo and Juliet. And now this kid Jungkook appears out of thin air right when you need him and not only for the organization, but for you personally. You’re struggling to get on with your life after Jimin and as I said he fits your type, so he’s making you wonder if he can be the one to help you move on.”

“You’re pretty insightful for an emotionally constipated asshole who vomits at the very idea of love and romanticism.”

“I don’t need to be ‘in touch with my feelings’ to understand human nature. I have eyes. Besides, I know you better than you know yourself, Namjoon.”

“I wish I could deny that.”

“Yeah, well we’re best friends for life so too bad. It’ll always be this way.”

Namjoon laughed.
“Did you really call us BFF’s?”

“Fuck off,” he mumbled, which was a Yoongi way of saying that’s the most sensibility you’ll get from me this year, so enjoy it and shut up.

“Alright, I think it’s time to head home. I’d walk you out, but I left all my stuff in my office. Then, I’ll head back to my place to change. This is an expensive suit. I don’t want to get either blood or cocaine on it if shit goes down later.”

“Smart move.”

“I’ll call Tae on the way, explain to him that I’m tagging along not because I don’t trust him to handle this alone but because I need some time away from my empty apartment.”

“Your empty penthouse,” Yoongi corrected as they exited the conference room. “You can claim to be miserable, but remember that you’re also filthy rich.”

“Right, thanks,” he chuckled. “Enjoy your...date? One-night stand? I don’t know what to call it?”

“I appreciate the sentiment. Don’t die tonight,” he sent him a breezy salute and strolled towards the elevators.

“Love you too, hyung,” he shook his head fondly, turning to the right to make his way down the long carpeted corridor to his private office.

He was surprised to see his assistant, Myunghee, still at her desk. She knew he had a meeting that could run late and he always let her leave early on Friday’s.

“Sir, I didn’t want to bother you during your meeting, but you have someone waiting for you in your office.”

“How long have they been here? Who is it?”
“He arrived about fifteen minutes ago. I told him it’d be best to call or stop by on Monday, but he claimed it was urgent and refused to leave. I’m sorry, should I have called security to escort him out of your office? He sort of...invited himself inside and got comfortable on your futon.”

Namjoon bit back a smile, already getting an idea of the mystery figure.

“And his name?”

“I asked for a business card, but he said he was out of them and he told me I didn’t need to know his name for privacy concerns? He said you would know who he was if I told you he went by ‘Chim.’ Would you like me to call security, sir or do you know this man?”

“That won’t be necessary. This is a friend of mine. I told him to stop by this week. Thank you for waiting for me Myunghee-ssi. You are now free to go home.”

“Of course. Thank you, sir. I’ll head out then,” she bowed, gathering her belongings and departing.

Namjoon was now the only one left on the executive’s floor of the company building. Well, he and “Chim.” He pushed open the heavy oak doors, letting them fall shut behind them as he strode forward until he was standing before the prone figure on his futon. He crossed his arms and tilted his head.

“Well, well. Do my eyes deceive me or is it really you?”

Chapter End Notes

I'm sure you can figure out who's waiting on Namjoon's futon ;)
Part III.

Chapter Summary

Jimin and Namjoon get...reacquainted with each other and an interesting arrangement is made.

“Hmm...How often do you fantasize about me showing up in your office?” Jimin countered. “And in those fantasies, how often am I naked?”

“I’ve missed you, Jiminnie,” Namjoon smiled.

Jimin stood, placing his small hands on Namjoon’s chest to steady himself as he jumped on his tiptoes to press a gentle kiss to Namjoon’s lips.

“And I’ve missed you, Joonie. It’s our anniversary today.”

“I remembered. Is that why you’re here?”

“It’s one reason, the other being Seokjin put me on house arrest for the next month and I was going crazy so I had to sneak out. Instinctually, I sought you out and ended up here.”

“What did you do to merit house arrest?” he raised an eyebrow.

“I might have set a few places on fire.” Jimin played with the collar of Namjoon’s shirt, avoiding his gaze.

“What, now you’re into arson?”

“One of our...partnerships fell through. I felt we needed to send a strong message to the son of a bitch that made it clear that double-crossing the Parks is a death sentence, but Seokjin disagreed. He said we needed to be more diplomatic because the dick we were negotiating with was a critical player in the continent.”
“But you set some of his businesses and storehouses on fire?”

“What would you have done, Joonie? Honestly?” he pouted up at him and Namjoon laughed softly at the cute expression he’d missed so much.

“I might have made sure one of those fires was in his house...and that he was inside before the Molotov cocktail exploded.”

“See, that’s why I love you.”

Namjoon’s heart skipped in his chest, but his eyes saddened at the words, a fact Jimin noticed immediately.

“Not gonna say it back?”

“Jiminnie,” he sighed. “I know today means a lot to us and we both wish things could be different, but the truth is they aren’t. Your brother still wants me at the bottom of the Han River with a bullet through my brain and Yoongi has similar scenarios regarding you. We can’t be together.”

“How can you say that?” Jimin’s hands tightened into fists, ruining the perfectly ironed lines of Namjoon’s dress shirt with the motion.

“One of us has to be realistic and I am your hyung.”

“Fuck right off, Namjoon, you’re like a year older and I have never called you hyung nor will I ever do so.”

“You’re such a rude little brat,” he spat.

Jimin’s reddened cheeks puffed out and though it was an adorable sight, it also signaled that his rage was steadily building.
“And you’re an egotistical fuckface but I choose to keep that opinion to myself most of the time.”

“Seriously? You’re back to that childish insult? I thought you’d finally matured.”

“You’re an asshole, Kim Namjoon,” he growled, using the grip he had on his expensive silk shirt vindictively and beginning to dig in his blunt nails until the taller man was hissing in pain.

“That hurts, Jimin,” he placed his larger hands over the tiny fists, attempting to dislodge them, though Jimin just dug them in harder.

“You know what hurts more? My stupid, pathetic heart because it continues to idiotically beat for someone who values money over love and commitment. I bet you jumped for joy when Seokjin found out about us. Gave you an easy out, didn’t it?”

Namjoon’s hands still over Jimin’s.

“Is that what you think?”

“When was the last time you told me you loved me? Do you even remember because I sure don’t,” his words were bitter and his tone harsh but the moisture building up in his eyes gave him away.

Jimin was notorious for his cherubic face and diabolical character. He was a demon with the face of an angel and his enemies feared him for the unpredictability of his temper and the vicious way he acted out when someone or something upset him. When he was 15 he got into an argument with his best friend (and Seokjin’s long-time boyfriend) Hoseok and ended up throwing a heavy porcelain vase at his head. Hoseok was graced with quick reflexes and was able to duck in time, but the vase slammed into the wall behind, leaving behind a deep dent and a broken family heirloom. Jimin’s mother had grounded him for weeks for that one.

Yet, even the deadly Park heir had his weakness, the Achilles heel every one of his rivals would exploit if they ever got the chance to learn it. That weakness was Namjoon. He was the only one who could calm Jimin even in his worst, most violent moods. Jimin had made it a point to rebel against every elder’s authority, from his late father to his older brother, but Namjoon’s words were special and he treasured them like nothing else.

These were things Namjoon was aware of and a part of him recognized that the same applied to him because if knowledge of his relationship with Jimin had gone public and one of his many many
enemies had wanted to take their revenge by targeting Jimin Namjoon would have handed over his entire criminal empire if that secured his lover’s safety. This wasn’t something he’d ever admitted to Jimin because he’d known their relationship was running on borrowed time. It was miraculous they lasted six years. Six marvelous years…

“I do remember, Jimin,” he finally answered, staring into the stormy almond eyes he used to desperately depend on to anchor him to reality in the moments when his very existence was chaos unleashed.

Jimin had been his safe harbor as ironic as that may seem considering he was a criminal just like Namjoon.

“Then why don’t you remind me?” Jimin challenged and Namjoon sighed, beginning to caress the younger’s hands, already numb to the burn of Jimin’s nails on his sensitive skin.

“It was your mother’s birthday and Seokjin had planned some ridiculously elaborate gala to celebrate it. It was held on one of your private yachts and you were dreading it because you’re prone to seasickness and you despise schmoozing with your mother’s friends.”

“They’re a crowd of demented old gangsters who would have stabbed her in the back after Dad died if Seokjin hadn’t stepped up to take over. They’re snakes and on top of that they’re perverts,” he sniffed. “I’d need two hands to count how many of those degenerates have tried to molest me.”

“I know. How unfortunate for them that you learned how to wield a blade before your sixth birthday.”

Jimin’s smile was all teeth and wickedness.

“I didn’t leave any of them with their hands intact. Try to rape me, you sick fuck, I’ll cut parts of your fingers right off.”

“That was why I fell in love with you, Jimin. You’re a fighter and the best one I’ve seen. Some may call you rash but I see it as passionate. You’re a dangerous man to oppose. How could I resist someone so beautifully wicked?” he asked rhetorically, a small smile appearing as he felt Jimin’s fingers relax under his soft movements.
“Go on,” he ordered with an adorable tilt of his head, intertwining their fingers and pressing closer to Namjoon so his every breath warmed Jimin’s upturned face.

“Still as controlling as I remember,” he chuckled. “That night, you snuck me onboard. It was your plan and it was fucking insane but it worked somehow. We locked ourselves in your room and got wasted—that may be the most alcohol I’ve ever imbibed in one sitting—and we decided playing Truth or Dare was the best idea.”

“It was though,” Jimin giggled.

“It wasn’t like we had many secrets from each other at that point, but we quickly got bored with that and started picking only Dare. We were brutal with those dares.”

“You made me do a handstand on the banister of the ship. I could have died!”

“Yeah only because you forced me to call Yoongi and try to initiate phone sex with him! I was doing all these embarrassing fake moans and telling him how much I liked his body. I’m still scarred and he still brings it up at any social gathering,” he growled, though the sound was muffled by Jimin’s giggles.

“That was a fun night.”

“And when we finally ran out of booze, we were passing out on the carpet and I pulled you closer so you could lay your head on my chest and not wake up with a sprained neck. You were drunker than I was and were half-asleep when I told you that...I loved you more than life itself.”

Silence stretched between them as Jimin stared up at him and Namjoon bravely held the intense gaze. The black-haired man seemed to be searching for something and Namjoon assumed he found it when he crushed his lips to his again.

“I didn’t want us to end, Joonie,” he whispered against his lips.

“Neither did I. I was never skilled at lying to you, so trust me when I say breaking up with you was the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do. But, I couldn’t be selfish when your brother was on the warpath and he tried to blow up one of my best friends. Taehyung could have died that night and I
wouldn’t have been able to forgive myself for it.”

Jimin nuzzled into his neck.

“It shouldn’t be this hard. It’s not fair. Why can’t we find happiness with each other?”

“The world’s against us, baby. Maybe we weren’t meant to be in this lifetime.”

“What good does that do me? I could give less of a shit about our souls finding ourselves in another universe or timeline or whatever the fuck. I want you now.”

“Jiminie...I’m sorry.”

Jimin released a shaky exhale, but he set his features into a breezy expression of insouciance.

“Don’t be sorry. There’s a solution to all of this staring us right in the face.”

Namjoon raised an eyebrow and waited.

“The problem wasn’t that we were together but that we got caught. And why did we get caught? Because we got overly emotional. We both know how dangerous that is in our line of work.”

“What are you saying?” Namjoon remained befuddled.

“I’m saying, *mon amour*, that compartmentalizing is an art and we should start learning it,” he moved his hands from Namjoon’s to have the freedom of wrapping his arms around Namjoon’s neck, reaching up to trail nips and kisses down the line of the silver-haired man’s neck.

“Ah, Jiminie, no…” his protests were weak and he found himself clutching Jimin more tightly, intoxicated by the feeling of his luscious lips and wet tongue on his neck.

“This isn’t about love, Joonie. Don’t think of it as rekindling our relationship and reawakening all
those deep feelings. Love is weakness, right?” Jimin bit down particularly hard on Namjoon’s pulse point, making him jolt and begin a slow grind against one of Jimin’s thick thighs, which the younger had surreptitiously slipped between his legs who knew when. “This is pure, carnal desire. When we first met we were seconds away from fucking behind the bar at my family’s club. Those early years together were dirty and delicious, seeking each other out in dark alleyways or the back of your car. Need drove us not emotions.”

“You...want to be...friends with benefits?”

“Of sorts,” Jimin snorted, lips now tracing along Namjoon’s jawline.

“It’s still risky.”

“We live on the edge of destruction, Joonie. What’s one more risk in the grand scheme of things?”

And Namjoon pondered this question as Jimin sucked his lower lip, letting out a lewd noise when Namjoon granted him complete access to his mouth, tongues engaging in a sinfully wet duel.

Is it possible to put aside our love to satisfy the animalistic lust that’s always flared between us? Is it going to be enough to keep us clear-headed and able to maintain our new...arrangement a secret? Am I really jumping down the rabbit hole again with Park Jimin?

So many questions with insufficient answers. Jimin pulled away from Namjoon’s mouth and then detached his leanly muscled frame completely. Namjoon felt empty, despite the younger man being mere steps away from him.

“Well? Should I adjust the hard-on in my pants and sneak back home or are you going to help me with this?”

To his credit Jimin didn’t smirk too obnoxiously when Namjoon waited less than a millisecond before shoving Jimin onto the futon, larger frame following right after, his mouth moving down Jimin’s body with urgency as clothes were speedily removed.

“D--do you h--have condoms and lube in here?” Jimin stuttered, his nude form bared to Namjoon, who was not wasting any time and was pumping Jimin’s cute little cock while he used his teeth and his tongue to worship his sensitive nipples.
“Nope, neither. You been sleeping around?”

“None of your business,” Jimin slapped at Namjoon’s chest, but he only laughed, removing the final article of clothing between them: his black boxers.

“Just tell me. No judgments. I’ve fucked a couple of guys. Always with a condom.”

“You’re a fucking whore then,” Jimin glared, gasping when Namjoon moved a hand down to begin teasing at his rim.

“You’re testing my patience, baby,” he warned.

“Fine, fine! I had some one-night stands. Meaningless sex.”

“Isn’t that what this is?” Namjoon asked sarcastically, poking fun at Jimin’s entire arrangement for the two of them.

“Don’t patronize me. You know it isn’t. We’re playing a game, Joonie, but the only rule is that you don’t put me on the same level as your stupid whores. I get my own pedestal, understood?”

“Understood,” he snorted. “I assume the same goes for me?”

“You’re the only guy I’ve ever fucked without a condom. Does that tell you anything?”

Namjoon pressed a gentle kiss to his forehead.

“It does. I don’t have lube, but don’t worry. I’ll take care of it,” his lascivious wink made Jimin furrow his brow in confusion.

“What will you—Holy fucking fuck,” he moaned wantonly as Namjoon’s tongue was suddenly
occupied eating him out.

Namjoon buried his face right between his thighs, using his strength to elevate his hips and give himself the perfect angle to penetrate Jimin’s hole with his tongue, over and over until Jimin was sobbing from pleasure. Namjoon had begun inserting his fingers, using his saliva to help the stretch, Jimin’s muscles relaxing from the rim job. Soon enough he was three fingers in and his tongue had moved to suck at the head of Jimin’s cock.

“S--stop, Joonie, please. God, p--please fuck me. Namjoon,” he whimpered his name so desperately that Namjoon knew if he kept teasing Jimin would cum and he was only going to allow that to happen with his cock deep inside him.

“I still have the sex tape we made. You remember that?” Namjoon asked, sitting up and making himself comfortable between Jimin’s spread thighs.

He began to line himself up with the younger’s tight, pink opening.

“Yeah, I used all my best moves. Lucky you. We filmed it with your video camera, so you got to keep it.”

“I meant to email you a copy.”

“Mm-hmm. Do you jerk off to it often?”

“I think you’ll judge me if I tell you how often.”

“I’m gonna assume it’s every night. You won’t find a better ass than mine, babe. I hope you know that.”

“I think I need to test if for myself. The tape was great, but that was two years ago. Maybe you’ve lost it.”

Jimin’s eyes narrowed daringly and before Namjoon could blink he’d been shoved off the futon, falling on the ground back-first hard. 
“What the fuck, Jimin?!”

Jimin didn’t answer. He dropped to the floor after Namjoon, thighs poised around Namjoon’s hips, as he grabbed Namjoon’s dick and pressed it to his hole, slowly lowering himself. The stretch still ached. He hadn’t been sleeping around after the break-up and the total of three men he’d been with simply didn’t compare to Namjoon, who had been gifted with a perfectly long and thick dick. The man was blessed, truly.

“Oh shit, Jiminie. Yeah, just like that,” Namjoon groaned once Jimin had adjusted and began grinding his hips down.

“I still dance in my free time,” Jimin gasped as he rested his hands on Namjoon’s chest to help with his motions. “Mom disapproves, but learning how to move my hips so perfectly they make a grown man cry is a necessity.”

Namjoon gave a breathless laugh.

“You’re a fucking treasure.”

“Oh I know, Joonie,” his saccharine smile was juxtaposed with the bouncing of his ass, the pace quick and forceful.

Namjoon was struggling not to bust a nut less than 5 minutes in. He could not humiliate himself like that, but Jimin felt so amazing on top of him and they’d begun sharing messy kisses that were more like mutual tongue-sucks but whatever. It felt fucking glorious.

“If I let you take over, think you can make me scream?” Jimin panted, slowing his breathtaking pace as his thighs began to tire.

“You doubting me, Park Jimin?” Namjoon growled.

“It’s up to you to rectify that,” he giggled, a sound so adorable it was misplaced among the filthiness of their whimpers and moans.
Namjoon pulled him down by his neck to press a soft kiss to his lips, now swollen from Jimin himself biting them as well as Namjoon’s bruising kisses.

“Hang on,” he said, maneuvering them around so Jimin was once again underneath him.

Namjoon let Jimin wrap his legs tightly around his waist before he used his right arm to wrap around the younger’s lower back, raising his hips to an angle that Namjoon was familiar with. He knew Jimin’s body better than he knew his own and that meant that following his request to make him scream was going to be as easy as breathing.

When Namjoon thrust forward at that angle he was drilling directly into Jimin’s prostate, making him see stars. It wasn’t long before Jimin was crying and screaming his name, arms clutching to Namjoon’s upper back in an attempt to anchor himself to the larger frame blanketing his own.

Jimin’s cheeks were flushed, his lips were bitten raw, and his obsidian hair was a mess around his sweaty face. In short, he looked insanely gorgeous. Namjoon took in the heavenly scent below him, groaning when Jimin tightened around him, knowing the younger was moments away from cumming and knowing he would follow right after. It was impossible to hold it together after Jimin came. His expression of agonizing bliss and the tantalizing sound of his melodious voice breaking into airy whines and moans was more than enough to have Namjoon shouting his own release. And that was exactly what happened.

They were left breathing heavily, Namjoon’s hips still weakly moving, chasing Jimin’s warmth even then. When he finally pulled out, Jimin whimpered at the emptiness he felt after being so full.

“We should have filmed that,” Jimin gasped, moving his head to look at Namjoon, who collapsed beside him.

“Fuck yes we should have.”

“Yes your dick game’s still the best in the business.”

Namjoon laughed out loud because Jimin was so refreshingly shameless and vocal about his thoughts.
“What a compliment coming from you.”

“Are you insinuating I have tons of experience because I get a lot of dick?” he faux-gasped.

“I’m not calling you a slut. Although you did lose your virginity before me, despite being younger…”

“You fuckface! I was 16 and you lost yours at 18, jump off your high horse.”

“Did I lose mine or did you take advantage of my gentle innocence to steal it?”

Jimin’s jaw dropped.

“Jesus, you’re so full of shit. You practically ripped my pants off the first weekend we spent together.”

“Lies.”

“Namjoon, you actually destroyed my underwear. Don’t pretend like you forgot about that! You still owe me a new pair of briefs, by the way.”

Namjoon rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, yeah, I was responsible for the end of that flimsy piece of fabric, whatever. You certainly weren’t complaining.”

Jimin twisted his nipple and Namjoon smacked his hand away.

“Yah! It doesn’t feel good for me like it does for you!”
“I know,” Jimin stuck his tongue out.

“You’re the devil incarnate.”

“Such sweet words,” he said sarcastically.

Before Namjoon could continue their banter his cell phone rang. He sighed and sat up, reaching over Jimin to reach his suit jacket and remove the ringing device.

“Hello?” he answered.

“Hyungie! Yoongi-hyung said you’re coming with tonight. That true?”

Namjoon looked at Jimin, whose sharp eyes were focused on his.

“Uh, yeah. I’ll, uh, I’ll meet you at the training compound an hour before. You can show me who you picked for the crew.”

“Alrighty. Is there a reason you’ve changed your plans? It’s not because you think I can’t handle this deal, right?”

“No, of course not, Tae-ah. I know you’re capable. It’s because...Let me be honest with you. I was missing you too much and simply had to see you.”

Taehyung’s deep laughter rang out, making Namjoon smile fondly.

“Bullshit, but I’m a vain creature and pretty words do work on me. I’ll see you in a few hours then.”

“See you,” he hung up.

Jimin had begun to dress himself again, not speaking until Namjoon addressed him.
“Are you heading back home? Can I drop you off nearby?”

“That’s a terrible idea. Jin knows all the vehicles in your possession. You get too close and he’ll be suspicious.”

“Did you drive here?”

“ Took a cab. I’ll just take another,” his tone was emotionless and disinterested now and Namjoon only pulled on his pants before he stepped over and stopped Jimin’s rushed movements with his hands, capturing his thin wrists.

“Are we good?”

“Why wouldn’t we be?” he shrugged.

“Do you really think we should be doing this? That it won’t get messy between us?”

“It’s already messy. We’re just capitalizing on that to get some pleasure out of it... And let’s leave it at that. I’d better get going. You seem to be busy.”

“Jimin—”

“I’ll text you, okay? We’ll decide where to go from there. I do want to see you again, Joonie. Don’t you want the same thing?”

What I really want is to be able to tell you I love you without fearing that it’ll be the last time I ever get the chance. I want your brother to stop threatening my best friends and let us be together. I want to turn back time and choose a better path and hope that even as a regular guy and not a mafia boss I can meet you and have you love me...I want to be able to confess these things.

“Of course I do. Take care of yourself. Text me when you get home, please? Just so I know Seokjin didn’t ground your ass for an even longer time,” he gave a small smile and Jimin laughed.
“Alright. Bye, Joonie.”

“Bye,” he told Jimin’s retreating back.

Namjoon wondered if he had made the right decision or if this would blow up in his face as most things seemed to.
Part IV.

Chapter Summary

Jungkook goes on his first mission and is surprised to see a familiar face. Namjoon comes to terms with the entanglements presenting themselves in his romantic life.

“Look at you. I didn’t think someone who innately screams ‘baby boy’ could look so dangerous,” a low voice whistled.

Jungkook turned away from his reflection in the bathroom mirror. He had actually been inspecting his outfit—tight black pants, a sleek dark shirt under a bomber jacket and light boots—trying to decide if he looked ridiculous.

“Hyung. I didn’t hear you come in,” he gave a small bow.

“Aish, what a cutie pie, seriously.”

Jungkook blushed. Why did all his bosses keep saying that? The compliments were nice, but it made him feel strange, like he was constantly on display and being studied by these incredibly attractive men. First Namjoon and now Taehyung, who didn’t seem much older than him but was obviously well-versed in the criminal underground. He had explained the first day to him and a group of other newly initiated members that he served as the head combat instructor. He would train them to use their bodies as lethal machines from head to toe. Namjoon’s organization only hired the best and every job had to be a success. There was no room for error.

“Did you strap in the hidden holster and sheathes?” Taehyung asked and Jungkook nodded, patting at his thighs and lower back, as well as his left ankle.

“I didn’t know it was possible to conceal so many weapons on my body.”

“That’s nothing. Yoongi-hyung always has three hand-guns and at least one machete on his person.”

“A machete? How the hell…”
“That’s Yoongi-hyung for you. He’s bathed in mystery,” Taehyung modulated his voice to sound like the narrator of *The Twilight Zone* and Jungkook laughed.

He’d been feeling nervous the entire week as he went through the combat and weapons training with Jungkook and Yoongi who stopped in a couple of times. He hadn’t seen Namjoon yet, though his name was constantly mentioned. Jungkook had been selected for his first mission, which Taehyung had promised would be an easy one, but it hadn’t been enough to ease all his worries.

“How you doing, Kookie? All jokes aside.”

“Honestly? I’m freaking out, but I’ll get over it. Don’t think I’m not prepared for this because I am!” he rushed to add but Taehyung only grinned.

“I trust you and, more importantly, Namjoon-hyung trusts you. He told me the day he hired you that he had high expectations of you. That’s the reason I’m extra tough on you.”

“I knew it!” Jungkook exclaimed, remembering the extended training imposed on him and how sore his entire body had felt all week.

“Sorry not sorry,” the taller brunette winked.

“Whatever, I guess it made me stronger. Tough love and all that.”

“Whoa, *love* ? Don’t get ahead of yourself there, babe. I’ve only said the L word to three people and only two of them remain alive.”

“No, I was j-just--it was a joke, I used a c-common expression,” he stuttered, evidently flustered.

“Cute,” Taehyung beamed, reaching out to pinch his cheek. “Get your poker face on, though. We don’t need cuteness on the streets and your expression has to be as badass as your outfit.”

Jungkook nodded, determined to prove himself to Taehyung (and hopefully to Namjoon).
“Ah, one last thing before I forget,” Taehyung had been heading out the door when he suddenly whirled to face the younger man. “We have a guest of honor joining us tonight, an unexpected but exciting addition to the group.”

“Who is it?”

“The boss.”

Jungkook’s eyes widened.

“Y-you mean…”

“Yes, Namjoon-hyung, the head capo himself.”

“Oh...that’s nice.”

Taehyung laughed at the panic etched into the younger’s face.

“Wheels up in 10. See you out there!” he gave him a playful salute and exited the bathroom.

Jungkook turned back to the mirror and exhaled.

“I can do this. I can do this. It doesn’t matter that he’s here. It totally doesn’t add a million tons of pressure, nope,” he gave his pep talk to his reflection, running a hand through his hair and taking a deep breath. “Showtime.”

If he had to assign himself a score from 1-10, 10 being the chillest, breeziest individual on the planet and 1 being the most pathetic, Jungkook would have to give himself a 6. He’d only tripped over his leather boots twice in Namjoon’s presence and the boss probably hadn’t seen it happen either time (Taehyung had and he’d snorted loudly, the asshole). He hadn’t had to speak to the silver-haired man one-on-one yet. The crew had split into three cars—identically non distinct black sedans—and Jungkook wasn’t in his and Taehyung’s car. The group of 8, sans Taehyung, had greeted the boss
respectfully in one voice as soon as he arrived and Jungkook had kept his gaze trained steadily on a point above Namjoon’s face.

All his nonchalance flew out the window when they arrived at a desolate warehouse by the docks and his name was called out by Taehyung, who was standing near the front of the group, directly beside...Namjoon.

“It’s nice to see you again, Jungkook-ah,” the dimpled smile was as breathtaking as it had been the first day he’d witnessed it.

“Likewise, sir,” he muttered, bowing again and hearing Taehyung’s annoying chuckle.

“Why do you insist on being so formal?” Namjoon shook his head amusedly.

Jungkook saw out of the corner of his eye that the other men (his co-workers? He supposed that would be the appropriate word) were watching his interaction unblinkingly. He kept his head ducked respectfully.

“Because you’re my boss, sir.”

Namjoon’s head tilted and he exchanged a glance with Taehyung, who only nodded towards the others.

“Ah, I understand. Tae, take 4 men with you inside to meet with Jackson. Post 3 at the exits.”

Taehyung acknowledged the order with another nod and picked 4 men at random. He didn’t need to ask why only 7 of the 8 would be accompanying him.

Jungkook waited until the others were at a distance, Taehyung disappearing inside the grimy warehouse, to lift his head and fix Namjoon with a scowl of displeasure.

“Hyung, why did you do that?”
“Oh, now I’m your hyung?”

Jungkook released a sigh of exasperation.

“Why are you here?”

“Excuse me?” Namjoon huffed a laugh of disbelief, both eyebrows raised.

This was what he found so captivating about Jeon Jungkook. He was young and inexperienced, had lived a normal life far-removed from the criminal underground that Namjoon ruled, but from one day to the next he’d gone in search of the “dark side.” Nevertheless, he maintained a refreshing innocence, blushing at lewd comments and occasionally stumbling over his words when he grew too nervous. But, then there were moments like this one where the younger man released a powerful amount of confidence and stated his opinion, even if it had the potential to get him in trouble with the head of the mafia.

“Taehyung told us it was just a small, unexceptional group for tonight. Not something on your radar.”

“This is all part of my job as head of the organization. Don’t you think it’s my responsibility to be aware of everything that happens, even if it seems ‘unexceptional’?”

“...I suppose so,” he bit his lip, trying to restrain himself from continuing to mouth off to his dangerously attractive boss.

“Yes?”

“Nothing,” he lied.

“I can see the question on the tip of your tongue. Just ask it.”

“You shouldn’t be watching my tongue,” he muttered and Namjoon tipped his head back, emitting a hearty laugh.
“I definitely made the right decision coming tonight. You, Jeon Jungkook, are an absolute treat. Exactly what I needed after the day I’ve had.”

“Why, what happened today?”

Namjoon shook his head, a mysterious smile on his lips.

“Not the question you wanted to ask. We’ll leave that for another day.”

“Okay...I think you’d expect me to ask this though. Why did you tell Taehyung to leave me behind? Do you not trust me to carry out a task as simple as this one?”

“First, always expect the unexpected. A meeting with our new drug runners should be nothing to write home about. I’ve known Jackson for a year and have worked a deal with him that satisfies both of us and shouldn’t cause any problems. However, in this business peace and quiet is really the calm before the storm. Second, I wouldn’t have hired you if I didn’t trust you. I promise you that.”

“Then? I’ve been training all week. Taehyung’s kicked my ass especially hard--because of you --and now I don’t even get to walk into a warehouse?”

“I don’t mean to limit you or baby you if that’s what you were thinking. To tell you the truth...today was exhausting, emotionally more so than physically, and I came tonight because I needed a distraction. Tae should finish things up soon and I was going to treat the group to drinks at a pub or something.”

“What you’re saying is...you were feeling lonely and you came to try and escape the emptiness of your apartment?”

“Penthouse,” he corrected off-handedly, remembering Yoongi’s words. “And yes, I guess that’s painfully accurate.”

“And you made me stay back with you because you didn’t want to crowd Taehyung inside and make him think you were micromanaging him, but you didn’t want to be alone out here either and we’re...friends?”
Namjoon chuckled, slipping his hands into the pockets of his leather jacket and shrugging.

“You’re more perceptive than I gave you credit for.”

“One of the career paths I considered when I still gave a shit about school was psychology.”

“Hmm. I think you would have been one of the best.”

“Nah. The lectures were slit your wrist boring and everything was psychoanalyzed to the point that it didn’t even make sense anymore. Human beings are intrinsically flawed, but if you look hard enough and bring all their crap to the surface you’ll be left lost in a maze of your own creation. It’s enough to be honest with yourself, like admit that you’re an alcoholic because you never had a relationship with your parents or that you’re possessive with your spouse because your father was a cheater and it gave you anxiety. Unless you’re that lost in denial in which case, you’re screwed.”

“If I asked you to psychoanalyze me, would you?”

“Oh, uh, I don’t think that’d be a good idea,” Jungkook blushed.

“Why not? Scared you’ll get lost in my maze?” Namjoon’s wink did not help matters.

“I did like a year and a half of psych, I’m no expert.”

“What you said was intriguing and I’m inclined to agree. We all have issues, some of us more than others, and it’s possible to pinpoint events in our childhood that affected how we turned out as adults.”

“I know nothing about your childhood, hyung. We met a week ago and this is only the second conversation we’ve had.”

“You make a good point... Well, we’re going to have to spend more time together then.”
“What?” Jungkook squeaked, foolishly believing Namjoon would turn his sharp gaze and unswerving attention away to someone more deserving and Jungkook could take a moment to breathe.

“What? You’ll keep training with Tae and I’ll make sure he assigns you to more missions. That way you’ll build up enough experience. If in a month he reports that your progress has been exceptional, I am prepared to offer you a permanent position in my personal team.”

“Your personal team?”

“You’d be my bodyguard, Jungkook-ah. How does that sound?”

“Like an insanely huge responsibility!” he said with panic in his voice.

“Which I hope you can handle. We only have the cream of the crop at our sides, which is saying something because the people in our organization are top-quality. Taehyung and Yoongi’s personal guards have been with them for over a decade. Mine was a friend of my father’s, but he had to retire. Wanted to spend more time with his family since his wife’s job moved her to Japan. I need someone young, strong, and eager to please. I’d like for that someone to be you.”

“I-I don’t know,” Jungkook said, fidgeting where he stood, not even acknowledging the innuendo behind Namjoon’s third desired quality for a bodyguard.

This was all a lot for him to take in. Every minute spent in Namjoon’s presence was overwhelming and Jungkook found himself struggling to keep up with his charming, magnetic persona and the way he skillfully wielded words like a knife. The strange fixation Namjoon had on him was difficult to understand, though Jungkook would be lying to himself if he said it was off-putting. He just didn’t know how to react.

“I don’t need an answer right now. Why don’t you get back to me in two or--” Namjoon was cut off by the sound of gunshots coming from inside the warehouse.

The three men Taehyung had posted by the front door had already darted inside, but Namjoon didn’t hesitate to pull the handgun from under his jacket and run after them.
“Come on! Make sure the safety isn’t on. It’s the typical rookie mistake,” he called over his shoulder as Jungkook took off after him, his own gun in hand.

“Do you think Taehyung and the others are okay?”

Screams of pain and more gunfire rang out as Namjoon and Jungkook sprinted down the long, dimly lit corridor that led to the open space of the main warehouse.

“I don’t know. This was supposed to be in and out. Unless Jackson double-crossed us, no one knew this was going down,” Namjoon growled.

They skidded into the main room, taking in the bloodshed before them. Jungkook counted at least 6 bodies on the floor, still and most likely dead. He could hear Taehyung, though, shouting something from a corner of the room. Namjoon’s shoulders seemed minutely less tense at the knowledge that his best friend was alive.

“Stay low, follow me,” Namjoon whispered, leading him to a crouched position behind some storage crates.

“How many are there?”

The gun shots were more sparse now as those still standing attempted to fight back and the unknown assailants regrouped.

“I count...6. Each with an AK-47. Shit, they came here to massacre us.”

“Do you think the drug runner guy betrayed you?”

Namjoon shook his head with a frown.

“Doubt it since he’s currently bleeding to death in the center of the room. He was a target too.”
“I’m sorry. You said you knew him for a year, right?”

“Jackson was a good guy. He was known for using his own supply sometimes, but he’d been clean for two years. I made sure of it before I suggested this deal.”

“Hyung, what should we do? Their firepower clearly trumps ours.”

Namjoon turned to look at him.

“You don’t sound afraid.”

“Because I’m not.”

Namjoon seemed skeptical.

“I wouldn’t lie right now. I mean, I’m not 100% confident that I won’t accidentally shoot myself instead of the enemy, but I can handle this. Whatever you need me to do, I’ll do it. I want to get us out of here alive.”

Namjoon studied him for a moment, but couldn’t find anything that told him Jungkook wasn’t being truthful. And it may have sounded insane, but Jungkook wasn’t panicked or worried for his safety. Far from it. He felt an odd sense of tranquility, as if he were made to be there by Namjoon’s side, ready to take on dangerous criminals like he did it every day.

“Alright. Here’s the plan. Listen carefully. One wrong move and we’re both dead,” Namjoon reminded him (quite unnecessarily).

Jungkook gulped, watching Namjoon shouting that if they allowed a ceasefire he’d give up his weapon and offer himself to their boss. They obviously recognized the mafia leader and the warehouse was silent save for their mutterings and whispers before the one that must have been in charge yelled that Namjoon should come out with his hands behind his head and one wrong move would result in his brains being blown out of his head.
Jungkook scanned the room, spotting Taehyung peering out from behind a storage container. There seemed to be 3 other men with him. There were also 2 men Jungkook didn’t recognize crouching behind another container. They must have been some of the drug runners.

Namjoon had slid his gun over to the masked figures, all pointing their assault rifles at him, and was slowly making his way over. His hands were clasped behind his head, but Jungkook could see that he kept raising the middle and ring fingers of his left hand before stilling them again. He had explained that this was a code that Taehyung would understand. Jungkook saw the brunette nod and mouth something to the men beside him. Message received. Taehyung hadn’t noticed Jungkook crouching there, though, which was good because if he hadn’t then neither had any of the assholes jeering and cursing at Namjoon.

*Just wait, you fuckers, a few more steps and you won’t be laughing anymore,* Jungkook thought darkly, shocking himself by how hostile and hateful he was being. It was a side of him left previously unexplored. This night was revealing more about himself than he could have ever expected.

“The big bad boss taken out on a pitiful drug run meeting. That’s just sad, isn’t it boys?” the leader of the masked group asked with faux sympathy.

The other 5 cackled disgustingly like ravenous hyenas that had just set eyes on a wounded antelope. Jungkook’s fingers itched to pull the trigger, but Namjoon had told him to wait for the perfect opening.

‘Let them think they have us cornered. I’ll be vulnerable and they’ll ask Tae and the rest of my men to surrender as well. You have the element of surprise, you have to use it wisely. If the others are forced to give up their weapons we’re fucked. You need to pick the exact moment to take your shot. Aim for the leader and don’t stop until they’re all dead. Think you can do that?’ he had asked.

‘I *know* that I can,’ he’d responded.

Jungkook counted each deliberate footstep Namjoon took, estimating 8 more before he was too close to the enemy and Jungkook’s window of opportunity closed.

*Just a few more. 7, 6, 5…now.*

Jungkook emerged from his crouch in one graceful move, his shot quick and unquestionably
accurate. The masked leader never saw it coming. He was dead before any of his companions could process it. Taehyung let out an angry cry before taking his own shots and Jungkook couldn’t pat himself on the back for too long in the face of Taehyung’s perfect targeting. The brunette took out 4 with his gun before he ran out of ammo and left the last man to another member of their crew.

Namjoon shot Jungkook a thumbs-up before jogging the last steps forward to remove the mask of the head goon.

“You recognize him, hyung?” Taehyung asked, kicking away the corpse of one of the other assailants with his heavy boot.

“No, but he may be in the system,” he took out his cell phone and snapped a picture. “Masks off. All of them,” he commanded, addressing the two men from their original crew that had survived.

He walked around taking pictures of all the assailants and put his phone away again.

“You two!” he snarled, this time speaking to the drug runners who had taken shelter behind a storage container.

The two came out with their hands up, begging Namjoon to have mercy and not kill them.

“I better hear an explanation I like or Taehyung here will use his favorite knife to peel your skin off until I’m satisfied with how much you’ve bled.”

Even Jungkook shivered at the lethality laced in each syllable he uttered. Taehyung had already slipped a hand into the sheathe hidden in his pant leg to take out a serrated blade that seemed to have a smiley face engraved at the edge. The lanky brunette began playing with it, tapered fingers spinning the blade around and showing off every inch of its glimmering steel. The shorter of the two drug runners looked ready to piss himself.

“No, p-please. We had no idea this would happen. Jackson just said we were receiving our new product and being assigned parts of the city to deal. Nothing out of the ordinary!” the other said, finding his voice.

“Who else knew about this?” Namjoon asked coldly, seeing Taehyung’s blade twisting around in his peripheral vision.
“Apart from the men here no one!”

“A-actually there w-was one other person who knew,” the shorter man spoke up, flinching when Namjoon’s gaze turned to him.

“Are you really going to make me ask who it was?” Namjoon’s patience wore thin, his jaw tensing.

“S-sorry, sir! I j-just don’t know the guy’s name. He only spoke to the boss and we saw glimpses of him, but that’s it.”

“What did this man look like?”

“A-average height. Reddish brown hair. Dressed extremely formal.”

“Utterly useless,” Taehyung hissed, flipping the knife and pointing at the shorter man. “The clock’s ticking and I’m getting bored. You know what I do when I’m bored, little man?”

“Wait!” the other drug runner threw up his hands. “I remember him too! He had a distinctive feature. On his face, he had this s-scar.”

Something flashed in Namjoon’s eyes.

“What kind of scar?”

“It looked like a snake.”

“Below his right cheekbone?”

“Yes.”
“Get out of here,” he suddenly demanded.

“Wh-what?”

“I need to repeat myself?” he growled, whipping out his gun and cocking it towards them.

The drug runners were gone before Jungkook could blink.

“A scar shaped like a snake below the right cheekbone. Not a lot of men matching that description would choose to take on Kim Namjoon,” Taehyung said.

“Only one would.”

“Who is it?” Jungkook tentatively asked.

“He goes by Suho. Head of a rival organization,” Taehyung explained, sheathing his knife again. "And if Jackson was messing around with him, we may have been wrong about him. Though he did end up getting his..."

“An organization as powerful of yours?” Jungkook asked, curious at the hierarchy of the criminal underground.

Taehyung exchanged a pointed look with Namjoon.

“This isn’t something to discuss here. We’re too exposed,” Namjoon said and Taehyung nodded, motioning for the remaining men to head towards the cars.

“Am I calling Yoongi-hyung or are you?”

“Apparently he had plans tonight. Maybe it’s best we wait until morning to bother him.”
“Plans?” Taehyung raised an eyebrow. “Of the romantic variety?”

“Seemed like.”

“Hmm,” Taehyung’s face suddenly closed-off, though Jungkook could sense some heavy emotion hovering underneath.

“I’m sure it’s nothing important,” Namjoon said, noticing the same thing.

“You’re probably right, hyung...I’ll just call him now,” he chirped, smile too dangerous to be innocent.

He was already tapping at a number in his contacts as he exited the warehouse.

“Yoongi-hyung, hello. How are you doing on this fine evening?”

Namjoon snorted, shaking his head and walking after him, Jungkook at his side.

“What’s that about?” the younger inquired.

“I’d need 10 hours and a bottle of vodka to explain it all to you.”

“Noted...How about instead you explain who Suho is and how his organization was able to infiltrate yours tonight?”

Namjoon paused.

“Ever heard the phrase curiosity killed the cat?”
“Nope, doesn’t sound familiar in the slightest.”

Namjoon huffed a laugh, walking toward the sedan he’d arrived in. Jungkook wondered if he was being dismissed, but Namjoon shot him a glance over his shoulder.

“Coming?”

“Where are we going?”

“You want me to answer your questions, don’t you? This isn’t the place to do so.”

“Then where?”

“How about somewhere with unlimited amounts of alcohol?”

“I admit you’ve piqued my interest, hyung,” he smiled.

“Come on then.”

Jungkook joined him in the sedan, momentarily surprised that Namjoon was seated at the driver’s seat.

“Where did Taehyung and the other guys go?”

“Taehyungie took off in another car, probably driving straight to Yoongi’s place or if the poor bastard was on a date somewhere I assume Tae will just barge in and disrupt it. The other guys took the third car back to the main compound.”

“Hmm. It kind of seems like Taehyung has feelings for Yoongi-hyung.”

“It does, doesn’t it?” it was said as a question, though one Namjoon clearly knew the answer to.
“Can I ask you something?”

Namjoon burst into body-shaking laughter and Jungkook watched him, bewildered at the response.

“What’s the joke?”

“I just find it hilarious that you’re asking me for permission to continue your interrogation. From the moment we met you’ve barraged me with questions. I feel like I’m on trial sometimes.”

Jungkook made a face.

“Lawyer Jeon, please, don’t be shy. I swear on my signed copy of Demian that the evidence I shall give, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

“You’re making fun of me.”

“Just a little,” Namjoon grinned.

“...And Demian? If you’re testifying to a piece of classic literature wouldn’t something like Crime and Punishment or I don’t know To Kill a Mockingbird be better?”

“More pertinent to criminal justice I suppose, but the reason people swear on the Bible is the meaning it holds, right? It’s the holy book and it requires respect and promise. Not being a believer myself placing my palm on a bible and affirming the oath would mean nothing, but Demian is different.”

“Why does that novel mean so much to you?”

Namjoon pondered the best way to explain it.

“Have you ever read it?”
“Once, I think, but I don’t remember much. It’s a coming-of-age story right? Takes place in a pre-World War I Europe.”

“Both are true to a extent. Yes, it recounts the coming-of-age of the main character, Sinclair, but it’s a dark take on the development of the human being. It describes how we can be so deeply affected by the world around us, by certain individuals who become a concrete part of our existence and our reasoning. This is, of course, what Demian becomes: teacher, friend, companion, master...The corruption of youth is another central theme, though the phrase denotes something innately negative and it’s not always the case.”

“The corruption of anything is negative, hyung. How can you view that in another light?”

“Because what occurs to Sinclair, partially due to Demian’s influence, partially due to a natural process in which we understand that the world around us isn’t perfect and those we considered our immaculate leaders and guides--our parents--are not without their faults, is not corruption in itself. It isn’t the defilement of the body, soul or mind, but the erasure of barriers and limitations. If we used different words to express the same course it may sound more pleasing to the ear, more acceptable. It was not the ‘corruption of youth’ but the ‘enlightenment of youth.’ Does that help?”

"I guess so.”

“And as to your second point, the story’s geographical landscape is vaguer than most stories--of classic literature and otherwise--though we understand it is Europe, we are meant to comprehend that pinpointing the exact location is not worthwhile. It could be Europe before the Great War or America before the Civil War or Korea before the Korean War. War can be replaced with genocide or famine or any event that jars the normality and banality of human existence. What Hesse meant to show in his novel is that we should not conform. We have to be ready to adapt to novelties, no matter how radical they seem. Becoming complacent is dangerous and stupid. Do you agree?”

Jungkook had been straining to travel back in time to the summer before freshman year when he’d stumbled across the novel in his attic. He didn’t know which of his parents the book belonged to and didn’t care, he’d been bored and figured it was preferable to get lost in a literary world than deal with his reality. He finished Demian that same day, feeling that the words he’d taken in were important but not fully conscious of why. Namjoon’s keen analysis was making him relive the novel. The more he remembered the more he began instinctively forming comparisons between the protagonist and himself.

Am I the naive Sinclair, susceptible to the intoxicating charm of one Max Demian? Was everything that happened in my life truly fated? Was I meant to be estranged from my family and go through hell at university just to end up here by Namjoon’s side?
Jungkook had to agree with Namjoon. He asked too many questions. It was impossible to find the answers.

“I’m sorry, Jungkook-ah, did I bore you? Yoongi-hyung and Tae always tune out when I bring up any written work that isn’t a manga or a graphic novel.”

“No, no I was only thinking. Reflecting on what you said. And I think I do agree. With all of it.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Maybe I hadn’t thought of it exactly as you did when I first read it, but it makes perfect sense to me.”

“Well, I keep a copy in my office. It’s tattered and annotated practically line by line, but if you’re ever interested, feel free to ask me.”

“That’d be cool. Thanks.”

“No problem.”

The silence between them was maintained until they reached a small pub near Namjoon’s club, though it was tranquil and comfortable, something Jungkook considered rare. They each had a few beers and talked about anything from sports to what classes Jungkook had bothered with before he got fed up and quit university. He didn’t find it difficult to open up and even ventured into little parts of his childhood.

Namjoon was a great listener. He was intuitive and prosaic and he didn’t offer judgments, only thought-out comments that proved he was always on Jungkook’s side though he didn’t hesitate to signal moments when Jungkook could have been a bit rash. Still, his final suggestion after Jungkook chugged his fifth beer and told an anecdote about a particularly horrible birthday (with more bitterness than he liked to release in front of others) made Jungkook stop and stare.

“Memories constitute a great part of our identities. We never forget where we came from, whether we like it or not. This doesn’t mean we can’t escape a past that only holds pain and toxic
connotations. We can happily run away from home and stop talking to our parents for the rest of our lives. However, that won’t magically fix everything because like I said memories exist and they flare up whether we want them to or not. What you need to keep in mind, Jungkook-ah, is that you survived it. All of it. And you came out stronger, standing tall and proud. You owe yourself a round of applause.”

“Uh, I-I...for what?”

“For all of it. Your life wasn’t easy, not that we can say that for most people’s, but we’re focusing on you and I believe you need to only be proud of you and everything you are.”

When Jungkook continued to gape at him Namjoon gave a gentle laugh and moved one large hand to close his mouth for him. Jungkook watched the long, pretty fingers retreat and looked back into Namjoon’s eyes.

“Hyung, you got me drunk and you didn’t answer any of my questions.”

“Jungkook, you are a never-ending stream of questions. I can barely keep up. You’ll have to forgive me if I didn’t get them all.”

“No, but I mean the ones about that Suho guy and what happened tonight,” he protested.

“Ahh, I suppose that’s true. It slipped my mind.”

“Liar.”

“Are you really drunk?” Namjoon raised an eyebrow.

“My tolerance is shitty, I’ll admit, but I’m only buzzed. I swear. Look, my palm is steady, solid as a rock!” he stuck his palm out almost smacking Namjoon in the chin because he overextended his limb.

They both watched Jungkook’s palm tremble slightly. Namjoon looked up at him with an amused
smirk.

“Shut up,” Jungkook growled.

“You’re so cute, Jungkook-ah,” he laughed.

“Stop it! You keep saying that and Taehyung’s been doing it too and I hate it!”

“Is that so?”

“Yes! I am a grown man. I am not cute or adorable.”

“Mmhmm and so what are you?”

“I’m--I’m attractive and handsome and--”

“And hot and sexy and tantalizing. That too right?”

Jungkook gulped. Namjoon’s expression was dangerous. He felt if he breathed the wrong way the silver haired man would jump across the table and swallow him up. Jungkook wondered if he should feel more shocked by how much he wanted that to happen.

Namjoon tilted his head, taking in Jungkook’s slightly glassy eyes and the rapid rise and fall of his chest. He seemed to come to a decision then.

“I have an early morning tomorrow. I should be getting home.”


“Let me take you home.”
“No, hyung, don’t worry. I’ll order a cab.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. Let’s go.”

He dropped some bills on the table and stood, ignoring Jungkook’s protests about letting him pay his half, especially since he’d had more to drink than Namjoon.

“It’s my treat, remember? After what you did for me today it’s the least I can do.”

“What I did for you?” Jungkook seemed confused.

“You saved my life, Jungkook-ah. My plan could have led all of us to an early grave, but you played your part perfectly, despite it being your first mission. Thank you.”

“Oh...You’re welcome.”

Namjoon smiled, gesturing for him to follow to the car.

“Tomorrow, make sure you ask Taehyung to fill you in on Suho and the other organizations in the business. I’ll inform him that apart from your combat and weapons training you should be instructed on what exactly we’re up against all the time.”

“Wait, really? You’re letting me in...on everything?”

“Isn’t that what you wanted?”

They were driving towards Jungkook’s place, which was a shitty studio apartment he was honestly embarrassed to call home. At least, his landlord was a firm believer in “appearances can be deceiving” and he did his best to make that true. The outside of Jungkook’s apartment complex wasn’t half as bad as the inside.
“You know if my annoying habit is asking too many questions yours is answering a question with another question.”

Namjoon’s chuckle was strained.

“I’ve heard that before.”

Incidentally, Jimin had constantly complained about that very thing.

‘Joonie, if I wanted endless questions as responses I’d start watching Jeopardy. Can I get a straight answer? I know you want to keep the mystery alive, but it’s exhausting.’

Namjoon suddenly thought back to his conversation with Yoongi earlier when he pointed out that Namjoon had a specific type and that Jungkook was eerily similar to Jimin. He hated when his hyung was right.

“Hyung? Uh, this is me,” Jungkook pointed out the passenger window, bringing Namjoon out of his thoughts.

“Oh, good. It was nice to see you tonight, Jungkook-ah. I hope to have the pleasure again soon.”

Jungkook managed a quick nod and a mumbled “Thank you, good night” before he was flying out of the car and into his apartment complex. Namjoon shook his head at the young man’s bashful nature, which made a reappearance at some inopportune moments. He mentally chastised himself for this thought because if Jungkook had been of a bolder nature (if he was exactly like Jimin for instance) something more R-rated could have begun at the pub, ending in a romp between the sheets that neither of them was prepared for.

Namjoon wondered if it would be prudent to keep some distance between him and Jungkook. It wasn’t fair to involve the kid in the shitshow that was Namjoon’s love life. As if he’d known that he was being thought of, Jimin chose that moment to text him.

Joonie, today was fun. Let’s do it again soon. I got home fine. Forgot to text earlier. Sorry.

Namjoon sighed, putting away his phone and laying his head on the steering wheel. Maybe he would go home to drink and jack off like Yoongi had suggested. Except maybe it was best to avoid the latter activity. God forbid his sexual fantasies become more convoluted. He was terrified that he’d
start picturing a heated night with Jungkook and Jimin would suddenly materialize or vice versa.

“What the fuck are you doing, Kim Namjoon?” he asked himself, running a hand through his hair and finally putting the car in drive, pulling away from Jungkook’s apartment.
Part V.

Chapter Summary

Namjoon and Jungkook attend the company gala, where secrets are revealed, leading to a conversation neither could hope to avoid any longer.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jungkook’s training intensified that week and he would complain if Taehyung didn’t put him through hell with the brightest, sweetest boxy smile in the world. He had also followed Namjoon’s request of Jungkook being informed of the hierarchy in the criminal world and who this “Suho” was.

“His organization is our biggest rival. They’re a bunch of assholes with too much money and political connections. Half of Korea’s ministers and judges are on his payroll,” Taehyung explained one afternoon after he’d spent hours making Jungkook and his fellow initiates running miles under the blazing sun and doing strength exercises like jumping push-ups with one hand.

Jungkook had always been athletic and was a talented soccer and lacrosse player from middle school to university, but he had never felt this physically exhausted. His muscles ached and his bones felt heavy. This was a necessary evil, though, and he knew the end result would be worthwhile. He would prove his worth to Namjoon and earn a place at his side. An honor he would never have believed he’d achieve in the first month of him seeking out this lifestyle.

He did appreciate the side lessons. He was tired of feeling like such a newbie when it came to the clandestine affairs that hid beneath the Seoul he’d been residing in for years, completely ignorant of the fact that the things that went bump in the night were controlled by powerful men like Namjoon and this Suho.

“There is one other organization in the big leagues with us. They used to be the top dog, actually, but the last decade has represented a significant shift in power. I’d say Namjoon-hyung has been to blame for that. His authority is unquestioned and he’s taken his father’s businesses to new heights.”

“What happened to his father?”

“He got real sick real fast.”
“Did he die?” Jungkook asked concernedly.

“No, but he lives with a nurse who’s on call 24/7. He breathes through a tube. It’s not pretty,” Taehyung shook his head sadly.

“What about his mother?”

“We don’t know a lot about her. I doubt hyung does either. She left when he was little and that’s the story we’ve always sworn by.”

“She abandoned her family?”

“It’s tragic.”

“Yeah.”

Taehyung tilted his head contemplatively, making Jungkook fidget uncomfortably when his unblinking gaze remained trained on him.

“What?” he finally asked.

“You care a lot about the boss, don’t you?”

Jungkook knew he was blushing, but he thought it would be in his best interest to appear as unruffled as possible.

“I mean, sure I do, he’s my employer.”

“No, you care more than that. You care too much, actually, and you know it.”
Jungkook kept his lips tightly sealed, but Taehyung was undeterred.

“From the moment you met you felt something spark within you. You try to fight it, bury it and forget about it, but it’s impossible. Why? Because Kim Namjoon is an extraordinary force. He carries a galaxy inside of him and all you want is to be part of it. Even if all you get to be is a teeny, tiny pathetic star in his periphery vision, you jump at the chance.”

Jungkook listened entranced, lulled into a strange, dream-like haze by Taehyung’s words.

“And when suddenly you’re more than that, less a star and more a planet, a celestial body worthy of his time and attention—his love—you go insane because now that you have it, what do you do with yourself? You self-combust, you self-destruct, you tear apart at the seams. And you don’t regret it. Because it’s all for him. For Kim Namjoon.”

“Wow,” Jungkook gasped.

“If you could relate to that, you’re screwed.”

“A--are, uh, are you...in love with him?”

Taehyung threw his head back and laughed, the motion causing his lean frame and the chair he was sitting in to shake.

“Why? Scared of the competition?”

“Hyung, stop it,” he ducked his head, distinctly aware of the rosiness of his cheeks.

“I like you, Kookie, so I’ll be honest with you. Yeah, I was in love with him for a long time... See, I only had my grandfather back home. My parents died when I was a kid and though Gramps did his best, he was an elderly man with severe arthritis and burgeoning Alzheimer’s and I was a nightmare of a child. I mean bouncing off the walls hyper.”

Jungkook gave a small laugh and Taehyung smiled with him.
“He couldn’t do it on his own, but Gramps wasn’t the type to admit defeat and the only other option would be to give me away and he refused. He was the only family I had left. Lucky for him, he had friends in the right places. One of his old college friends was Namjoon-hyung’s grandfather. He came into town once, visited us in our rickety little shack and offered us a better life. Of course, I was too young to comprehend the strings attached were of a criminal nature, but hey, I turned out okay. I think. You’d be a better judge than me,” he joked.

“So you weren’t born in Seoul?”

“Nope. Daegu. I moved to Seoul with hyung’s family when I was 7 though. I met Yoongi-hyung there too. The Min and Kim families have been tied together for generations.”

“A friendship that stood the test of time.”

“It’s admirable,” he nodded. “But, I’m sure you want me to get to the juicy part of this coming-of-age story right?” his smirk was all teeth and mischief.

Jungkook only rolled his eyes.

“At 7 years old I was quite an impressionable child. I was also untamed and unruly...or so my teachers loved to complain. Anyway, being an only child and never having had any friends close to my age, Yoongi-hyung and Namjoon-hyung’s presence was impactful. I latched on to them without looking back. They helped me...become me, I guess. Probably sounds corny but it’s true.”

“I don’t think it’s corny. I think it’s nice. I never had that,” his small laugh was forced and Taehyung’s eyes softened, sympathetic to the pain he could sense in the younger boy.

“You’ll have it now. With us. This is a family. Although, things get convoluted when you fall in love with who was only meant to be an older brother, a father figure even.”

“I have not thought of Namjoon-hyung as a father figure,” Jungkook scrunched up his nose.

“I wasn’t talking about you,” Taehyung grinned.

“Oh...no, r-right, I knew that,” he stammered.
“Careful, Kookie, falling in love with Kim Namjoon is practically making a death wish.”

“Why would you say that?”

“I had feelings for him for most of my childhood and he was aware of it, but was too nice to break my heart or make me see reason. Deep down I knew we could never be together. He only saw me as a dongsaeng, the grubby kid he’d helped with his times tables and with shaving and a bunch of other things that solidify a familial yet unromantic bond.”

“How did you convince yourself to stop loving him?”

Taehyung barked out a laugh.

“I didn’t. Park Jimin did.”

“Park Jimin?” Jungkook repeated the name. “Who’s that?”

“Remember how I told you there’s a third organization in the business? That used to rule Seoul almost single-handedly?” he waited for Jungkook’s nod. “Well, it’s run by the Park family. Jimin’s great-grandfather was the first to set foot in Seoul and lay claim.”

“Okay...and what does that have to do with your feelings and Namjoon-hyung?”

“Absolutely everything. This is the part I hate to have to tell you. I can see it in your eyes. That fascination, that longing for Namjoon-hyung. I get it, trust me I do, but loving him is a messy affair.”

“Because of this Jimin guy?”

“Park Jimin and his older brother Seokjin have inherited the family business. Their father died last year and their mother was overcome with grief and was left in a weakened position. If Seokjin hadn’t stepped in there would have been a hostile takeover. You always have more enemies than friends. Seokjin’s grooming Jimin to be his number two and Jimin certainly has the brains for it, but he has no interest in running things. His mind is preoccupied with other affairs, mainly those involving Namjoon-hyung.”

“Are they together?” it hurt Jungkook to have to ask the question, a fact Taehyung clearly noticed if
the comforting pat on the back was anything to go by.

“Not anymore. They were forced to break up when Seokjin found out. They kept it hidden for years, but when Seokjin discovered the truth he went berserk. Sent all his hitmen after Namjoon-hyung and those closest to him. It’s a short list, but it exists. His dad and me and Yoongi-hyung.”

“He tried to kill you?!”

“He almost succeeded too. The car bomb would have killed me, like it did my guys, if it hadn’t gone off at the wrong time. I’d gotten out of the car to meet with a client and was only walking back so I could be driven home when it exploded. As it was, I was in the hospital for a week. Nothing too serious just a concussion, some cracked ribs, other scratches like that, but it was enough. Yoongi-hyung was pissed, I’ve never seen him speak to Namjoon-hyung in that way. He told him he’d been reckless and selfish getting involved with one of the Park heirs. By the time I was released from the hospital Namjoon-hyung and Jimin had gone their separate ways.”

“That’s...a lot to take in,” Jungkook admitted.

“Unfortunately, there’s a bit more. Jimin isn’t over Namjoon-hyung. He claims they’re soulmates and the few times I saw them together...I believed it. The way they looked at each other...Kookie, I just want you to be careful.”

“Because a rival crime boss would poke my eyes out with a fork if he found out I liked his ex-boyfriend?”

“That, and because Namjoon-hyung is still stuck on Jimin. They were together for so long, shared more firsts than I’d like to think about. I don’t think he’s stopped loving him. Keep that in mind when you do...whatever it is that you want to do.”

“I wasn’t planning to do anything,” he muttered, unable to meet Taehyung’s gaze anymore.

“Yoongi-hyung told me that at the end of the month you’re supposed to let the boss know if you want to be his personal bodyguard. You know what that means, right? You’d be at his side day and night. You’d get your own bedroom in his penthouse.”

Jungkook cursed his heart for jumping in his chest at the thought of sleeping in the same place Namjoon did.

“I’m not telling you what to do with your life, I have absolutely no right, but I care about you, Kookie. And you needed to know. That way you make an informed decision,” he smiled gently before clapping his hands. “Alright, that’s enough girl talk. Let’s get back to the training mat.”
Jungkook groaned. He didn’t want to continue with the depressing thread of this conversation, but the prospect of getting his ass kicked by Taehyung for another four hours was no comfort.

The next day he was informed that his next assignment would take place that weekend at a high-profile event both Namjoon and Yoongi would be attending as CEO and CFO, respectively, of the media conglomerate that was their most successful (legal) endeavor. Taehyung would not be present, but Namjoon and Yoongi each required a security team and surprise, surprise Jungkook was assigned to Namjoon’s 4 person team.

Taehyung’s story and the faceless figure of Park Jimin haunted his dreams the entire week.

“Did we get any hits in the system?” Namjoon asked Yoongi when he entered his best friend’s private office.

He was referring to the pictures he’d taken of the men who’d murdered Jackson and attempted to capture Namjoon.

“The drug runners that weren’t massacred on the spot weren’t lying. All these men have been seen with Suho and his organization,” Yoongi explained.

“That’s what I thought. It’s not good news. We may not get along with those pricks...or the Parks...but an unacknowledged truce has been maintained since my father’s last years. Suho’s moving in on our territory. What does that tell you?”

“He’s done sharing his toys.”

“Exactly.”

“You think it extends beyond the drug trade? That he’s coming after our entire operation?”

“I don’t know, but we can’t underestimate him. His organization came out of thin air. My dad thought he only had the Parks to grapple with when Suho’s uncle suddenly took over key trade routes and began holding sway in most areas of our government. We still don’t know how they pulled that off.”
“Luck and greed,” Yoongi scoffed. “Those fuckers share one brain cell between them, but when they set their sights on something they’re not afraid to do whatever it takes to obtain it. Suho’s uncle killed his own brother to run the organization. And didn’t Suho have a younger brother?”

“The rumor was that he smothered him with a pillow so the poor bastard would never even think of overthrowing him or contesting his right to the organization.”

“Yeah, that’s some twisted fuckery right there. He’s sick in the head, probably more than his precious uncle Scar.”

“Good Lion King reference.”

“I know.”

“What do you propose we do? Retaliate or wait?”

“I don’t wage wars unless I know I can win them.”

“Wait then?”

“We need to know more about Suho and what his game is before we take action. We don’t even know how he grew his power. And before last night he hadn’t made any attempts against us. The playing field is changing, but we don’t know how or why. It’s prudent to stand by for now at least.”

“Agreed. Hey, on a lighter note, how did the date/not-date go?”

“It didn’t. Taehyung interrupted us before any of the interesting stuff happened.”

“Ah, that’s on me. I let it slip that you were romantically occupied and he got a bit jealous.”

“Doesn’t sound like him.”
“Recently it has been.. Are you really over your crush on Tae?”

“Fuck off, Namjoon, I am not talking about this. If you’re that excited to braid my hair and paint my toenails while you ramble on about boys, tell me how your night with Jungkook was.”

“First off, that’s a horrible image. I’d never go near your disgusting toes. Second, I told you there was a shoot-out and 4 of our guys died. Not to mention Jackson and 3 of his drug runners.”

“And? There was no time for a quickie in the car or behind a storage container?”

“You’re a pervert.”

“And suddenly you’re a prude? Come on, Namjoon, I may loathe Park Jimin but when you told us of your sexual exploits I was shook. That midget was kinky.”

“You’re the same height.”

“I’m taller.”

“Whatsoever. I didn’t fuck Jungkook and I’m not going to.”

“Oh for God’s sakes, is it because of Jimin?”

“So what if it is? I know you hate him, hyung, but I don’t.”

“And therein lies the problem.”

“Maybe so, but you can’t expect me to snap my fingers and stop loving him.”

Yoongi didn’t say anything else and Namjoon sighed, leaving his office and making his way back to his own.

“Sir?” his assistant, Myunghee, asked.

“Yes?”
“I left all the documents you need to read to be prepared for this weekend’s event. I thought it would help to brush up on the contracts you signed this year since the entire board will be in attendance. There are also files on the heads of other up and coming companies who you may want to mingle with in case of future business offers or simply to be aware of all the competition in the field.”

Namjoon shot her an impressed grin.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better assistant. What would I do without you, Myunghee-ssi?”

“I don’t know, sir, but let’s hope you never have to find out,” she smiled.

He gave her a thankful bow and disappeared into his office, resigning himself to an all-nighter in the office. This Saturday’s event was a crucial one. He was on good terms with most of the board members, but as always, you can’t please everyone and there were two or three of them that kept Namjoon under a magnifying glass praying that he’d slip up once so they could throw him to the streets. It wouldn’t be that easy, of course, since Namjoon controlled nearly 40% of the media conglomerate’s stocks and the board wasn’t aware of his...not so legal side of things, but it still required careful attention and an obnoxious amount of schmoozing. Namjoon excelled in most types of sophistry by now, but his CFO/best friend? Not so much. Yoongi hated small talk almost as much as he did pop music.

It was hours later that Namjoon had his nose buried in case files when the ding of his phone alerted him to a new message. He cursed himself for forgetting to silence the mobile device, knowing his distracting it could be, but checked the screen anyway.

Jimin

Good evening looooveeeerrr. Got any plans for this Sunday?

Namjoon checked his calendar, seeing that the only thing programmed into his phone was a visit to his father’s house, but that was later in the day.

What did you have in mind?

Jimin’s response was instantaneous.
It’s a surprise, Joonie. I know how much you like those ;)

Namjoon rolled his eyes. The little brat did know how to play his games. One of Namjoon’s least favorite things was being caught off-guard or walking into a situation he wasn’t 100% prepared for.

You’re a fucking menace to society.

Ooh, talk dirty to me, baby.

Namjoon chuckled, seeing the ellipses bubble pop up and waiting for the younger’s next message.

Sunday. 9 a.m. sharp by the park near the Han River where we had that picnic. Remember?

Of course I do.

Don’t keep me waiting, Joonie.

Namjoon didn’t respond. He didn’t have to. Six months of separation and one passionate fuck in his office and it was like nothing had changed between them. Their relationship was still complex and forbidden and reckless. And he was still head over fucking heels for Park Jimin.

Jungkook waited, arms crossed behind his back, for Namjoon and Yoongi’s cars to arrive. They’d be taking two chauffeured limousines to the glamorous event hall in a hotel near the center of the city where the gala would be held. He was still unsure what the gala actually was, despite Taehyung explaining its practical uses for Namjoon’s legal company, but he figured it didn’t matter. His only job that night would be to shadow Namjoon and keep him protected. Although that was easier said than done.

“Hey, you nervous?” a voice beside him asked, adding an unnecessary elbow to his side.
“Ow. No, I’m just fine. Why?” Jungkook frowned, moving a step away from the other member of Namjoon’s security team, whose name was either Minho or Baekhyun.

He didn’t know which. Maybe he should socialize with his co-workers more?

“Your face looks weird. And your body’s too tense.”

“Thanks for the concern, but I’m fine,” Jungkook shot back, seeing two cars pulling into the main compound, where their trainings were always held.

“You better be. This operation’s gonna run smoothly with or without you. Don’t think that because the boss has a momentary hard-on for you, you can get away with shit.”

Jungkook’s face burned at the other man’s words, but he kept his mouth shut because Yoongi and Namjoon were stepping out of each car and approaching their security teams. It wouldn’t do to draw attention to himself right now. He already had enough of that.

“Good evening,” Yoongi greeted the eight men before him.

“Good evening, boss,” they all chorused, bowing to both Yoongi and Namjoon respectfully.

“I’m sure Taehyung masterfully explained how tonight’s events will transpire, but the maxim we live by in this business is ‘expect the unexpected’ isn’t it? Do exactly that or a nice evening mingling with the snobby and posh will end in another disaster like last week’s supplier meet up,” Yoongi’s face was grim and at the reminder Jungkook chanced a look in Namjoon’s direction.

He was surprised to see the silver-haired man already watching him.

“Lighten up, Yoongs. The team gathered before us is prepared for anything. And we should get going. One thing is being fashionably late and another is being shamefully tardy, a label we will never have applied to our persons,” Namjoon grinned and Yoongi only rolled his eyes, nodding at the four men who would be accompanying him that evening and climbing back into one luxurious sedan.

Namjoon headed to his own, his own security team filing in behind him. The jackass who had
spoken earlier (Jungkook had finally remembered his name was in fact Baekhyun) jeered at him as he slipped into the backseat on Namjoon’s right. Another guy was already on his left, leaving Jungkook to take the passenger seat up front. He was pretty sure the tall man driving was Minho, but he didn’t know anything about him. Even if he had the ride to the event hall was most likely meant to be in silence. It wouldn’t do for subordinates to be gossiping or engaging in casual conversation with each other with the mafia boss in the car.

Yet, that didn’t stop Baekhyun from starting up a conversation...with Namjoon himself.

“You’re looking sharp tonight, boss. Truly a handsome suit you’ve selected.”

Jungkook’s eyes darted up to the rear-view mirror, able to see how Baekhyun had positioned himself next to Namjoon. Despite the spacious backseat being more than enough for another grown man to fit comfortably, the blonde-haired bodyguard was pressed into Namjoon’s side, one hand on his shoulder. The smirk on his thin face was lascivious. Jungkook couldn’t help but wonder if something intimate had happened between them.

What? Did you think you were special? From what Taehyung said the only man he loves is that Park Jimin. Everyone else is like a disposable sex-doll. It makes sense he’d sleep his way through his personal security team.

As Jungkook’s thoughts grew more and more dark and bitter he heard a cry of pain from the back and couldn’t help but turn his head to see Baekhyun cowering by the window, clutching his right-hand to his chest and trembling in his seat. Namjoon was nonchalantly cracking his knuckles. He looked over at the shaking man and snorted.

“I clearly overestimated your intellect and your ability to utilize logic. Did you believe because I once allowed you into my bed you suddenly have unlimited rights over my body? No one lays a hand on me unless I allow it. Understand?”

Baekhyun nodded mutely.

“When we arrive get yourself to a hospital. I made sure to break the wrist. It was a clean snap though. I was feeling merciful,” his chuckle was cruel. “You’re dismissed for tonight and never again will you be assigned to my personal team. If it were up to me you’d be left for dead on the streets, but Taehyung hired you and he was the one to vouch for you. I’ll leave it up to him,” he pulled out his phone, elegant fingers running over the screen quickly, most likely sending a message to his friend explaining the situation.
When he looked up again Jungkook made sure he was facing forward. He didn’t dare look up at the rearview mirror again. The remainder of the ride was spent in a tense silence broken only by occasional gasps of pain by Baekhyun when the car ran over a bump or braked too harshly. Jungkook was soon clued in to the intentionality behind these actions. Minho smiled widely every time Baekhyun couldn’t help but release a sound of agony. It seemed that Baekhyun was an ass to more than just Jungkook.

When they arrived at the hotel Minho immediately jumped out, tossing the keys to the valet waiting nearby and made his way to the right-side door, eagerly pulling Baekhyun out by his injured arm and pushing him down the sidewalk. He ignored the other’s heavy groan and held the door open for Namjoon, who stepped out with an amused grin, giving Minho a pat on the back and adjusting his silk tie. Jungkook waited for Minho and the other bodyguard before taking his place behind Namjoon. It should have been two in front and two behind, but the formation had obviously changed with Baekhyun’s dismissal.

When they met up with Yoongi again the elder raised an eyebrow at the loss of one member, but Namjoon simply shrugged and they entered the gala together.

Jungkook could honestly say he had never been so bored in his life and there had been lectures at university that he had slept through in their entirety. However, it was impossible for him to knock out during this ridiculous gala because he was meant to be working/protecting Namjoon’s life. The boss was currently sipping wine and popping truffles into his mouth, laughing with a group of obnoxiously wealthy men and women, who he more or less recognized as board members of his company. Taehyung had shown him pictures and brief profiles of the board members during their more academic lessons and Jungkook had done his best to retain that information. He was a better student than he gave himself credit for.

There was a live band playing and many couples took up the dance floor, excitedly spinning around in chiffon, velvet, and silk outfits. Many women had shawls or coats of real fur, which disgusted Jungkook who had once sworn off of animal meat for two years. Vegetarianism had been exhausting, but it was rewarding while it lasted and to this day Jungkook refrained from eating meats such as veal and lamb because it hurt his heart to think of these animals dying just to end up on his plate. Perhaps that made him pathetic but he had his code of ethics and not even joining a criminal organization would change that.

Jungkook sighed as a beautiful woman in a tight red dress approached Namjoon’s table, bending over to give a generous view of her cleavage and whispering something in his ear. The message was clear when Namjoon shot her a charming smile and nod, standing and extending his arm before leading her to the dance floor. He watched the attractive couple move across the dance floor, a picture of perfection, for two songs before he shook his head and turned to Minho beside him.
“I need a moment.”

“What? You gotta piss?”

“That and I need some air.”

Minho nodded understandingly.

“These things suck ass, but you’ll get used to it. I can give you 10 minutes, kid, but more than that and boss man would get pissed that a member of his security team is AWOL.”

“Thanks, but, hey, I’m not a kid.”

“Sure you’re not,” Minho chuckled.

Jungkook rolled his eyes but he appreciated the opportunity the other had given him. He briskly exited the event hall, locating the bathrooms down the marble hallway. After relieving himself and washing his hands he stared at his reflection in the mirror, splashing some water on his face to wake himself up and checking his watch. It had only been 2 minutes since he left the ballroom.

“8 minutes of freedom,” he murmured. “What to do, what to do.”

He exited the bathroom and turned to the left, a stone fountain catching his attention. He made his way outside, following a paved path to an enormous garden area. Behind the fountain he could see a gazebo and benches, as well as a pong. He approached the fountain and admired the intricate designs.
“They’re satyrs,” a deep voice broke the stillness of the garden and Jungkook jumped, whirling to see Namjoon behind him.

His silver hair was slightly mussed and a light sheen of sweat was visible on his handsome features, most likely from dancing on a crowded dance floor. Jungkook didn’t want to consider that it was also due to being closely pressed against that gorgeous woman, who got to indulge in having Namjoon’s arms around her, Namjoon’s face hovering over hers, Namjoon’s eyes trained on her…

“Is everything okay?” Namjoon asked, stepping closer until they were both directly in front of the fountain, water serenely flowing from the stone figures to the larger basin below.

“Everything’s fine, boss,” he answered instantaneously.

“Boss?” Namjoon raised an eyebrow. “Didn’t we have this conversation already?”

“I think maybe we should revisit it, boss.”
“What’s going on, Jungkook-ah? Did something happen tonight?”

“Yeah, something did. I realized how foolish and childish I was,” he snapped.

Namjoon’s eyes widened, clearly surprised by the acerbic edge to his words. Jungkook couldn’t blame him for being shocked by the outburst. Jungkook himself couldn’t believe the words were leaving his mouth. Was he really going to tell Namjoon what had been bothering him? Not just that night but that entire week ever since he learned about Park Jimin.

“Okay, I understand that you’re upset with me, but I don’t understand why. Care to elucidate me?”

Jungkook released a shaky breath and turned back to the fountain.

“I took a Greek mythology class once. Thought the stories were interesting. From what I remember satyrs were these horny drunks who reported to Dionysus, right? Half-man half-goat?”

Namjoon’s brow furrowed at the turn in conversation, but he came closer, watching Jungkook resolutely stare at the stone figures.

“Actually, the representation of them as half-goat came from the Romans. The Greeks depicted them as a man with with a horse’s ear and tail.”

“But they were horny drunks that followed in Dionysus’ examples, weren’t they?”

“That may be an oversimplification. They were deities in their own right. Gods of the woods and mountains and being half-man half-beast they had a duality within them of wild and civilization. They reveled in drinking, dancing, and copious amounts of sex, but they were also fertility spirits. Their actions had a purpose, though many judged them and Dionysus harshly for their actions.”

“You don’t? You find something redeemable in being inexhaustibly lustful and unfaithful? I remember in the stories they wanted to spread chaos in their own way and never stopped to consider the consequences of their actions on the lesser mortals,” Jungkook’s tone was laced with venom and as Namjoon analyzed his words, he began to piece together what exactly had Jungkook this worked up.
“They didn’t know better. Their only allegiance was to their master, Dionysus, and in their heads they believed what they were doing was not spreading chaos but spreading joy and helping to liberate mankind from the perils of monotony. The stresses of daily existence take a toll on people. They need a little excitement in their lives.”

“Is that how you see yourself? As the savior of the ordinary and the unexceptional? You find some poor, pathetic soul and *grace* them with your attention until they’re obsessed and unbalanced the way all those people were after one night with the satyrs’ influence. But it’s only temporary, a passing fancy, and then you’re on your way, leaving your playthings behind without a care?” Jungkook spat the words venomously, finally facing Namjoon again.

“Jungkook…”

“I need you to be completely honest with me, *hyung*, am I just the latest toy in your toybox? In a couple of weeks will you be treating me like you did Baekhyun?”

Namjoon vehemently shook his head.

“This is nothing like that.”

“What exactly makes it any different?!”

“I care about you!” Namjoon shouted, making Jungkook take a couple steps back.

“Y-you do?”

“Is that so hard to believe?” Namjoon’s features were tensed, his own breathing slightly uneven from the rising emotions in their conversation.

“B-but I know a-about Park Jimin,” he stuttered and Namjoon shut his eyes, running a hand over his face.
“Taehyung?”

Jungkook nodded.

“I figured. He is physically incapable of keeping his mouth shut.”

“He was right to tell me. I needed to know,” Jungkook stared at his shoes.

“...Does it change things?”

Jungkook looked up at Namjoon, whose face was now carefully blank. He had a talent for closing himself off from the outside world. Jungkook had no way of knowing what he was thinking and despite learning that he “cared” about him the younger’s mind was still whirling in confusion.

“Shouldn’t it?” Jungkook finally answered.

“I can see why answering a question with another question is so irritating. I’ve had a taste of my own medicine now,” Namjoon made a face and Jungkook rolled his eyes.

“Hyung...If you’re in love with someone else why did you sleep with Baekhyun? Why are you...playing with me?” his voice was softer, vulnerability leaking through.

Namjoon reached out to take one of Jungkook’s hands, lightly caressing his knuckles.

“It was never my intention to play with you or fuck with your feelings, whatever they may be. You don’t need to tell me. I wasn’t lying when I said I care about you. I do. It’s a short list of people who merit that from me and you’re on it...Nevertheless, my life is a shitshow and that applies to the romantic side more than anything else.”

Jungkook’s pulse raced at the casual touch and at the elder’s reiteration of his earlier sentiment.

“Then, where does that leave us?”
“I don’t know, Jungkook. Taehyung must have told you how fucked up everything gone because of my relationship with Jimin.”

“Yeah, and he also told me how much you loved each other. That you’re soulmates,” he whispered the words and Namjoon’s heart ached at the pain it caused Jungkook to say it.

“I don’t believe in soulmates.”

“But you still love him?”

Namjoon hesitated, but he couldn’t lie to the younger man.

“Yes.”

Jungkook swallowed loudly, tears threatening to escape his tear ducts.

“That’s that I guess,” he pulled his hand out of Namjoon’s and was heading back to the ballroom when he was yanked backwards, stumbling into Namjoon’s chest.

“Please don’t go yet,” Namjoon murmured, tightening his arms around Jungkook and embracing him with a balance of firmness and gentleness.

Jungkook didn’t fight the tears anymore and he buried his face in the smooth lines of Namjoon’s suit.

“I’m so stupid,” he sobbed but Namjoon shook his head, moving a hand to begin caressing Jungkook’s brown locks.

“You’re not.”

“Of course I am. I should be running away from you.”
“And I should be letting you...Why can’t I let you go, Jungkook-ah?” he pulled back for a moment, dark eyes narrowing in on Jungkook’s tearful ones.

Jungkook gulped at the proximity of Namjoon’s face to his own. Unconsciously, he licked his lips and Namjoon’s eyes followed the motion, darting back to Jungkook’s own again and beginning to lean in. Jungkook tried to calm his heart, but it was impossible. Instead, he let his eyes fall closed and tilted his head up, longing to feel the touch of Namjoon’s lips on his.

“Boss, there you are. I was just--oh shit. Shit, I’m sorry,” Minho’s voice broke them out of their bubble and they jumped apart.

Jungkook couldn’t meet the other guard’s gaze, but he heard Namjoon inquire as to why he was being disturbed. Apparently, the board members required his presence and Yoongi was also looking for him. Namjoon exhaled in frustration and waved Minho away. The other man bowed and departed.

Jungkook cleared his throat, looking back at the fountain that had unwittingly set everything in motion.

“Jungkook, we need to head back inside.”

“Mm-hmm.”

“You can avoid me for the rest of the night. I won’t mind.”

Jungkook huffed a laugh.

“How would I do that, hyung? I’m one of your bodyguards.”

“I’m sure you’d find a way,” Namjoon grinned.
“I’m fine, though. Don’t worry,” Jungkook had wiped his tears away and straightened his suit, making sure he was presentable.

“I’m sorry we were interrupted.”

Jungkook blushed and nodded.

“Yeah, me too.”

Namjoon ran his fingers over his reddened cheeks and then pulled completely away.

“Perhaps it was for the best. We both have a lot to think about before...anything else can happen. Don’t you agree?”

Jungkook nodded again and they made their way inside. For the rest of the night Jungkook watched over Namjoon, trying to forget that he had almost received a kiss from the man that plagued his thoughts day and night. What he couldn’t forget was his parting words.

‘We both have a lot to think about before...anything else can happen.’

He admitted to having feelings for me, he wanted to kiss me, but he also admitted that he’s still in love with his ex. Am I an idiot for wanting to pursue things with him and believing I can be the one to change his mind? He doesn’t believe in soulmates and I know your first love can leave a mark on you forever, but that doesn’t mean you’ll never love again.

Jungkook felt a burgeoning determination to prove to Namjoon, to Taehyung, to this faceless Jimin, and to the very universe itself that it was possible to love more than one person. More importantly, it was possible to fall out of love when you find the one who is really meant for you.

Chapter End Notes

The love triangle truly begins! Isn’t Kookie cute when he gets possessive? How will Joon choose between these two gorgeous, strong men?

I certainly wouldn’t be able to ;)}
Part VI.

Chapter Summary

In the second part of Namjoon's weekend he spends time with Jimin and ends the day at his father's house, where one meeting changes the course of events for all those involved, though the effects are slow to reveal themselves.

Chapter Notes

Because I'm awful like that this chapter explores Minjoon in a different way. Hopefully by the end you're even more conflicted about this little love triangle ;)

tell me what you think, darlings!

Namjoon had made sure to set an alarm that morning. He didn’t usually sleep in, but he had gotten back pretty late from the gala the night before and he may or may not have had trouble sleeping because his brain refused to shut off and instead replayed his almost-kiss with Jungkook on an endless loop. Namjoon still didn’t know if he was thankful or pissed that Minho had interrupted them at that moment. He was already in too deep with Jungkook and here he was getting ready to meet up with Jimin.

He was able to console himself with the fact that he had been honest with Jungkook about his feelings for Jimin and the younger was aware of the history that existed between the two mafia heirs. However, Namjoon had not confessed--neither to Jungkook nor his best friends--that he was seeing Jimin again. It was true that it was in a different capacity than before because they weren’t actually dating, but though it was difficult to put a name to what was now occurring between the ex-lovers it was still something. And Namjoon couldn’t help but stand in his walk-in closet for an entire 10 minutes contemplating what he should wear.

I am absolutely pathetic, he sighed to himself, finally deciding on a casual yet polished look consisting of light-washed jeans with a tan-colored v-neck that matched his Vans. He told himself it wasn’t only for Jimin’s benefit because he wanted to look nicely put together when he visited his father that evening, but he was lying to himself. His father certainly had other things on his mind and wouldn’t give a second glance to whatever his son was wearing. Namjoon had even tested that theory, showing up in a kilt once.

He was driving towards the Han River when his phone rang, the caller ID indicating it was Yoongi.
“Shit,” he mumbled.

Namjoon had never been a skilled liar when it came to those closest to him. Sure, he could manipulate a nation if he had to, but Yoongi asked him if he stole his favorite sweater and Namjoon was stammering and crying tears of frustration (he’d been 12 years old then but still). He’d just have to pray his oldest friend didn’t question him about his plans for the day.

“Hyung, what are you up to on such a fine and beautiful day?” Namjoon chirped, grinning at the exaggerated scoff he received.

“It’s too sunny. It’ll burn my skin to a crisp. I’m staying inside today.”

“Sounds about right. What’s up?”

“Got some info you may be interested in. About your buddy Jackson.”

“Did he double cross us?”

“Yeah, but I guess we can’t blame him for doing so.”

“What do you mean?”

“Did you know Jackson’s boyfriend?”

“Uh, kind of? He went by Bam Bam, right?”

“Yeah. He was basically the one who pulled Jackson back from the edge of the addiction cliff. Jackson was doing hard shit and in extreme quantities. He was one hit away from a heroin or cocaine overdose. This guy saved him.”

“Jackson must have really loved him.”

“He must have because that became his biggest weakness. My sources have confirmed that Bam Bam was kidnapped by Suho’s men a week before your meeting with Jackson. Suho must have
guessed what was coming and decided to intervene before his business was affected.”

“He threatened Jackson, said he’d kill his boyfriend if he didn’t cooperate and turned against us.”

“You weren’t even supposed to be there. Imagine how delighted Suho must have felt when he heard you were dropping by. It would have been the cherry on his fucking sundae.”

“But, against all odds I survived and all of Suho’s men got theirs.”

“None of my sources have reported any sightings of Bam Bam after that night. I assume he killed him anyway.”

“A real son of a bitch that guy.”

“Makes us look like Mother Teresa and Gandhi,” Yoongi remarked sarcastically.

“You’re Mother Teresa,” he quipped.

“Fuck off.”

“Hey, none of that foul language, Mother, you’re meant to be an example for the entire world to follow.”

“I’m hanging up now. I’ll see you bright and early tomorrow. We have a shit ton of work ahead of us, most of it concerning the illegal side of things.”

“Got it. See you tomorrow.”

They hung up and Namjoon drove another few minutes in silence, arriving at the location Jimin had specified. They’d shared more than one picnic at this very spot, which was mostly secluded and at certain hours of the day completely empty. They’d always had to be careful not to be seen together. Namjoon got out of his shiny Mercedes, locking the car behind him and strolling over to the large tree they’d depended on for shade when the sun’s rays were more scorching than toasty, Jimin’s
smaller frame tucked into Namjoon’s as they laughed about anything and everything.

“8:59. Your punctuality continues to be impressive,” a mellifluous voice teased and Namjoon turned away from the tree to watch Jimin’s approach.

“It’s one of my finer qualities.”

“Mm, that and your big dick.”

Namjoon huffed a laugh, shaking his head at the ebony-haired man’s shamelessness.

“Anyone ever told you the things that come out of your mouth are positively lewd?”

“Joonie, no one ever complains about what my mouth does,” he winked.

Namjoon felt heat spread throughout his body. Jimin’s effect on him began the moment he set eyes on him. Add in his absolutely sinful mouth and Namjoon’s nerves tingled, eager to feel the next best thing: Jimin’s touch.

“Save the dirty talk for when we’re alone, baby.”

“Why? Scared you’ll get a boner and I’ll leave you hanging?” his dark eyes glimmered with mischief.

“Well, it wouldn’t be the first or eleventh time you blue-balled me in public, but it’s for your benefit. I’m not feeling too patient today--more bite than bark I mean--and if you try and act like a little cocktease I’ll just take you right here. Against this tree if I have to.”

Jimin bit his lips, cheeks flushing at the threat.

“Voyeurism is--surprisingly--not one of your kinks, but push me too hard...and you’ll have to start liking it.”
“I don’t want anyone else seeing what’s mine,” Jimin’s sweet voice roughened. “Your pleasure is something only I should control.”

Namjoon felt his dick awakening in his pants, internally cursing Jimin for the effortless way he set his body on fire.

“Then I suggest you be a good boy and change your tone.”

Jimin grinned again, though the smile was a lot more saccharine than dangerous.

“I forgot how weak you were for my voice,” Jimin gave him a pointed look when Namjoon attempted to protest. “Please. I know you better than you know yourself. Anyway, ready to hear what the day’s itinerary is going to be?”

Namjoon hadn’t been able to refute the fact that Jimin’s melodious voice could bring him to his knees, but more than that he couldn’t deny that Jimin did know him better than even Namjoon knew himself. He’d known Yoongi and Taehyung longer, hell his parents told him he and Yoongi used to play and scream at each other when they were still in diapers, yet Jimin had the uncanny talent for stealing his thoughts right out of his head.

Jimin’s intellect was always underestimated, most likely because his beauty was so destabilizing. How could it be possible for an individual to be both heart stoppingly gorgeous and highly intelligent? To this day Namjoon couldn’t fathom how Park Jimin came to be. His ex-boyfriend knew exactly how to utilize all his charms. One of his favorite manipulations was playing the “dumb blonde” so to speak and giggling like an airhead until his target was relaxed and convinced that Jimin was not a threat. That was a mistake that cost many a man his life.

Yoongi had once said that Jimin scared the shit out of him because of that disarming cuteness.

‘It’s fucking unnatural. Imagine your puppy turning on you and morphing into a rabid wolf that hasn’t eaten in weeks and tears your throat open before you have a chance to scream.’

Namjoon had always been turned on by that, which Yoongi had explained as being due to his “serious psychological issues.” Oh well.
“You wanna take any guesses?” Jimin asked, snapping Namjoon back to their conversation.

“Not particularly.”

“Come on! You’re no fun,” he pouted.

“Alright, fine,” he rolled his eyes as he crossed his arms. “If we’re by the Han River...I would hope we’d rent some bikes and ride around for a bit.”

Jimin clapped his hands joyfully.

“You guessed item number one on the list! Wait, did you have breakfast already?”

“By breakfast do you mean coffee?”

Jimin’s unamused glare was answer enough.

“You have terrible dietary habits. How have you not died without me feeding you properly?”

“That’s Taehyung’s responsibility now. He stays on top of both Yoongi-hyung and I. Without him we’d scarf down half-cooked ramen and black coffee for most meals,” he shrugged.

“I’m glad you have them then,” Jimin’s voice was suddenly subdued, a note of sadness ringing through.

Namjoon examined him more closely, but Jimin began walking away.

“Come on, I saw a cute cafe on the way over and I haven’t eaten yet. Honestly, I assumed something like this would happen.”

“You brought your car?” Namjoon asked, trailing after him.
He wanted to return to the moment of seconds before, but he knew from experience if Jimin didn’t want to talk about something there was no one on the planet who could force him to until he was good and ready.

“Yes. Hyung’s out of town this weekend. Went down to Busan to visit an old friend.”

“Is the trip purely personal or is there a professional motive?” he asked.

“Personal, I think. He left Hoseok-hyung in charge.”

“Hoseok came around then? You told me only a year ago he still had his qualms with Jin’s involvement in a criminal organization, especially since it was only recently that he became the leader of said organization.”

“They’ve been together for like forever. Neither that nor anything else was going to tear them apart.”

Namjoon wished the same had applied to them.

“I heard about Jackson’s murder,” Jimin didn’t speak again until they were settled into a cozy booth in the back of the bustling cafe, each sipping chai teas and awaiting their respective breakfast sandwiches and scones.

“I don’t really want to talk about work, Jiminie,” Namjoon frowned into his ceramic mug.

“I’m sorry. I know you liked him. I remember how proud you were when he finally kicked the drug addiction,” Jimin’s words were soft and cautious.

“Yeah well, he was smart enough to realize drugs could kill him but not smart enough to see that this business is 10 times more dangerous than snorting coke and bath salts,” he spat nastily, feeling anger bubbling up again as his mind turned to the one responsible for his friend’s death.

“Jin-hyung said...you almost died. Is that true?”
Namjoon sighed, taking another sip of his tea and nodding.

“What were you even doing there? You’re the boss, Namjoon, you don’t need to be doing your subordinate’s job.”

“Jimin.”

“You put your life at risk idiotically. Suho and his sick followers are growing restless. They want to take over the city. You and Seokjin are standing directly in their way!”

“Jimin,” he said again, trying to keep his patience.

“Did you even consider that when you were strutting around like a badass, showing off to who the fuck knows who?”

“Jimin!” he raised his voice, attracting the attention of a passing waiter and making Jimin’s mouth shut. “Listen,” he spoke more quietly. “I wasn’t in the right headspace that night—that day really—and it was rash of me to show up to that meeting, I’ll admit it, but what’s done is done. I don’t want to talk about that stuff, okay? It’s done more than enough to screw us over,” he muttered.

Jimin’s eyes softened and he slid one small, smooth hand over to rest on Namjoon’s.

“That day...it was our anniversary, wasn’t it? You took that phone call from Taehyung right after we slept together and you had already decided to go.”

Namjoon concentrated on engraving the image of Jimin’s tiny hand in his brain, relishing the endless warmth it seemed to hold. Namjoon’s hands were always cold, as if he spent his days dipping them in ice baths, but Jimin’s were like portable space heaters. Namjoon had always been fascinated by those little hands and the power they held in their warm palms.

“I wish it didn’t have to be this way,” Jimin whispered.

Namjoon looked up at him. Jimin shot him a half-smile and turned to thank the waitress that had just placed their steaming breakfast sandwiches and pastries on the table.
Breakfast was a quiet but comfortable affair, each immersed in his own thoughts. Jimin’s hand remained on Namjoon’s for the entirety of the meal.

“Jimin-ah, why are you so slow?” Namjoon called over one shoulder, laughing at the colorful insults he got in reply.

“We weren’t all blessed with modelesque proportions, you jackass! My legs can’t keep up with yours,” he said, attempting to pedal harder to catch up with the silver-haired man.

“Hmm, you managed to insult me and compliment me all at once. Impressive,” he slowed his pedaling until his bike was directly beside Jimin’s.

“Shut up. Have you gotten your fill of bicycle riding yet? It’s midday already.”

“How about you convince me that the next item on your list is interesting enough for me to want to return my bike?” he grinned, moderately speeding up and making Jimin growl as he pushed his shorter legs harder to match Namjoon’s.

“I was going to allow you a ride on my yacht with the bonus of having me riding your dick, but I’m beginning to change my mind.”

“Aw, Jiminnie, don’t be such a sore loser. I’m better at this than you are, but you know damn well you kick my ass at bowling and weight-lighting and ice-skating. And you are never shy about rubbing that in my face.”

“I can’t help my competitive nature. It’s what’s allowed me to excel in this business.”

Namjoon seemed to be ruminating over something.

“I know I said I didn’t want to talk about it, but I need to ask you something.”

“About my family’s business?”
“Yes.”

“This wouldn’t be the best place. Let’s ditch the bikes and head to the marina.”

Namjoon nodded, agreeing Jimin’s decision was the right one and 20 minutes later they were leaving the wharf behind them, open water surrounding them. It was strangely soothing. Namjoon felt a sense of liberation, as if he were entering another dimension where nothing existed except for him and Jimin. There were no external forces pulling them apart, no violence and heartache afflicting them...no Jungkook mudding his thoughts.

“What did you want to ask me, Joonie?” Jimin asked once they were far enough from the rest of civilization for him to leave the yacht’s wheel and have the vessel cruising gently.

“First things first--when did you get this? I was never treated to a trip on your personal yacht before?” Namjoon crossed his arms and made a face of faux-offense.
“It was a bribe from my brother,” Jimin laughed, sitting on the comfortable seat by the deck next to Namjoon.

“What did he want from you?”

“My cooperation. He could sense my disinterest in the business, but he didn’t trust my idleness—which was smart on his part—and bought me several exorbitantly luxurious presents to get my attention, including this yacht, a new Maserati, several Rolexes, and a new closet full of designer brand everything. My underwear collection is worth more than a small house.”

“Wow, and did it work?”

“I guess. I just...It’s hard for me to focus on our affairs—legal and otherwise—when it was exactly that business that…” he looked at Namjoon, melancholia radiating from his pretty eyes and the silver-haired man understood what he left unsaid.

“Do you resent your brother for ending our relationship?”
“I think I resent my parents more than Seokjin. He was only following orders and in his head he was convinced he was doing what was best for me in the long-run. How could he have known he was stealing all the joy from my soul and leaving me a pathetic shell of myself?”

“Jiminie…” Namjoon lifted a hand, intending to cup one of Jimin’s soft cheeks but the younger moved away.

“No, just forget I said that. We said this wouldn’t be about our feelings and the over-complicated shit. All that just got in the way.”

“Jimin, we can’t pretend to switch our feelings on and off. Human beings aren’t machines. We feel what we feel.”

“We don’t have that privilege, Namjoon.”

“I just think that—”

“Ask me what you really wanted to ask me earlier,” Jimin interrupted him and Namjoon understood that the time for baring their hearts was over.

“Okay,” he sighed. “It’s about Suho and his organization. Have they approached Seokjin recently?”

“Why would they?”

“Yoongi’s been digging into things after the failed meeting that led to Jackson’s death and it’s clear that Suho’s getting antsy. He wants complete control of Seoul and he sees me as a key obstacle, one he has no problem with removing. The Parks have always been my family’s principal rivals. I figure Suho’s heard of ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend.’”

“To my knowledge they haven’t reached out to us, but if I hear otherwise I’ll let you know.”

“I...I’m sorry to put you in this position.”
Jimin tilted his head in question and Namjoon continued.

“You know like a mole in your own family’s organization. You don’t owe me anything, Jimin, not this and certainly not anything like betraying your brother.”

“But you’re not asking me to betray Seokjin. I have no problem with giving you information that keeps you alive, Joonie.”

“Survival seems to get harder and harder by the hour,” he commented.

“That’s life,” Jimin shrugged.

“That’s our lives.”

“The only ones we know.”

“Jimin...did you ever wish...no, nevermind,” Namjoon stood so he could rest his arms on the metal railing of the ship, eyes trained on the horizon.

“Finish your thought,” Jimin urged, joining him with his body turned to the side so the railing supported his small, compact frame as he looked up at Namjoon’s troubled face.

“I shouldn’t. Don’t wanna get too soft on you and violate our newly unwritten rules for this ,” he gestured vaguely between them.

Jimin bit back a smile. The truth was there was nothing he wanted more than indulging in a “soft” Kim Namjoon. When they were together Namjoon was prone to waxing poetic about anything that had to do with Jimin, from his physical features to his personality traits or the outfits he wore.

‘I’ve never seen a sight more adorable than you in oversized sweaters with those little sweater-paws you make.’
‘You’re fucking brilliant, you know that? Don’t let anyone tell you you’re not.’

‘Your hair is pure sunshine. I’m going to call you my personal angel. What do you think about that, baby?’

Jimin had chosen to bleach his hair on a whim, wanting to change the color after sporting pink, brown and red. He maintained the honey blonde hair for two years, completely in love with the praise that came from Namjoon. After being told by his parents, his teachers, his brother, and even his best friend Hoseok that he was a “mischievous demon” or “the devil himself” (the latter was a favorite among his professors and his mother) it was nice to be referred to as someone’s “angel.”

When Seokjin forced them apart the first thing Jimin did was dye his hair back to the original black. There was no point in adding color in his life. That had faded when Namjoon left him. Why would he pretend otherwise?

Now, 8 months after their break-up they were together again, distanced from the world and all its pains. Just Jimin and Namjoon. The way he wished it could be. Jimin said a silent ‘fuck you’ to the version of him that had--a week ago--told Namjoon their new relationship would only be about sex.

*I’m on a romantic voyage at sea with my soulmate. If he wants to be sappy and I want to tell him how much I love him, nothing’s going to stop us. Not even my own reservations.*

“Joonie, tell me what you were thinking. Please,” he lowered his voice until it was so quiet only Namjoon heard it before it was carried off in the gently maritime breeze.

Namjoon’s gaze remained fixed on the infinite distance between man and the celestial bodies above them, knowing he could see the sun and that the moon was hidden nearby, awaiting its turn, but also knowing there were stars and black holes and entire galaxies his mortal sight was missing and would have no way of reaching unless technology made several rapid advancements.

“I didn’t realize I was in love with you until 3 years passed from our first meeting in that bar,” Namjoon began. “That doesn’t mean I didn’t love you prior to that point, it just means I was too big of a dumbass to comprehend it. I’d had crushes now and then, felt lust and affection for certain people, but it never lasted. But, then you came along.…. 

“Initially, I convinced myself my attraction to you was purely physical and there was an element of thrill involved because of your family name. You seemed to think the same. It was just a game for
both of us...until suddenly it wasn’t. Being apart from you proved torturous. I was constantly wondering what you were doing and what you were feeling. I doubted you were feeling what I was. That’s probably why it took me so long to confess to you.

“We said we weren’t exclusive, yet I hadn’t so much as looked at another man or woman in the time we were together. Yoongi and Taehyung thought there was something wrong with me and I told so many lies, assuring them I was fucking around but it was never serious. They were appeased. How could they ever have suspected who exactly I was fucking around with? How could they have known I was helplessly in love with Park Jimin of all people?

“That day...it was autumn, a few weeks before my 21st birthday and we were holed up in a hotel room making out, half-naked, a breath away from fucking each other into oblivion as usual, but something told me that was the moment. I pulled away from you--somehow--and I told you...I loved you. Do you remember?” for the first time he turned to see Jimin’s reaction.

The dark-haired man was watching him as if bewitched. He gave a tiny nod and Namjoon turned back to the ocean.

“Thank fuck you said it back, cursed at me for not saying it sooner. We never tried to trace the origins of that love. I don’t know if you fell first or I did, not that it matters. We just did. It was after that afternoon in autumn that I began having these daydreams. It was odd because I didn’t dream of these scenarios, I was always awake when I did. These daydreams were more vivid than any I’d had before, more than the dreams I could remember as well, and in every one we were together. Together and far away from the reality of our lives.

“I’d never before considered running away from my life. I expected that once my father grew too old to lead and stepped down that I would inherit the business. He developed a debilitating sickness and I took over decades before I should have, but it didn’t seem burdensome. It was what I was destined for, so who cared if it was sped up by a year or by twenty? And then you told me you loved me and the future was a blur. No longer could I picture myself as the CEO of our corporations and as the big bad mafia boss running Seoul. Instead, I had alternate realities of you by my side and it didn’t matter where we were exactly as long as it was far from here.

I guess what I wanted to ask was if you’d ever done the same. Did you ever wish we could run away?”

Though Namjoon had stopped speaking and it was obviously Jimin’s turn, the younger was frozen in shock. Namjoon didn’t rush him, simply stared out at the sea, letting Jimin gather his thoughts. However, he was broken out of his tranquil stillness by the loud sob Jimin emitted.
“Jiminie?” he whirled to face him, pulling him into his arms as Jimin began to cry.

His sobs were heartwrenching and his small frame shook with the violence of the motion.

“Shh, sweetheart, what’s wrong? Tell me why you’re crying,” he pleaded and Jimin did his best to gasp out an answer.

“A--all the t-time.”

“What?”

“I w-wanted to r-run a-all the t--t-time. Far far a-away.”

“Oh, Jimin,” he whispered, clutching him tightly.

Jimin’s face was buried in the crook of Namjoon’s neck, crying and holding on to the man he loved with all the strength he possessed.

“Joonie,” he murmured some time later when his sobs had subsided and only mild trembles shook his body.

“Yes?”

“Will you make love to me?” he asked, head tilted up, lips parted entreatingly.

Namjoon wiped the final tears away, leaving his large hands on the younger’s face and bending down to kiss the plush lips he so loved.

“Of course I will, baby.”

“Will you tell me you love me?” he asked next, voice more solemn.
Namjoon pressed a gentle kiss to his forehead.

“I’ll tell you so many times you’ll regret asking me to do it.”

Jimin released a little giggle.

“Impossible.”

“Don’t say I didn’t warn you,” Namjoon smiled, brushing Jimin’s hair out of his face and grabbing one warm hand in his own to lead him downstairs.

He located the master cabin at the end of the corridor and pulled his lover inside.

The door shut quietly behind them and Namjoon, using all the tenderness he felt for the man in front of him, lay the younger down and slowly stripped him of his clothes.

“I love you, Jiminie,” he said with pure reverence.
“I love you too, Joonie,” Jimin answered, wrapping his arms around his neck and pulling him down for a passionate kiss as he felt Namjoon slowly enter him.

The sun went down and nighttime gradually descended on the crystalline waters outside. The two lovers inside didn’t even notice, so lost in each other as they were.

Somehow Namjoon had found the strength to pull himself away from Jimin, knowing it would be suspicious for him to cancel the monthly visit to his father’s mansion on such short notice. He had spent six blissful hours wrapped in the warmth of Jimin’s presence, but reality came crashing back soon enough. Jimin was meant to meet Hoseok for dinner in the penthouse apartment Jimin, Seokjin and Hoseok shared. He already had two missed calls from his best friend. Missing another would be risky.

They had kissed until their lips were numb and finally separated once they were back on dry land. Namjoon drove quickly towards his father’s residence and breathed a sigh of relief when he arrived ten minutes before he was supposed to. He checked his reflection in the mirror and decided nothing gave away the fact that he’d been lost in a paradise of his own making half an hour earlier.

Meetings with his father were always an unpleasant affair. His father was a proud man and the sickness that left him practically bedridden hadn’t destroyed that excessive hubris and arrogance that led him to conquer the criminal underground and establish himself as a supreme authority in Seoul. He still barked orders at everyone, Namjoon especially, and complained that he was surrounded by incompetents who paled in comparison to his own achievements. This time was no different.

“What’s this I hear that Daehyun and his infernal nephew have expanded their drug routes, taking over some of our long-established territory?!”

Daehyun was Suho’s uncle, the founder of their twisted organization, and the man Namjoon’s father hated more than anyone, which was understandable.

“We’re looking into it, Dad.”

“Who? You and Yoongi? You each have half a brain and that’s on a good day!”

“What do you want us to do? Start a war over some cokeheads we’ve lost? Drugs aren’t where we make our biggest profits.”
“That doesn’t matter! We look weak if we don’t stand against those cocksuckers! They won’t stop with our drug routes. They’ll go after our arms business and our legal corporations. They’ll exterminate us, Namjoon. I order you to pull your head out of your ass and do something, Today.”

“What exactly would you have me do?”

His father gave him a feral smile, making Namjoon’s blood run cold.

“He want us to what?” Yoongi was not pleased when Namjoon showed up at his apartment at 10:30 that night, Taehyung in tow, as he had been rudely woken up from a four hour nap before his regular sleep time.

“He wants us to kill their drug runners. And not just the ones encroaching on our territory. He wants us to wipe out all the districts bordering Gangnam.”

“Okay, I don’t doubt we can get the information on his guys and theoretically hunt them down tonight if we wanted to. We have the resources, but is this really the right call? We’d set off World War III,” Taehyung pointed out.

Namjoon gave a grim nod.

“I know.”

“You’re in charge now, Namjoon, not that old bastard!” Yoongi complained. “Why would we do anything he says?”

“...He threatened to turn the board against me if I didn’t.”

“What?” his friends asked in shocked unison.

“You know most of the board is still under his thumb, most of which hold me in utter contempt and believe one of them should have been asked to take over not me. They see me as an unworthy child.”
“Stupid fuckers,” Taehyung growled.

“We can’t hope to sustain our businesses without the legal side and that depends on the board’s support, which my father controls.”

“I can’t believe we were upset when he had his stroke. I’m actively praying for him to die,” Yoongi grumbled.

“Hyung!” Taehyung elbowed him, shooting Namjoon an apologetic look but Namjoon shook his head.

“Don’t worry about it. I make the occasional prayer for the same thing. He was a shitty father. The only reason he didn’t abandon me like my mother did was that he needed me. I was his only heir after all.”

“I’m sorry,” Taehyung said.

“We can’t change the past.”

“Yeah, but now he’s fucking up the future,” Yoongi stated. “We can’t do this, Joon. We aren’t prepared for the retaliation. We don’t know enough about our enemy yet.”

“I don’t have a choice,” he put his head in his hands, the picture of despair, a complete 180 from the expression of bliss he’d had just that morning when he’d been able to hold Jimin close and get to hear that melodious voice tell him how much he loved him.

Taehyung slid closer on the leather couch and hugged Namjoon with one arm.

“We’ll figure it out, hyungie. Together. Whatever the consequences are, I promise we’ll always be here for you.”

“I detest group hugs, but yeah same here. You know I’d take a fucking bullet for you,” Yoongi said with the blend of nonchalance and intensity only he could pull off.

“Thank you,” Namjoon whispered.
“Let’s get this shit over with then,” Yoongi said, taking out his cell phone and making the calls to assemble their men and order them to kill Suho and Daehyung’s drug runners.

By tomorrow morning there would be more than 50 corpses littering the streets of Seoul.
Chapter Summary

We tune back into Jungkook's life as the end of the month arrives and the mafia recruit must decide whether to accept or reject Namjoon's offer and become his personal bodyguard. Tensions only grown between Namjoon and Suho's organizations.

Chapter Notes

Last update on this fic for the week! If I have time I will update my vampire au this week too. I was feeling particularly inspired these last few days and had these chapters mostly outlined.

fluff and angst continue (as they always do)

Warning: description of extreme violence and gore (but it's super brief, don't worry!)

Jungkook had just come out of the shower when his phone rang. He checked the caller ID, which revealed it was Taehyung.

“How are you doing, little bunny?” the elder brunette chirped.

“Would you stop with that? I told you I hated that nickname!” he complained.

“Alright, don’t throw a fit about it. Are you busy right now?”

“Uh, no, but it’s my day off, isn’t it?”

“Yep, it is, but it’s also the end of the month which means…” he trailed off, expecting Jungkook to finish the sentence.

“It’s time to tell you my decision.”
“Actually, it’s time to tell Namjoon-hyung your decision. He wants you to stop by his office before the end of the day to let him know.”

“Should I tell you now?”

“Nah, I like the suspense of it all. I’ll find out tomorrow. Let me just ask you one thing: did you make the choice that’s truly going to make you happy?”

Jungkook considered the question. It had been almost 3 weeks since the gala where he and Namjoon almost kissed. He hadn’t seen his boss since. Taehyung had informed him of the ongoing battle between their organization and Suho’s, including the hit Namjoon’s father had ordered on a total of 64 of the enemy’s drug runners. Since then there were drug runners and arms dealers in their organization that had gone missing, as well as long-time customers who were suddenly uninterested in business with Namjoon.

The legal side of things was still in top-shape, but Yoongi and Namjoon were worried. Everyone was waiting for the other shoe to drop. It was one of the reasons Jungkook had decided to accept Namjoon’s offer. He couldn’t deny the feelings he had for the silver-haired man and all the training he’d endured had prepared him to become one of the company’s greatest assets. He would be the best bodyguard in the history of bodyguards. He’d saved Namjoon’s life once, he had no qualms with making it his daily objective.

“I think so, hyung.”

“Well, then that’s what matters. I’ll see you tomorrow, baby bun.”

Taehyung hung up, chuckling to himself, before Jungkook could protest the pet name.

He didn’t have any major plans for his day off and he’d already been to the gym and to the grocery store. It was depressing hanging around his crappy apartment. His showers were never warm nor cool. It was either boiling hot or freeze your balls off cold. There was no central heating or air conditioning, so it was up to him to buy a few fans and space heaters. The lighting was like six times his age and were prone to flicker every other day. It was only one room and a closet of a bathroom, which meant Jungkook’s old mattress was always ten steps away from the rusting stove.
Since he began working at Namjoon’s organization he’d been receiving a steady paycheck that was more money than he’d ever held in one hand. He’d already opened a savings account for himself at the bank, promising himself he would leave the money there until he could afford a beautiful apartment in an area of town that didn’t make him fear for his life every time he came home after 7 P.M. Though his “salary” was substantial, it would take him another three or four months to be able to sustain himself in a new apartment with utilities, groceries, and furniture that wasn’t dilapidated.

For this reason, he took one look at the doom and gloom that was his living quarters and decided he’d walk to the boss’ main office. It was already late-afternoon and by foot the distance from Jungkook’s apartment to the posh company building was give or take an hour and a half. He grabbed his headphones, his phone and his keys and was out the door.

When he finally arrived, he’d already gone through two Epik High albums and was just starting an old Eminem one. He pocketed the headphones and entered the building. He’d never actually visited the main offices or seen where Namjoon spent the majority of his time. He’d been hired in the back office of The Magic Shop and his day to day training and lessons with Taehyung and the others was at the special compound at the edge of the city. This was something else.

Jungkook’s jaw was agape as he walked through the lobby towards the help desk manned by three employees—a man and two women—dressed as elegantly as if they were attending the wedding of a celebrity.

“Good evening, I’m here to see Kim Namjoon,” Jungkook had bowed respectfully and kept his tone clear and carefully measured.

The woman in the center seat inspected him from head to toe and from the look of disdain she gave him he had not met whatever standard was in her mind.

“The boss isn’t seeing anyone at this time. He’s in an important meeting. You—whoever you are—will have to come back tomorrow,” her tone was unkind and the other two behind the desk were whispering to each other and shooting him looks that were not at all subtle.

“My name’s Jungkook and I was sent here by Kim Taehyung. I’m sure if you alert Namjoon-ssi about my arrival he’ll see me. He’s expecting me.”

“I’m sorry, sir, but I told you that cannot be. Neither Taehyung-ssi nor Namjoon-ssi would be associating with characters such as yourself, so you can give up the charade now,” she turned her nose up at him.
Jungkook could hear the other two talking about the poor state of his clothes. He was in a simple pair of jeans and a blue hoodie. His Converse were pretty beat-up, but it gave them a quaint, worn-in look. He didn’t look dirty or anything. His hair was brushed out of his face and he had worn the best/only cologne he owned. He didn’t deserve this treatment from people who were judging him solely based on appearances.

He was about to dial Taehyung’s number, not having Namjoon’s in his cell phone, to see if he’d be able to resolve the situation when he heard his name called. He turned his head to the right and saw Min Yoongi stepping out of the gold elevator.

“Jungkook-ah, you certainly took your time. We were in a meeting that would never end for 3 full hours and were about to head home. Namjoon’s still upstairs in the conference room but another 15 minutes and you would have missed him.”

“Oh, I apologize, hyung,” he bowed regretfully. “I would have explained myself sooner, but I was told I had no business being here.”

“What?”

“I gave my name to this lady and informed her I was sent by Taehyung-ssi to speak to Namjoon-ssi, but was firmly denied.”

Yoongi whirled on the three at the front desk with unrestrained irritation. The woman who had spoken so haughtily to Jungkook was practically cowering behind the other woman.

“Is this true?” Yoongi’s low voice seemed to boom through the quiet lobby.

“I-I, uh, y-yes, sir it is, but I d-did not think he was truly allowed near the boss,” she stuttered nervously.

“Do you think that’s your decision to make? That it is you who sets the criteria for who Kim Namjoon can or cannot see?”
She was visibly shaking now as Yoongi took careful steps to the front desk and casually leaned against it, folding his hands together.

“I’m going to count this as a warning—the only warning you get—and if I ever hear that you took it upon yourself to interfere in the CEO’s life in any way...Well, let’s just say a pink slip is not all you’ll be receiving,” the threat underlying his calm words was undeniable.

“Y-yes, s-sir. I completely understand, sir. Never again,” she bowed repeatedly until Yoongi rolled his eyes and waved a hand dismissively. “Jungkook.”

“Yes, hyung?”

“I’m heading home, but you should hurry upstairs. Our main offices are on the 20th floor. There should still be a few people around who can direct you to the primary conference room if you can’t locate it yourself.”

“Yes, hyung. Thank you.”

He nodded and exited the building. Jungkook turned back to the three at the front desk and gave a small smile before heading towards the elevators.

“He called Min Yoongi hyung,” one of the bewildered employees said as the elevator doors closed.

Jungkook laughed to himself.

When the elevator doors opened on the 20th floor Jungkook was yet again amazed by the extravagance of the building. The carpet Jungkook’s Converse were treading on looked insanely expensive. The entire floor had an air of luxury, the scent reminding him of the designer perfume section at the mall. He didn’t see any employees around, so he walked down a random corridor, reading the names on the doors. At the end of that corridor he spotted an open door where light was shining through. It looked like a conference room, though he didn’t know if it was the main one Yoongi had been referring to. Either way if there was a light on there was most likely a person there and they could point him towards Namjoon’s office.

“Excuse me, I’m sorry to bother you but—oh, hyung,” Jungkook had knocked on the door and begun speaking before noticing that the lone figure hunched over a pile of documents was the very man he’d been searching for.
“Jungkook. I was about to give up all hope of seeing you today,” his dimpled smile made his pulse race like it always did and Jungkook’s answering smile was more bashful than usual.

“Ah, I apologize, hyung. I decided to walk here and time got away from me.”

“Don’t worry about it. Let me just skim this last paragraph and we can head to my office. I assume you’re ready to give me your decision?”

“I am.”

“Okay, great. One minute please.”

Jungkook nodded, waiting patiently for the CEO to finish whatever he was reading before he closed the folder with a graceful flick of his wrist and gathered the documents in his arms to take back to his office.

“Thanks for waiting. I’ll drop these off with my assistant so she can finally go home,” he led the way as he spoke, Jungkook falling into step beside him. “Sometimes I feel insanely guilty when I stay too late because Myunghee refuses to leave until I do. She thinks she’s my mother, honestly.”

Jungkook laughed.

“Do you always stay until this hour? Are you a workaholic?”

“No!”

“Hyung, are you lying?” Jungkook fixed him with a knowing look and Namjoon sighed.

“Fine...I may be overly dedicated to my job. Who isn’t?”

“Sounds like you’re making excuses, but whatever.”
“Yah, Jeon Jungkook, you’re supposed to be on my side, remember? Not highlighting my flaws.”

They both laughed and Jungkook couldn’t help but stare at the handsome face he’d so missed for the last couple of weeks. He hadn’t forgotten the vow he’d made to the universe to carve a place for himself in Namjoon’s heart. It may have sounded creepy, but of course it was all figurative. Jungkook’s feelings for his boss were now impossible to ignore and hearing that the older man cared about him and considered him one of the select few on that list had caused butterflies to blossom in his tummy. He could feel them fluttering inside him as Namjoon spoke, their hands brushing slightly as they walked.

“So? Are you going to put me out of my misery anytime soon or…”

“Huh?” Jungkook inquired, a bit lost at the turn at the conversation, probably because his mind had been concentrated on Namjoon’s golden skin and his pretty cheekbones...his thick lips...his broad shoulders...the low timbre his magnetic voice could reach…

“Did you decide if you wanted to accept the position as my personal bodyguard? Jungkook, hello?” Namjoon waved a hand in front of his face, making the younger blink and shoot him an embarrassed smile and blush.

“S-sorry.”

“What _were_ you thinking about, Jungkookie?” he smirked.

“N-nothing. Don’t worry about it, hyung. Uh, anyway, I have an answer for you.”

Namjoon had turned right, letting Jungkook see a comfortable waiting area and a set of wooden doors that must have led to his office.

“I accept,” he finally breathed out.

Namjoon’s steps faltered and then stopped. He turned to Jungkook with a mile-long smile.
“Really?”

“Yes. I believe I can do the job better than anyone else. You can trust me.”


Jungkook ducked his head and smiled up at him. They stood there for what felt like hours smiling stupidly at each other until Namjoon cleared his throat and began walking toward his assistant’s desk.

“That’s strange,” he commented and Jungkook followed him, stopping in front of the desk next to the elder.

“What is? Whoa, what happened here?”

The desk was destroyed. Papers and folders were ripped to pieces. There were pens and staples everywhere. A purse, which must have belonged to Namjoon’s assistant, was spilled behind the desk and the cashmere coat was rumpled and dirty on the ground, as if it had been stepped on repeatedly.

Namjoon placed the documents on the desk and slipped a hand into the hidden sheathe strapped to his ankle, revealing a sharp blade.

“Are you carrying?” he asked.

“No. Taehyung doesn’t let us take any weapons from the compound unless we’re on a mission. At least not those of us who are still recruits,” Jungkook’s eyes were wide.

“Fuck, that’s right. Okay, stay behind me,” he whispered.

“No, hyung, I’m your bodyguard now. Give me the knife, I’ll go first,” he said bravely but Namjoon snorted.
“You’re adorable, Kookie, but you’re not Iron Man. You may have better combat training than me now, but I have the only weapon and I won’t put your life at risk the first day you become my bodyguard. That just wouldn’t sit well with me. Stay alert, come on.”

Jungkook didn’t protest again and followed Namjoon closely, grabbing the letter opener he spied on the floor, among a chaotic mess of other office supplies. It was better than entering empty-handed. Namjoon nodded in approval when he saw the makeshift weapon Jungkook had armed himself with and continued forward. The doors to his office were closed, but the light was on, slivers of it spilling out from beneath the heavy oak doors.

“Ready?” he asked and Jungkook nodded mutely. “Okay, 1, 2, 3, go,” he pushed the door open, knife at the ready and froze at the sight they were greeted with.

“Oh my god,” Jungkook gasped. “Was--was this…”

“Yes, My assistant, Myunghee,” Namjoon responded numbly, taking in what remained of his pretty, loyal assistant.

Myunghee was fresh out of college. She had such spirit and endless potential. Namjoon knew she was meant for greater things than being his assistant. And now she’d never have the opportunity.

“Do you have Yoongi’s number?” Namjoon suddenly asked when Jungkook was contemplating if throwing up would make him lose all of Namjoon’s respect.

“Uh, n-no?”

“Then call Taehyung. Tell him what happened. He and Yoongi need to be here now.”

“Sh-should I tell them about the s-snake?”

“Start with that. This was what we feared. Suho’s vengeance. It’s only the beginning,” Namjoon said gravely.
Myunghee’s petite frame had been reduced to bloody chunks. Her head had been bashed in and was unrecognizable. Her arms and legs were mutilated and removed from her torso, which was bare. Her breasts looked bruised and on her navel someone had incised the image of a snake. The bloody serpent jeered at Namjoon, promising greater horrors.

“H-hyung? They’re on their way. Taehyung was with Yoongi-hyung.”

“Good. You can go home.”

“W-wait, what?”

“Go. I know this is hard to stomach, literally and figuratively. I understand if you can’t.”

Jungkook steeled himself, taking a deep breath and squaring his shoulders before he replied.

“No. I can handle it. I’m your shadow now, hyung. Wherever you are, I am.”

Namjoon regarded him approvingly.

“Fine, but we don’t need to stay in this room. Yoongi’s the one with the degree in forensic science and psychology anyway.”

“He is?” he asked, surprised.

“We did college in our own ways. Online or with hired professors. It adds spice to the resume. I can’t just write ‘mafia boss’ can I?”

“I-I guess not.”

Namjoon ushered him out of the room.
“I need to make a call to some of the other guys, as well as Myunghee’s family. Wait for Yoongi and Taehyung here. Don’t go back inside alone,” he warned. “That’s the stuff of nightmares. I don’t want you torturing yourself.”

“Yes, hyung,” he agreed.

Namjoon pinched one of his cheeks and gave him a small smile.

“I’ll be back soon.”

And Jungkook was left guarding a horribly mutilated corpse. He knew he would have trouble sleeping that night.

A clean-up crew had taken the butchered remains of the girl away and had begun bleaching and sanitizing Namjoon’s office. By this point, the group—now consisting of Namjoon, Jungkook, Taehyung and Yoongi—had moved back to the conference room to discuss their next step.

“How did they get in? Is our security that shitty?” Yoongi scowled.

“One of the guys got back to me about the CCTV footage they scoured through. It’s blank starting from around 6:00 P.M,” Taehyung explained.

“Figures. They didn’t seem like the sloppy type. No one saw them come in or exit the building. The cameras in the elevators don’t show any strangers, so they must have used the stairs and we don’t have cameras in the stairwells,” Namjoon frowned.

“Maybe we should implement them,” Yoongi scoffed.

“I didn’t imagine this kind of thing happening. Suho’s been going after our illicit affairs, but this is crossing a line. Myunghee had nothing to do with our criminal organization. She was ignorant of the dark side of my existence. Yet, she still died. Because of me,” Namjoon had his hands clasped tightly in front of him, glaring down at the table, his guilt palpable to the other three.

“Hyung, you can’t blame yourself for this fucker’s actions,” Taehyung’s words of comfort didn’t seem to have an effect on him.
“What does your jackass of a father have to say about this?” Yoongi asked, hissing when Taehyung kicked him roughly under the table for his insensitivity.

“I haven’t been taking his calls. He has spies everywhere, so I’m sure he’s been made aware of it. I could give less of a shit right now. He got us into this mess and now we’re the ones responsible for it. I don’t want any more blood on my hands...Well, at least not the blood of the people on my side of the battlefield.”

“We officially calling it a war now?”

“We officially calling it a war now?”

“Gather the troops, General. Things are gonna get rough.”

Jungkook gulped at the murderous look flashing in Namjoon’s dark eyes.

“What’s the move, hyung?” Taehyung asked.

“Yoongi-hyung, you have sources in most of the country’s intelligence services. We need information on this fucker and his family. Did his uncle really kill his own brother? Where did they come from and how did they end up in Seoul? The reconnaissance process is a month too late but whatever. Taehyung, the recruits, are they ready to join the organization? Permanently?”

“My latest batch, including Jungkookie here, is deadly good. 30 new recruits, all set to join the ranks.”

“Good. Assign them positions then. Ah, what did you decide to do to Baekhyun?”

Taehyung shot him a wicked smile.

“Hyungie, I know you hate not being completely in the know, but trust me, you would have been proud of me.”

“Is he d-dead?” Jungkook cleared his throat, as if that would cover his stutter, but the others couldn’t hide their amused grins.
“Nah, but he wishes he was,” Taehyung winked and left it at that. “Point is, he’s no longer part of our crew.”

“Perfect. I have zero tolerance for obsessive imbeciles,” Namjoon sniffed. “Anyway, the goal will be making Suho and Daehyun’s organization implode.”

“How will we do that?”

“Carefully. It’s true that we don’t know a lot about the structure of their business, mainly what they use on the legal side of things to fund their underground business, but we are sure of one thing,” he shared a look with Yoongi, who seemed to understand his mental telepathy and nodded.

“He has a shit ton of government employees on his payroll. Mainly dirty judges and magistrates, as well as several ministers.”

“Do you know which ones?” Jungkook asked, making a wordless sound of awe when Yoongi nodded with complete confidence.

“I figured that out a long time ago. I have the list on my laptop.”

“Hmm, I think we should pay some of these honorable men a visit. Don’t you think, Tae-ah?” Namjoon’s words were sharp and dangerous, matching the expression on Taehyung’s striking face.

“Just say when you need me, hyung. I’ll gladly pack my favorite...toys and join you.”

“Go over the list with Yoongi-hyung tonight. I’ll leave it up to you to decide who we waste our time speaking to and who merits a quick shot to the head.”

“Aw, sometimes I wish I was a sniper,” Taehyung pouted. “They get to have way more fun,” he stage-whispered to Jungkook, whose eyes widened.

“That’s it for today. I’m sorry I had to bother you at all,” Namjoon apologized, but his friends waved it off.
“It’s fine,” Yoongi said.

“Are you sure? Didn’t I...interrupt anything?” Namjoon’s smile was mischievous and the flush on his oldest friend’s face was evident even to Jungkook.

“No!” He protested at the same time that Taehyung shouted a “You absolutely did!”

Namjoon chuckled, seeing Yoongi glare warningly at the young brunette, who only shot him a dopey smile.

“I won’t ask. Tell me when you want to tell me,” Namjoon stood, waving a goodbye over his shoulder.

“Goodbye, Yoongi-hyung, Taehyung,” Jungkook bowed respectfully and jogged after his new charge.

“No you have a car?” Namjoon asked as they took the elevator to the parking level.

“Yeah, right. I can’t even afford those remote-controlled cars children play with,” Jungkook said with a certain amount of bitterness.

Namjoon raised an eyebrow.

“I must not be paying you enough.”

“No, you are! I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to sound ungrateful,” he was quick to placate the other, but Namjoon only laughed, unbothered by the younger’s honesty.

“I didn’t think you were being ungrateful. I know your apartment is a hellhole and the entire building should be torn down.”

“It’s my job to know everything about the people I employ. And, well, you’re a special case, so all the more reason to familiarize myself with your lifestyle.”

“Oh,” he said with a significant blush coloring his cheeks.

“But you won’t have to worry about that anymore,” Namjoon whipped his keys out of his pocket, unlocking the luxury car he’d decided to drive to work that day—a silver Lexus.

“What do you mean?” Jungkook got into the passenger seat.

“You’re not ever returning to that rat’s nest,” he spoke matter-of-factly.

Jungkook blinked, equal parts confused and offended. It wasn’t like he was proud of where he lived, but he had worked hard to pay off the student loans he’d acquired in the time he’d spent at university with odd jobs. He juggled three at one point to afford the rent and pay off his debts. His apartment at least represented his struggle to live independently without having to crawl back to his parents with his tail between his legs.

“Jungkook? I apologize. Did I hurt your feelings?” Namjoon was perceptive but Jungkook shook his head.

“No, I’m okay.”

“It wasn’t my intention to belittle you. Your life hasn’t been easy and you were doing the best you could. I just want to offer you an alternative to that continuous hardship. Will you let me?”

They were stopped at a red light and Namjoon had looked over him plaintively, almond eyes boring into his soul. Jungkook felt like the helpless moth drawn to the proverbial flame. He’d be happy to burn to ashes as long as Namjoon was the one responsible for his combustion.

“Yes, hyung,” he finally whispered.
Namjoon’s answering smile took his breath away.

“Oh.My. God,” Jungkook gasped, perhaps overdramatically but mainly because it was warranted.

Namjoon chuckled.

“I’m guessing you like my apartment.”

“A-apartment? Even a word like penthouse is insufficient to describe this--this utopia.”
“Would you like to see your room?” Namjoon came up behind him, surprising Jungkook who had been staring open-mouthed at the incredible view of Seoul at night, hands pressed to the glass and everything.

“M-my room? What Taehyung said was true? Now that I’m your bodyguard I get a room in your
“Keeping my safe is a 24/7 job. The closer you are to me the better, right?” his words were playful but Jungkook nodded seriously.

“I’ll protect you, hyung. No one will hurt you when I’m around.”

An emotion Jungkook couldn’t catch flashed through Namjoon’s eyes, but it was gone when he looked again and he was forced to shrug it off.

“It’s usually a guest room, but it offers ample space for someone to use permanently. There’s an adjacent bathroom that will be for your use only and the walk-in closet should hopefully fit all of your clothes and belongings, which will be brought over tomorrow. I already texted the movers. By the time we get back to the apartment you’ll be all moved in.”

“Oh wow. Thank you so much.”

“For tonight I can lend you some clothes to sleep in. There are toiletries under the sink in your bathroom. Let me know if anything’s missing. Are you hungry?”

“No, not really. I...I don’t think I can eat tonight after what I saw. I skipped dinner, but seeing that poor woman like that...Sorry. I’m being weak.”

Namjoon placed a hand on his head, making Jungkook tilt his head up, heart-rate increasing at the sudden proximity.

“You aren’t weak or stupid or childish or any of those pernicious words you’ve thrown at yourself. You’re you. Jeon Jungkook. And that’s someone you should be very proud of. Got it?”

“Got it,” he repeated, awe-stricken by the beautiful force that was Namjoon, the profound speech Taehyung had made about him weeks before coming back to him.

“You’ll have to get accustomed to my work schedule now that you’ll become a fixture by my side. You’ll still see Taehyung for additional training because your skills can always be sharpened, but I’ll go with you to the compound. I like to do my own training.”
“Really? That’s cool. Maybe we can spar!”

“I think you’d kick my ass,” Namjoon snorted and Jungkook laughed.

“But I’d do it respectfully.”

Namjoon barked a loud laugh.

“I’m sure you would. Set your alarm for 7 AM. I want to be at the office at 8 sharp. The driver will be here at precisely 7:30.”

“I understand. I’ll be ready, hyung.”

“Your cell phone works, right?”

Jungkook’s brow furrowed as he took out his phone. It was an old iPhone 5 with cracks on the screen and shitty coverage. He couldn’t even send a text when it stormed.

“Uh, yes?”

“I knew it functioned, at least at the bare minimum, but I wanted to see it. Yeah, that’s gotta go,” Namjoon shook his head, whipping out his own sleep iPhone--the newest model of course. “I’ll have a new one ready for you tomorrow. And a company car you can park in my private garage. I usually have Minho as chauffeur, but if you have a day off and you want to get away it’ll be nice for you to have your own form of transportation.”

Namjoon put his phone away again. When he looked up he noticed Jungkook was nearly hyperventilating.

“What is it?”
“I-I, uh, I just don’t, uh, I-I didn’t expect all of this,” he stammered.

Namjoon raised an eyebrow, asking for clarification.

“I’m not used to...your kind of lifestyle yet. You know?” he felt embarrassed, imagining himself as the immature child before the commanding adult, though he knew Namjoon wasn’t thinking the same thing.

“I get it, Jungkook-ah. You shared your story with me and your parents made it difficult for you to thrive in this world, but you got away from them. You forged your own path and it led you here. You deserve this.”

Jungkook bit his lips, eyes watering slightly.

“Aish, this kid,” Namjoon chuckled. “Come here,” he pulled him into a hug and Jungkook sniffled, accepting the embrace and placing his head on Namjoon’s broad chest.

“Thank you, hyung. I seriously don’t know how else to say it. Words aren’t enough to express my gratitude.”

“You don’t need to thank me. You’re in charge of my life now, Jungkook-ah. You saved me once and I know I can count on you to continue doing so. That’s all you owe me. Your loyalty.”

Jungkook nodded, words muffled by Namjoon’s dress shirt.

“What was that?”

Jungkook pulled away, clearing his throat nervously.

“I could, um...give you more than that. More than my loyalty, I mean.”

Namjoon tensed, knowing the inevitable had occurred. He hadn’t seen Jungkook since the kiss that
wasn’t. The younger didn’t know about the blissful Sunday he spent with Jimin or the many other meetups they’d had over the weeks, each as perfect as the one before.

They didn’t feel the pressure to pretend with each other anymore. They were happy and in love and not afraid to say it to each other. Namjoon would be lying to himself if he said he didn’t feel a certain something for Jungkook. He was beautiful, inside and out, and the dedication he gave any task he put before him was enviable. Namjoon had started to think of him as golden. A golden youth, a diamond in the rough, a precious treasure in a harsh world. Yet...Namjoon was working to set aside these still undefined feelings for Jungkook because of Jimin. He couldn’t be unfaithful to him in any capacity. Not when things were going so well between them.

*I care about Jungkook. Like a friend or a little brother. The same way I do Taehyungie...More or less.*

“Jungkook…” Namjoon took a deep breath and he saw the pain flicker in Jungkook’s doe eyes.

“Oh...You...You don’t want that, do you?”

“Kookie, I just think--” he was cut off again.

“You don’t need to say it, hyung. I-I don’t want to actually hear you verbalize my rejection,” he gave a small, forced laugh, stepping away from Namjoon and exhaling shakily.

“Jungkook, I’m sorry,” Namjoon gulped.

“Don’t be. You’re being honest. I would feel worse if--if you just played with me. You love someone else. You don’t love me. So...yeah,” Jungkook stared at the ground, praying his tears would be kept at bay at least until he was alone in his room.

He was already planning to bawl his eyes out in the shower.

“If you don’t want to do this anymore, I understand,” Namjoon referred to his new position, but Jungkook shook his head.
“That’s not necessary. I won’t run away from you, Namjoon-hyung. I still want to be near you even if...I’m the best one for the job. My feelings haven’t made me forget that. I can promise you I’ll protect you no matter what.”

Namjoon’s chest ached and he had to actively hold himself back from pulling Jungkook back into his arms. The younger’s lip was trembling. Namjoon wished he could press a kiss there and make everything okay for him again. He already missed his sweet smile and blushing cheeks.

“I’m exhausted. I think I’ll head to bed now,” he bowed, making his way down the hall without turning back.

Namjoon thought about calling him back to remind him that he would let him borrow some sleep clothes, but changed his mind. Something told him that if he called out to Jungkook right now and he was faced with that sorrowful face again he’d do something impulsive like attempt to kiss his sadness away.

Things were messy enough as they were. No need to make it worse...
Part VIII.

Chapter Summary

A time skip reveals the novel partnership between Namjoon and his now bodyguard Jungkook as the threat of Suho’s organization only increments.

Chapter Notes

A short little chapter, but an important one ;)

Namjoon was slumped over on his desk, face buried in neverending piles of documents and folders, when Jungkook found him.

“Hyung? Are you okay?” he asked from the doorway of Namjoon’s office.

An unintelligible noise was the only answer he received.

“You’re aware it’s 10 PM right? And you’re still here? It’s Friday, hyung.”

“I’m aware of the time and the date, Jungkook,” he sighed, picking his head up and finally standing from the chair his ass had practically sunken into. “It’s been a long fucking day.”

“I’m sorry to say it’s not close to being over. Minho has the car out front, but we have to get going if you want to have time to shower and change back home before we go to The Magic Shop.”

“I know, you’re right. No use lingering here I guess,” he nodded, collecting his briefcase and suit jacket before following Jungkook out of the office.

It had been two weeks since Jungkook agreed to become a permanent fixture at Namjoon’s side as his personal bodyguard. There had been a few uncomfortable moments at the offset since both were painfully aware of Jungkook’s feelings and remembered the confession he’d made, as well as Namjoon’s gentle rejection. Yet, Jungkook was incredibly professional and had done as promised, dedicating himself to protecting Namjoon without protest. He acclimated to Namjoon’s lifestyle and
his hectic schedule and became his closest companion.

He saw more of Jungkook then he did either Taehyung or Yoongi and especially more than he saw...Jimin. Trying times had arrived since Namjoon’s organization declared war on Suho’s. There were more scuffles on the streets of Seoul than ever before between drug runners, suppliers, even clients. Arms dealings had decreased after one of Suho’s crew intercepted a shipment, murdering eight of Namjoon’s men and stealing the guns for their use.

The last time he was able to meet with Jimin a week ago (making use of the two hours Jungkook had spent training with Taehyung at the compound) had been at a tiny coffee shop on the edge of the city. The first thing Namjoon noticed was the strain seeping into Jimin’s delicate features.

‘Daehyun and Suho paid us a visit last night,’ he’d said.

‘What? Shit, what did they want?’ Namjoon asked worriedly, taking Jimin’s hands in his own and squeezing gently to offer a semblance of comfort to the younger.

‘What you said they might want: an alliance.’

‘Against me?’

Jimin nodded.

‘What did Seokjin say?’

‘Surprisingly, he refused the offer. Better the devil you know, he told me.’

‘I bet they were pissed.’

‘Fucking livid. Joonie...I’m afraid things are going to get worse more quickly than we can all prepare for.’
‘What makes you say that?’

‘If you had been there you would understand. Suho and his uncle are...they’re the embodiment of monsters. The word doesn’t apply to anyone better than it does to them. Honestly, they scare me.’

Namjoon could tell by the tremble in his hands that he wasn’t exaggerating his fear.

‘Baby, they won’t be around for much longer. We’re going to take care of them. Yoongi and I have been making plans--

‘You set off a war. Slaughtered his men and he’s repaying you with more violence. Shit’s hitting the fan. I know.’

‘We’re trying to understand more about his organization. Where that family came from and how they rose to power. It’s a work in progress.’

‘Do you think you can win?’

‘I do,’ Namjoon replied evenly.

‘At what cost?’

Namjoon hesitated and Jimin simply sighed.

‘I’m tired, Joonie.’

‘Of what, my love?’

‘Of everything...I’m going to take a little vacation. I feel that if I don’t get away for a while I’ll self-implode.’
'Where are you going? Alone?'

‘I don’t know yet, but yes alone. I told Seokjin and he wasn’t pleased, but he doesn’t own me. And, let me remind you, neither do you, so nothing you say will change my plans. I need this.’

Namjoon bit his tongue to stop the rush of protests from escaping because Jimin was absolutely right. Even when they were officially dating and Namjoon could claim him as his boyfriend he had no say in Jimin’s life decisions unless the younger chose to let him in. There was no one more headstrong than Park Jimin.

‘Can I ask when you’ll be back?’ his question was tentative and Jimin gave him a small smile, dainty fingers pressing warmly into Namjoon’s large palms.

‘It won’t be forever, I promise. I’ll text you and if you earn it maybe even send you some wildly inappropriate pictures,’ he winked, making the silver-haired man chuckle.

‘I’ll make sure to earn them then.’

‘I love you, Namjoon,’ he said, the sentiment seeming a bit sudden, but not enough to throw Namjoon off.

‘And I love you, Jimin.’

Jimin released a tiny exhale and leaned across the table to leave him with a soft kiss.

‘Goodbye,’ he’d said, pulling his hands and his lips away and leaving Namjoon staring at his retreating back.

Since then Namjoon had received a total of zero pictures and a handful of texts that said the bare minimum. Jimin certainly didn’t want him to know anything about where he was or what he was doing.
“Hyung? Is there something on your mind? I’ve been told I’m an excellent listener,” Jungkook interrupted his thought process, deciding to break the silence in the elevator before they reached the first floor.

“Hmm? Oh, no it’s just work stuff.”

“What a shitty liar you are for a notorious mafia boss.”

“You’re asking to be shot in the face, Jeon Jungkook,” Namjoon growled, but Jungkook only rolled his eyes.

“Fine, don’t tell me.”

“There’s nothing to tell,” he insisted.

“Is it about Jimin?”

Namjoon froze and Jungkook began shifting from foot to foot.

“I know it’s, uh, awkward for you and, uh, me to discuss this particular topic because...well, you know, but if something’s bothering you I just wanted to let you know I’m...I’m here for you, hyung,” his voice grew quieter towards the end of the sentence and he stayed quiet when Namjoon didn’t respond.

However, the taller man wasn’t attempting to ignore him. Instead, he was processing the sweet, bashful words Jungkook had offered him. It was amazing to Namjoon that the young man could volunteer to listen to the romantic troubles of the man he harbored feelings for. But that was Jungkook. Soft-hearted and altruistic to a fault.

“Thanks, Jungkookie, but I’m okay. If depression finally makes me its bitch I’ll be sure to turn to you first, alright?”

“Alright. Sounds good,” he gave him a wide smile.
They made it back to the penthouse in record time—courtesy of Minho’s borderline reckless driving—and were both able to change into more casual attire for the night’s events.
They were riding the elevator back down to the parking garage when Jungkook realized Namjoon was staring at him--or more accurately--staring at his legs.
“What?” he asked, startling Namjoon who jumped a bit.

“Sorry.”

“Were you...checking me out?”

Namjoon seemed like he was going to deny it, but then he switched gears and crossed his arms, adding a petulant frown.

“Where the hell did you get pants that tight?”

Jungkook let out an incredulous laugh.

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me. It might cut off all your circulation and then you’ll end up in the hospital and the employee health plan doesn’t kick in until next month, you know.”

“Namjoon-hyung, leather pants are supposed to look this form-fitting. Do you not own any?”

“We’re not talking about me.”

The ridiculous argument continued into the car, Jungkook taking the passenger seat beside a Minho who rapidly grew more and more amused when he understood the nature of their debate.

“I would never wear something like this to the office, but we’re going to your club and that requires a certain type of dress code. I don’t want to look childish.”

“Regular jeans could convey maturity.”

“Are you saying I look bad? That I should drive myself back and change?”
“No, no you don’t look bad!”

“Then? If you had to describe how I look in one word--what would it be?”

“Tantalizing.”

Jungkook’s eyes flew up to the rearview mirror, connecting with Namjoon’s dark gaze. The silence stretched on until Minho cleared his throat.

“If nobody minds...I'm just going to turn on the radio. Tomorrow’s my day off so I’d like to know if the weather will be nice,” the other man said before doing just that.

He dropped them off in front of the club while he swung around back to park the car. Jungkook stayed a step behind Namjoon as he greeted the bouncers and a few important figures that had chosen his lavish club for their night out. Namjoon tried to make an appearance at The Magic Shop every weekend, either Friday or Saturday night, because it was such a successful enterprise. The club was lauded by critics and clients alike and the revenue was more than steady. They offered good music and excellent drinks, as well as an air of exclusivity that kept the riff raff out. Jungkook wondered if he would ever have earned an invitation if he hadn’t been interviewing for a job in the mafia and was now Kim Namjoon’s bodyguard. Probably not.

“Well, well, a familiar face. And yet one I haven’t seen in a few millennia,” Namjoon teased, leaning over the bar to clap Yoongi on the back.

He was filling in as a bartender that night like he was fond of doing, claiming he liked to show off and make sure the other bartenders knew who the mixology master really was.

“Don’t start, you jackass,” Yoongi grumbled. “How you doing, Jungkook-ah?”

“Good, hyung. And you?” Jungkook grinned, resting an elbow on the bar.

“Can’t complain.”
“No, of course not, how could you when you’re getting laid both consistently and amazingly? And when you’ve finally allowed your feelings out of the steel box you’d locked them up in?” Namjoon clasped his hands together and batted his eyelashes, imitating a teenage girl babbling about her crush at school.

“I fucking hate you. Taehyung told you?”

“I received a call at 2 AM last week where Tae literally screamed into my ear that he was in a serious relationship with his ‘Yoongi-bear.’”

“You absolute fucker. Don’t say that so loudly around here. I have a reputation to maintain,” Yoongi growled, looking fairly red-faced under the club lights.

Jungkook giggled at the grumpy man’s annoyed expression.

“I’m happy for you, hyung. You deserve it,” Namjoon spoke genuinely and Yoongi’s features softened.

“Yeah, thanks,” his smile gave an endearing display of his gums. “Are you going to hide in your office all night or will we get the pleasure of seeing you out on the dance floor?”

Namjoon groaned, shooting the smirking bartender the middle finger before pushing away from the bar and heading directly towards his office in the back.

“Kid, try and convince him to let loose a little, huh?”

“Me? How am I going to force Namjoon-hyung to dance?” Jungkook was skeptical.

“To dance and get smashed,” Yoongi clarified. “Oh, please, with the way you’re dressed tonight, you can snap your fingers and shake your ass at him and he’s at your disposal.”

“Hyung,” the younger blushed. “That wouldn’t work.”
“Are you insane? Of course it would! You’re hot as fuck. I’m in a committed relationship, so I can say that without you thinking I have ulterior motives,” he said sagely but Jungkook shook his head.

“Namjoon-hyung doesn’t see me in that way.”

Yoongi watched the brunette’s doe eyes drop to the floor, the sadness palpable.

*Fucking Park Jimin. He’s the size of a Tonka truck, yet he has the amazingly enormous ability of screwing everyone over even when he’s not around*, Yoongi thought bitterly.

“What if I told you he did?” he found himself saying.

Jungkook’s head shot up, curiosity and hope flashing across his face.

“He talked to you about...about me?”

“He hired you because you intrigued him like no one had in a long time. Not since his ex.”

“Ji--

“He who must be named, yes,” Yoongi cut him off. “He couldn’t get you out of his head. I’m sure you noticed how he acted like an excited puppy around you after you became part of our organization. He gave Taehyung special instructions regarding your training. He always planned to place you at his side. Doesn’t that tell you something?”

Jungkook’s mouth was agape as he listened to Yoongi.

“But--but when I confessed to him and insinuated that I could be more than a bodyguard for him he turned me down.”

“He’s conflicted with the memory of his old flame, but he cares about you, Jungkook-ah. He’s attracted to you.”
Jungkook thought back to the car ride where he asked Namjoon to sum up his feelings on his selected outfit. ‘Tantalizing’ he’d said.

“What should I do?” he asked and Yoongi’s thin lips stretched into an impish smile.

“Seduce him, of course.”

Namjoon rifled through some ledgers and tax accounts on his desk before setting the papers aside and logging into his computer. He was planning to check up on the revenue being produced by the two bars and three restaurants he owned when Jungkook walked in, shutting the door behind him with clear purpose.

“Jungkook-ah, what took you? Did Yoongi lure you into trying his latest concoction?” he chuckled. “Be careful because last time I agreed to be his guinea pig I ended up on the floor, half-intoxicated. From one drink.”

Jungkook didn’t speak. He took a deep breath before striding across the room, reaching Namjoon’s chair and using his considerable strength to turn the chair. Now that the desk wasn’t covering Namjoon’s thighs, Jungkook was free to take a seat. Which he did. He straddled Namjoon’s thighs with his own, placing his hands on Namjoon’s broad shoulders.

“Whoa, what’s going on? Jungkook--

“Shh,” he pressed a finger to his lips. “You shouldn’t be working today, hyung. The only thing you should be doing is relaxing and having some fun. Let me help you with that, okay?”

Before Namjoon could think to ask what Jungkook’s help entailed, the younger had maneuvered Namjoon’s hands off of the desk and placed them on his own hips. He then moved one of his hands from Namjoon’s shoulder to hold Namjoon’s jaw still and then he swooped down and connected their lips in a bruising kiss that sent tingles throughout Namjoon’s entire nervous system. He didn’t hesitate before pulling Jungkook closer by the grip on his lean waist and opening the younger’s mouth so their tongues could begin a sensual dance together.
Part IX.

Chapter Summary

Namjoon and Jungkook discuss what their kiss meant and we learn more about Suho’s organization.
Namjoon makes a difficult decision.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for being such amazing readers and followers of my story. Your comments make me jump for joy!

Here’s a longer chapter that should have your heart at war with itself because Minjoon? Namkook? Who belongs together??

Imma be real, I don’t know the answer to that yet ;)

When Namjoon finally had the wherewithal to pull away from the kiss he looked up to see Jungkook giving him a gentle smile.

“Jungkook—”

“It’s okay, hyung, we don’t need to talk about it right now. That’s not what tonight should be about anyway. I was given a mission and I intend to complete it.”


“Yoongi-hyung,” the brunette grinned. “And I’m meant to help you enjoy a night out without getting lost in that big brain of yours,” he gave a little tap to Namjoon’s forehead.

“Yoongi encouraged this, huh?”
Jungkook smiled.

“Well…” Namjoon sighed. “Maybe he’s right.”

“Does that mean I succeeded? Are we drinking tonight?” he teased.

“What the hell. Yeah, let’s get fucked up,” he shrugged resignedly.

Jungkook dragged him out of his office and back to the bar where Yoongi was waiting with a smug smirk and a round of shots. The night became a blur for the group, especially after Taehyung showed up and urged them all to down another couple rounds of tequila.

And for one night Namjoon felt free. It was a nice feeling. He danced with Jungkook and saw out of the corner of his eye as his best friends swayed together drunkenly but lovingly. He shared a few more kisses with Jungkook, but neither pushed it past that. Jungkook wasn’t looking to be a forgotten one-night stand and the influence of alcohol could force that outcome. When he slept with Namjoon he would be sure to make it memorable and use a moment when neither of them could blame it on the booze.

On Namjoon’s side there was a deeper awareness haunting him because every beautiful smile Jungkook flashed him and every heated touch they shared only reminded him that he was playing with fire. Jimin had not vanished off the face of the earth (though it may have seemed that way with how he had basically declared radio silence) and their relationship may have been undefined but it was existent. How would he explain this night to Jimin? Would he even listen? Knowing the younger man he’d probably shoot first, ask questions later.

“Hyung?” a raspy voice called and Namjoon chuckled, pouring a fresh cup of coffee for Jungkook, who stumbled into the kitchen with only one eye open, hair a bird’s nest and pillow creases still marking his face.

Namjoon thought he looked adorable.

“How’s that hangover treating you, Kookie?” he handed him the coffee mug, the younger mumbling a thank you before taking a few tentative sips.
“Honestly, I’ve never been as drunk as I was last night.”

“Really? No all-night ragers at college? Frat parties that leave everyone passed out on lawns and pool floats?”

“You’ve been watching too many movies,” Jungkook shook his head. “No party I went to was ever that exciting. Granted, I wasn’t invited to all the frat events, but whatever.”

“Did you have fun?”

“I did.”

“I’m glad.”

There was a pause as both scrambled to formulate an appropriate segway into the topic they’d avoided the night before.

“So...we kissed,” Jungkook said, immediately wincing at the awkwardness.

Namjoon bit back a laugh.

“Yep, that we did.”

“...Did you like it?”

Namjoon couldn’t hide his laugh that time. He couldn’t help it. Jungkook looked so cute and unsure in his rumpled pajamas, pretty brown eyes fluttering around the room to avoid Namjoon’s.

“Are you laughing at me?” Jungkook sounded hurt, but Namjoon rushed to placate him.
“No no, Kookie, I was just thinking you were too cute for me to handle with my head pounding like this and my throat feeling drier than the Sahara.”

“Oh.”

“Do you want to know what I felt when we kissed?”

Jungkook’s eyes widened and he quickly nodded.

“I felt protected,” he swallowed heavily, the admission making him feel more than vulnerable. Yet, he knew Jungkook deserved his honesty and he forced himself to power through. “It’s not something I experience often considering my line of work, but I had that last night. With you. Jungkook, you...I told you the day we met that you were special. Sometimes I think it was some celestial force that brought you to my club and to my office that day. I couldn’t have imagined then that I would grow to depend on you so much, that I would put my life in your hands and trust that as my bodyguard you would do everything in your power to keep me safe? You’re young, still maturing, but you have such beautiful drive and determination...I’m lucky to have you.”

Jungkook didn’t dare to breathe. He was deathly afraid of making one wrong move and waking himself up because this had to be a dream, right? Namjoon couldn’t really be saying that destiny or fate had brought them together. Even if Jungkook himself believed that.

“Jungkook-ah, a couple of weeks ago I pushed you away when you offered me something that was a bit more than friendship. I want you to understand that I had my reasons for it and that I still do. I doubt my ability to give you a proper relationship, which is what you deserve, but I want you to know I care for you. Deeply.”

“Can I ask you something?” Jungkook’s voice was quiet, but purposeful.

“Anything.”

“Do you...Is there a future in which you see your feelings for me developing into something stronger? Into...love?”

Namjoon considered the question for what to Jungkook felt like hours but was most likely 30 seconds.
“I do,” he finally said and Jungkook almost dropped the mug in his hand.

As it was the jerk his body had done sloshed the coffee around, causing some to spill onto the floor and onto Jungkook’s pajama pants.

“Oh, shit, sorry,” he hurried to put the mug in the sink and clean up the spill with a paper towel.

“Don’t worry about it,” Namjoon smiled kindly.

“I, uh, I don’t know what to do with myself now,” Jungkook admitted and Namjoon laughed, placing one hand on Jungkook’s neck, long fingers stretching so he could rub his thumb over the curve of his jaw.

“I can tell you what to do. Get dressed. The others are set to be here by early afternoon for an important briefing. Yoongi, the bastard, had no hangover and began calling me before 8 AM. I’ve been up for a while, unfortunately.”

“Oh, okay. I’ll go get ready then,” Jungkook turned around, but before he could take a step out of the kitchen he was whirling around again. “Hyung?”

“Hmm?”

“Tonight if you aren’t too busy or whatever maybe we, I mean you and I, could go out somewhere? On a d-date?” the small stammer at the end made his cheeks flush the color of a fresh tomato.

Namjoon hesitated, but staring at Jungkook’s hopeful expression he found himself unable to reject him again. Letting thoughts of Jimin swirl into a chaotic buzz in the back of his mind, Namjoon’s lips fell into a warm smile.

“I’d like that.”

A series of sharp raps on the door announced Taehyung and Yoongi’s arrival. Namjoon pulled open
the door, nearly toppling over when Taehyung launched himself at him in a powerful hug.

“What a beautiful day to meet with friends, right hyungie?” he chirped.

Namjoon raised a brow at Yoongi over Taehyung’s shoulder but Yoongi only gave a helpless smile.

“He woke up feeling extra perky.”

“Why wouldn’t I? The birds are chirping, the sun is shining, and the four of us had an amazing night last night! Baby bun!” Taehyung turned his attentions to Jungkook, whose attempt to escape was futile and Taehyung tackled him onto the couch. “Accept my love!”

“Seriously though did you drug him?” Namjoon asked Yoongi.

“What the fuck? No! But, at brunch Tae Tae did devour an order of s’mores stuffed french toast with a large cup of chocolate milk.”

“Stuffed with s’mores? Did you have brunch at a candy factory? Damn it, hyung, you know Taehyung bounces off the walls when he floods his system with too much sugar. Your problem always was you could never say no to him. It’s only gotten worse now that he’s your boyfriend,” he shook his head reproachfully.

“Oh, shut up,” he glared, knowing he couldn’t refute Namjoon’s point.

“Um, can someone help me? I’m having trouble breathing,” Jungkook choked out from beneath Taehyung’s anaconda-esque grip.

After Taehyung was ordered to down a cup of chamomile tea to calm himself down the four settled into the sofas in the living room.

“So?” Namjoon turned to Yoongi.

“I have good news, bad news and terrible news. Which do you want first?”
“Uh, the good news?”

“Horrible mistake,” he reproached.

“Then just tell me in the order you want, but tell me!”

“No, no I’ll respect your choice,” he drawled sarcastically.

“Jesus,” Namjoon rolled his eyes.

“The good news is I know exactly how Suho and Daehyun forged their place in this city and what businesses they use to substantiate their criminal workings.”

“That’s great!”

“I’d refrain from commenting until I get through the bad and the terrible news.”

Namjoon quieted, lips turning almost into a pout. Beside him Jungkook hesitantly slipped a hand into the open palm Namjoon had resting on his right knee. He was thankful his gesture wasn’t rejected and Namjoon intertwined their hands easily.

“The bad news is attacking their legal enterprises is impossible since most of them are entangled with federal institutions. We knew there were ministers and magistrates and such on their payroll, but Daehyun made sure to dig his claws deep into the government body. I wouldn’t be surprised if he receives protection from the president himself.”

“Shit. What’s the terrible news then?”

“Well, it’s good that you’re already sitting down for this.”

“Hyung.”
“It involves another crime family, it’s really more of the aftershock to the earthquake Daehyun and Suho set off.”

There was no doubt in Namjoon’s mind as to which other crime family was being referred to.

“What did Seokjin do?”

“Some of my guys had been keeping tabs on our drug runners,” Taehyung began. “After what happened with Jackson that night I thought offering them some extra protection was necessary and having eyes on the ground would benefit us in the long run. Turns out that wasn’t enough. You know we’ve lost a lot of clients and suppliers to the other families, but our drug runners are being slaughtered in cold blood and not just by Suho. The Parks are doing their part to annihilate us.”

“What?! You think they’re working together?” Namjoon was seeing red.

Had Jimin lied to him? Had Seokjin actually taken the offer and set out to do what he always dreamed of doing? Tearing the Kim organization to shreds and Namjoon with it? He could imagine Seokjin dancing on his tombstone.

“I can’t deny or confirm that. None of my guys saw the Park’s crews interactions with Suho’s. Seokjin could just be taking advantage of our debilitations.”

Namjoon ran his free hand through his hair and over his face, body feeling restless. He wanted to jump up and do something, but what? What could he do to change this situation?

“Namjoon, do you want to hear about where Suho and Daehyun came from? Their family originated in Gyeonggi, but they moved to Seoul when Suho was 10 years old. His father died a year later and he grew up as his uncle’s charge. I found the death certificates of both Suho’s father and Daehyun’s wife, but nothing on Suho’s mother. It’s strange. It’s almost like she never existed. I’ll keep digging.”

“It doesn’t matter. We have what we need.”

“What do you want to do?”
“What we had planned. Do you have the list, Taehyung?”

The brunette nodded, pulling out his iPhone.

“Send the hit list to our best snipers. I want them dead by Monday. When I arrive to the office at 8:30 AM I expect a message confirming that the job is done.”

“It’s going to be a serious blow not just to their organization, but to Seoul’s legislative hierarchy. We’re taking out a lot of important figures,” Yoongi reminded them.

“Corruption makes me sick. We have no government officials on our payroll for a reason. I don’t mix our business with the country’s affairs. Call it my personal code of ethics.”

“What about the other half of the list, hyung? The ones you said we should see in person?” Taehyung inquired.

“Pencil them in for tomorrow. How many?”

“Six.”

“Three and three. Send me the names and Jungkook and I will pay them a visit tomorrow.”

“What are we seeking to get from them?”

“Information. As much as they want to reveal...and as much as you can torture out of them.”

“And I thought tomorrow would be a lazy Sunday,” Yoongi grinned.

“Sorry, hyung, but I don’t foresee us having any of those or any days off for a long time.”

“Alright, we’ll keep in contact tomorrow then. Hopefully, there are no extra complications.”
“Yoongi-bear is bartending tonight. Are you coming by the club again?” Taehyung asked, ignoring Yoongi’s protest at the pet name.

“Maybe,” Namjoon said noncommittally, sharing a look with Jungkook, who had to hide his smile.

They were both thinking of their date, though it was too soon to tell Taehyung and Yoongi about it. Namjoon, for one, could live without their teasing and their pressuring.

“Joon,” Yoongi said before he and Taehyung stood to leave. “What about the Parks?”

Jungkook studied the tense set of Namjoon’s features at the mention of his ex’s family.

“Let’s leave that problem for Monday. One shitshow at a time, please.”

Yoongi nodded understandingly.

“We’ll call you tomorrow.”

They said their goodbyes and Namjoon and Jungkook were alone again.

“Are you okay?” the bodyguard asked.

“No,” Namjoon groaned. “But, I’ll have to be. Heavy weighs the crown and all that,” he waved a hand dismissively.

“It must be hard being the leader. You’re responsible for so much,” he said gently.

“Sometimes I wish I could quit, but that’s just not possible.”
“Why?”

“My dad would send a team of mercenaries to track me down for one. And they’d offer me the choice of returning to my position or receiving a shot to the head. But, I’ve also put a lot into this organization and I don’t just mean the criminal side. I grew our media conglomerate and put us on the map with it. I’ve taken this company light years ahead of what my father achieved.”

“Did you ever consider getting rid of the illegal side for good? You’re an excellent CEO, you wouldn’t need to add mafia boss to the title.”

“I tried for most of my childhood to convince my father to walk the straight and narrow path. It earned me some pretty violent beatings.”

Jungkook winced.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. My childhood was a fucking nightmare, but it’s done with. I have a semblance of control now. It would be incremented if my father wasn’t still alive and breathing down my neck, but things have bettered. Thank fuck I always had Yoongi and Tae. And then, of course, Jimin. And now I have you.”

Jungkook gave him a bashful grin.

“I’ll always be here for you, hyungie. If--if you need me.”

“Thank you,” he pressed a kiss to Jungkook’s mussed hair. “So, I have some errands to do because believe it or not but even the notorious Kim Namjoon has to go grocery shopping, but we should discuss what we want to do tonight. Dinner and a movie? Would you like to see a play or visit the club again?”

“I wouldn’t mind stopping by the club later. Ooh, but I would love to go to the movies. There’s a new Mission Impossible film! It’s supposed to be the best one in the series,” he said excitedly.

Namjoon raised a brow.
“How many of those movies are there? And are those the ones with Tom Cruise?”

“Yep! This is the sixth one.”

“I haven’t seen the first five, but if you’re interested I guess I don’t mind being lost.”

“It’s mostly action and gunfights, hyung. You won’t be too lost, I promise.”

“Alright then that’s settled. Where would you like to go for dinner? Any culinary preference?”

“Mmm...What about Japanese? I’m dying for some sushi,” he licked his lips at the thought and Namjoon laughed out loud.

“You’re too cute, Jungkook-ah.”

“Ah, thanks,” he flushed prettily.

“I’ll make the reservation for 8 o clock. Gives us time to get through the boring errands. Do you mind accompanying me? You don’t have to.”

“I don’t mind! Plus, I’m your personal guard, hyung. Where you go, I go, remember?”

“Yeah,” he gave him a tender smile. “I remember...Let’s get going then. The supermarket I go to is pretty far. I only shop organic.”

“Wow, okay, Your Majesty. Do you buy gold toilet paper and diamond trash bags?” he joked.

“The second one is not a thing, but I have actually tried toilet paper made with real gold and let me tell you my ass felt fancy as fuck and I have no shame admitting it,” he humphed.
Jungkook almost fell to the floor from his body-wracking laughter.

Namjoon hummed a song to himself as he styled his hair in the bathroom mirror. He was already dressed and just had to finish with his hair and slip into his favorite leather jacket before meeting Jungkook in the living room for their date.

He had just put the comb and styling gel down when he felt his phone ping in his pocket. He fished his phone out and stared at the screen.

Jimin

Guess who’s back in town?

In case you didn’t get it, I meant me. It’s me.

Can we meet by the park in an hour or so? There’s a lot I have to tell you.

Namjoon worried at his lip as he reread the three messages. He could hear the open and close of Jungkook’s bedroom door, signaling that the younger was ready and would be waiting for him in the living room.

Namjoon made a decision that night that he never thought he was capable of making. He would never have imagined he had the strength to deny Jimin anything. But recent events had caused an uncomfortable emotion to grow in his heart, something ugly and painful, directed at Jimin but also at himself and what they were together. The Park family was using Suho’s attack on his organization for their benefit and that made sense (Seokjin probably salivated at the image of Namjoon’s lifeless corpse), but it didn’t make anything easier. The fact remained that Jimin and Namjoon couldn’t be together.

For instance, tonight he and Jungkook were going on a date. Dinner and a movie. Nothing out of this world and yet a prime example of what Jimin and Namjoon could not do. It was too public and put them both at risk. Seokjin wanted him dead, Yoongi wanted Jimin dead. He’d thought it many times. The world was against them. They were star-crossed lovers, desperately holding on to one another despite the chaos and destruction around them.
Namjoon would give anything for Jimin, would walk through fire for him if he asked, but the only thing Jimin had done in the past week was push him away. If he looked back through their text thread he could see more than dozen unanswered messages where Namjoon tried to ask his lover how he was doing and if he needed somebody to talk to. Jimin only responded now that he wanted to because he was back from wherever the hell he'd gone. It was what Jimin wanted and Namjoon was expected to follow along like an obedient dog.

_ Love’s bitch_, Yoongi had been fond of saying when he found out about Jimin and Namjoon’s relationship back then.

It bothered him then. It was bothering him now.

“I’m sorry, Jiminnie. I hope you’ll forgive me,” he whispered, typing out a message and sending it before he could second guess himself.

**Can’t tonight or this weekend really. Work stuff.**

**At any point during the week works better for me. Let me know...**

**Hope you enjoyed your trip.**
Part X.

Chapter Summary

Namjoon and Jungkook go on their first date. The next day romance is replaced with warfare as Namjoon, Jungkook, Yoongi and Taehyung work their way down a hit list of corrupt officials on Suho and Daehyun’s payroll.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jungkook had to hold back a moan as he shoved another sushi roll in his mouth. The flavor was exquisite. He had never tasted sushi this delicious before.

“What’s the verdict, Jungkook-ah? Do you approve of my choice?” a highly amused Namjoon asked, pausing with his own roll already set to be eaten in his chopsticks.

“If I were on death row and someone asked me what I wanted for my last meal, it would be this. I would die a happy man,” he chewed with a happy smile on his face.

“I would prefer you live as a happy man.”

“Hyung, is that your way of saying you’d miss me too much if I died?” the brunette teased.

“On second thought if you were gone I wouldn’t be constantly badgered with questions…”

“Hyung!”

Namjoon laughed, Jungkook joining in soon after.

“Fine fine, I’ll apologize. Maybe with ice cream?”

Jungkook’s eyes lit up.
“Mochi ice cream? With the red bean flavor?”

“If you’re interested.”

“I am!”

Namjoon finished his plate before calling over the waitress and ordering dessert.

“So, Jungkook-ah, what would you rate this date? On a scale of 1 to 10?” he grinned, lips falling into a worried frown at the melancholia that now marked the younger’s face. “Jungkook?”

“Ah, sorry, hyung. It’s just that...this is, um, God I’m going to sound like such a loser. More than I already do,” he huffed. “This is technically my first date.”

“Ever?” Namjoon’s mouth dropped.

“Ever,” the younger confirmed, cheeks aflame with embarrassment.

“How is that possible? No one’s ever asked you out before? You mentioned dating that TA of yours in college.”

“No, I mentioned being that douchebag’s dirty little secret, remember? We didn’t go out in public,” he mumbled.

“What a fucking prick,” Namjoon wished he could pay the pathetic excuse for a man a little visit. “But, before that in high school?”

“You mean when I was struggling to figure out my identity and why I wasn’t attracted to girls? Yeah, my parents would not have been receptive to me going out for pizza with another guy.”

Namjoon was struck with how unfair Jungkook’s young life had been. Ironically, it made him fit in
quite well with the people in his organization. They were a group of misfits dragged through dirt and gravel by life, destiny, whatever, and brought together by crime. Not the best coping method but they were too fucked up to seek out therapy or religion or something stabilizing like that. Namjoon couldn’t imagine spilling his deepest, darkest secrets to a shrink. The guy’d probably want to slit his wrists after one hour of listening to Namjoon’s life story.

“I’m sorry, Namjoon-hyung. You must think I’m too immature for a relationship with you. I’ve never been in one of those either,” Jungkook whispered sadly.

“Don’t be ridiculous. I don’t blame you for what were shitty circumstances in your life. You didn’t have the privilege of going on dates when you had the world against you. It doesn’t make you immature. I’ve told you before I don’t see you as some foolish child. I wouldn’t have taken interest in you if that’s what you truly were.”

“Thank you,” he murmured, gaze shy but clearly touched by Namjoon’s words.

“Of course. Look, the ice cream’s coming,” he gestured towards the approaching waitress.

Jungkook bounced in his seat, broad smile gracing his handsome face one more. The second the bowl was placed before him with a clean spoon the brunette was digging in. Namjoon, hopelessly endeared by the boy’s sweet, innocent nature, couldn’t help but take his phone out to take a picture.

“Hey,” Jungkook paused, spoon raised for another taste. “Did you just take a picture of me eating?”

“Yep,” he said with a victorious smile. “It was a moment I needed to capture.”

“Hyungie, delete it,” he whined. “I must have looked ugly and bloated.”

“Nope, you looked adorable and delighted and I’m keeping the picture.”

“Noooo,” he pouted, but Namjoon only laughed with a stern shake of his head.

“You’re going to have to accept the fact that you’re cute as fuck and I’m always going to be around to appreciate your beauty.”
Jungkook’s skin was colored with a soft rose hue.

“Always?” he asked softly.


They stared at each other, Namjoon’s gaze too intense for the younger, forcing him to finally blink and give in to his usual bashfulness.

“Um, your ice cream’s melting,” he pointed out, returning to his love affair with his own bowl and escaping the charged moment.

Namjoon simply smirked, letting him off the hook. He wouldn’t be so nice next time.

The rest of their date went wonderfully. Namjoon was a bit confused with the movie’s plot line, but the action scenes were thrilling and Tom Cruise pulled off the role of the protagonist with ease. Namjoon admitted he left the theater entertained. They ended the night at the club, meeting up with a tipsy Taehyung and a lovestruck Yoongi. It only took one glance to see that Yoongi was head over heels for his new boyfriend. Namjoon had been seeing that look in his best friend’s eyes since childhood, though back then Taehyung was blissfully unaware of it and directed his affections at Namjoon.

Namjoon made sure to remain mostly sober, knowing he was in charge of getting Jungkook and himself back in one place to the penthouse. The younger gave in to Taehyung’s skillful peer pressure and drank enough to maintain a steady buzz for the night. He didn’t get as drunk as the previous night because one migraine-inducing hangover was more than enough for him. When the clock read 2:15 Namjoon decided it was time to head home.

He reminded Yoongi to stay in contact the next day as each pair went about interrogating the men on Suho and Daehyun’s payroll and then led Jungkook to the car. The ride was mostly silent, Jungkook dozing off in the passenger seat, but when they were parking in the garage the younger suddenly roused himself and turned to Namjoon with a sense of urgency.

“Jungkook-ah?” he questioned, but Jungkook remained silent.
He was analyzing Namjoon’s face and he must have found what he was searching for because he leaned over the armrest, pulling Namjoon down by his neck so their lips could meet in a passionate kiss. Jungkook let his hot tongue drag over Namjoon’s lower lip, causing him to groan and grant the younger access to his mouth. Jungkook didn’t waste time and chased after Namjoon’s tongue, licking into his open mouth and moaning at the taste of Namjoon.

When they pulled away—purely out of a need for oxygen—Jungkook gripped one of Namjoon’s hands in his and squeezed gently.

“I really like you, hyung. A lot.”

Namjoon felt like a teenager again, breathing heavily from a makeout session in the car, blushing because of a string of pretty words. No one had made him feel like this...no one except Jimin.

“You like me too, don’t you?” Jungkook asked, head tilted slightly.

“I do, Kookie. A lot.”

Jungkook gave a tiny giggle and nodded.

“Good.”

They made out until Jungkook began to yawn and Namjoon pulled him out of the car, the younger complaining the entire way that he wasn’t tired yet. They parted ways in the hallway that separated Namjoon’s room at one end to Jungkook’s at the other end.

“Good night, Jungkook. Have sweet dreams, preferably about me,” he winked.

“I’ll try, hyung,” he laughed, leaning up for a chaste kiss, Namjoon, of course, obliging.

Namjoon threw himself back on his bed, crossing his arms behind his head and sighing contentedly. It had been a great night. He certainly deserved it after what was coming next. Tomorrow (or in a
few hours really) he’d have to wake up to go threaten ministers and magistrates. On Monday he’d have to deal with the Parks’ malicious actions and at some point during the week he’d have to meet with Jimin. The latter was what he was dreading most of all.

He couldn’t even talk to anyone and ask for their advice. His father? Ha, yeah right. They hadn’t had a conversation that wasn’t business-related since Namjoon was 5. Yoongi and Taehyung? Taehyung might listen and try to understand why Namjoon had gone back to Jimin, but it would only be out of respect to his hyung. He would be in complete disagreement and Yoongi wouldn’t be nice about it.

‘Get your head out of your fucking ass, Kim Namjoon. The Parks are poison, pure and simple. You want real love that doesn’t put the lives of your friends at risk? Jungkook’s right fucking there.’

And Namjoon would understand his anger. The only other person he trusted enough to talk about his troubles was Jungkook and obviously he couldn’t bring up his renewed “relationship” with Jimin, especially now that they’d gone on an official date. They wouldn’t be considered boyfriends yet, but that was logically the next step. Namjoon didn’t want to hurt his feelings...At the same time he didn’t want to hurt Jimin’s, who he genuinely still loved.

“Fuck me,” he whispered into the darkness of his room.

The bottom line was he couldn’t make it out of this without breaking someone’s heart. It was coming closer and closer to the metaphorical forked path in the road of Namjoon’s life. Two options. Two people he cared so deeply for. When the time came to make a definitive choice, would he be able to do it?

Namjoon fell into a restless sleep, the question plaguing him even in unconsciousness.

“Did he really shit his pants?” Namjoon’s face was twisted in disgust as he listened to Yoongi.

He and Jungkook were in his most inconspicuous vehicle, a black Porsche, driving to the address of the second man on their list, Lee Yongjoon, a judge who specialized in throwing out cases in which members of Suho’s organization were at risk. Their first visit to an elderly minister that looked a breath away from falling over dead was unproductive. Namjoon had only had to pull out his gun for the old man to burst into tears and confess that he had only heard of Suho and Daehyun but never met with them face to face.

The only name he knew was an alias and they had tried tracing it through a computer but only met...
with dead ends. There was no one in Korea with the given name. A clear fake. Yoongi and Taehyung had also made it through the first man on their list, a chubby magistrate who had a task identical to Lee Yongjoon’s.

“I wanted to puke,” Yoongi said dryly, voice echoing through the car’s speakers as Namjoon was utilizing the in-car speakerphone so both he and Jungkook could hear.

“And he didn’t tell you anything noteworthy?”

“He blubbered on for an hour about nonsense, but after shitting himself he seemed to have an epiphany—probably realizing I was seconds away from blowing his brains out if he didn’t make it worth my while—and told us one thing you’ll find interesting.”

“I’m listening.”

“He said he had heard of someone known as ‘Larkspur.’ This person is supposedly the boss of the organization, not Suho and not Daehyun.”

“Wait, what?” Namjoon was floored, turning to an equally bewildered Jungkook. “There’s someone above them? Who?”

“No idea. Our stinky friend only said he had heard Larkspur mentioned more than once, as if Suho and Daehyun were afraid of this person.”

“So this magistrate has dealt directly with Suho and Daehyun but never with Larkspur?”

“Yep. I’ve never heard the name before and Tae asked around with our crew on the streets and nothing. This is a big player, classified for only the top of the criminal ladder.”

“It’s obviously an alias for whoever this is—man or woman. You weren’t able to unearth anything about Suho’s mother, right?”

“Nothing. She was a ghost.”
“She could be the one calling the shots...A larkspur is a flower. An extremely poisonous one. It’s a lovely purple color, drawing you in to your death. It’s one of the only flowers where the entire thing-from bulb to stem—is positively toxic and any physical contact can kill a human being.”

“Well, fuck. That’s not good news. Some lethal woman behind the scenes and we now zero about her? Ignorance is what gets you killed in this business.”

“I’m well aware. We still have two each on our lists. These are the political figures Tae singled out as being integral to their organization. We got a decent lead already, let’s roll with it. Start with Larkspur. I want to know who he or--what I’m leaning towards-- she is.”

“Got it.”

They hung up and Namjoon pressed down on the accelerator. They were relatively close to Lee Yongjoon’s estate, but he didn’t want to waste any more time. Jungkook had brought a tablet Namjoon had issued him for work (though the younger would be reluctant to admit he had also downloaded various games to play during his downtime) and was flicking through the files Taehyung and the team he’d utilized had put together. They wouldn’t be going in blind as most of these political figures obviously had personal security details and gates 10 feet high around their homes.

It shouldn’t be too difficult to hack into their security systems and take out a few hired guards. Jungkook was excellent with computer and technology in general. He had taken well to computer hacking and grew more and more skilled every day. He had received training from Lee Donghae, a technological expert Namjoon had hired years back.

“Hyung, I’m in,” Jungkook announced.

“Good, because we’re here,” Namjoon parked the car a block from the estate clearly visible in the distance.

“I’m actually kind of bummed this security system was so easy to hack,” Jungkook mused.

“Thank you,” he mumbled, turning his attention to the screen. “Um, look. If you study the security cameras installed throughout the house you can see it’s pretty quiet. Yongjoon’s home but his family—he has a wife and two daughters—are out. Some of his security team must have gone with them because I only count 4 guys total. 2 standing outside the library, which is where he is right now and 2 in the security room inside the house. They’re in charge of watching the cameras at all times.”

“That screws us, doesn’t it?”

“I wouldn’t have said it so casually if it did.”

“You know, you’ve become pretty mouthy. I don’t know how I feel about it.”

“I don’t really care how you feel about it, how about that?” Jungkook stuck out his tongue playfully and Namjoon laughed.

“On second thought, I like it.”

“Mm-hmm. Oh, we’re set!” he called out triumphantly, fingers moving over the touch screen more quickly than Namjoon could keep up with.

“We can go in without being detected?”

“Yes. I set the cameras on a looped feed. They won’t see us go in. We can literally stroll through the front door. The library’s on the first floor and the security room’s on the second floor.”

“We can split up and take two each. I’ll head to the library.”

“Isn’t splitting up dangerous?”

“Jungkook, everything about this is dangerous,” he reminded him, holstering his gun and double-
checking that he had extra rounds in one pocket and his trusty blade in a hidden sheathe.

“Yeah, but...splitting up never worked out for Scooby Doo and the gang.”

Namjoon blinked at him for a few seconds before his lips twisted into a wide smile, unable to conceal the fondness he was feeling for the young man.

“You’re going to make fun of me aren’t you?” Jungkook winced.

“I considered it, but instead I thought I’d tell you how cute you are.”

“I’m starting to think that’s a nice way for everyone to call me stupid,” he frowned.

“When I say you’re cute it’s because I think you’re freaking adorable, okay? I don’t play those kind of mind games. What I say is what I mean.”

“Oh...alright,” Jungkook looked awkward and Namjoon pressed a soft kiss to the corner of his lips.

“I promise you we’ll have better luck than a cartoon dog and a ragtag group of teenagers chasing creepy old men in monster costumes. Stay sharp. Shout if you need me.”

Jungkook nodded mutely, once again wondering if he was living in a dream.

“After you take out the guards in the security room make your way to the library. Maybe I’ll let you lead the interrogation this time.”

“That’s...not necessary, hyung, but thanks.”

“Not a fan of torture?”
“Who would call themselves a fan of torture?” Jungkook made a face.

“You’d be surprised,” he chuckled. “Be safe, Jungkook-ah.”

“You too, hyung.”

They entered the estate together, guns raised, taking great care to keep their footsteps soundless. They went their separate ways at the main staircase, Jungkook ascending and Namjoon continuing down the first floor hallway. He could hear two men conversing in the distance, discussing some sports game. They were positioned directly in front of the door. If Namjoon came any closer they would see him and two guns were more effective than one. He’d have to find a way to change the odds in his favor.

When the idea came to him he holstered his gun and crouched behind a wall. He was a few doors down from the library, in another corridor that seemed to lead to the patio. He had set his sights on a vase perched on a glass table around the corner. With one fluid motion he had sent the vase flying. As he’d expected one of the security guards told the other he would go to check it out. As the guard’s footsteps came closer and closer Namjoon stepped back into the other corridor, making sure his leg bumped into the wall, producing another noise.

It was like leading a lamb to slaughter. The guard came around the corner, gun raised to shoot, but was unprepared for Namjoon’s punch to the throat. He choked and before he could react Namjoon had taken his gun, throwing it aside and grabbing the guard by the throat. He cut off his air, pressing him back against the wall until the man passed out.

One down.

When Jungkook entered the library he saw Yongjoon, a man about the age of his father, trembling and crying from his position—which was hanging from the ceiling... Where had Namjoon found the cables to tie the man up and dangle him over the floor.

“Please! The blood is rushing to my head. It hurts!” the middle-aged man cried out.

“Hyung, where did you get--never mind. That doesn’t matter. Has he said anything?”
Namjoon kicked the hanging man in the abdomen, using enough strength to crack at least two ribs. The man screamed in agony.

“Not yet. But, I’m getting tired of wasting my time here. You know what that means, Yongjoonie? If you don’t give me something to work with, I’ll have to slit your throat. What do you think about that?” Namjoon’s tone was conversational, as if he weren’t discussing cold-blooded murder.

“I found a USB in the security office that must have been the backup of the month’s security tapes. It’s labeled for this month. I couldn’t find any older ones. They must be kept in locked drawers, but this one was on the desk, probably just compiled. It could tell us who the guy’s been meeting with.”

“Excellent work,” Namjoon praised. “Perhaps we won’t need your cooperation after all, Yongjoonie. How unfortunate. If you’re this useless, why should I leave you alive?” he directed his next kick at the man’s face.

“No, please! I can help you!” Yongjoon’s voice was hoarse from screaming.

The man’s nose was now broken, blood gushing out like a crimson waterfall. He must have been feeling lightheaded from the position he was hanging in as well. Desperation clawed at his body.

“Ah, you’ve changed your mind? It’s really for your benefit, Yongjoonie,” Namjoon addressed the elder informally and with a mix of derision and superiority.

“I know where the main compound is. Where they manufacture their drugs and store the guns before they’re dealt.”

Namjoon raised an eyebrow.

“You bullshitting me?”

“No! Please. I can’t feel my legs. Let me down and I’ll tell you. I swear it!”

“Lack of circulation’s kicking in. I tied the cables very tightly,” Namjoon chirped.
“Should I cut him down?” Jungkook asked.

“Hmm...it does seem like Yongjoonie’s finally being a good doggy. Ah, why not? I’m feeling merciful today. Let him down!”

It didn’t take more than five seconds after Yongjoon’s tired body hit the ground for the judge to start talking.

That evening they congregated in Namjoon’s living room as they had the previous morning.

“Who wants to share first?” Taehyung questioned like a teacher encouraging a group of kindergartners.

“We can start,” Namjoon shrugged. “Yongjoon was the only one with valuable information. The other two were kept in the dark about the important figures in the organization. They barely knew of Suho and Daehyung, so they had no idea who Larkspur was. Yongjoon, however, has met with both men in the past month.”

“I swiped a copy of the security tapes,” Jungkook explained.

“Wow, baby bun, you’re like the whole package. Beauty, brains and lawlessness,” Taehyung licked his lips lasciviously, earning him a glower from Namjoon and an elbow to the side from his scowling boyfriend. “Ouch! It was harmless flirting, Yoongi-bear.”

“I’m a jealous man, you know that.”

“I do. It turns me on,” Taehyung purred, leaning in for a kiss that was much too graphic for Namjoon and Jungkook to sit through.

“You’re not fucking on my couch and especially not with me present,” he pushed them apart. “Anyway, we got the location of their main compound. They keep both drugs and guns there.”
“By which you mean that blowing it up would be oh so satisfying,” Yoongi drawled.

“You just get me,” Namjoon shared a wicked grin with his white-haired best friend.

“Text it to me. I’ll get a team on it,” Taehyung assured him.

Namjoon sent the address and turned back to Yoongi.

“And you guys?”

“The second guy had shit for brains—we had a lot of experiences with shit today—but the third was a gold mine. That may be over exaggerating it, but he knew quite a bit about Larkspur.”

“Did he give a name?”

“No, but he did confirm it was a woman. She always uses the code name and the few times he’s met her in person she’s always been with Daehyun and Suho, never alone. She doesn’t speak. Maybe to keep her voice unknown? I don’t know. He also connected her with one of their organization’s companies—the legal ones. Apparently, she’s the CEO of their investment bank.”

“But, if it’s a legal company like an investment bank, shouldn’t her name be on their website? I mean a simple google search would pull up the identity of any company’s CEO,” Jungkook pointed out.

“Obviously. We checked, but under CEO the company lists some other guy.”

“You think he was lying to you then?” Namjoon asked.

“He wouldn’t have the balls. Taehyung had already used some of his favorite toys on him.”

“Hey, Tae, would you consider yourself a ‘fan’ of torture?” Namjoon suddenly inquired.
“Hell yeah! Nothing’s more effective than torture,” he beamed.

“See?” Namjoon pointed. “A fan of torture.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes.

“If they’re hiding her identity from the public, but she’s still running things, how would we get to her? There are no facial records and without a name we can’t do any other searches. What now?” the youngest of the team asked.

“We’ll have to draw her out of the shadows,” Yoongi said. “Starting with the elimination of this compound. The only way to get her attention is to piss her off enough that she decides she needs to step in over Suho and Daehyun.”

“When should I tell my team to do it?” Taehyung looked at Namjoon.

“We’ve already stirred the pot a lot this weekend. Our visits, as well as all the others the snipers are taking care of…”

“Eh, what’s one more act of war?” Yoongi shrugged. “We can speed this along. I’m tired of living with such a big target on my back. The Parks are nowhere near as annoying as these fuckers.”

“Was that almost a compliment from you directed at the Parks?” Taehyung joked.

“Shut up, I still want them both three feet under. I just have other priorities right now.”

Namjoon didn’t comment on that, letting Yoongi finalize the plan. That very night Suho, Daehyun and this mystery woman would be looking at 8 corrupt public servants no longer on their payroll/no longer breathing, as well as the demolition of their main compound.

Ball’s in your court, assholes, Namjoon thought.
I tried to focus on furthering the plot in this chapter! Next chapter, though, expect some more angst and romantic tension as we learn where Jimin went and what exactly he wants to talk too Namjoon about...
Part XI.

Chapter Summary

Namjoon meets with the returned Jimin. The truth that comes out is not what anyone could have imagined.

Chapter Notes

My feelings were all over the freaking place with this chapter, guys! Please let me know how you feel at the end. This chapter is very impactful in the romantic aspect of the story.

It was 8:00 PM on Monday night and Namjoon was still in his office. He rolled his head around, attempting to relieve some of the tension that had accumulated throughout the day. Surprisingly, there had been no retaliation from Suho, Daehyun and the enigmatic Larkspur. Yoongi had opined that their enemies were biding their time, preparing a plan of attack that would really hit them where it hurt. The thought was far from comforting.

The eerie silence from the rival criminal organization did not mean that Namjoon was gifted a day off. The legal side of his business dealings, his company, was in the middle of absorbing a smaller corporation in Seoul and the day had been spent with monotonous meetings and briefings with just about everybody. Yoongi had stopped by his office to wish him a “good night and good luck” before leaving. Lucky bastard. His assistant hadn’t been slaughtered like an animal. Namjoon missed Myunghee. He’d done his best to offer his condolences to her family, including a hefty donation towards her younger brother’s college tuition. Money couldn’t replace loved ones, of course, but Namjoon couldn’t offer anything else until he tracked down the girl’s killer and made them suffer exactly what Myunghee did.

Namjoon was shutting off his computer and packing his things when his phone pinged. He wondered if it was Jungkook apologizing for getting home later than expected. He had left Namjoon’s office around 6:00 to meet with Taehyung for their usual combat and arms training, as well as some extra sessions that were actually for Taehyung’s benefit considering they revolved around computer hacking. The elder brunette had been so impressed by Jungkook’s work over the weekend that he wanted to better his own technological abilities. Yoongi was always complaining that Taehyung was like an old grandfather with technology and could take hours to answer his texts.

‘Texts are so impersonal, hyung! Call me and I’ll pick up on the first ring. Hell, even a Skype call or a Facetime call would be better, but if you think you can yell at me for forgetting about your little three word messages you are wrong!’ Taehyung had hissed the other day.
Yoongi hadn’t been able to argue with his logic.

“Oh,” Namjoon breathed, seeing the name on his phone screen.

Jimin

I think I’ve waited long enough, don’t you? I didn’t bother you this weekend or for most of your work day, but time’s up.

Meet me outside. 5 minutes.

Namjoon frowned, throwing his coat on and shutting the lights in his office as he made his way toward the elevators.

You’re coming to my office? How did you even know where I would be?

Jimin’s response came in less than a second later.

Because I know you, Namjoon.

Namjoon wished that fact didn’t make him ache.

I’ll bring my car around back. 3 minutes now.

Exactly three minutes later Jimin pulled up in a sleek, black Maserati.

“Nice,” Namjoon whistled, sliding into the passenger seat.
“Part of my brother’s bribe package.”

“Ah.”

They sped off into the night, neither speaking for a moment until Namjoon cleared his throat.

“How have you been?”

“Let’s not engage in small talk. We’ve never excelled at that,” Jimin snapped and Namjoon sighed.

“I’m guessing you’re pissed at me for not meeting with you the night you returned.”

“Maybe I don’t have the right to, but you’ve never blown me off before. Not even for work.”

Namjoon swallowed back his guilt.

“Sorry.”

“Hmm, are you?” Jimin’s tone wasn’t confrontational, but it stabbed at Namjoon’s heart anyway.

“Yes.”

“Okay.”

“Where are we going?” he asked next.

“Down by the beach. I know you’re going to bitch about getting sand on your fancy suit and in those shiny Italian leather shoes, but I’m sacrificing the pristine condition of my Maserati so…”
“Got it, no bitching allowed,” Namjoon chuckled.

A tiny smile flickered on Jimin’s face, but it was gone the next time Namjoon looked.

When they arrived at the beach, they each removed their shoes and carried them in one hand as they walked across the sand, taking in the nighttime breeze and the smell of salt in the air. Jimin plopped down onto the sand, Namjoon hesitating before removing his jacket and laying it down between them.

“Sit here,” he gestured but Jimin shook his head.

“Don’t worry about it.”

Namjoon shrugged, sitting on the jacket and letting his feet burrow under the sand, wiggling his toes to feel the scratchy yet comforting texture of the sand grains.

“Are you suicidal?” Jimin suddenly spoke up, startling Namjoon who had grown accustomed to the silence and was listening to the gentle rise and fall of the waves on the shore.

“What?”

“You heard me. Do you have a death wish or something? Life not doing it for you anymore?”

“Jimin, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“You blew up Suho’s main compound. Probably destroyed a month’s supply of coke and crank. Two month’s worth of guns and ammunition.”

“So you heard about that.”

“Everyone has. Minor crime families, crack addicts stumbling through alleys, the cops. All of Seoul
knows there’s a war going on.”

“Well, the Parks are certainly making the most of it,” he snorted, Jimin’s eyes narrowing at the sound.

“Excuse me?”

“Come on, Jimin, don’t pretend like you don’t know what your brother’s been doing.”

“I’ve been out of the country for a week, how the fuck would I? I told you I needed to get away from this shit for a reason.”

“You told me Seokjin turned down Suho and Daehyun’s offer at a partnership, yet your family’s crews have been swooping in like vultures, preying on the weaknesses in my organization that those bastards have exposed. I’ve lost 10% of my territory and 15% of my narcotics supply.”

“Whatever Jin’s done I haven’t been part of it. Your insinuation is fucking offensive. Do you not know me at all?” Jimin looked disgusted. “I wouldn’t do anything to hurt you or even to hurt your business.”

Namjoon looked sufficiently chagrined. He dragged a hand over his face in exasperation and stared out at the ocean.

“I’m waiting for my apology, asshole.”

“I’m sorry, Jiminie. I’m sorry, okay? There’s a lot of shit going on, I’m having trouble deciding who I can trust and your brother’s always had it out for me--”

“I’m not my brother. I’m not just one of the Parks. I thought you knew that.”

“I did. I do,” he assured him.
“You’re making a mistake taking on that twisted family. I only met them briefly and my skin crawled.”

“I don’t have a choice. They struck first. Do you know what they did to my assistant? Tore her to pieces and littered her around my office. Myunghee wasn’t part of my other life. She was innocent.”

“No one’s innocent in their eyes. Any person connected to you--in any capacity--is going on their hit list.”

“Jimin,” Namjoon’s voice was serious, sensing that something deeper loomed beneath all of Jimin’s warnings. “What’s wrong? Why do you seem so...afraid?”

“Because I am afraid, Joonie,” he whispered, resting his head on the arms he’d folded over his bent knees.

“Of what? Suho’s people?”

“Of the effects of their actions. The war they waged with you, it’s affecting the entire city. It’s affecting us.”

“Can you please stop being so vague?” Namjoon furrowed his brows in confusion.

“We’ve been receiving death threats.”

“You’ve what?”

“They’re never signed, but we know they’re from them. You don’t get to say no to people like them. If Seokjin’s been encroaching on your territory it’s only because he’s terrified of looking weak. He’s trying to accumulate more power, more money, in the hopes that it’ll keep us safe.”

“Jimin, are you telling me Suho and Daehyun have been trying to kill you? Your entire family?”
“They haven’t actually made good on any of their threats, I assume because they’re preoccupied with what you’ve been doing, but our time will come.”

“You should have told me sooner.”

“What would you have done? Swoop in like a knight in shining armor to save my family? I assume neither Yoongi nor Taehyung would approve of any attempts to keep me alive.”

“That doesn’t matter. I would do anything to keep you safe,” he felt desperation coloring his voice.

Jimin looked so unattached to every word he uttered, as if he had numbed himself to any pain associated with the topic they were discussing.

“There is something you can do. For me.”

“What is it?” Namjoon instantly asked. “Do you want to hide out in one of my safe houses? Do you need me to help you arrange a trip overseas again? Maybe for a few months or so? I’d even be willing to...meet with Seokjin if that would help.”

Jimin mutely shook his head.

“Then?”

Namjoon would never have imagined that Jimin could say what he said.

“You can give me your blessing. I’m getting married.”

Namjoon realized he was a selfish man and a shitty human being overall. He was a mafia leader and he had killed more people than he cared to remember. He was an active player in both the drugs and arms markets and he tortured to acquire the information he needed.
Now, he was involved with two men at the same time (in some capacity) and despite the fact that he had gone on a date with Jungkook and had made out with him until exhaustion finally won, he still felt drawn to Jimin. He still wanted to love him and have his love in return. He still had ridiculous daydreams about a future by his side. For this reason, hearing the man he had loved for most of a decade say he was engaged to someone that wasn’t him made him want to punch things, made him want to scream in fury, made him want to cry in agony.

“The threats began only a day after Seokjin rejected their offer. There were anonymous phone calls and harrowing voice mails on our personal cells. There were even letters sent to our businesses and our home. My mother decided we couldn’t stand idly by and wait to get our throats slit in our sleep or worse. She told Seokjin to focus on the business, which must have included taking advantage of your debility. Meanwhile, she made her own arrangements. See, she figured we needed more protection because the only way to survive this war would be with the right allies on our side.”

Namjoon listened as Jimin recounted the events of the past month. He sat frozen, hands clenched together in his lap as he kept his eyes on the water in the distance. It was like watching old History Channel documentaries and learning about horrors committed in the past and commiserating that humanity was fucked up, but at least the same tragedies weren’t happening in the present. Namjoon felt oddly disjointed and disconnected from Jimin’s memories, even though most of them had something to do with him either directly or indirectly.

“She knew things would only get worse, so she took a page out of our family’s old rulebook: arranged marriages. The last ones in my family to have an arranged marriage were my great-grandparents. My great-grandmother had money, but my great-grandfather had political connections. It worked out then. It was what established the empire we have now...Seokjin is the eldest, but he’s always had Hoseok and my mother knows she could never get in between them. That only left me.”

Namjoon felt bile rise in this throat. He didn’t want to hear anymore, but he couldn’t find the energy to stand up and walk away to save himself the heartache.

“She made me go on all these dates...It was awkward, but all these men were big shot businessmen or even political and military figures. It was hard weeding out the ones on Suho’s extensive payroll, but she found a way. After the sixth one I felt like I was suffocating. I was lying to you, spending these blissful moments with you and basking in your presence, your affection, your love...I took that week to clear my head. My mother more than my brother wanted me to stay. She threatened to lock me in the penthouse again with a permanent guard reporting back to her. The only way I could get her to give me that time away was...promising that upon my return I would make a choice...I would select a husband.”

“And did you?” Namjoon resisted the urge to clear his throat, hearing just how dry and gritty his voice sounded.
Jimin reached out to him, intending to place a hand on his cheek, but Namjoon pushed it away. He didn’t want to feel the familiar warm touch of those small hands, not when another man would soon get to have Jimin all to himself until death do them part.

“Joonie--”

“Answer my question, Jimin,” he growled. “Did you pick yourself a nice little groom with billions of dollars to throw at your blood-sucking family and a huge dick to satisfy you with? Did you get to pick a man your age or are you marrying a filthy old man who can proudly refer to you as his trophy hubby or his sugar baby?”

“Stop it.”

“What’s the matter? Am I hurting your feelings? That’s funny, you’d have to actually have some of those to be affected.”

“How can you--”

“Did you even try to fight this, Jimin? Huh?” he cut him off again. “Did you once open your mouth to tell your witch of a mother or fucking Seokjin that you couldn’t marry someone you didn’t love or, better yet, that you were already with the man you loved?”

“It wouldn’t have done much good. They would have found a way to force me into it, no matter what.”

“You didn’t even try!” he shouted, Jimin ducking his head and pressing his tiny hands to his face.

Namjoon could hear him begin to cry.

“You waited so long to tell me out of guilt, I’m assuming, but when things got too rough you took your little vacation and came sweeping back into my life--after ignoring all my messages--to tell me this? ‘Hey, I’m getting married. The sex’s been great but ta ta. Hope you don’t die!’ Fuck you, Jimin. Why the hell did I fall in love with you?”
Jimin’s sobs increased, his small frame shaking beside Namjoon, whose own body vibrated with fury and a pang of pain so intense he was surprised he didn’t keel over right there and succumb to unconsciousness.

“You didn’t try to fight this. It’s like you never believed in us. You were the one who came to me, found me when I was trying to move on from you, attempting to get my life back together without you in it—you pulled me back in! And n-now—now you j--just yank at my heartstrings like I’m your fucking puppet and push me away again! Did you know I went on a date this Saturday?” Jimin’s head shot up, puppy dog eyes red-rimmed as he stared at him open-mouthed. “For the first time, I gave someone who wasn’t you a chance at something real. It was great, I’m not going to lie to you. He gave me hope of loving someone who wasn’t you.”

Jimin’s tears spilled down his face—the picture of a heartbreakingly beautiful waterfall, a piece of nature you could only yearn to be a part of. Why did Namjoon think he could tame someone like Jimin, a man so gorgeous he must have been brought to life like Wonder Woman had—a breath of life from wind blown by the gods themselves.

“But, I still wanted you, Jimin. Hopelessly, pathetically I wanted you. I told myself I could give another relationship a try if only to compare it to what we’d been, but I imagined a time would come when we could find a way to each other again. I was deluding myself. Clearly,” his laugh was pure bitterness.

“Joonie,” Jimin whimpered, pleading for something Namjoon could no longer give him.

“Don’t call me that anymore,” he stood on shaky legs, towering over Jimin, who only stared up at him sobs and cries making him tremble. “Don’t call me anything anymore. After all, we aren’t anything but...business rivals. The same way I feel about your brother, that’s what I’ll feel for you. Distant animosity, a desire to take you down. It’s easier that way,” he whispered almost to himself.

“I w--wish things were d-different. I w-wish I c--could love you f--forever,” he gasped between his sobs.

Namjoon took a shaky breath, collecting himself so he could walk away from this somewhat intact.

“What’s the point of wishing?”
He walked away from Jimin, wrapping an arm around his mid-section to hold himself up. The urge to fall forward and vomit all his organs out grew stronger and stronger. He could still hear Jimin crying from the beach. He forced his legs to walk faster, to get him away. He pulled his phone out of his pocket, squinting at the screen and suddenly realizing he was shedding tears as well.

The screen remained blurry due to his misty eyes, but he managed to find his contacts page. His finger hovered over the list of names. He didn’t know who would be the right person to call. He couldn’t get home on his own, but either of his friends would be a mistake. They wouldn’t hesitate to track down Jimin and shoot him dead. Despite the gaping hole that now existed in Namjoon because of Jimin, he wouldn’t be able to live with himself if Jimin were dead. That was how fucking pitiful he was.

Jungkook’s number was under his thumb, but he hovered over it uncertainly. All he had said to Jimin had been true. He had contemplated a new relationship with his love for Jimin still constantly in the back of his mind. Wasn’t that unfair to Jungkook? If he called him now and he saw him in this state, he’d have questions--and rightfully so--and Namjoon didn’t want to lie to him. He would have to confess the renewed tryst with Jimin and his buried belief that in some future he could be with Jimin again.

He’d have to lay all his cards down and let Jungkook make an informed decision. He could break his nose and walk out of his life, like Jimin had chosen, or he could stay. And he and Namjoon could try and make their relationship work without the ghost of Jimin looming over them. Namjoon didn’t know if he was capable of something like that, but he knew if anyone merited him attempting to truly get over Jimin it was Jungkook.

Namjoon wiped his tears and tapped his screen, holding his phone to his ear and waiting for Jungkook to answer.

“Hyungie? Where are you? I called your office and was driving over because you weren’t picking up. I didn’t want to bother you, but--

“Jungkook-ah,” he whispered.

“Namjoon-hyung, what’s happening? Please tell me where you are. I’ll come find you,” Jungkook sounded worried, something in Namjoon’s tone alerting him that he was not okay.

“I need to be honest with you.”
“What?”

"I need to tell you everything."

"Okay, hyung, okay, you can tell me whatever you need to, but we need to be together first. Where are you?"

“I’m sorry, Jungkook. I’m not the man you need me to be,” he said and he was crying again.

"I’m turning on the GPS in your phone. I’ll find you. Give me a little time,” he begged, but Namjoon couldn't formulate words anymore.

Jungkook tried to murmur assurances and comforting words as he drove, but eventually he put him on speaker and tracked his location as he’d said, using the GPS system in the car Namjoon had bought him. He found him less than a mile from the beach, collapsed on the pavement, clutching his phone to his ear and weeping.
Part XII.

Chapter Summary

Jungkook learns the truth and comes to his own conclusion about the situation. We get a glimpse of the inner workings of Larkspur's organization.

Chapter Notes

Welp, minjoon has gone on a long hiatus, right? Jimin's getting married and Namjoon's heart is broken and Jungkook's picking up the pieces. Namkook does have a lot to work through, so it won't be rainbows and kisses just now. I hope you guys like how I'm developing the relationship. I hope it comes across as organic as these are meant to be three dimensional characters, who react like real humans dealing with real pain.

I'm also excited to get to more of the action between the mafia organizations! Thank you guys for your comments and your support!

It was 2 AM in the morning. Jungkook remembered he had set an alarm on his phone to go off in four hours so he could go for a run around the neighborhood before accompanying Namjoon to his office. Of course right now all he wanted was to run away from Namjoon and everything that had to do with the silver haired man.

When Jungkook picked Namjoon up--literally picked him up from the sidewalk--by the beach he couldn’t get anything out of him but sobs and gasps. It took him an hour to calm him down back at the apartment. Two glasses of water and one glass of vodka later he’d begun to speak clearly. It was an eerie sort of lucidity too, like Namjoon was laying out the life of some distant person and not his own. He recounted his renewed relationship with Jimin with complete detail, letting Jungkook flinch at the descriptions of their intimacy. What hurt more than hearing the man he had feelings for narrate his nights of sex with another man was hearing said man narrate how many times he told the man who was not Jungkook how much he loved him.

When the words seemed to dry out Namjoon just sat there, staring at his empty glass and waiting. Jungkook wondered if he was waiting for his response or simply waiting for unconsciousness to take over and grant him an escape from the emotional turmoil he’d endured that day. Jungkook had to admit that he felt bad for what Namjoon had suffered though everything in him ached at the fact that Namjoon had done to Jungkook something quite similar to what Jimin had done to him.

Endlessly toxic cycles...We all go round and round never learning, never fighting our demons away...Perhaps we’ve all fallen masochistically in love with what stabs at our hearts and souls.
Jungkook hated that his inner voice sounded so much like Namjoon.

“Are you going to leave?” Namjoon whispered into the stillness, voice hoarse from use.

Jungkook considered the question.

“I should,” he began. “I should scream at you, throw things at you, maybe kick you in the balls and storm out of here.”

“I’d deserve it.”

“You’d deserve much worse.”

Namjoon didn’t refute that.

“But, that’s not what I’m going to do.”

Namjoon looked up at him as he stood, towering over the mafia leader for once.

“Instead, I’m going to stay--by your side--like I promised I would. I may as well have recited those cheesy wedding vows, you know ‘in sickness and in health’ and all that shit? I feel that I owe you a great debt for giving me a place in the world. I never dreamed that I’d meet somebody like you and I don’t plan on losing you. Not even to yourself, hyung.”

Namjoon tilted his head, seeking clarification of his last statement.

“When you were telling me all of that, repeating Jimin’s name more than a hundred times, I initially felt a great deal of jealousy. How could I not when there was another man who was receiving everything I wanted from you?” Namjoon’s eyes watered again but Jungkook gently wiped the tears away before they could trail down his cheeks. “As you kept talking I realized I wasn’t jealous of Jimin. Not really. He’s a part of your past that you mistakenly allowed to infiltrate your present and put your future at risk. What I was jealous of was the you he unlocked. I want that side of you,
hyung. The boyfriend side. The lover side...I want all of you and you haven’t given me that. I’ve been given mere pieces of you, Jimin’s scraps,” he snorted.

“I’m sorry, Kookie,” he murmured and Jungkook could see the honesty in his dark eyes.

“I know are, Namjoon-hyung. It isn’t completely your fault. Our first loves leave a mark on us and they can convince us that nothing better will come. If we let them, they can ruin us for good.”

“Yoongi’s said that to me more times than I can remember,” he sighed.

“Hyung knows what he’s talking about,” Jungkook shrugged. “Trust me, I understand. That douchebag TA who played with my feelings like they were nothing more than his personal toys was my first love. I did fall hard for him against all odds and defying all reason. It happened because it was out of my control. We can’t help who we fall for...but we can force ourselves to move on if we know that staying with that person is dangerous. In your case it literally puts your life at risk, but your heart and your sanity are at risk too.”

“I know.”

“What are you going to do about it then?” he demanded.

“I...I’m going to forget about Park Jimin.”

“Then I’m going to help you,” he bent forward, placing a hand on one of Namjoon’s cheeks and kissing the other. “I’ll treat you like an addict. A love addict. You have shitty self-control right now and just like if your vice was drugs or alcohol you’ll be tempted to fall right back into a path of self-destruction. I’ll keep you on the straight and narrow...sort of,” he gave a small chuckle at his unintentional joke.

“Why would you do that for me? I’ve hurt you by keeping things from you and beginning a relationship with you when my feeling for Jimin were stronger,” Namjoon didn’t seem to understand how Jungkook could be so forgiving.

The younger sighed.
“Hyung, I may be ten times more pathetic than you, but so be it. I need to give this a chance, a real chance without some other guy between us. I care about you, Namjoon-hyung, and I like you a lot. I told you that.”

“I care about you too, Jungkook. And I do like you very much. I wasn’t lying when I said that,” his eyes begged him to believe his words.

“I know you weren’t lying. You like me...but you love Jimin.”

Namjoon looked down, a tiny nod serving as his answer.

“Don’t worry. That’s going to change.”

“You sound so sure.”

“Of course I’m sure. I’m super fucking lovable,” Jungkook scoffed. “If you don’t end up head over heels from me a month from now I’ll pack my bags and move back in with my parents.”

Namjoon barked a laugh out at the dramatic tone his bodyguard was using.

“I can’t believe this is happening.”

“Why not?”

“I was expecting you to leave. I told you I would have deserved it.”

“Yeah, but like it or not I’m in too deep. Can’t just leave you,” he confessed in a tiny voice.

Namjoon stood up from the couch, causing Jungkook’s hand to drop from his face. He took a step back but was quickly pulled into Namjoon’s arms in a tight embrace that stole the air from his lungs.
“I promise that you won’t regret giving me this opportunity, Jungkook-ah.”

“Okay, hyung. I hope not.”

“You won’t, I swear it,” he insisted. “And we can start tomorrow! We’ll take the day off. Have a day just for ourselves. Where do you want to go? Jeju? Thailand? Brazil?”

Jungkook blinked dazedly.

“We can’t just take off for the other side of the world with everything that’s going on.”

“Yes, we can. I’m in charge and I say so.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes.

“I can’t believe I’m the level-headed and responsible one between us, but I guess I have to be. We just delivered a major hit on a dozen or so political figures who make up integral parts of the country’s power structure, as well as key figures in Suho and Daehyun’s organization. The fallout has to be coming. Yoongi-hyung keeps saying it’s suspicious that it hasn’t happened already. We need to prepare for whatever it is that’s coming. How will we do that if we’re in Brazil?”

“Via Skype?”

Jungkook shot him a look of disappointment.

“Running away won’t solve your problems. It doesn’t matter how far you are from this war—or Jimin--your life won’t magically fix itself.”

“You’re right,” he sighed, all the vitality leaving his body as he seemed to almost sink into himself.

“Okay, let’s get you to bed. We have to be at the office in like 5 hours. And, no, you don’t get to sleep in and go later.”
“I’ll only get to sleep four hours though,” he whined, the picture of a petulant toddler.

“Let’s consider that your punishment for keeping all that shit from me. Or at least one of your punishments. I’m still deciding on the other ones.”

“That’s fair,” he nodded gravely, Jungkook smiling at the easy acquiescence.

“Let’s go, hyung. Come on, don’t make me carry you. I could, but I don’t know if your pride could take it,” he joked.

“My body feels so dead I think my pride is actually crying out for me to let you.”

Jungkook laughed but shook his head.

“We’re almost there. Just a few more steps,” he gave a little cheer when Namjoon was falling back on his mattress. “Good job, hyungie.”

“It was all thanks to you,” he muttered, half asleep already.

“Yeah, but I’m a team player so I’ll give you some credit,” he grinned.

“Thank you for forgiving me, Kookie,” he murmured before succumbing to exhaustion.

“Please... please don’t make me regret it,” he whispered, walking to his own room and carefully closing the door to Namjoon's behind him.

Miles away in an underground complex a flustered Suho was adjusting his tie and his cufflinks, hurrying down the corridor to reach the main conference room where he’d been summoned a half hour ago. He had been asleep (obviously, who was awake at freaking 3:15 AM?) but the summon had come directly from Larkspur herself and he had no way of denying a request from the boss.
He wondered if his uncle had been called in as well and his question was answered when the conference room door was pulled open for him by one of the security guards and he saw his uncle sitting half bent over in a chair. His hair was a mess and he was still in pajamas. He must have stayed over in the complex that night, never making it back to his own penthouse like Suho had.

“Nice of you to join us. Finally,” Larkspur’s cold voice snapped as he took his seat.

“I apologize,” he bowed his head. “I’m a heavy sleeper and I missed the phone call the first two times.”

“Next time I’ll send one of my personal team to awaken you with a bullet to the shoulder.”

“It won’t happen again,” he bowed his head again, holding back a shiver at the threat.

“Very well, we’ll stop wasting time and get back on task. Daehyun, are the bombs in place?”

“They are. All 6 of them perfectly planted with no security cameras catching any of the crew as they were set up.”

“You’ve done well.”

Daehyun preened at the praise. Suho resisted the urge to roll his eyes. It was no secret that his uncle was in love with the boss and had been since the start of time most likely. It was disgusting how he lapped at her heels like a trained dog. He hadn’t even questioned her when she ordered him to murder his own brother. He’d simply shown up at the man’s doorstep, gun and knife in each hand.

Suho could give less of a shit about his father choking to death on his own blood--the man had always been a vindictive bastard who was on his case about everything. Yet, the mechanical way Daehyun carried out Larkspur’s every order--no matter what it was--unsettled him. If she ever grew displeased with him, would she sic his uncle on him without a second thought? Would his uncle not hesitate to plunge a blade into the only person who he still shared blood with? Suho realized how twisted it was that he trusted more in his uncle not killing him than Larkspur, despite the fact that she was--

“Suho!” his name was called, startling him out of his thoughts.
“Yes, ma’am,” he shot up in his seat, back rigid against the back.

“Were you listening?” her nearly obsidian eyes narrowed in on him.

He looked at his uncle who shook his head disapprovingly and back to Larkspur before nodding.

“I was. I apologize. My mind was on my schedule for today. You know I have a lot to do before evening comes.”

“It must be done perfectly,” she reminded him, though it was not news to him.

“Yes. It will be.”

“Anything less and you’ll receive a very serious consequence. We have zero room for error. Kim Namjoon and his pack of mutts have eliminated many of our allies, slaughtered them in their beds as they slept. They blew up our main compound and struck fear into the hearts of many who depend on us. The insolence cannot be allowed to continue.”

“It won’t. There certainly won’t be any smile on that dick’s face when he wakes up to the sound of explosions,” Daehyun smirked. “Though it is a shame he won’t be blown up himself.”

“Have patience, Daehyun. We won’t kill Kim Namjoon until he’s seen all those he cares about die a painful death before his eyes. Once we have stolen everything he holds dear from this earth it will be his turn. And with his extermination we will finally be free to rule this city as we desire.”

“I would never dare to question you,” Daehyun gasped. “I did not mean to--”

“I know,” she cut him off. “I understand your thirst for death and destruction, but it must be done with intelligence and not recklessness.”

“Yes, Larkspur. You know best,” he bowed.
Suho was disgusted by his uncle’s pathetic devotion to the boss. He believed in the cause. Hell, he wanted to be the one to deliver the killing blow to fucking Kim Namjoon, but he had a sense of dignity. Something his uncle had never heard of.

“Suho, you may go. You need your rest to carry out your orders today. I wanted to include you in this briefing because you should be aware of everything,” Larkspur addressed him with newfound kindness and warmth.

Suho always found her scarier when she tried to be nice.

“Thank you, ma’am,” he nodded, standing and bowing.

He was reaching out for the door handle when she cleared her throat. He turned back.

“I think a little less formality is allowed. We are the only ones present. Have you not missed me? I have been extremely busy finalizing our plans for the Kims, but I should make more time to see you. Come. Give me a hug.”

Suho’s hands shook but he stilled them at his side before moving forward to where Larkspur sat at the head of the conference room table. He leaned down to hug her.

“Let us try that farewell one more time.”

“Of course. I’ll make sure to succeed today. Goodbye...Mother.”

She accepted the hug and patted his back.

“Goodbye, my child. Sweet dreams.”
Part XIII.

Chapter Summary

We see the war from the perspective of the Parks before returning to the effects of Larkspur's bombs from Namjoon's side. When tragedy strikes, Namjoon realizes exactly who he counts on to serve as his source of strength.

Chapter Notes

Hold on to your wigs, darlings. This chapter brings plot development and...a little something extra for the romance plot at the center of the story ;)

let me know what you think

“Suho and Daehyun have dealt quite the blow to Namjoon’s organization. He’s going to be spending the rest of the week picking up the pieces,” Seokjin was briefing the higher ups in his own organization on what had occurred earlier that morning.

Hoseok and Jimin were also present, though both technically against their will. The former hated involving himself with his boyfriend’s criminal affairs and preferred to stay as ignorant as he could. The latter was not in the state of mind to hear anything about Namjoon, but this would be his life now. Learning about the love of his life through Seokjin’s briefings or via some news medium.

“There were 8 bombs total correct?” his right-hand man, Kihyun, asked.

“Yep. And they all reached their intended targets. Read off the list, Wonho,” he ordered, his personal secretary nodding and pulling up the slide he’d prepared on his computer.

“RM Studios--completely demolished, two bombs. Death toll is 45 and counting. SUGA Media--it’s a skyscraper, the two bombs were placed on the first floor. Death toll is 120 and counting, but the building remains standing. A large warehouse down by the pier received a bomb. It must have been one of their storehouses. Nothing remains. No casualties that I know of. The last three bombs all went to a private residence, an estate on the edge of the city. It took some digging, but I found out that it’s Kim Wonshik’s home.”

“Yep,” the secretary answered.

“Is he dead? I mean three bombs is overkill, no?”

“He’s in the hospital. Intensive Care, but it’s not looking good,” Seokjin responded. “And you’re right. Three bombs for one old man’s estate? Even if that geezer is Kim Wonshik, it’s excessive. They were sending a message.”

“To Namjoon?” Kihyun asked.

“In part, but I believe it had a lot to do with Wonshik. It’s hard to narrow down their enemies or differentiate which hate Wonshik more than Namjoon or vice versa, but I suspect there’s more to this war than a power play.”

“Something personal? Boss, that doesn’t make a lot of sense. Only the Kim and Park families trace their history back several decades. Suho and Daehyun popped out of fucking nowhere. How could they already have a personal grudge against the Kims?”

“I’ve had some of the recon team investigating, trying to infiltrate the organization. It’s been hard, impossible really, but they were able to find out one thing we all need to know.”

“What’s that, boss?”

“There’s someone above Suho and Daehyun. The true head of the organization isn’t either of those assholes.”

“A puppet master?”

“Precisely. Suho and Daehyun are puppets on a string.”

“And that person is the one harboring some serious resentment for the Kims?”

“That’s what I believe. It would explain the single-minded focus on them. It’s giving us a chance to
breathe, Thank God, but I’m not seeing a happy ending for Kim Namjoon or his little minions,” Seokjin couldn’t hold back a grin of excitement.

“I’m cheering for the puppet master. Fuck Kim Namjoon,” Kihyun sneered.

Seokjin looked up to see the conference room door slam shut, Jimin rushing down the hallway before the door had even closed all the way. Seokjin looked towards the back of the room where his boyfriend had his arms crossed and was shaking his head in disappointment. When the briefing ended, Seokjin got 5 seconds to breathe before Hoseok was storming over to yell at him.

“What the hell was that?!”

“What?” Seokjin asked, maintaining an innocent expression on his face.

“Don’t play dumb with me. You’re many things--among them a narcissistic prick--but you’re not dumb.”

“Okay, ouch.”

“Shut up. You knew this briefing would reveal all those terrible things happening to Namjoon, that his own father’s dying in the hospital and you still forced Jimin to be here? What’s wrong with you?”

“He can’t turn a blind eye to reality, Hobi. He has to know these things about our world. He has to look at Namjoon and feel nothing.”

“How the fuck is he supposed to do that if he’s in love with the guy and has been since he was a teenager? You don’t dictate who other people’s hearts can beat for.”

“Love fades.”

“That’s for the two people in love to decide, not a power-hungry dickwad, a.k.a. You.”

“You’re being awfully mean to me.”
“You deserve it! Are you really that oblivious to what’s happening to your little brother? You’re supposed to protect him, to make sure he’s happy, and all you’ve done is bring him misery. Your idiotic rivalry with the Kims screwed him from the start, making his relationship with Namjoon a million times harder than it had to be and relationships are already hard enough!”

“I am protecting him. Keeping him away from Namjoon equals keeping him safe.”

“And his happiness?”

Seokjin didn’t answer.

“That’s what I thought. You don’t honestly believe this arranged marriage is going to bring him any happiness.”

“Maybe somewhere down the line…”

“Oh, shut the fuck up, don’t lie to my face. You know that’s not happening. Jimin’s going to resent you and that monstrous woman you call a mother for the rest of his days. Can you live with that? Having your brother hate you?”

Seokjin bit his lip, but eventually gave a small nod.

“I’m doing what’s best for him even if he ends up hating me for it.”

“What about me, huh? Can you live with me hating you for being an insensitive, cold-hearted man that is nothing like the one I fell in love with?”

Hoseok didn’t wait for him to answer. He stormed out of the room, intending to follow after his best friend and offer him a modicum of comfort, though it wouldn’t be enough. Jimin’s brother, the man Hoseok claimed to want to marry, had meddled in something beautiful, had killed it, had pulled two lovers apart twice (Seokjin had been well aware of Jimin and Namjoon’s renewed tryst) and sat back without remorse in his eyes.
Hoseok was tired of seeing his best friend, his little Jiminie, crying himself to sleep. But, what could he possibly do to help him?

“How’s your father doing, hyung?” Taehyung asked when Namjoon and Jungkook arrived.

“Not good,” Namjoon answered tiredly.

He had endured the most unpleasant meeting with the board before heading to the hospital to check on his father’s condition in Intensive Care. It was late afternoon now and he wished he’d never gotten out of bed.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I’m not.”

“You have the right to feel nothing, Namjoon,” Yoongi spoke with uncharacteristic gentleness. “He was a dick to you from birth.”

“I know, but how does it look that the only living relative I have is dying in a hospital bed and I haven’t shed a tear?”

“Who gives a shit how it looks? You’re coping with the situation, which is what matters. If you’re not sad, you’re not sad. We get it.”

Namjoon nodded, but didn’t say anything else. Jungkook worried at his bottom lip and Taehyung fidgeted in his seat. Yoongi took a deep breath, realizing it was on him to carry the team for the moment.

“The last thing you want to do is talk about business, but we don’t have a choice. We have a lot of fires to put out, Joon-ah. I don’t know where to begin. The media companies or our main compound? Not to mention our operation being compromised. How did Suho and Daehyun know so much about our inner workings. Should we suspect a mole or is this Larkspur women leading them just that dangerous?”
“She certainly knows more than she should. Isn’t it coming across as very...targeted?” Taehyung offered timidly.

“As in personal?” Jungkook clarified.

They, of course, didn’t know it, but the thread of their conversation and the conclusions they were reaching were identical to those Seokjin and his team had come to earlier that day. They were all realizing that something bigger, something more sinister was occurring.

“What do you think, hyung?” Taehyung turned to their leader, who had been frowning at the conference room table.

“I don’t know who to trust anymore,” he murmured.

Jungkook was the only one who understood the pain he was feeling extended past the attacks on his businesses and his father. Larkspur’s attacks and Suho and Daehyun’s threats had caused an irreversible shift in his relationship with Jimin. It was all pretty fucked up and Namjoon couldn’t talk about it openly and receive comfort from his best friends because neither of them would be willing to listen when the name Park was released.

Jungkook had ultimately become Namjoon’s closest confidante, the one who was allowed to peek into his Pandora’s Box of secrets. It was as much an honor as a burden. But, that was what happened when you tied yourself to a person so intimately. Jungkook was already responsible for Namjoon’s life as his bodyguard, but the younger knew his devotion was much more than professional. He was most likely in love with the mafia leader and watching him fall apart broke his heart. All Jungkook wanted was to see Namjoon’s beautiful, dimpled smile. Why did that seem like a greater impossibility with every day that passed?

“You can trust us, hyungie. The people in this room? We would do anything for you,” Taehyung swore.

Jungkook quickly nodded and Yoongi only shrugged. His eldest friend never felt the need to explain himself or detail the bond between them. He would happily jump in front of a speeding train for Namjoon. That’s just how it was.

“I know that, I know. Sorry,” he exhaled slowly. “I’m all over the place today. I think my brain decided to take a vacation or something.”
“You have the right to feel discombobulated. We’re in a shitstorm and there’s no end in sight, but we can’t show our weaknesses to the vultures waiting to pick us apart,” Yoongi’s tone was firm and resolute. “They think they’ve ruined us and that our confidence is shaken, so we’re ready to fall to our knees and beg them to have mercy. That’s not fucking happening.”

“What are you thinking, hyung?” Jungkook inquired.

“The board tore into us this morning, blaming us for what happened to our businesses. Millions of dollars went down the drain and hundreds of innocent employees lost their lives. Our stocks have fallen. The news are all over us, waiting to strike when we’re most vulnerable. The cops are running investigations into who planted the bombs, supposedly, but we know full well they won’t find anything. A lot of those fuckers are on Larkspur’s payroll. By all appearances, we’re flatlining. We’ve lost this battle, right?”

“I guess?”

“What’s the best way to lift people’s spirits and give yourself a boost of much needed confidence to win the overall war?”

Jungkook and Taehyung shared a confused look and Namjoon only stared at him blankly.

“Throw a party,” Yoongi grinned.

“A party? Are you insane, hyung?” Taehyung was bewildered.

“We can’t let them know they got to us, Tae, that’s what they want. While we’re recovering we need something to serve as a distraction of sorts. I was thinking a gala, actually, to stroke the egos of our investors and the board itself. We’ll invite the press and wow them with our high-end catering services and expert mixologists,” he puffed his chest out. “And, the cherry on top, we invite Suho and Daehyun.”

“We what?” Taehyung’s jaw dropped. “That’s asking for trouble.”

“They’re legitimate businessmen as much as they are crime bosses. Just like we are. They’re public figures and fellow company owners. It wouldn’t seem weird for them to receive a golden invitation.”
“Are we...planning to kill them at the gala?” Jungkook asked.

“Not exactly,” Yoongi’s smirk was lethal. “But, we’ll get there.”

“You want to draw Larkspur out,” Namjoon finally spoke up, the two youngests’ heads snapping between the elders, who seemed to be communicating telepathically.

“Do you think it’ll work?”

“We’ll make it work.”

“Okay, um, we aren’t all on the same wavelength, so care to fill us in?” Taehyung asked with some impatience.

“We’re not going to kill Suho and Daehyun, but we are going to take them hostage. And our demands will include a private meeting with Larkspur herself,” Yoongi explained.

“Ohhhhh...How are you so sure they’ll attend the gala? And that their security team will be lax enough for us to do it?”

“They’ll come if we give the event enough publicity,” Namjoon said. “I’ll hold a press conference telling all of Seoul about how hard we’re trying to overcome the fear of these terrorist attacks and keep our businesses going. The gala will be how we take a stand against terrorism. Something patriotic like that,” he waved a hand.

“The press will eat it up. And Namjoon will mention some of the important figures we’re planning to invite, including Suho and Daehyun. If they decline the invitation they’ll have too many questions to answer. They wouldn’t want to draw suspicions to their business, lest somehow their criminal affairs get uncovered. We only exist because we keep the heat off of our illicit businesses,” Yoongi finished their shared thought.

“Where will the gala be held? It has to be a location we have control of, right? So we can kidnap Suho and Daehyun without starting a gunfight with their security teams,” Jungkook started looking
“I was thinking The Westin Chosun downtown. The hotel manager is an old friend of mine. He’d be more than willing to help us arrange the event,” Namjoon mused.

“A friend who knows about...the mafia stuff?” Jungkook asked.

“Yes, Jungkook, he’s well aware of the 'mafia stuff,'” he chuckled. “What do you think, Yoongi-hyung?”

“It’s the best option. Is this Saturday too soon to have an entire gala planned?”

“You tell me. I’m putting you in charge of it,” Namjoon gave him a shit-eating grin.

“Fuck you.”

“Taehyung’s in charge of the guest list. Let’s keep it under 150. Hopefully, they’ll all come even on such short notice. I’ll go pay Kwonhyuk a visit,” Namjoon stood up, Jungkook doing the same.

“We’ll get started on the technical parts of the plan tonight then? Where do we want the meeting with Larkspur to happen if everything goes to plan with the kidnapping plot?” Yoongi asked.

“We’ll use my safehouse in Goyang.”

“How big do we want the security detail?” Taehyung took his phone out, prepared to make a note. “How many of my guys do you want?”

“The bare minimum. We only need four.”

“Four? For a gala with more than 100 people?”
“There’s hotel security too and they attract less attention than our personal security does. We don’t want to make our special guests more suspicious than they already are. Remember, they’re going to be expecting foul play from us. They’re going to think they’re coming prepared and when they see minimal security and half of Seoul’s elite involved, they’ll lower their guard.”

“It still seems so risky not to have more of our own there.”

“It would do more harm than good, Tae-ah, trust me. We only need the people in this room to pull this off anyway.”

“Alright. I’ll call you tonight, let you know how progress is going,” Yoongi promised.

“Thanks, hyung. I’ll be here earlier tomorrow. I’m going to schedule the press conference for 9 and officially kick things off. I expect the guest list to be finalized tonight and reach the designated individuals by morning tomorrow,” he directed this at Taehyung who saluted him.

“Sir, yes, sir!”

“Dumbass,” he shook his head fondly, waving before leaving with Jungkook.

The rest of the evening passed quickly. Namjoon knew Kwonhyuk would come through for him. The hotelier was once the kingpin of arms sales, but he relaxed his hold on the trade to manage his hotel, which was thriving and bringing in more than enough revenue to keep him happy. He had handed over the reins to Namjoon when he took over for his father and they maintained a profitable partnership/friendship.

The event was set for Saturday, beginning at 7 and hopefully winding down by 12. The five hour window the gala offered would need to be used perfectly.

Jungkook was driving them back towards the penthouse when Namjoon’s phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Is this Mr. Kim Namjoon?” an unfamiliar voice asked.
“Yes? May I ask who's speaking?”

“I’m Dr. Lee. I was your father’s primary doctor…I regret to inform you your father passed away approximately 10 minutes ago. I’m very sorry.”

“Oh,” Namjoon said dumbly, listening mutely as the doctor informed him he should feel free to come say his farewell and then take his father home for any funeral arrangements that may come.

Namjoon hung up before the doctor could finish his last sentence.

“Hyung?” Jungkook’s voice was gentle, sensing that the phone call had not been a positive one.

“My father, he, uh, he’s dead.”

“Oh my god. I’m sorry. Should we head to the hospital?” he prepared to change lanes and take the next exit, but Namjoon immediately shook his head.

“No. Take me home please. I don’t need to see another dead body. I’ve seen enough of those in my lifetime.”

“But--”


“Okay, hyung,” he pressed down on the accelerator, not speaking again until they were back in the penthouse. “Can I get you anything? Tea? Coffee? Tequila?”

Namjoon gave a tired chuckle before collapsing back onto one of the long couches.
“Maybe later. I think I just need to...lay here for a bit.”

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

“You shouldn’t be. It’s like Yoongi-hyung’s always saying. My father was a piece of shit.”

“But, he was still your father. His death’s bound to have an effect on you,” Jungkook sat on the couch across from Namjoon, taking in his slightly disheveled hair and closed eyes.

“The effect hasn’t been sadness. I feel...numb, I guess that’s what I would call it...I’m an only child and I never knew my mother. My father wasn’t anything you’d want in a father--or a human being--but he was always there. He wanted to leave me with a legacy so he gave me a criminal empire. Not the best gift for an innocent kid, but soon enough I wasn’t innocent...He made me what I am today and now that he’s gone I just--I just don’t know what to do with what remains.”

“What do you mean?” Jungkook tilted his head, confused.

“With him still alive I felt like I knew my place, like I was ruling his businesses and his crime syndicate, but it was temporary. Realistically, I knew he was getting older and this moment would eventually come, but it happened sooner than I thought it would and now what. I’m a mafia boss, Jungkook, engaged in a war with a sadistic rival family who seems to hate me personally and will kill anyone to prove it. It’s all so fucked up-- I’m so fuckin’ up...I can blame it on my father, my absent mother, but they’re gone and I’m what’s left. I need to take responsibility for what I allowed myself to become.”

Jungkook watched Namjoon bring his hands to his face, covering his eyes, feeling ashamed that he was crying in front of the younger man for the second consecutive day.

“Hyungie, don’t cry,” he murmured, hesitating before getting up from the couch and joining Namjoon on his.

He climbed on top of the prone man, thighs resting gently on either side of Namjoon’s waist.

“I need to be alone, Jungkookie,” he said, voice gritty from the strain of holding back heavy sobs.
He hadn’t reacted to Jungkook moving to straddle him and his face remained concealed by his hands. Jungkook was undeterred. The man he...maybe, possibly loved was in pain and the only thing he’d do if left alone was continue to wallow in self-deprecation and melancholia.

“No, you don’t. What you need is to let me in. Let me comfort you, let me be here for you, really be here for you...I want you, hyung,” he began rocking his hips down, causing Namjoon’s hands to fly off his face and land on them instead.

“What are you doing?” his red-rimmed eyes were narrowed in bemusement, strong hands keeping Jungkook’s hips immobile.

“I’m comforting you,” he spoke matter-of-factly.

“With sex? This isn’t a good idea, Jungkook.”

“Why not?”

“We should be taking this slow and--and having sex is definitely not slow.”

“I’m not a child, hyung. You don’t need to tiptoe around my feelings, which you’re well aware of. And, yeah, I remember that last night you were crying over your ex getting engaged, but fuck it. I want you--in this way and so many others, but I can be patient for those. I told you you’re going to fall in love with me, but that’s not happening tonight. Tonight, all I want is for you to let go. Of all that stress and pain you’re carrying... Let me give you a moment of respite,” he ran a hand through the silky silver hair Namjoon always styled so impeccably.

It felt soft between his fingers and he began pressing in harder, massaging his scalp and feeling Namjoon relax beneath him.

“That feels good,” the elder commented, eyes fluttering shut again.

“Yeah?” Jungkook bent down, lips ghosting over the shell of Namjoon’s ear. “I bet I can make you feel better. Would you like that, hyungie?” he began moving his hips again, smiling when
Namjoon’s grip loosened and his own hips began following the slow grind he’d set. “I can offer you euphoria, hyungie. Just say yes.”

Namjoon was having a hard time concentrating on anything that wasn’t the wonderful friction of Jungkook’s crotch against his. The younger’s sensual tone was stirring up all the desire he’d forced to lay dormant, back when he’d convinced himself Jungkook could be nothing more than a professional interest to him and not someone who owned skintight leather pants and would paint a sinfully alluring picture if he laid him out naked on his silk sheets.

“Oh, Namjoon groaned as Jungkook sped up, palms running over Namjoon’s broad chest and beginning to explore the skin underneath his shirt.

“I’m waiting, hyungie. If you don’t give me an answer I’ll stop. Is that what you want?”

Oh God even that fucking honorific is getting to me. Why is that so hot? Namjoon warred with himself internally.

He still believed he’d be rushing into a stage of a relationship he and Jungkook weren’t prepared for, but at the same time he wanted nothing more than to get lost, body and soul in Jungkook. He was so sweet, so warm, so adorably genuine. He wasn’t trying to manipulate Namjoon or work some secret, selfish angle that would end up stabbing Namjoon in the heart and leaving him bleeding on the side of the road. Jungkook wanted him for him. And wasn’t that so breathtakingly beautiful?

Jungkook made a small squeak of surprise when Namjoon surged up, slamming their lips together and winding his arms around Jungkook’s waist, big palms squeezing at the erection in his pants and then gripping his thighs.

“Mmm, i-is that a y-yes?” Jungkook stuttered between maddening kisses where Namjoon slipped his tongue into his mouth and sucked on his lower lip before pulling away with a smirk.

“What do you think?”

“I think if you don’t take off all your clothes in the next 10 seconds, I’m going to rip them off.”

Namjoon raised an eyebrow.
“Well, well the bunny does have bite indeed.”

“What is with everyone referring to me as a woodland creature,” Jungkook grumbled, reaching down to pull his t-shirt off, leaving his muscular chest bared to Namjoon’s hungry gaze.

“It’s because you’re so fucking cute, but goddamn I had forgotten how fucking sexy you are too,” Namjoon licked his lips before ducking down to take one of Jungkook’s pointed nipples into his mouth.

“Ah! N-namjoon-hyung, p-please,” he begged, fingers digging into Namjoon’s silver locks as Namjoon raised a hand to stimulate the nipple he wasn’t torturing with his tongue and teeth.

“Please, what, baby boy?”

“P-please. Bedroom,” he whined, moving his hips to give himself some sort of relief.

He was so hard it hurt and Namjoon wasn’t too far off. He gave the younger’s chest one more lick before standing, Jungkook in his arms, and heading to the bedroom. He kicked the door open and fell onto the bed with Jungkook squirming beneath him.

“You’re too heavy, hyung.”

“That’s rude of you to say, baby boy. If you’re not nice to me I’ll have to punish you.”

Jungkook studied him for a second.

“If you’re expecting me to call you Daddy, you’ll find yourself sorely disappointed.”

Namjoon barked out a laugh.

“Noted. Stick with hyungie. I like that,” he winked lavisciously and Jungkook flushed.
“You’re a pervert.”

“You’re a pervert, hyungie,” he corrected before whipping off his shirt and unbuckling his belt.

He stood up for a moment to pull off his pants, his blue boxers following suit. Jungkook remained half-naked on the bed, staring at the naked man in front of him with his mouth ajar.

“Is your mouth waiting to be filled with my dick or…”

“Oh my god,” Jungkook covered his face in embarrassment. “I can’t do this. I thought I could seduce you and I’m failing.”

“Are you kidding? Your seduction skills are no joke. I’m seconds away from jumping you.”

Jungkook felt the bed dip as Namjoon crawled back to hover over him.

“Are you sure you want to do this, Kookie? We don’t have to. I already told you that.”

“No, I want to do this. I want to have sex with you, hyungie...I’m just nervous. The last time I did this was with…”

“The shit for brains TA,” he growled.

“Yeah.”

“Hey, Jungkook, look at me,” Namjoon waited for the younger’s wide brown eyes to meet his before continuing. “I promise it will be different this time. You deserve total transparency from me and I’ll give it. No more secrets, no more ghosts from the past coming between us. What you tried to do for me this entire day, not just now, was incredible. You’re always there for me. You put me before you and it makes me feel...secure. My dad was murdered, my enemies keep coming after me, but I’m not worried. Not when I have you beside me.”
Jungkook’s cheeks bloomed the color of a freshly picked rose.

“I really like you, Namjoon-hyung,” he whispered.

“I really like you too, Kookie.”

Jungkook nudged Namjoon gently, the elder quickly moving off him. Jungkook got off the bed and Namjoon thought for a second he was planning to leave, but he had only stood to remove the last of his clothes.


“That’s corny,” Jungkook groaned with a soft smile, returning to the bed and pulling Namjoon to cover his body with his larger frame.

“You like it,” he said, leaning down for a kiss, which Jungkook happily gave.

“S--so are you going to f-fuck me now, hyungie?” he asked with false bravado, hoping to impress Namjoon with his bashful dirty talk.

Namjoon gave him a tender smile.

“No, Jungkook. But I am going to make love to you now.”

“Oh,” Jungkook felt his body tremble as Namjoon began pressing kisses to his jawline, his neck, his collarbone and further down.

Soon, he was crying out with pleasure, Namjoon’s hot mouth wrapped around his erection, leading him to a toe-curling orgasm.
“Good?” Namjoon asked after swallowing his release and coming back up to Jungkook’s face.

“Incredible,” he answered breathily.

“You’re adorable,” Namjoon chuckled, kissing his pink lips passionately, tongues battling for dominance.

“Hyungie, that’s not appropriate given the circumstances,” he complained. “I can’t be adorable when you just gave me a blowjob.”

“Why not?” he shrugged. “I gave you a blowjob because you’re adorable.”

“Stop it!”

Namjoon laughed. Jungkook was endlessly amusing. It was so easy to get wrapped up in him. Namjoon didn’t even waste a second to think about the chaos going on outside his bedroom. All that mattered was the beautiful boy beneath him.

“I apologize, baby boy,” he said with a wide grin.

“Mm-hmm. You look real sorry.”

“I know how I can make it up to you.”

“I’m listening,” Jungkook hid his smile at their silly banter.

“I give a very impressive dickdown,” Namjoon whispered as if it were a national secret.

Jungkook burst into laughter, Namjoon laughing with him.
“I admit I’m interested.”

“Are you?”

“Oh yes, very interested... hyungie ,” he let the honorific roll off his tongue in a breathy moan that made the amused expression on Namjoon’s face disappear.

It wasn’t long after that Jungkook was choking on loud gasps and moans as ecstasy wracked his body. Namjoon made love to him that night. They spent hours bringing each other to the edge and ultimately falling over the brink of bliss together.

When their desire was finally sated and they heavy breathing normalized Jungkook turned to Namjoon, whose eyes were already closed. He looked like he was asleep.

“Namjoon-hyung?” he whispered into the darkness of the bedroom.

“Hmm?” the sleepy voice answered, pulling Jungkook closer so the younger was completely wrapped up in his long arms.

“Sweet dreams,” he said.

“Sweet dreams, Kookie,” Namjoon responded, small snores escaping soon after.

Jungkook waited until he was sure his lover was asleep before staring at the outline of his handsome face.

“I love you,” he murmured.
Part XIV

Chapter Summary

The night of the gala arrived and Namjoon and Yoongi’s plan is set in motion. The evening ends with a revelation no one could have prepared for.

Chapter Notes

cliffhanger alert!!!!

let me know what you think in the comments ;)

“Do I look okay?” Jungkook asked, inspecting his reflection in the panel of floor length mirrors in Namjoon’s enormous walk-in closet.

“You do know you aren’t actually attending this gala, but participating in a kidnapping for which the gala is a cover, right?”

Jungkook glared at his boyfriend in the mirror and Namjoon chuckled, stepping closer to adjust the younger’s black bow-tie and straighten his suit jacket.

“You look perfect,” he amended and Jungkook smiled, turning around to press a kiss to his thick lips.

“As do you, but then again you always do. It’s a bit irritating if we’re being honest here.”

“What?” Namjoon laughed, raising an eyebrow.

“It’s like you’re incapable of looking bad! I’ve seen you cut a striking figure in gym shorts and pajama pants. What the hell? That’s not normal, hyungie.”
“You do wonders to my ego, Kookie. Never leave my side.”

“I’m not planning to,” Jungkook grinned.

Namjoon caressed Jungkook’s styled hair, careful not to mess up the up-do. He felt like he could burst from the sheer amount of fondness he felt for the young man in front of him.

“Should we head out?”

“Yep. I don’t think I’m the fashionably late type of person,” Jungkook made a face.

“You don’t need to be. Those types of people are the worst.”

“Don’t you show up to board meetings exactly 10 minutes late?”

“Yep. I’m the worst,” he winked.

Jungkook laughed, chuckles cutting off with a wide smile as he saw Namjoon offer him the crook of his elbow.

“How gentlemanly of you,” he teased.

“Tonight may be about our political agenda so to speak, but it doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy ourselves a bit before we get to work. So, will you do me the honor of accompanying me tonight, Jeon Jungkook?”

Jungkook let his hand grip the curve of Namjoon’s strong arm.

“Nothing would make me happier.”
“Anything?” Namjoon asked Yoongi when they met up by the bar.

It was an hour and a half into the gala and the guests of honor had yet to arrive.

“Nothing,” his best friend glared into his glass of bourbon.

“Shit. I hadn’t actually considered that they wouldn’t show up.”

“Neither had I. They’re egotistical pricks who think they’ve left us battered. They’d jump at the chance to come and gloat.”

Before Namjoon could agree a slightly breathless Taehyung appeared behind him.

“They’re here.”

“Where?” Yoongi inquired, setting his glass down.

“Their cars just pulled in. One of my guys just informed me.”

“How many men did they bring?”

“Five each.”

“Both Suho and Daehyun are in attendance?” Namjoon clarified.

“Jinyoung assured me he saw them both. T-minus 30 seconds now.”

“Where’s Jungkook?” Yoongi asked Namjoon.
“In the bathroom.”

“Are we proceeding with the previously discussed plan of action?” Taehyung asked.

“Why are you talking like that?” Yoongi made a face.

“What? I’m trying to sound professional.”

“You sound pretentious and fake. Quit it.”

“I don’t appreciate you trying to control me...outside of the bedroom, hyung.”

“Jesus, please don’t mention your bedroom when I’m around,” Namjoon complained. “And yes, Taehyung, exactly as discussed.”

He spotted Jungkook and subtly pointed towards the event hall doors, signaling that the bodyguard should stay focused on the men who would be entering. The younger man nodded, aware that the more grave portion of the evening had arrived.

“There they are. Stupid Fucker 1 and Stupid Fucker 2,” Yoongi growled.

Namjoon huffed a laugh and then squared his shoulders, settling his expression into one of calm indifference.

“Showtime,” he declared, strolling over into enemy territory.

Suho and Daehyun’s team of bodyguards tensed at his approach, hands going to the weapon that had to be concealed under their suit jackets.

“Good evening, gentlemen. I’m Kim Namjoon, I believe we’ve never had the pleasure of meeting face to face,” he extended his hand.
Daehyun waved a hand at his bodyguards, laughing jovially and accepting the offered handshake.

“You’re right, this is a rare opportunity for the both of us. Although, we’re all well aware of who the other is.”

“I won’t deny that. Suho-ssi,” Namjoon extended his hand to the younger man next, who sneered at him, pointedly looking down at his hand and then away.

Message received, asshole. You won’t play nice even tonight. That’s fine. I’ll rejoice in watching you beg for mercy when I shoot your kneecaps out and then lodge a bullet in your stomach. You’ll bleed out nice and slow…

“Yah, you insolent child. Have you no sense of civility?” Daehyun hissed at his nephew.

“Don’t worry about it, Daehyun-ssi. Your nephew must have his reasons and we shouldn’t question them. I only wanted to come over and greet you formally, but I have many other distinguished guests to mingle with. Please enjoy the open bar and dance to your heart’s desire. Dinner will be served within the hour.”

“Thank you, Namjoon-ssi.”

“Of course,” he bowed his head respectfully, Daehyun reciprocating the gesture.

Suho only scoffed and stalked away, heading straight for the bar.

“How do you think it’s going?” Jungkook asked two hours later.

The gala was in its last stretch, many of the guests drunk or one champagne flute away from being drunk.

“Precisely as we’d hoped. The bodyguards didn’t eat anything except a few appetizers and a few drinks, but that was enough. Suho and Daehyun gorged on every course and had more than their
share of cocktails. We knew if we placed them at the same table as the most important guests--and
the most beautiful women--they’d be at ease and wouldn’t even consider that their food was laced
with potent but slow-acting sedatives,” Namjoon smirked and popped a truffle into his mouth with
barely concealed glee.

“Get Taehyung’s guys together and meet us by the side exit by the bathrooms. I think it’s about time
the real event began.”

Getting Daehyun out of the ballroom was easy. His drinks caught up to him eventually and he
excused himself to the bathroom, all his bodyguards accompanying him. The drugs should already
be kicking in, making all of them feel drowsy and loose-limbed. The bodyguards wouldn’t put up
much of a fight. Suho was a bit trickier. The man was younger and physically more fit than his
middle-aged uncle, meaning that the sedatives were definitely taking effect but that he’d be less
inclined to leave the room to compose himself. Instead, he’d be looking for a quick exit, distrusting
the nature of his condition and beginning to suspect foul play. And he would be right.

Before Suho could start formulating an escape or putting together the clues that pointed towards
Namjoon slowly but steadily drugging him as the night progressed, one of the woman at his table (a
pretty young thing just beginning a career in lingerie modeling) leaned over to whisper a series of
sensuous, provocative words.

“Meet me in the coat closet?” she whispered.

“Give me 2 minutes, baby,” he said, without a second thought.

Taehyung watched the model walk by him with a small smile. Her name was Jihyun and they’d met
months ago when Taehyung saved her from a particularly nasty photographer who had tried to force
the innocent girl into having sex with him in order to jump start her career. Namjoon had wanted to
partner with the modeling agency, hoping to use some of their best models in a music video for one
of their entertainment company’s artists. Taehyung had been sent to do some reconnaissance
(because even on the legal side of things Namjoon was nothing if not through) and overhearing the
disgusting old man threatening Jihyun with either a bright career or becoming a hooker to survive in
Seoul struck a nerve.

Jihyun got some wonderful photos out of that gig, though not with the initial photographer, but with
his replacement. The former would need an entire year to recover both mentally and physically from
the punishment Taehyung administered. It was far from the worst thing he’d done (the old pervert
only got 8 out of 10 fingers broken one by one) and wasn’t even what the man deserved for preying
on vulnerable young women.
Jihyun had been so appreciative, she made Taehyung swear if he ever needed anything to call her and let her know. Taehyung added her name to the gala guest list, his own input to Namjoon and Yoongi’s plan coming together perfectly with her assistance.

Taehyung casually walked towards the kitchen, intending to slip through the back door and meet Jungkook and his team outside.

It was less than 15 minutes later that they were driving towards one of their safehouses, an unconscious Daehyun and Suho in the backseat.

“That was easy,” Taehyung declared, sounding a bit put out.

“Because that wasn’t the complicated part,” Yoongi snorted.

“We need to attract Larkspur’s attention. We have her most devoted underlings, but what are we going to do with them?” Namjoon posed the question, expecting one of them to answer it.

“Please say torture them, please say torture them,” Taehyung crossed his fingers, twisted grin completing the maniacal expression he was now sporting.

“We’re going to push them until they crack and put us in contact with their boss.”

“But more specifically?” Taehyung prodded.

“Yes, Tae, to get them to reveal that information we’ll need to dabble in some light torture methods,” he sighed.

“Dibs!”

“He’s sick in the head, but I love that about him,” Yoongi shrugged helplessly.

“Aw, I love you too, Yoongi-bear!”
“I feel like I should expand my circle of friends,” Namjoon suddenly proclaimed, making Jungkook laugh.

The levity was broken when they arrived at the safehouse and the moment came to rouse their hostages and begin the interrogation. As Namjoon expected, they weren’t up to talking—though they did engage in a significant amount of cursing.

“Such profanity,” Taehyung tsked, returning to the dim, dirty stone room they were holding Suho and Daehyun in with a small rolling cart of assorted instruments. “You kiss your mommies with those mouths?”

“Fuck you, dirty faggot,” Daehyun growled, spitting up towards Taehyung’s face.

Taehyung’s boxy smile slipped from his face, handsome features suddenly much less pleasing and incredibly more terrifying. Namjoon took a few cautionary steps back, gently pulling a questioning Jungkook with him so their backs were against the opposite wall of the ugly little room.

“What is it, hyungie?” he whispered.

“We want to get out of the splash zone.”

“The what?”

“Unless you want that nice suit painted a blood-red and an intestine brown, you need to keep a distance between Taehyung and his favorite playthings. By that I mean his knives and saws, of course,” Yoongi smirked.

“Oh my god,” Jungkook said, already feeling queasy when he heard the ear-piercing scream Daehyun released.

“Uncle!” Suho shouted, instantly falling silent when Taehyung turned his gaze on him.
The tall brunette shoved Suho’s chair to one side, giving him more space with the man handcuffed to the other chair. The older man was crying, tears, snot and saliva congealing on his face as he kept screaming.

“I’m not even touching you anymore,” Taehyung sounded amused. “What’s the matter? Not a fan of my portable saw? It’s the best one on the market, I can assure you your torture session is brought to you by only the most expensive of devices.”

“You’re fucking insane!”

“And you’re seconds away from getting your jugular sliced open. All I did was nick the axillary vein, but if you keep testing my patience I’ll move to one of the most important veins in the human body. Is that what you want?”

“N-no. Pl-please. Don’t kill me,” Daehyun stammered, sounding like a lost child.

“Then you’re going to do what I ordered. Tell me about your boss, tell me who Larkspur really is.”

“I can’t do that.”

Taehyung switched the saw on again and Daehyun shrieked, fervently shaking his head.

“If I tell you she’ll kill me! Nothing you do will be worse than what she’d do to me. If I tell you too much, there’s no going back for me. Even if you let me go, she’ll rip me to pieces.”

“She really that intimidating?” he raised a fine eyebrow.

“More than I can put into words,” he shivered.

“Then what can you tell me? And make it interesting or your time on this earth will dwindle to mere seconds,” Taehyung warned, brandishing a serrated knife in his other hand.
“She’s ambitious, ingenious, cold-hearted, and once she sets her mind on something she does it. No matter what it takes. Guess what her latest objective is?” Daehyun looked past Taehyung to find Namjoon. “Your obliteration.”

Namjoon’s brow furrowed at the word choice.

“You mean she wants him dead?” Taehyung asked.

“Oh, she wants much more than that. You’ll be begging for death when she’s finished with you. And only then will she plunge a blade through your chest and rip your beating heart from your chest, crush it in her hands.”

Jungkook felt a shiver course through him, Namjoon himself seeming unsettled by the words.

“Listen, you annoying prick, I’m this close to ending you here and now,” Yoongi hissed. “You clearly have no intel to offer us, so you’re going to do us one better and call your boss. If Larkspur isn’t here in exactly one hour, your corpse will be found floating in the Han River.”

“You’ll regret it,” Daehyun threatened.

“I didn’t ask for your fucking opinion,” Taehyung found the cell phone in the older man’s bloodied jacket and flipped it open, searching through until he found the name. “Namsan Park, by the pond. One hour or you and your good-for-nothing nephew lose the privilege of breathing.”

“Are you all in position?” Taehyung asked through his earpiece, confirming that his men were covering every vantage point possible. “All set, hyung.”

Namjoon nodded.

“I don’t want a gunfight tonight, but it’s best to be prepared.”

“We chose the location, we have the hostages. We’re in control,” Yoongi said.
“Larkspur isn’t someone we can underestimate and she accepted this meeting too easily. The call lasted all of 10 seconds. It was like she wasn’t even surprised that Daehyun was calling to tell her he’d been kidnapped by her enemies.”

“What do you think that means?” Jungkook asked, growing more anxious as the minutes ticked by and the confrontation with the faceless monster he’d had more than one nightmare about was imminent.

“There’s a town car driving in this direction. Minho says the windows are tinted black, but the vehicle fits at least 8 comfortably. No other cars in the distance,” Taehyung reported.

“That’s her,” Yoongi nodded. “She’s certainly feeling bold if she only brought 7 guards.”

“I think we need to use the utmost caution tonight. The unexpected can and will occur,” Namjoon said, responding to Jungkook’s question.

“Wait, what?” Taehyung frowned at Minho’s words. “That can’t be.”

“What is it, Taehyung?” Namjoon questioned.

“She’s here, but...she’s alone. Not one single bodyguard or even a driver.”

“She drove here alone?” Jungkook asked, brow furrowed.

“Bold,” Yoongi repeated.

“Dangerous,” Namjoon added. “I don’t like it.”

He glanced over at the two gagged and bound men on the park bench beside them.

“One wrong move and we won’t hesitate to shoot you in the head,” he reminded them, ignoring the blazing fury in Suho and Daehyun’s dark eyes.
“She’s coming. They don’t see any weapons on her person, but she’s wearing a thick coat. I wouldn’t discount a few handguns or blades,” Taehyung opined.

The staccato click and clack of heels broke through the still night air and when Namjoon looked up he looked upon the face of the woman who’d made it her life’s purpose to destroy his.

Larkspur strode forward as casually as if she were entering her own living room.

“Hello there, Namjoon-ah. It’s certainly been a while,” her voice was cutting, every syllable pointed and powerful.

“I don’t appreciate the informality nor the insinuation that we have any sort of relationship that merits such pleasantries,” Namjoon spoke lowly, eyes narrowed.

Larkspur laughed, a sound completely devoid of joy or genuine emotion. It was harsh and nasty, yet nearly silent.

“That’s where you’re wrong, Namjoon-ah,” she stepped closer, light hazel eyes flickering over to Taehyung, Jungkook, and Yoongi who had all instinctively moved a hand to their waists where each carried a gun. “Such well-trained puppy dogs,” she sneered.

“Fuck you,” Yoongi growled.

“Min Yoongi. I always hated your family,” Larkspur shook her head, as if in disappointment. “I knew you’d only be a terrible influence on Namjoon.”

“Stop saying my name like you know me, like you have any right to say it after what you’ve tried to do to me.”

“I would say I haven’t tried to do anything, but instead that I have successfully done many things.”

“Who are you? Why did you choose Seoul to grow a criminal organization when it was already
disputed territory between two crime families? Why a personal vendetta against me...against my father?”

Larkspur’s eyes gleamed with uncontrolled hate.

“Why? Because Kim Wonshik enslaved me. He offered me heaven and subjected me to an inferno Dante couldn’t have conceived.”

“You knew my father?” Namjoon dissected the words. “Personally?”

Larkspur gave another chilling chuckle.

“You might say that. I was his wife after all.”

“His w-wife?” Namjoon took a step back, stumbling and letting Jungkook come up behind him and support his larger frame. “That can’t be.”

“I was the poor fool who succumbed to that snake’s charms. He was but a beautiful illusion. My life was nothing but a never-ending nightmare. A nightmare that only grew darker when he forced me into a pregnancy I had always been against.”

Yoongi’s eyes were wide, jaw dropping and Taehyung had moved to grip his boyfriend’s shoulder, not knowing if he was doing it for his benefit or his own. Jungkook was less shaken by the words, not understanding what was being unveiled but seeing the effect it had on his friends and on his lover.

“N-no,” Namjoon stuttered.

“He never loved me; I was the means to and end. He got what he wanted from me. An heir to his precious empire. His only child...his prodigal son.”

Namjoon’s weight was fully supported by Jungkook, his limbs weak and his breathing uneven.
“I didn’t ask to be your mother, Namjoon-ah, yet here we are. What now?” Larkspur smirked.

Namjoon stared into her face and slowly, heartbreakingly, he saw himself.
Part XV.

Chapter Summary

The encounter with Larkspur takes a sudden turn. We get a glimpse into Hoseok and Jimin’s friendship and Hoseok has a plan that may change everything.

Chapter Notes

My lovely readers!! I love all of my stories (and have way too many lol) but life/uni is kicking my ass right now. My updates won’t be as regular, but I haven’t forgotten about my fics or all you lovely people <3

Three Years Ago

“You know that cliche phrase about the ‘apple never falling far from the tree’ and the insinuation that you are always going to be a product of your upbringing?” Namjoon asked.

Jimin groaned from his prone position behind him.

“Joonie, we’re supposed to be relaxing. We’re in freaking Aruba. No one knows we’re here and we should be sunbathing and fucking all weekend. Why do you insist on bringing down the mood?”

“Because I think I’m getting sunburnt and because you may have broken my dick last night. I need a break from your grand itinerary,” he said sarcastically.

“Aw, was I too rough, baby?” Jimin’s giggle was pure wickedness and he ran a couple dainty fingers over the waistband of the elder man’s swim trunks.

“Even if it can get hard again I’m afraid it will never be the same,” he shook his head sadly.

Jimin laughed out loud, reaching over the small divider between their poolside lounge chairs to press
a kiss to the blonde’s cheek.

“Are you worried you’re going to be like your father?” Jimin asked more seriously, knowing Namjoon didn’t go off on tangents without purpose.

His brilliant mind could work with single-minded focus and every thread of conversation or minute action was somehow connected to a big picture only Namjoon could see.

“Yes. But more so that I’ll be like my mother.”

“Why?”

“My father’s a grade A jackass and I actually threw a party when I turned 18 and moved out of his house into my penthouse. And yet...he stayed. He didn’t abandon me and leave me wondering who he was. I know exactly who my father is and am I afraid I’ll turn out as evil and manipulative as him? Of course, but my fear of throwing away the people I’m meant to protect and--and love? Much greater.”

Jimin worried at his lip for a moment, considering his words.

“I don’t think you should waste time on those kind of destructive thoughts. Do you know why?”

Namjoon gave a weak shake of his head and Jimin continued.

“Because you’re ten times the man your father is and you’re only 21. You have a beautiful soul and you don’t view the world like a chessboard filled with pawns for you to move as you wish, regardless of the consequences. You care.”

“I’m next line to take over a crime syndicate,” he spat wryly.

“That doesn’t make you a bad person. My opinion may not mean anything considering I’m also set to inherit a mafia organization,” he shrugged. “But, my point is you’re not like Wonshik. And you’re certainly not like your mother, whoever she was or is.”
“What makes you so sure?” Namjoon asked and they could both hear the anxiety lacing his words.

“Because you protect me and you love me wholeheartedly. Your love is just this wonderful, tangible thing. Makes me feel warm...I know you’d never throw me away, Joonie.”

Namjoon’s features softened at the gentle words and he stood, extending his hand to a confused Jimin.

“What?”

“Let’s go back to our room.”

Jimin smiled at the look in his eyes, one he recognized quite well.

“I thought your dick was out of commission.”

“Nah, let’s not underestimate its true strength,” he winked.

Jimin giggled, taking his lover’s hand and jumping up.

“I love you so much, Jiminie,” he whispered as they walked.

“I know you do,” Jimin regarded him tenderly. “As do I.”

Since childhood Namjoon had felt an internal conflict, two sides of him warring for prominence. One side longing to meet his absent mother, the other side convinced it was best to pretend she’d never existed and move on.

Having Larkspur--his mother--in front of him now, he was inclined to award the latter side the
victory. Ignorance had truly been bliss.

“Nothing to say to your dear mother, Namjoon-ah?” Larkspur jeered.

Namjoon was faintly trembling, but he cleared his throat and found his balance, no longer needing Jungkook to support his weight.

“Where have you been all these years?”

“Ah, well, here, there. Everywhere, really,” she replied vaguely, cold smile firmly set on her sharp, elegant features. “You’ve been learning from your father, I see. Taking over the family business.”

“I was never given another option but to do so.”

“Yes, I assumed so. Wonshik didn’t beat me and rape me for most of our marriage to produce an heir and then not use that heir to continue his twisted legacy.”

Namjoon winced at the casual reference to the abuse Larkspur had experienced at his father’s hands, but the woman herself seemed unphased, as if she were speaking about someone she held no interest for.

“You must have been pleased to hear your explosion killed him. He died in the hospital.”

“Alone, I hope.”

“I wasn’t there, no.”

She studied Namjoon’s face for a moment.

“I wasn’t the only one pleased by the notice of his death.”
“...Perhaps not.”

“Hmm.”

There was a pause, an uncomfortable moment of silence in which Namjoon grew acutely aware of his friends shifting beside him and of Larkspur’s worryingly ecstatic expression.

“Namjoon, I think something’s wro--” Yoongi leaned over to whisper, but his sentence was cut off by a sudden flurry of motion.

Jungkook gasped in horror as Daehyun seemed to appear from nowhere, somehow with his arms free and the gag removed, brandishing a shiny pistol and chuckling.

“Ta ta, nephew. See you in hell.”

Namjoon only had time to raise his hands up before the gun fired. There was a scream of agony and then Daehyun’s body fell to the ground.

“Oh my god,” Jungkook murmured, turning his head to see Taehyung coolly replacing his gun in his concealed holster.

“Fastest shot in all of Asia,” Yoongi nodded proudly at his boyfriend.

“She’s gone,” Namjoon breathed and the four of them looked back to see that only Daehyun’s corpse remained.

Larkspur and Suho were nowhere to be found.

“How could your guys let this happen?” Jungkook demanded, speaking somewhat rudely to Taehyung, who was both his boss and his elder.
The stress of the situation had him out of mind, however. Namjoon had almost died right before his eyes. And he would have been powerless to stop it, despite being the one responsible for protecting him.

“Right before Daehyun somehow got out of his restraints I heard static through my comm. I was trying to listen and I heard a cry of pain before the distinct slice of a blade through the air.”

“Larkspur knew about the snipers,” Yoongi frowned.

“Her men systematically took mine out while she stalled us here.”

“Where did Daehyun get the gun? We searched him,” Jungkook reminded them.

“Not thoroughly enough,” Yoongi growled. “Fuck, what a careless mistake. Either he hid it somewhere we didn’t think to look or Suho did. Regardless, it could have cost us our lives.”

“We’re all out sorts, hyung.” Taehyung glanced at Namjoon, who was still frozen staring at the space where Larkspur had once stood. “I think we should get out of here. Some of her men may have stayed behind.”

Jungkook intertwined his hand with Namjoon, who mutely allowed himself to be led back to their SUV. They drove away, leaving dead bodies behind and the revelation that Namjoon’s greatest enemy, the person most set on destroying him and everything he cared for, had given him life.

Jung Hoseok had never felt such raw despair as he did in that moment. Jimin had locked himself in his room since Jin’s dick move in the briefing on the explosions that shook the Kim’s organization to the core.

That meant that for nearly four days he hadn’t emerged from the self-imposed exile and he was ignoring the trays of food left outside his door by the mansion servants.

Hoseok wondered if Jimin planned to starve and dehydrate himself to death. He had said multiple times in the past that if he couldn’t be with Namjoon, then what was the point? Jimin could be scarily dedicated when he set his mind to something. Hoseok just didn’t want to believe that something was
“Jeminie?” he knocked a few times and waited, hearing only silence. “Jeminie, please open the door for me. I have pizza! And it’s your favorite: stuffed cheese crust and tons of pepperoni.”

Hoseok sighed, balancing the plate in his hand and the liter water bottle under his arm and knocked again.

“Please let me in. You’ve been alone in there for too long...I’m worried about you. Jin’s worried about you. Hell, your mother’s worried about you. She’s been calling here nonstop, threatening to get on a plane from Taiwan to drag you out of your room by your hair, like she used to when you were a kid.”

The door swung open and a glowering Jimin appeared. His obsidian hair was an absolute mess on his head and his clothes seemed to hang off his body, skin pale and dull. It hurt to see him in that state.

“That bitch can try. I’d love to see it,” he hissed.

“There’s the spirit of the Park Jeminie I love and cherish!” Hoseok chirped, quickly pushing past Jimin into his room before the door swung closed and refused to open once more.

“I didn’t invite you in.”

“I invited myself,” Hoseok set the food and the bottle down on his mahogany desk and took a seat on the velvet couch on one side of the room. “We need to talk.”

“I don’t want to talk to anyone.”

“Ah, but I’m not just anyone, am I? I’m your best friend in the whole entire world and all the galaxies in existence and those yet to be found!”

“You’re so annoyingly perky,” Jimin said, narrowing his eyes.
“My energy is meant to give you energy. It’s how our friendship has always worked and you know that.”

“Whatever,” Jimin plopped on his bed and glared at the floor.

“Jimin.”

“What?” he mumbled.

“Please don’t waste away in here. It breaks my heart and it isn’t fair to you.”

“What about my life seems fair to you, Hobi? Huh? Is it my brother and my mother controlling every aspect of my life and forcing me into an arranged marriage? Or perhaps the fact that the other half of my soul is probably with someone else right now, half in love with them and I’m meant to just accept that? I can go on if you need.”

“I’ve known you all your life, Jiminie. I’m well aware how shitty your family has made your life, but starving yourself and refusing to see the sun again isn’t taking revenge against them; it’s letting them win.”

“Sounds about right. I’ve lost everything.”

“Jimin,” Hoseok sighed, standing and joining Jimin on his bed. “Don’t give up on life. Don’t give up on love.”

“There’s no such thing.”

“I didn’t mean love in connection to the total dipshit you’re supposed to marry next month. I was talking about Namjoon.”
“Please don’t say his name,” his eyes shut in anguish.

“I’m planning to see him tomorrow.”

“You’re what?” Jimin’s eyes shot open.

“Seokjin thinks I’m going to Gwangju to visit my sister, but I’m going to stop by Namjoon’s penthouse and try to talk to him.”

“You’re insane. His security team will shoot you in the lobby and Namjoon has a personal bodyguard. If you make it to his penthouse, his bodyguard will shoot you!”

“I have an idea, don’t worry. Nobody’s shooting me.”

“Crazy,” Jimin shook his head, still stunned. “What are you even going to say to him?”

“Honestly? I’m not sure yet, but...probably the same thing I said to you. Don’t give up on love. What you and he had was special. Once in a lifetime, you know?”

“When I told him about my marriage, he told me there was someone else. Someone he may actually find happiness with,” Jimin’s eyes misted over and Hoseok instantly wrapped him in a hug.

Jimin felt small and weak in his arms. Too thin. Hoseok hugged him more tightly, making sure not to hurt him.

“Don’t give up,” he repeated. “Some things are meant to be. Why not believe your love story is one of them?”

“Because good things don’t happen to people like me,” Jimin whispered.
“Shut up. There are no people ‘like you.’ There’s you, Park Jimin, my beautiful, fiery best friend and I’m abso-fucking-certain you deserve the world so. Shut up,” he repeated, making Jimin huff a tiny laugh.

“Okay.”

“Okay?” Hoseok confirmed.

“Yeah, okay. I don’t have high hopes that one talk with Namjoon will magically fix all of my problems, but it’s better than starving to death I guess.”

“Oh my god, you were going to starve yourself? For real?!”

Jimin just shrugged.

“When you don’t look like a frail stick in the wind, we need to fight. I feel the need to punch you.”

“That’s fair, I guess,” the younger admitted.

“I love you.”

“I love you too,” Jimin sighed. “Sorry, I’m such a fucking trainwreck.”

“It’s not your fault. Your family’s to blame. They’re the true trainwreck.”

“Yeah, but the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” Jimin repeated the proverb quietly, eyes staring off into the distance.

Hoseok didn’t push him to explain the hidden emotion underlying his words. He simply held him and stroked his hair like he used to do when they were kids. He refused to let his Jiminnie fall to pieces. And he didn’t care if he had to go against Seokjin, the man he loved with his entire being,
and a whole army of the Kim Empire’s best fighters.

He was getting to Namjoon and he was going to convince him to fight for Jimin. Sure, the world was going to hell and the mysterious gang that had killed Namjoon’s father was only growing stronger, but none of that mattered in the face of true love. Although, Hoseok had to admit he was a hopeless romantic, so maybe he was wrong about that. Oh, well. He could only hope for the best.
Part XVI.

Chapter Summary

Jungkook receives a very rude awakening. Hoseok and Namjoon have a chat. New developments in the war between crime families leaves two people struggling to breathe.

Jungkook frowned at the T.V. screen, eyes staring unseeingly past the random cartoon he’d found when switching through channels, if only because the blur of colors offered him a modicum of comfort. Yoongi and Taehyung had accompanied them to Namjoon’s penthouse and immediately driven away to the main compound to restructure Taehyung’s men. The organization had been in a state of chaos since the explosions began and Namjoon’s father died. The board was frazzled and attempting to schedule a meeting demanding answers and a game plan from Namjoon, but the silver-haired man had been evading them.

And after tonight, Jungkook doubted he’d be in the state of mind to even leave his building for the next week. That left Yoongi, his second-in-command, in charge.

Jungkook had helped Namjoon to his bed and the elder curled up on his side and just laid there. His breathing was fairly uneven so Jungkook knew he wasn’t asleep, but he wasn’t speaking or even moving so the bodyguard figured it was best to give him some space.

_My parents are complete idiots and I hated growing up with them, but compared to Namjoon’s childhood I was raised by angels._

Jungkook shook his head, still repaying the events of the evening. He remembered looking into Larkspur’s eyes and seeing pure loathing in the darkness. She looked at Namjoon like she wished she could tear him apart with her perfectly manicured nails. It was horrifying.

Eventually, Jungkook fell into a restless sleep on the couch, the television still a pleasant sort of hum in the background. Nightmares plagued him, though, and he felt like he had only closed his eyes for 10 minutes before a loud rap on the front door had him shooting up, awake.

The digital clock on the cable box read 6:00 A.M. Jungkook groaned. It must have been the doorman with the delivered groceries. Namjoon had fresh groceries delivered twice a week at the ass crack of dawn. He said it reminded him to get out of bed and go for a run or spend time in his personal gym, which Jungkook thought was bullshit because Namjoon may have a lean frame but he certainly wasn’t spending hours lifting weights or jogging around his posh neighborhood. Jungkook
had used that gym more in the time he’d been there than probably in all the time Namjoon had lived in his penthouse.

Grumbling under his breath at Namjoon’s lazy exercise tendencies, Jungkook swung open the door and blinked in confusion at the sight of a young orange-haired man instead of their middle aged doorman, Chiwon.

“Hi there! Is Mr. Kim Namjoon in?” the man was sporting a mile-long smile, shifting the grocery bags around on his thin arms.

“He’s sleeping,” Jungkook narrowed his eyes at the man. “Who are you? Where’s Chiwon?”

“Oh Mr. Lim was frazzled by some enormous furniture delivery this woman on the 5th floor planned without telling him. I told him I wouldn’t mind hand-delivering the groceries myself. He works too hard after all.”

“Okay, but…no one else is supposed to deliver anything to Mr. Kim. Didn’t the security team explain that in the lobby?”

The sunny smile on the man’s face dropped so suddenly Jungkook didn’t even have time to take a breath before he was being hit across the face with a powerfully aimed bag that must have contained only metal cans because damn it hurt. The brunette whined as he clutched his head, dazed and falling back against the wall.

“You must be the personal bodyguard,” the man mused, letting himself in and eyeing Jungkook as he slid down to the floor, head lolling. “Was Namjoon shopping in the juniors section or something? You look like a baby.”

Jungkook would have taken offense, but he was in the process of losing consciousness so as it was he just cursed the man in his head and sent millions of desperate apologies to Namjoon. He had let him down.

“What the fuck is going on here?” a deep voice growled.

The orange-haired man, known to all his friends (well he really only had the one best friend), as Hobi dropped the grocery bags and turned towards Namjoon with a grin.
“Just the man I wanted to see!” he chirped. “Ooh, someone woke up angry.”

Namjoon took in Jungkook’s crumpled frame and Hoseok standing over him and didn’t hesitate to take the safety off of his handgun, pointing it straight at Hoseok’s forehead.

“What are you doing here, Jung Hoseok?”

“Aw, Joon, you remember me? I’m touched!”

“I don’t care that you’re Jimin’s best friend. I’ll kill you and you know it.”

“I think you kind of, sort of do care that I’m Jimin’s best friend or you wouldn’t have said that,” he gibed, completely nonchalant despite the gun pointed in his direction.

“Did he send you?” Namjoon ignored the jab.

“No, but he knows I’m here. The choice was all mine, though, and so was the effort. Your security team was such a hassle to take out. Not impossible though, obviously.”

“You killed my team?”

“Nah, just stunned them with some light nerve gas one of our scientists was working on. I was doing him a favor taking it out on a trial run and, hey, it’s a total success!”

“Do you realize how incredibly grating your voice is?” Namjoon looked more than annoyed but Hoseok only laughed.

“It grows on you.”
“Doubtful.”

“You know, I think we should stop standing in this entryway like we’re enemies or strangers. Let’s sit down and chat!”

“Say what you need to say and get the fuck out. I should rip out your ribs for breaking into my home and hurting my team,” his eyes lingered on Jungkook’s still frame long enough for Hoseok to understand what Jimin had been referring to when he said his soulmate was being happy with someone else while he suffered.

“I see...The kid isn’t just your bodyguard, is he?”

“He isn’t a kid and it’s none of your fucking business, Hoseok.”

“Namjoon,” Hoseok sighed tiredly, all the vitality seeming to drain from his body. “Please, can we talk? Just--just 5 minutes, that’s all I ask of you. You can throw me out with a broken limb if you want, but just give me 5 minutes before you do. Please?”

Namjoon examined him in silence for what felt like hours until finally he nodded, holstering his gun and nodding towards the living room.

“Sit. Don’t touch anything. I’ll be right back.”

Hoseok nodded gratefully and made his way into the living room, seeing out of his peripheral vision as Namjoon shouldered Jungkook’s muscular frame and disappeared down the darkened corridor, probably placing him in his bedroom.

“Your five minutes start now,” Namjoon declared as he sat on the couch across from Hoseok.

“I wasn’t lying when I said Jimin didn’t send me, but I am here for Jimin.”

“Whatever he and I had is in the past and that’s where it’s going to remain ,” Namjoon snarled angrily, reliving the agonizing moment on the beach when he learned Jimin had been playing games
with him and was arranged to be married to some unknown man.

“I don’t know you well enough to know if that’s the truth, but I know Jimin better than I know myself and I can promise you that it’s fully present for him. The love he feels for you, the story you two shared, the relationship he still wants you to be allowed to have. Not one where you have to hide your love in the shadows, but one where you’re free to be who you want to be together.”

“Jimin is marrying someone else,” Namjoon’s tone was curt. “Did you forget that? Because I sure as fuck didn’t.”

“How the hell could that slip my mind when I’m the one who sees the weight of his family’s decision crushing him, day by day? You are aware it wasn’t his choice, right? I know you’re pissed, but you’re not stupid.”

“Watch it,” Namjoon hissed.

“His witch of a mother and Seokjin forced him into it. He had no say!”

“He didn’t even try!”

“It wouldn’t have mattered, Namjoon! We both know what his mother is like. She put both Jimin and Seokjin in dangerous, life-threatening situations to test them. They were so young when she started risking their lives to make them prove their worth to her and to the Park empire. Seokjin will never be able to walk normally because he broke his spine twice before his 9th birthday. Jimin was so close--so scarily fucking close--to being raped multiple times as a child, even more as a pre-teen. If he wasn’t so skilled with a knife--”

“I know,” Namjoon looked pained as he shut his eyes. “I know about every one of those disturbed, perverted old men that tried to take advantage of him. And I know it was because his mother allowed it.”

“She was willing to let her children experience the worst kinds of trauma to train them into being her little soldiers. Jimin’s happiness was the least of her concerns when she planned this marriage. She was protecting herself and her organization...and she chose Jimin instead of Seokjin to punish him. Jimin was always more rebellious...He dated you after all.”
“...What do you want me to say? Or do, huh? You expecting me to show up at the church on his wedding day and storm in screaming ‘I object!’? That’s not happening.”

“I don’t expect you to be the knight in shining armor, asshole, but I do expect you to let Jimin back into your life. In any capacity. If you’re in love with your little bodyguard, then fine, but Jimin has known you for so much of his life. You’re, like, ingrained in his very being. Without you...he’s breaking, Namjoon.”

“What does that mean?” Namjoon asked cautiously.

Hoseok dug his hands into his own thighs, finding it difficult to admit the truth to Namjoon, but it was necessary.

“He was trying to kill himself.”

“*What?*”

“He’d locked himself in his room for days and he was turning away food and water. His mother threatened to fly in to break down the door herself and Seokjin would have done it if he wasn’t busy with his ridiculous drug campaigns,” Hoseok rolled his eyes in disdain. “I convinced him to let me in yesterday and he looked a day away from the end, if I’m being frank. He told me he was going to do it.”

“That’s not Park Jimin. It can’t be,” Namjoon’s eyes were wide and shocked.

“You’re right, it isn’t. My Jimin...your Jimin wouldn’t do that, but the Jimin his family has pulled to the edge? That’s exactly him. And he sees his only form of rebellion as this. One final act.”

“When is the wedding?”

“Next month. His mother’s been in Taiwan organizing it with the groom. Some middle-aged tool who got rich quick selling life insurance and money-laundering,” his face soured at the mention of Jimin’s “fiancée.”
“Jesus. Middle-aged?”

“Again, not Jimin’s choice, but I would guess you realized that.”

“Is he here?” Namjoon’s eyes darted around his own living room as if Hoseok had somehow hidden him under the couch cushions.

“He can’t leave the mansion. Not without three personal teams and with Seokjin’s explicit approval. I’m supposed to be on a business trip and I’m not really a key member of the organization so I’m not kept under constant watch.”

“I know you said you’re doing this for Jimin and he’s your best friend, I get it, but isn’t Seokjin meant to be the love of your life?” Namjoon questioned.

“It’s complicated,” Hoseok sighed.

“Elucidate me. First, because I still don’t trust you 100% and you could be trying to manipulate me and lead me to slaughter at one of Seokjin’s secret murder houses. Second, because, well, if anyone understands complicated relationships it’s me,” he shrugged.

“Drama queen,” Hoseok glared. “I’m not doing Seokjin’s bidding. I don’t even talk to the man anymore. Yes, he’s the love of my life. I love him, but it’s hard to stay in love with him when he acts like such a piece of shit. Look what he’s doing to Jimin and for what? A power struggle he wouldn’t even be able to win? The smartest move would be to work with you not against you, but his pride would never let him ask you for help. Even if that meant Jimin could be with the person he loves and not, you know, starving himself to death. Goddamnit,” Hoseok clenched his fist on his lap. “Fucking Park Seokjin.”

“That was...enlightening.”

“Shut up.”

“I believe you.”
“Whoop-dee-fucking-do, what does that mean in concrete terms?”

“Could you...arrange a meeting with Jimin? I don’t think calling him and having whoever’s tracking his devices trace it back to me is a good idea.”

“No, plus he isn’t in possession of his phone anymore. His mother ordered it to be taken away.”

“ Fucking bitch. After Suho and my mother, she’s on my list,” Namjoon snarled.

“Whoa, wait, did you just say Suho and your mother?”

“A story for another time,” he rolled his eyes.

A groan from down the hall alerted Hoseok to the fact that the cute little boy guard was waking up and, amazingly, Namjoon had given him much longer than five minutes.

“I should get going,” Hoseok stood. “I’ll do my best to arrange a meeting, maybe next week. I’ll send an email to your official work email at the company. My alias is ‘Tim McMellon’ so keep an eye out.”

“And you chose an American name, why?”

“My alias has a successful chain of restaurants in the American South, alright? Don’t judge my business acumen.”

“Whatever,” the silver-haired man rolled his eyes. “Leave before Jungkook fully wakes up and strangles you with three fingers.”

“Wow, I guess the toddler has bite?”
“Stop trying to demean him, you dick.”

“Sorry, it’s nothing personal, but I’m the best friend,” he shrugged. “I’m on Jimin’s side.”

“There are no sides here,” Namjoon sighed. “I never wanted that.”

Hoseok actually believed him. Namjoon and Jimin had been forced to love each other clandestinely, as if there was something wrong with finding the person you wanted to spend forever with.

Before Hoseok could leave with an awkward wave or finger guns (which he much preferred) there began a series of frantic knocks on the front door followed by loud shouts of Namjoon’s name.

“It’s Yoongi and Tae,” Namjoon frowned. “It’s not even 7 AM, what the hell is everyone doing here so early?”

“No. Just shut up and come with me. They won’t shoot if I’m in front of you...I think. Any link to Jimin sets Yoongi off though.”

“Comforting,” Hoseok drawled sarcastically, doing as Namjoon said anyway.

When Namjoon opened the door he knew, at once, that something was very wrong. Yoongi’s pale skin was flushed red with exertion. Yoongi never ran, yet there he was hugging and puffing as if he’d finished two marathons in a row. And Taehyung’s eyes were wild, his hands shaking at his sides.

“Hyung,” Taehyung’s voice was as unsteady as his palms. “There’s been another wave of explosions.”

“What? This morning?” Namjoon asked.
“In the last hour,” Yoongi clarified. “We came as soon as the locations and the...bodies were confirmed.”

“The bodies?” Namjoon repeated, confused.

Yoongi’s eyes flickered over his shoulder, seeing Hoseok for the first time.

“You.”

“Yep, me,” Hoseok nodded. “Please don’t try and kill me. I’ve had a stressful few days and I only came to talk to Namjoon. I’m leaving peacefully, I swear.”

“I don’t think you have anywhere to go right now.”

“What does that mean?” Hoseok scowled. “Are you threatening me?”

“No, he isn’t,” Taehyung cut in. “The explosions weren’t all on our territory. It was a pointed attack at the Kims and...the Parks.”

Hoseok felt like he’d lost the ability to breathe and beside him Namjoon seemed to be in the same predicament. He seemed near-hyperventilation.

“Yoongi…” Namjoon couldn’t formulate the question, yet his best friend knew exactly what he was asking.

“Joon, the bombs were expertly placed. One in Paradise, one in the bar the Parks just opened, and five in the mansion.”

“F--five?” Hoseok gasped, clutching his chest.
“Park Seokjin was at the club. We received confirmation that he’s unharmed, but he’s being taken to the hospital anyway. The club had three fatalities, ten injuries. It wasn’t open to the public, only staff was there. But the mansion...30 fatalities, 45 injuries. Among them, Park Jimin.”

“Oh my god, oh my god, no,” Hoseok was losing oxygen, his world was spinning.

Hearing that Seokjin was safe was a small breath of fresh air, but what about his best friend?

“Among which, Yoongi. For fuck’s sake,” Namjoon growled, hands tangling roughly through his already mussed hair. “What happened to him?”

“We don’t know, hyungie,” Taehyung tried to speak softly to calm them all, but it was to no avail. “The intelligence we received said Jimin was taken to the hospital, but we can’t confirm anything beyond that.”

Namjoon took a shaky breath before turning on his heel.

“Where are you going?” Yoongi asked.

“To make sure Jungkook is awake and to change my clothes. Then, you’re taking me to the hospital and I’m going to make sure Jimin is alive.”

“Are you sure that--” Taehyung didn’t even finish his sentence before Namjoon was whirling on him furiously.

“Are you questioning a direct order from your boss, Taehyung?”

“N-no, s-sir. Sorry,” he bowed his head and Namjoon stormed away.

Yoongi wrapped an arm around his boyfriend and whispered soft, comforting words into his ear.
Hoseok could only hold on to himself, arms shaking as he tried to hug himself tightly and convince himself that he wouldn’t be burying his best friend, his *brother* by the end of the day.
Part XVII.

Chapter Summary

Jimin's physical condition is revealed. A confrontation at the hospital leads to completely unexpected results.

Chapter Notes

the next chapter will bring interesting developments in the central love triangle so prepare yourselves for that, darlings :)

thanks for all your comments! I'm happy you're all invested in the fic and in Namjoon's romantic life lol. he's going to have to make a difficult choice

Namjoon felt like he was existing in a blur of space and time. One moment he was in his apartment wrangling a semi-conscious Jungkook into his shoes and jacket, the next he was speeding through Seoul on his way to the private ward at Asan Medical Center. The Park family owned it, which meant Kim Namjoon shouldn’t even be driving past it let alone shoving through the doors and strolling towards the elevators like he was expected.

The lobby receptionist and security guards recognized his face with one glance but Hoseok rushed over to murmur forceful instructions under his breath and they didn’t have the right to disobey. With the two Park heirs in different hospital rooms, the younger in critical condition, and the Park matron out of the country Jung Hoseok was technically in charge.

“What floor?” Namjoon demanded when Hoseok jogged over.

“Fourth. He’s...not doing too well.” Hoseok’s eyes were glossy with slowly falling tears, but he wiped them with the back of his sleeve and pushed the right button.

“But he’s alive?”

“They couldn’t tell me much. We need to find the doctor in charge.”
Namjoon nodded, watching the elevator numbers increment until the ding announced they were on the fourth floor. Before he could step out he was halted by a hand on his shoulder. He turned to see Yoongi with his pinched brow and deep-set frown.

“Are you sure you should be doing this?”

“We’re not doing this right now.”

“If not now, when? You realize you’re jumping right back into the frying pan with these people? This could be a trap, set up by Seokjin and his fucking mother or Larkspur. To get you here and finish you off when you’ve been dealt an emotional blow.”

“I need to know that Jimin’s alive. I need to confirm it with my own two eyes!”

“Okay,” Yoongi relented. “And then what?”

“What do you mean?”

“Let’s say he’s alive and well. What do you do then?”

Namjoon’s eyes flickered over briefly to Jungkook, who was pointedly staring at the floor, Taehyung’s arm around his shoulders for support.

“I...Nothing. I just need to know,” Namjoon reiterated.

Yoongi narrowed his eyes thoughtfully, but stayed silent, removing his hand. Namjoon turned to follow Hoseok and didn’t look back.

Jungkook knew the first reaction he should have upon seeing a coma patient isn’t pure envy, but he couldn’t help it. Park Jimin, heir of a powerful criminal organization and Namjoon’s first and only love, was stunningly beautiful and if that was true with scratches and bruises all over his face and petite frame, as well as wires sticking out of his nose and throat, then Jungkook didn’t even want to
imagine what he usually looked like. Obviously, Namjoon fell for his cherubic face and flawless skin before learning to love all his other qualities, all of which he had laid out for Jungkook in the spirit of total honesty.

Jimin’s doctor had explained that Jimin’s brain had placed his body in its current comatose state to cushion it from the mental and physical trauma suffered in the explosion.

‘How long...will he be like this?’ Hoseok had asked.

‘Two weeks, two months, or two years. We can’t be sure.’

‘Will he wake up? Eventually, will he wake up?’ Namjoon’s voice was rough and hoarse, despite how many times he cleared his throat.

‘We hope so,’ was the doctor’s not so comforting answer.

That had been 30 minutes ago and now Jungkook sat in an uncomfortable waiting room chair with Yoongi and Taehyung. Namjoon and Hoseok were still in Jimin’s hospital room.

“I’m exhausted,” Taehyung sighed, rubbing at his temples.

“I know. I’m sorry,” Yoongi ran a gentle hand through his boyfriend’s brown locks. “I wish we didn’t have to be here.”

“If you guys want to head home, I can let Namjoon know you had to go. You don’t need to wait with me,” Jungkook murmured.

“Yeah we do,” Taehyung shot him a look.
“It’s dangerous for you to be here alone. Hell, it’s dangerous for any of us to be here,” Yoongi huffed. “This is Park territory and Jung Hoseok may be all buddy-buddy with Namjoon right now, but things could take a bad turn with a snap of his fingers or the appearance of his beau.”

“Seokjin’s in this hospital too, isn’t he?” Taehyung asked.

“Seems like it. Our intel said he was mostly unharmed, but he must have some debilitating injury if he isn’t camped out in his brother’s room. But I’m sure that’s coming soon and we really shouldn’t be here when it does.”

“Do you think he’ll try and kill Namjoon?” Jungkook asked worriedly.

“Probably? He won’t be thrilled to see him, that’s certain. The last time Seokjin and Namjoon stood in the same room they were still teenagers and they had a knife fight.”

“Oh my god!”

“Yeah, that was before Namjoon and Jimin’s thing started,” Taehyung nodded. “Joon was sent on a mission by his dad, despite being too young and untrained to carry it out properly, and he crossed into Park territory quite stupidly. Seokjin was older and more experienced. He’s lucky to have made it out alive.”

“I’d say the odds are more even now. Namjoon’s skilled in combat and more so with a gun or a knife, but the point of being the head of the organization is never having to get your hands dirty,” Yoongi pointed out.

“Joon’s not thinking straight, but it’s about more than just Jimin’s accident. The fact that Larkspur is his mother is just a mindfuck. We all knew how much of a bastard his dad was, but the abuse he administered on his wife was so cruel she became hellbent on killing him and taking revenge by hurting her own child. Joon’s only crime was being born,” Taehyung shook his head sadly.

“This war turned into something we could never have prepared for,” Yoongi whispered.
“So...where do we go from here?” Jungkook asked.

Neither Taehyung nor Yoongi could formulate a response.

The sound of a gunshot resounded through the quiet waiting room.

“Oh fuck, did that come from--”

“Jimin’s hospital room? Unfortunately,” Yoongi answered Taehyung’s cut-off question.

The three men jumped up and sprinted down the corridor, Taehyung throwing the door open. He had already lifted his gun, removing the safety, and pointing it into the room.

“Ah, I knew Kim Namjoon didn’t travel without his little cavalry,” Park Seokjin chuckled.

Strangely, the mafia leader wasn’t threateningly waving a pistol in Namjoon’s face. In fact, he had his hands up in surrender and the one who was holding a gun was his boyfriend. Even stranger, Hoseok was aiming the gun at Seokjin.

“What the fuck is happening here?” Yoongi inquired bluntly.

“My Hobi’s chosen to join the Dark Side.”

“Shut the hell up, Seokjin, you are so full of shit,” Hoseok cursed.

Namjoon stood on the same side of Jimin’s hospital bed as Hoseok, but the silver-haired man looked unconcerned with the scene unfolding before him. Instead, his dark gaze was trained on Jimin’s face, studying the line of bruises on his face and the weak breaths his body struggled to produce.

“How could you bring Kim fucking Namjoon to my private hospital?” Seokjin’s handsome features were twisted in betrayal and disdain.
“Climb off your fucking high horse,” Hoseok snarled. “The only reason Jimin is in this hospital, in this room, in this coma is because of you! You and your snake of a mother.”

“Damn,” Yoongi muttered under his breath.

“How exactly did you come to that conclusion?” Seokjin scoffed.

“If you and that old hag had stopped meddling in Jimin’s life, he would have been safe, protected and happy with the man he loves—the only man he’s ever loved. And you know it.”

Taehyung glanced at Jungkook beside him, who flinched at Hoseok’s words and stared at Namjoon, who was much too immersed in Jimin to notice. Taehyung would never want to be the one asshole who said, “I told you so,” but he had warned Jungkook about getting in the middle of Namjoon and Jimin’s tragic love story.

“I did what I thought was right,” Seokjin was arguing.

“Bullshit! You did what was best for you and your precious empire.”

“Letting Jimin get entangled with a Kim was a mistake and one I should have corrected many years ago. When their little affair started up again, I was willing to turn a blind eye and let it run its course, but only because Jimin’s marriage was being arranged.”

“You knew?” Namjoon’s head shot up, directing an intense glare at the black-haired man.

“I know everything,” Seokjin boasted. “You really thought I wasn’t aware of your private yacht sexcapades?”


“Our parents wanted to make us strong and they achieved it. Here we are,” Seokjin waved a hand with a flourish, gesturing towards Jimin’s prone frame and himself. “We survived a round of fucking
“Explosions.”

“He’s comatose!”

“He’ll wake up!”

“You don’t know that,” Hoseok whispered. “And you really showed up here to insult Namjoon and refuse to take responsibility for all the actions that led us to this fucked up point in time. Larkspur and Suho’s organization will destroy us, but we’ve made it so easy for them. We’re already tearing apart at the seams.”

Hoseok stared at the gun in his hand like he couldn’t fathom where it’d come from and how it had ended up in his hand.

“Here,” he handed the weapon off to Yoongi as he stormed past him. “Park Seokjin,” he stopped at the doorway. “Forget about everything we ever were and everything we could have been. This...this relationship is over. I’ll move my stuff out tonight and if we ever cross paths again--because Jimin is the most important person in my life and I will not abandon him--we’re going to act like strangers. Really, that’s what we’ve been for so long.”

Seokjin didn’t even get a chance to protest before Hoseok was gone.

The silence was stifling and finally Yoongi stepped forward, brandishing the gun.

“Hey, dickface.”

“Now that’s a new one. You haven’t even seen my dick but you think it resembles my face? Both are marvelously breathtaking, so you’re right there,” Seokjin snarked, though there was no heat behind his words and he looked drained in every sense of the word.

“Shut up. You and I need to talk.”

“About?”
“This war and the fact that we’re smack dab in the middle of it and are only on the path to loss and death. What happened to your brother is only the beginning.”

“Are you threatening me?”

“Are you mentally challenged?” Yoongi snarled. “I have no interest in threatening you. You aren’t worth the effort. The conversation we need to have isn’t about our fight. It’s about a truce.”

There was a collective gasp and even Namjoon’s jaw dropped as he looked at his second-in-command.

“Yoongi—” Namjoon began.

“It’s the last thing I want to do,” he interrupted. “I’ve hated the Parks longer than you have, if only because I’m older. They’re a blight on this earth and I certainly wouldn’t be shedding tears if Larkspur’s explosions had killed both of these pricks.”

“You just have a way with words,” Seokjin drawled sarcastically.

“You aren’t friends nor will we ever be,” Yoongi continued as if he hadn’t heard. “But, desperate times call for desperate measures and in this case it calls for a truce. We aren’t friends, but we need to be...allies.”

Seokjin’s eyebrows were nearly in his obsidian hair, but he didn’t reject the proposal. Instead, he contemplated it mutely until minutes later he finally nodded.

“Okay. I agree that this isn’t the beginning of camping trips and pajama parties, but you’re right. We’re not winning this war and if we don’t act we’ll be annihilated. Enough cliches have been said, but...the enemy of my enemy is my friend, right?”
Part XVIII

Chapter Summary

A month later we see the effects of the new alliance and Jimin's coma.

Chapter Notes

I promised drama and a shake-up in the love triangle and I delivered. Let me know what you think in the comments ;)

I don't know how many chapters there will be but probably 20-25? I am still deciding so stay tuned

One Month Later

“So it's confirmed then?” Yoongi spoke over the phone in his spacious office, rifling through the paperwork in front of him. “The money trail cuts off in New Zealand, but we were able to trace it far enough that we can establish a timeline from when Mrs. Kim became Larkspur and built her empire.”

“And apparently killed her husband,” Seokjin added. “The circumstances around his death were more than suspicious. He was thirty years her senior. Old, old money in Shanghai.”

“She married him for his money and power then?”

“And to get an heir she chose to create herself.”

“Right. Because Namjoon was borne to her against her will,” Yoongi sighed, the words and figures seeming to blur before him.

“You sound tired.”
“I am tired and don’t act like you care.”

“When the hell did I say I did?”

“Fuck you, Park Seokjin. Keep me updated if you find anything else. We’ve managed to unearth a lot about Larkspur’s organization, yet we don’t even know her real name.”

“Or where she’s sequestered herself. After the explosions that destroyed most of my territory and properties she went off the grid.”

“A month of silence can only mean the worst is yet to come.”

“Hmm. I’ll call if I learn anything else.”

“Alright,” Yoongi was about to hang up when the older man called his name. “What?”

“Is my brother okay? And...Hoseok? Is he, uh, good?”

“I’m not your gossip hotline, dickface.”

“Please, Yoongi. I agreed to hand over Jimin to you guys—not that Namjoon gave me much of a choice in the matter—but he’s hidden away in one of your safehouses. For his safety it’s best that I know as little as possible and I’m not asking for the address so I can drive up. I just wanted to know how he’s doing and I assume where Jiminnie is, Hoseok is.”

Yoongi sighed.

“Fine, Park. Your brother’s still comatose and seems to be making no progress. There’s a doctor on location at all times as well a pair of nurses. Your ex is on site too. He usually camps out in Jimin’s bedroom though he was provided with his own room.”
“I can’t believe this is happening,” Seokjin sounded stunned.

“Which part?”

“Everything. This war, my little brother being in a coma...the man I love wanting nothing to do with me.”

“...I don’t know what to tell you, mainly because I don’t totally care about your life, but also because I’m bad at this shit. If you want comforting words that’s Taehyung’s department.”

“Your better half.”

“I’d say,” Yoongi gave a small smile at the reminder of his beautiful boyfriend, a smile that quickly faded when he remembered he hadn’t seen Taehyung in more than a week.

The new job was taking a toll on Yoongi, who tended to pass out on the couch in his office only when exhaustion drove him to unconsciousness. There was simply too much to do. He’d gone from Namjoon’s right-hand man to Namjoon’s right hand, responsible for as many things as the CEO and mafia leader was. Namjoon was focusing on saving face with the board and handling the legal repercussions of his father’s death. There were many assets to pass over and liquidize.

Namjoon was juggling the board and their investors while Yoongi dealt with the alliance with Park Seokjin and all the companies they owned in their day to day runnings. They were both trying to find more information on Namjoon’s mother and Namjoon had taken a few trips to the house he’d grown up in to see if any old neighbors could tell him more about his parents before he was born. There’d been little learned and Namjoon suspected either his father or his mother had forced people’s’ mouths shut with money (or violence).

Namjoon’s attention was also taken up by Jimin’s current condition. Yoongi didn’t have to be his best friend to see how much the silver-haired man was suffering. There was a possibility Jimin would never open his eyes again. Yoongi knew Namjoon was not prepared for this scenario and would react destructively. He wondered how Jungkook was faring. It must be difficult for the youngest member of their organization to love Namjoon so profusely and watch him love another just as passionately. And Namjoon still loved Jimin. Frankly, he’d never stopped.
Yoongi had been adamant about Namjoon ending things with Jimin after Seokjin had gone full psycho and tried to blow up his loved ones. Taehyung had almost died. Namjoon hadn’t put up a fight, accepting that he and Jimin’s end was inevitable. Yoongi had done all he could to help his best friend move on, including encouraging Jungkook’s feelings towards their boss. It seemed to have worked and Namjoon had seemed so happy with Jungkook beside him.

Of course, all of that changed when Jimin’s life was at stake. The younger had become a living corpse and Namjoon’s world had been shaken. Yoongi could empathize. If anything were to happen to Taehyung, he wouldn’t hesitate to set all of Seoul on fire to exact his vengeance.

“Youngi? Yah, asshole, were you even listening to me?” Seokjin’s irritated voice broke through Yoongi’s haze of thoughts.

“No,” he replied honestly.

“Asshole,” the Park heir repeated.

A quick knock on the door followed by his boyfriend’s modelesque frame had Yoongi’s mind wandering further from Seokjin’s yapping.

“Hey there, good-looking,” Taehyung mouthed with a flirty grin.

Yoongi bit back a laugh.

“I have to go,” he declared, cutting off Seokjin who sputtered with indignation.

“I was talking!”

“You’re always talking. If it’s urgent call me back. I need to go,” he said before hanging up.

He knew in their next conversation Seokjin would be screaming his ear off with insults, but it would be worth it.
“You’re here,” Yoongi smiled.

“I figured I had to show up sooner or later since you clearly weren’t coming back home.”

“Uh, yeah, sorry about that,” the elder man looked sheepish.

“Do you know what time it is?”

“Late-ish?”

“It’s 10 o clock.”

“Wait, that’s not that late.”

“It is when we were supposed to meet for lunch seven hours ago and I received no call or even a damn text to tell me our plans were off.”

Yoongi gulped as the coquettish smile fell off Taehyung’s face and suddenly his crossed arms and heavy scowl alerted him to the fact that his boyfriend was pissed.

“I am so sorry, Tae.”

“You’ve done this all week, missing lunches and dinners and then not coming to bed at all! I call and you’re rushing me off the line so you can get back to business minutes later. It’s like I’m not even a part of your life anymore.”

“I’m helping Namjoon with a lot. Running the organization isn’t easy.”
“I know that because I’m not an idiot or an ignorant child,” he hissed. “I could help you, but instead I’ve been sidelined and ignored. Namjoon-hyung’s going through some fucking crisis because of that damn Park Jimin, fine, he’s not my boyfriend—though Jungkook must be living his worst nightmare—but I’m here because you who are my boyfriend are certainly not acting like it!”

“Taehyung—” Yoongi stood from behind the ornate desk.

“Do you love me, Min Yoongi?”

Yoongi froze, jaw dropping.

“Wh-what? Of course I do.”

“Say it,” Taehyung demanded.

“I love you. You know I do.”

“Do I know that? If I did, don’t you think I’d be tucked under my favorite quilt being cuddled after hours of ravenous love-making? Don’t you think I’d feel warm and adored instead of frigid and unwanted?!”

“Tae, it’s only been a week and I think you’re being a tad dramatic—”

“It hasn’t just been this week! It’s been this entire month and I’m not selfish, I know the company and Namjoon-hyung require your time, but this alliance, this war, it’s pulling us apart. Have you realized that?”

Yoongi could only shake his head, bewildered by where the conversation had gone.

“No. No, Tae, that isn’t true.”
“It is,” Taehyung sighed tiredly. “We’ve been so busy running around following Namjoon’s orders and tip-toeing around his love triangle mess, we’ve forgotten about our relationship. I noticed a week ago, so I made it a point to schedule meals together or at least to be with you if you were working on something but you’d brought it to the apartment...Except you stopped coming home.”

Yoongi ran a hand over his face and sighed, sounding as drained as Taehyung had.

“I didn’t know you felt that way. I didn’t know I was failing you like this.”

“And now that you do?” Taehyung challenged. “Are you going to make it up to me? Are you going to come home on time and stop letting Larkspur ruin us?”

“I-I don’t want to lose you, lose us, but...these are perilous times and like you’ve pointed out, times of war. This company--Namjoon--needs me. And it needs you too! Tae, we’ve spilt blood for this organization. We can’t turn our backs on the cause.”

Taehyung’s face was twisted in melancholia as Yoongi’s words served to convince him that somewhere they’d taken a wrong turn and yet his boyfriend wasn’t willing to do anything he could to rectify that.

“Is the organization more important than me?” Taehyung asked, voice small.

“No. That is not what I’m saying. I just mean that we can’t get distracted right now.”

“Our relationship is not a distraction!” Taehyung threw up his hands in frustration. “Fuck, I can’t do this. I need a break. I have to go,” he turned towards the door.

“Wait!” Yoongi rushed to intercept his boyfriend. “What do you mean a break? Where are you going?”

“It doesn’t matter. It just needs to be away from you,” he murmured.
“Taehyung, I love you. Please stay so we can talk about this,” Yoongi tentatively lifted a hand to his lover’s face.

Taehyung allowed himself to lean into the touch for a second, but then he pushed Yoongi’s hand away.

“I...I love you too, but talking more will only feel like wasting my breath. You just don’t understand,” he breathed, shoving the door open and running away.

Yoongi could only stare after him, feeling like he’d missed something important and lost the man he’d loved because of it.

“He’s one of the only people I consider family, Jungkook. Can’t you understand that?” Namjoon exhaled sharply, swearing that he could feel a migraine forming from the stress of the conversation he seemed to be having for the millionth time.

“We’re locked up in a safehouse in the middle of nowhere because of him! We had to leave the comfort of our home to watch over a comatose patient!”

Jungkook was at his breaking point. He had tried to be patient and understanding, but having to witness his boyfriend fluttering around his ex-boyfriend and whispering sweet, comforting phrases while gently caressing his hair for an entire month was simply too much.

“We weren’t safe at the penthouse!”

“Oh, we weren’t our your precious Jimin wasn’t?” he snarked.

“Kook,” Namjoon ran a hand through his already mussed hair and sighed defeatedly. “I don’t know how else to explain it to you. Jimin is important to me.”

“Because you’re in love with him.”
“Because I love him,” Namjoon corrected. “Like I love Taehyung and Yoongi. If they were the ones in the hospital bed, I would have been just as concerned.”

“More than concern, it’s desperation! You look at him like if he doesn’t open his eyes you’re going to collapse on yourself and die with him,” Jungkook felt tears prick at the back of his eyes and he mentally groaned.

*Stop it! Don’t look like a stupid baby. Stay firm,* Jungkook told himself.

“Kookie, it isn’t like that,” Namjoon spoke softly, but Jungkook didn’t let the pretty, gentle tone affect him.

“I love you. You already knew that. I told you the night we first slept together that I would make you love me because I thought you were more than halfway there. I asked you once if you could imagine your feelings for me growing stronger. You said yes.”

“I meant it.”

“Maybe,” Jungkook responded quickly. “But we’ve been dating for a couple months and while I’ve felt my feelings--my love--for you blossom, I’m sure that you can’t say the same.”

“Jungkook, I care deeply for you. Whenever I’m away from you, I feel an ache inside. Seeing you brings me joy and warmth in a part deep inside of me,” he placed a hand over his chest. “Is this love? I’ve only loved once before you and it was a love that consumed me, that drowned me and stabbed at me. I don’t feel that now, but isn’t that better? What I feel for you doesn’t hurt.”

Jungkook considered the words as he allowed his tears to fall freely.

“Jungkook, say something. Please,” Namjoon begged, eyebrows furrowed.

Jungkook took in the beautiful face of the man he loved, lingering on every tiny freckle and every long lash adorning his lovely chocolate eyes. He looked at Namjoon and he could feel that fervent love Namjoon described.
My love for you consumes me, Namjoon. It drowns me. It stabs at me. It hurts so deeply...This intensity, this fire inside me...You don’t share it, do you? No. No, how could you when the flame within you has been burning for Park Jimin for so long?

“Goodbye.”

“What?” Namjoon frowned. “You’re leaving? It’s late, Jungkook, where do you plan to go?”

“I’ll stay at the compound tonight and tomorrow...I don’t know. But, I-I can’t be around y-you right now, hyung.”

“Kook, please,” he took a deep breath. “I love you. I do, okay? Please don’t go. I love you.”

Jungkook’s heart broke as the three words he’d so desperately longed for were offered. And yet it wasn’t enough.

“Goodbye, hyung,” he said, slipping out through the back door and coming upon a blue bicycle that seemed to have been abandoned in the back alley.

He climbed on without a second thought and pedaled away. He heard Namjoon’s voice calling out for him, but he didn’t stop pedaling and he didn’t look back.

Jungkook had been given the 10 digit code to the training compound a while ago, so it was a relief that it had somehow stuck in his memory. If not, he’d be sleeping on the streets. He walked the bicycle inside, laying it against a wall and ensuring that the door had locked behind him.

His phone vibrated in his jacket pocket. He pulled it out and wasn’t surprised to see Namjoon’s name on the caller ID. He pocketed the phone again and walked down the entrance hallway to the main training room.

“Jungkook?”
Jungkook jumped, immediately raising his fists and getting into a defensive position.

“Hey, relax, it’s me.”

“Taehyung?” Jungkook let his fists unclench.

“The one and only.”

“What are you doing here?”

“Camping out in my office. You?”

“Oh. I was also hoping to camp out here. On one of the training mats or something.”

“Did you fight with Namjoon-hyung?”

“Sort of...It was about Jimin.”

“I assumed so. Come on,” Taehyung turned on his heel and ascended the staircase that led to his large office space.

“Oh wow. I don’t think I’ve ever entered your office before. You have a whole bed here.”

“Well, it’s a futon but I tricked it out with sheets and pillows from my apartment so it looks more than comfortable, doesn’t it?”

“If you brought all that from your apartment, does that mean you had a fight with Yoongi-hyung?”

Taehyung nodded with a grimace.
“Our boyfriends only serve to bring us heartache, huh?”

“...He told me he loved me,” Jungkook murmured, taking a seat on the edge of the futon.

“But?” Taehyung sat beside the younger man, sharp eyes intuiting that the seemingly good news came with negative consequences.

“He doesn’t love me like I love him. He doesn’t love me like he loves Jimin.”

“I’m sorry, Kookie,” Taehyung wrapped an arm around him.

“It’s okay. A part of me always knew that,” he shrugged, staring at the ground and cursing as the teardrops began to fall.

He had cried the entire bike ride over, but apparently that was only the tip of the iceberg.

“I know what will cheer you up!” Taehyung popped up and dashed to his desk, where he crouched down for a few seconds before emerging with four large bottles of soju from his bottom drawer.

“Alcohol?” Jungkook was unenthused. “I have a shitty tolerance.”

“Good for you, it’ll take effect faster,” Taehyung placed two bottles on his lap and quickly popped open the cap on one of his to begin chugging.

Jungkook watched, wide-eyed, as Taehyung gulped ¾ of it down before taking a pause.

“Hurry up and drink! You need to catch up!”

Jungkook hesitated, but Taehyung leveled him with pleading pout and he relented. If this made his hyung feel better then he could follow along. He wasn’t a big fan of drinking, but it was true that
alcohol helped you forget and if he could escape reality (and the fact that Namjoon would never loved him like he needed him to) even for one night then great.

Jungkook finished one bottle when Taehyung finished both of his.

“This feels amazing,” Taehyung groaned, wiping his mouth and reaching over for the fourth bottle, which Jungkook had placed between his thighs. “Oops, sorry.”

Jungkook had jolted as Taehyung had accidentally brushed against his dick but he laughed it off.

“Don’t worry, hyung. Are you sure you should be drinking more though? You’ve had a lot.”

“I only feel a buzz,” Taehyung said, but his gaze was trained on Jungkook’s crotch.

“Um, you can have the last bottle if you want,” Jungkook offered, assuming that was what the elder brunette was staring at.

“Fuck me.”

“What?!” Jungkook dropped the empty bottle in his hand on the floor.

He was definitely feeling more than tipsy, lightweight that he was, so that must have contributed to him misunderstanding Taehyung. Certainly, he couldn’t have said what he thought he said.

“Fuck me, Jungkook,” Taehyung repeated calmly.

“Y-you have a b-boyfriend and I d-do too,” Jungkook stuttered, watching as Taehyung walked his hand up his thigh, dipping in between his thighs to grab the bottle.

“Namjoon-hyung doesn’t love you, right? He’s only going to hurt you more if you let him. And Yoongi? He’s fucked with my heart long enough. He told me tonight that the cause and the fucking organization mattered more to him. Ok then.”
Taehyung dropped the last full bottle on the futon and climbed onto Jungkook’s lap, wrapping his arms around him and dipping his head so they were sharing the same air.

“O-oh,” Jungkook stammered. “I d-don’t know th-that this is the r-right thing to d-do, hyung.”

“Call me Tae, okay? I don’t want to hear honorifics while you fuck me. Now that’ll be awkward,” he chuckled, letting one nimble hand slip into Jungkook’s pants.

The younger shivered as Taehyung began deftly stroking his dick to hardness.

“Y-you don’t l-love me and I d-don’t love y-you.”

“No,” Taehyung agreed. “But it’s better this way. Where did love get us, Kookie?”

Jungkook gulped, trying to think straight despite the thrum of alcohol and desire now fueling his system.

“Kook? I won’t force you. Just tell me if you don’t want to,” Taehyung ran his free hand through Jungkook’s hair, softly scratching at his scalp.

Jungkook took a shaky breath and came to the conclusion that tonight could only end one of two ways. One, he could reject Taehyung and awkwardly stumble to the training room or one of the practice rooms and sleep on some stinky, stiff training mat. He would lay there and cry more about Namjoon and Jimin and love being the most skillful form of torture. Or...Option two, he could let this happen and forget about the pain just for tonight. Just for a bit.

When Jungkook surged up to connect their lips, Taehyung gasped into his mouth, not expecting the younger to respond so passionately.

“Don’t stop,” Taehyung moaned as Jungkook moved his mouth down the line of his jaw and then his neck, dipping below his shirt to suck at his collarbone.
“Not planning to,” he breathed against his skin.

It wasn’t long before their clothes were strewn around the floor and they were pressed against each other, bare skin to bare skin. The air grew hot and their movements more desperate and then Jungkook was thrusting inside of Taehyung, holding him down against the bed and releasing all his pent-up frustrations and emotional agony through the jerk of his hips.

When Jungkook came inside of him, it took all of his strength not to whimper the name of another man, though flashes of deep dimples and beautiful brown eyes plagued him the entire night and even when he passed out, gasping beside an equally exhausted Taehyung, he dreamt of Kim Namjoon.
Part XIX

Chapter Summary

Taehyung and Jungkook reflect on their actions in the morning after. Namjoon and Yoongi focus on the war.

Chapter Notes

This was pointed out in the comments, but Yoongi is absolutely Namjoon's best friend, other half, ride or die, etc. They are best friends for life and this was a relationship I considered central to the plot from the start, so I'm glad everyone sees that. The only reason Namjoon broke it off with Jimin was that Seokjin came after his friends and yes, he hurt Tae, but it was Yoongi who told Namjoon he had to end his relationship and that was why Namjoon agreed despite how much it hurt him.

Thank you guys for following my fics! I love you so much <3

Hoseok had been taking a tranquil nap on the living room couch when he was jerked awake by a series of loud, insistent raps on the door. He stiffened at the seemingly aggressive knocks and his eyes darted up to Namjoon as the silver-haired man appeared from the corridor, gun cocked.

Stay calm, he mouthed and Hoseok could only nod. He more or less trusted Namjoon and this was meant to be his most secure safe house, the location of which was only known to the three people he trusted most: Yoongi, Taehyung, and Jungkook. The latter was probably not the one outside. Hoseok didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but no one had bothered to lower their voices, so though he had been focused on holding Jimin’s hand and reading him a bedtime story he had clearly overheard the couple’s argument. It definitely sounded like trouble in paradise.

Namjoon walked steadily towards the door, peering through the hidden peephole, which was imperceptible to anyone on the other side. He released a sigh of relief.

“I’m always on edge these days,” he shook his head, pocketing the gun and pulling open the heavy door to let his second-in-command in.

Yoongi looked terrible if Hoseok was being honest (which he prided himself on always being). The stylish and sleek white hair he usually pulled off made him look 70 because of how faded and unkempt it was. That paired with heavy eye bags under his eyes and a general pallor over his face
proved Min Yoongi had been having a hard few weeks.

“Jesus, you look like crap,” Namjoon said, voicing Hoseok’s observations.

“Thanks, asshole. It’s all your fault, of course.”

“I know. I’m sorry.”

“I know that,” Yoongi sighed, letting his small frame collapse on the couch beside Hoseok. “Hey.”


Yoongi squinted at him, suspicious at the show of hospitality.

“You’re offering to make me a sandwich?”

“Um, if you wanted one, yes I’d make it.”

“You Parks never stop surprising me,” he snorted.

“I’m not a Park.”

“You’re an honorary one, aren’t you? Park Jimin’s best friend and Park Seokjin’s paramour.”

“Ex-paramour,” Hoseok scowled.

“Yeah, he doesn’t seem to think so considering he’s still completely obsessed with you and every time he gets me on the phone he asks about you.”
“...He does?” Hoseok wasn’t sure how he should feel about the information.

“Yep. I never thought there’d be this amount of romantic drama in the mafia” he mused and Namjoon rolled his eyes.

“Are you here with news?”

“Yes. Is, uh, Taehyung here?” Yoongi meant for his question to come across casually, but Namjoon wasn’t fooled.

“No, why would he be?”

“No reason. Let me give you my briefing.”

“Hyung,” Namjoon gave him a look, but Yoongi shook his head.

“It’s not important right now. One of my sources finally came through. I brought you the official file on Larkspur. Real name: Lim Seoyeon,” he pulled the file from inside his jacket and handed it to Namjoon.

The taller man stood there dumbly for a minute, staring at the file as if unable to comprehend what it was. Finally, he took a deep breath and opened it, eyes scanning over the collected papers and records.

“She was originally from Busan,” he breathed. “One of the only things my father ever told me about my mother was that that she was a Seoulite because he would never be interested in some country bumpkin...I guess I shouldn’t be surprised he lied about that, or anything else.”

“Isn’t it funny that your mother and Jimin, the two people who’ve plagued your life most--in different ways--are both from Busan?” Yoongi chuckled.
“Yes, hilarious,” Namjoon glared.

“Well, we have different senses of humor,” Yoongi shrugged.

“So your mother is the infamous Larkspur, the woman who single handedly debilitated the most powerful crime families in Asia?” Hoseok whistled. “I’d be impressed if I weren’t more terrified and even more pissed as hell for what she did to my best friend.”

“Her personal vendetta won’t be fulfilled until she destroys me. My father was only step one,” Namjoon grimaced. “She won’t rest until I’m left with nothing. No empire, no loved ones...nothing but misery. Maybe then she’ll run a blade through my heart herself.”

“How horribly vivid,” Hoseok winced.

“She was a farmer’s daughter. Poor and without the means to improve her life. When Wonshik found her he must have seemed like some deity sent from above. He promised to save her,” Yoongi murmured.

Namjoon shut the file, closing his eyes for a moment and exhaling shakily.

“Joon?” Yoongi took the file and tossed it on the couch before standing to lay a comforting hand on his best friend’s shoulder.

“I wish my life didn’t have to be this much of a shitshow--that my father wasn’t an abusive psychopath who turned my mother into a monster, that my job wasn’t to lurk in the shadows of the criminal underground...that I could love freely and not feel like every time my heart beats I’m doing something wrong...I wish I wasn’t Kim Namjoon.”

Yoongi wordlessly embraced him, running a hand through his hair and gently twirling a few strands like he used to do when they were both children and Namjoon would suffer from night terrors.

Hoseok quietly excused himself from the room, returning to his place by Jimin’s bedside. As he took his best friend’s hand again he could hear Yoongi speaking in a soft voice, whispering reassurances and promises of a better future.
The world could be a cruel place, but at least there were special people put in your life to help you wade through the ugliness and hopefully come out mostly intact.

Jungkook woke up to the sound of heavy sobs. He slowly sat up, wincing slightly at the thrum of a headache—a product of his hangover.

“Taehyung?”

The sobs quieted for a moment, followed by sniffling.

“I’m sorry,” Taehyung whispered.

Jungkook blinked awake and noticed the brunette was curled up in a tight ball on his office chair, arms around his knees as he cried into his arms.

“...I’m sorry too,” Jungkook admitted.

“I threw up. I woke up and I just rushed to the bathroom and puked my guts out.”

“Because of all the alcohol?”

“No. Because I betrayed the only man who’s ever truly loved me.”

Jungkook felt a twinge of pain in his chest. He couldn’t relate. Yes, he felt an intense pressure on his chest, a physical embodiment of guilt, but he couldn’t say as certainly as Taehyung did that he had betrayed the man who truly loved him.

Kim Namjoon had become his everything, but Jungkook was only a lost star passing through his beautiful orbit—enamored with his alluring pull, his magnetism...Sooner or later the orbit would change, something would shift, and Jungkook would be pushed away again. He had only preempted this inevitability.
“We don’t need to tell anyone if you don’t want to.”

“I can’t keep this from Yoongi,” Taehyung quickly shook his head. “He sees right through me a-and I n-need to beg f-for his forgiveness.”

“I doubt Namjoon will even care,” Jungkook said numbly.

“I’m sorry things turned out this way...I was rooting for you.”

“You were honest with me from the start. You warned me and I was too stupid to listen.”

“You were in love.”

“As I said, too stupid .”

Taehyung wiped his face with the back of his hand and stood on shaky legs, beginning to gather his clothes and passing Jungkook’s his.

“I’m here for you if you need me, okay?”

“I don’t know if it’s a good idea for us to see each other for a while. It’s probably not a good idea for me to be within 20 feet of Yoongi-hyung either…”

“He won’t blame you for anything. It was my fault and I will take responsibility for everything.”

“We both made the decision, hyung. I...I felt so lost in despair and when you offered me a night of forgetting, I jumped at the chance. I’m an idiot, okay?”

“Then we’re both idiots,” Taehyung sighed. “And we need to face the consequences of our actions.”
It had taken Namjoon some time to compose himself, but once he did, he lifted his head from Yoongi’s slim shoulder and took a deep, steadying breath.

“It’s time to begin our retaliation,” he declared.

“Are you sure? You can take some more time to--”

“To what? Mope around in this safehouse, praying Jimin will wake up? Fighting with Jungkook and feeling like this space is more of a warzone than whatever’s waiting out there? No,” Namjoon said firmly. “This weakness isn’t something I can allow myself to wallow in. This war is far from over, hyung; it’s just our turn to act.”

“Have something in mind?” Yoongi raised an eyebrow.

“Have you heard the expression ‘fight fire with fire?’”

“Uh, yes. Always with a negative connotation because when you fight fire with fire you only get burned.”

“Hmm, I’d like to think if you’re smart enough you can ensure that the flame only burns one party.”

“Alright, genius, elucidate me. How are we going to do that?”

“Your recon team and your sources revealed the truth of my mother’s backstory. Mine opened the door on someone else. Her favorite son.”

“Suho. What do you have?”

“The assurance that every Friday night he spends time in an underground fight club that doubles as an elaborately organized brothel.”
“Classy.”

“I’d never heard of this club and I ran it by Seokjin a few days ago, neither had he. Yet, it’s existed since before Korea became a republic.”

“How did we miss it?”

“It’s buried deep in the underground and it’s a sector we’ve never wanted to delve into. The illegal sex trade and fights to the death? Those are big risks that could ruin a serious organization’s reputation. Larkspur may not be aware her precious son spends so much time—and money—in that cesspool of a place.”

“Who was the source?”

“Lee Taemin.”

“That fucking prick. It makes sense that he would call that place home.”

“It’s a side gig he says he does for fun. The big money is in more tasteful escort services, but he dabbles in both prostitution and fight clubs so.”

“Fucking prick,” Yoongi spat.

“Listen, we all know you hate him because he seduced Taehyung and they went off to Andorra for a week of sex and drugs, but that was years ago and Taemin risked a lot to give us this information.”

“That little snake wouldn’t have done shit if it didn’t benefit him. What did he get in return?”

“Protection throughout this war and a place in the organization, as well as a private apartment in our most luxurious property by the beach.”
“You made him part of our organization?!”

“Relax, he’s not doing anything high-level and it’s temporary. I just had to keep my word.”

“When this shit’s over, his cushy new apartment may suddenly end up with a rat and termite infestation,” he threatened.

“You will absolutely not put everyone else in the building at risk of rats and termites. They pay good money to live there and many are high-profile clients.”

“Fine. I’ll think of something else then,” he huffed, making Namjoon roll his eyes good-naturedly.

“Back to the point. It’s Friday. We know where Suho will be tonight. Are we making a move?”

“Is that even a question?”

They shared a grin.

“I think this deserves a personal touch. We’re suiting up tonight and delivering a message ourselves. I’ll call Jungkook, can you get Tae up to date?”

Yoongi glared at the floor and Namjoon observed the tense line of his friend’s shoulders.

“Or maybe I call Tae and you get Jungkook?”

Yoongi only nodded.

“It’s just as well. I doubt Kook wants to speak to me,” he admitted.
“It’s this fucking war,” Yoongi cursed.

“Maybe, but I think...I saw this coming from the beginning. I brought Jungkook into this organization, into my life and I tainted him. I got in the way of his normal life and I gave him pretty illusions.”

“Joon, you didn’t play him. You care about the kid, love him even.”

“Not enough.”

“Maybe not, but it’s genuine love and that’s more than most people get. You were happy together no matter how briefly.”

“But now what? What do I do?”

“What do you want to do?” Yoongi turned the question back on him.

“I don’t know. I feel like I can’t think clearly with Jimin in that state.”

“Okay, let’s say he wakes up. What then?”

“I...I think I’d want to be with him.”

“And if he dies? Would you choose Jungkook then?”

Namjoon ran a hand over his face.

“That wouldn’t be fair. He’d only be my second choice.”
“Hasn’t he always been?” Yoongi asked matter-of-factly.

“Fuck,” Namjoon shut his eyes. “I’m a total asshole.”

“Yeah, but we all are in some capacity. Tae’s pissed at me for ignoring him and forgetting about our relationship because I’ve been preoccupied with the organization and the war.”

“I’m sorry.”

“War always exacts a toll from human beings. We all knew that coming into this.”

Namjoon nodded mutely.

“We should pull ourselves together though. At least for tonight,” Yoongi reminded him.

“I know. I’ll make the call. Should we tell Seokjin?”

“Nah, he’ll only want to micromanage our operation and trust me, that man is bossy and controlling enough over the phone. We don’t need to deal with him in person,” he said, making Namjoon chuckle. “Besides, this needs to be subtle. The less people who know the better.”

“Agreed. Okay then. Let’s light the fuse.”
Part XX

Chapter Summary

Suho and Namjoon finally face off. Jungkook comes clean.

Chapter Notes

We are very close to the end now, my lovely readers!!! I think there will be about 5 more? Around there, I think. Stay tuned!

The silence in the SUV was deafening. Namjoon was driving and Taehyung was in the passenger side, Yoongi and Jungkook in the back seat. Namjoon’s eyes would flicker from the road to the rearview mirror to try and catch Jungkook’s gaze. To no avail. The younger man was steadily focused on the buildings they were speeding past. The same could be said of Taehyung who had mumbled a “Good evening, hyung” before staring outside the window and then simply blinking at the dashboard.

Yoongi had tried to talk to him when they all met at up outside the safehouse, but Taehyung had only shaken his head and asked him for some more time. Yoongi didn’t know what that meant exactly but he acquiesced. So here they all were. In silence.

“I’ll leave the car a few blocks away just in case,” Namjoon cleared his throat, his voice coming out odd as if it were too loud or too rough.

It was probably just in his head since no one had spoken in over 40 minutes.

“How are we getting in?” Yoongi asked. “Backdoor?”

“Nope, we’re going old school. Front door.”

Yoongi snorted.
“Aren’t these kind of underground clubs heavily guarded? And you need an invitation or a secret password to get in?” Jungkook asked, ducking his head when Namjoon caught his gaze in the mirror. “Or that’s what I’ve seen in the movies,” he mumbled.

“No, you’re right. On both counts. Luckily, I have the personal invitation from Taemin and tonight’s special password as well. We’re set. Taemin already confirmed Suho arrived at his usual time and is currently enjoying the best sex money can buy.”

“Pathetic,” Yoongi scoffed. “Having to pay for sex.”

“Well, his sad habits worked out in our favor so let’s just be grateful.”

“Are we going straight for the kill?” Taehyung asked quietly. “Or another elaborate kidnapping?”

“Yeah, we did a shit job last time, so no. I don’t particularly want any collateral, but Suho never travels alone. His security team will recognize us as soon as they see us, so we need to act fast. Taemin said he moves from the brothel to the ring and bets on the strongest fighters, which he recruits for his organization if he’s impressed enough. The main ring is on the lowest floor and it’s basically a pit.”

“Gladiator style?”

“Exactly. It’s a tight space with a big crowd, so it won’t be easy, but maybe it’ll help with the element of surprise. We have to be careful how we approach. We can’t alert his team or Suho himself until we’re close enough.”

“Killshot?”

“I brought my best knife actually,” Namjoon showed off the gleaming push dagger he’d hidden in his sleeve.

“Nice,” Taehyung nodded. “Push daggers are deadly efficient. They’re not made for combat, just for taking care of a target with minimal fuss. That’s why the blade is oriented horizontal to the ground when you hold it. Easy insert and exit.”
“You know way too much about knives,” Yoongi teased, hoping he could get his boyfriend to smile.

Taehyung didn’t respond though and a more uncomfortable silence permeated the car.

“We’re here,” Namjoon said a minute later, breaking the stillness once again.

He parked the car and the four men made their way towards the dilapidated looking building.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon grabbed the brunette’s arm, forcing him to fall a few steps behind Yoongi and Taehyung.

It was the closest they could get to a moment of privacy.

“What?” Jungkook asked, staring at the floor beneath his boots.

“I’m sorry about yesterday. I didn’t want to fight or upset you.”

“I know, hyung,” Jungkook said softly.

“I care deeply for you, Kook. I...love you. I do love you.”

“I know that too,” he sighed. “But, I also know it’s not the way I need to be loved. It’s not the way you love Jimin and it’s...not enough for me.”

“I’m sorry,” Namjoon repeated, unsure what else he could offer the beautiful boy beside him.

“Me too. You have no idea how sorry I am,” Jungkook had to take a deep breath to prevent his voice from breaking, yet Namjoon still tilted his head in confusion.
“You okay?”

“There he is,” Yoongi growled, pulling Namjoon’s attention away from Jungkook’s guilty expression. “I can’t believe I have to see that stupid fucker’s snake face again.”


“For now,” Yoongi spat.

Taemin lounged against the wall of the building, clearly waiting for them. He broke into a wide grin full of mischief and amusement as he saw them approach.

“Hello hello. Lovely to see you all. Mm, especially you, darling,” he winked at Taehyung, who managed a small smile.

“Hey, Taemin.”

“How have you been? It’s been a while since we...had our little getaway.”

Namjoon saw Yoongi’s eyes narrow, one pale hand going to his pocket. Namjoon knew his best friend had quite a selection of weapons hidden on his person, meaning that his hand could emerge with a pistol or a blade or even a throwing star. It was too early in the evening for murder and frankly, they still needed Taemin so being left with a useless corpse would be counterproductive.

“That was a long time ago and things have changed,” Namjoon stepped between Taehyung and Taemin, flashing a picture perfect grin. “Did you know Taehyung and Yoongi were together?”

“Oh?” Taemin raised an eyebrow, looking Yoongi up and down as if he were a fascinating zoo animal.

Yoongi bristled, fingers tightening around the knife in his pocket, but Namjoon shot him a warning look before turning back to Taemin.
“Yes. They’re disgustingly cute. You know the type. Lost in each other’s eyes and fawning over each other 24/7. You look great, Minnie. Have you lost weight?”

Taemin, who had always been easily distracted by affairs that concerned himself and his good looks, beamed at Namjoon.

“I have actually! Thank you for noticing, Namjoon. You have a sharp eye.”

“I pride myself on it,” he smirked. “Let’s not waste anymore time on words of praise though. You said Suho was here?”

“All finished up in the bedroom too. He’s ringside already and he placed a hefty sum on one of the contenders in the next fight.”

“He’s recruiting tonight?”

“Seems like it.”

“Okay, thanks. We’ll take it from here.”

“You can tell all the security guys you’re my personal guests. You don’t even need to worry about the entrance fee or the password. My name is more than enough to give you full access,” he boasted.

“Why’s that?” Jungkook asked.

Taemin gave him an interested once over.

“Well, you are positively delicious. What’s your name, baby?”

“Unavailable on account of being in a relationship. With me,” Namjoon added and Taemin
chuckled.

“Long name.”

“You’re sure we won’t need anything else? One hundred percent sure?”

“Yes, yes,” Taemin waved a hand dismissively. “I’ve blown half of the security guys and fucked the other half. They all adore me. My friends get treated like gods.”

Yoongi rolled his eyes.

“We’re all thankful for your promiscuity. Now, can we get to killing this fucker or what?” he demanded gruffly.

“Go right ahead,” Taemin’s smile was dangerous, but he pulled open the door and waved them inside. “Try not to die or whatever. Ta ta!”

“I hate that guy,” Yoongi muttered once they were inside and making their way to the downstairs center ring.

“Tell me something I don’t know,” Namjoon rolled his eyes. “He’s slimy, but he’s useful. He was right. I just had to mention his name and they practically laid out a red carpet for us.”

“I’d pull all my teeth out by hand before thanking that snake for anything.”

“Why do you hate him so much?” Jungkook asked curiously.

“A story for another time,” Yoongi said, eyes darting over to Taehyung, who was steadfastly staring straight ahead as if he were unaware of any conversation occurring.

Yoongi bit back a disappointed sigh. He and Taehyung needed to have a serious conversation after
tonight. Their relationship couldn’t continue like this and communication was key. Yoongi needed Taehyung to know how much he loved him and how happy he was to share a life with the younger man. This war and this situation was only temporary. He was already picturing forever with Taehyung. They would get through this.

Jungkook didn’t have as much experience in mafia business as the other three men did, but he had been working as Namjoon’s bodyguard long enough to know danger followed the man wherever he went and in cases where he actively sought the danger out? Well, that was a total shitstorm.

They’d spotted Suho seconds before the man saw them and the situation quickly spiraled out of control. His security team had begun shooting anyone in their way and dead bodies now littered the floor. Screams rang out and people were pushing each other to get away, which only added to the chaos and made it harder for Taehyung and Yoongi, who were the best shots, to take out the enemy gunmen.

Namjoon had jumped over bodies, metal chairs, and knocked-over tables to reach the furthermost ringside seats, eyes narrowed in on Suho, who was only smirking and taunting him with explicit hand gestures. Strangely, he wasn’t running or making any move to escape. It was almost like he was waiting for him.

Gunshots continued to ring out between Namjoon’s friends and Suho’s men as Namjoon finally made it to the ring. He was surprised to see Suho duck under the ropes and position himself in the center of the ring. Namjoon carefully entered the ring, stopping until he was mere feet away from the dark-haired man.

“Hello, brother,” Suho chuckled.

“Don’t call me that.”

“You’re right, that’s not a title you deserve. Let me be more accurate then. Hello, bastard,” he sneered.

“Shut the fuck up,” Namjoon growled.

“What a surprise seeing you and your trash in my club. You’re on my territory.”
“And yet I doubt Mommy Dearest knows about this place. Or does she?”

Suho narrowed his eyes at him but couldn’t deny the assertion.

“I wonder what Larkspur would say if she saw you here in the midst of all this blood and grime. Fight clubs and prostitution rings? How low class,” Namjoon scoffed. “As if a no-name prick like you could ever dream of dethroning me and taking Seoul. This may be your territory, but this is my city. I’ve had enough of your disrespect.”

“Oh, yeah? What exactly do you think you’re going to do about it? The Kims are history and it’s my turn in the spotlight.”

“Please. As if you have any real say in the organization. Everyone knows it was your uncle and Larkspur that handled the serious business. I’d say you were the pretty face, but even that’s a stretch for you, little bro,” he chuckled disparagingly.

“I’ll make you choke on those words, you fucking bastard,” Suho threatened. “When I finish with you, I’ll deliver you in a garbage bag to my mother’s feet and show her how good a son I am. I took care of her biggest mistake because having you has tortured you her entire life. Thank god she had me and didn’t have to vomit at the thought of the son she’d been forced to birth.”

Namjoon’s jaw tensed at the insult. It hit closer to home than Namjoon would like to admit. He was still grappling with a reality in which his mother loathed him and regretted his very existence. How was any child, no matter the age, supposed to accept that?

“And to show you just how noble and gracious I am, I’ll bury you next to the little Park prince. Jimin, right?” Suho’s laugh was pure malice. “I was personally in charge of planting the explosions at the mansion. It was magisterial when the bombs began to go off. Boom, boom, boom. One after the other,” he gestured wildly in the air. “I could just picture your dirty faggot lover crying out for you because you’re just all a pack of dirty faggots, aren’t you?”

Namjoon didn’t wait a second longer to throw the first punch.

Namjoon trained weekly at the compound with Taehyung and the rest of his men, but he had never been the most skilled fighter. He was decent with a gun or knife, but he was nowhere near as capable
as Taehyung or Jungkook. That was, of course, why he had a personal bodyguard and security teams, but in this moment he was alone. His friends were fighting their own battles with Suho’s men and gunshots still resonated through the room, a background of bullets reminding Namjoon that this life required grit and bloodshed.

“You look tired, bastard,” Suho jeered, slamming his knee up and grinning at the distinct crack of another rib.

Namjoon gasped, stumbling back a few feet and shielding his abdomen from the next kick. He tried to catch his breath and straighten, but Suho moved quickly and aimed a powerful punch to his exposed head, forcing him to fall to the floor face-first.

“You’re tainted blood, scum, Namjoon,” Suho spat, pinning Namjoon down with his body and pushing his face into the ring mat. “This was how it needed to end. My mother would give everything to be in my place right now, but she’ll be just as pleased that I finished the job. This way she doesn’t need to dirty her hands with your filthy faggot blood.”

Namjoon was struggling to throw the other off, but Suho only tightened his grip and slammed his body down harder, making Namjoon cry out as his collection of broken ribs were jostled harshly.

“We heard your little twink survived the explosions, but he was discharged from the hospital so suddenly, overnight. I wonder if you had anything to do with that?” Suho chuckled. “As soon as I finish with you, I’ll make it my mission to track him down and ensure that he takes his last breath. I think I’ll try something new this time. Hmm, inject poison into his veins? That would make for a painful death. Slow though...A knife through the heart? Awfully poetic, right?”

Namjoon had stopped moving, letting Suho’s weight settle on him as the other man blabbered on about all the horrific deaths he could choose for Jimin. Namjoon didn’t listen, focusing on sliding one of his pinned hands from under his body so he could free his arm and use the blade he’d hidden in the sleeve of his wrist. A trick he’d learned from Yoongi long-ago.

“I’ll be creative for your gang of lowlifes too. Oh, yes. I’ll bury one alive and maybe set another on fire. I’ve always wanted to do that!”

Namjoon nearly cried out in relief as he finally slid his arm out from under his and Suho’s piled bodies. He ignored the pain in his wrist—he wouldn’t be surprised if something was fractured there too—and made his move. Suho was mid-taunt when Namjoon raised his head up, mustering enough force to bash into Suho’s face, busting his lip and making him scream in pain.
“You stupid fucker!” Suho scrambled to his knees to press the back of his hand to his lips, pulling a gun from his holster and aiming it at the back of Namjoon’s head. “Go to hell, bastard, where you fucking belong.”

“I’ll see you there, brother,” Namjoon breathed, whipping the blade out and stabbing backwards, getting Suho’s right thigh.

The man shouted another obscenity, tumbling off Namjoon, who instantly turned to pin the other down. He dug his knife into the man’s abdomen and knocked the loaded gun out of his hand.

Suho was gurgling blood and trying to speak through the crimson liquid, but Namjoon wasn’t interested in any other words out of his mouth. He pushed the knife in deeper and twisted, making Suho sputter, his eyes fluttering as the pain rendered him voiceless. Namjoon knew this wasn’t a wound the man could recover from. And yet…

“Poetic you said? Hmm,” Namjoon pulled the knife out and brought it back down violently, straight into Suho’s heart.

The brunette released one weak cry and then stilled completely.

“The one thing you were right about,” Namjoon cleaned the knife on the edge of Suho’s jacket and stood on shaky feet.

“Namjoon!” Yoongi was rushing over, splatters of blood staining parts of his face. “You good?”

“Broken ribs, maybe a fractured wrist…Other miscellaneous injuries. Everything hurts like a bitch,” Namjoon admitted, wrapping an arm around his mid-section.

Yoongi, followed by Taehyung and Jungkook, had jumped into the ring shortly after Namjoon’s victory. The gunfight had lasted longer than any of them would have wanted, but with Yoongi’s skill with a handgun and Taehyung’s absolute gift for weapons of any kind the outcome was favorable. Jungkook could claim two out of the nine kills and the only injury on their side was a graze along Yoongi’s right bicep, which was barely bleeding. Yoongi claimed it was only a sting.
“We need to go. Come on, help me with him,” Yoongi ordered and Jungkook instantly stepped in to support most of Namjoon’s weight.

“You’re hurt, hyung?” he asked softly and Namjoon shook his head.

“Don’t worry about me, Kookie. I’m fine,” he offered a small, pained smile and Jungkook sighed.

“You’re lying.”

“Maybe.”

“Let’s go,” Taehyung led the way, gun cocked and poised in the air before him in case anymore of Suho’s men appeared.

That wasn’t the case, fortunately, and they made it to the car minutes later. Taehyung stepped into the driver’s seat and Yoongi helped Jungkook settle Namjoon in the back before climbing into the passenger’s seat.

“To the safe house or the compound?” Taehyung asked as the car sped forward.

“Safe house. We’ll have to call one of the on-call doctors and tell them we’re coming. I know there’s usually a nurse nearby for Park, but we need a doctor,” Yoongi said, already pulling out his phone to dial the number.

“How are you feeling, Namjoon-hyung?” Jungkook asked, stroking Namjoon’s hair from where his head rested in his lap.

“Better now.”

“Because Suho’s dead?”
“And because I’m here with you and you aren’t, you know, yelling at me and running from me,” Namjoon’s voice was weak but gentle.

“Hyung,” Jungkook bit his lip, running his fingers over Namjoon’s face, taking care not to press down too hard because the elder had bruises everywhere.

“Why do you look so distressed, Kookie? Are you hurt?”

“No, well, yes, but not, like, because of the gunfight...I just...Something happened.”


“I’m calling Hoseok,” Yoongi said once he had hung up with the doctor. “Tell him to be prepared for our arrival and get Namjoon’s room ready.”

Taehyung nodded, eyes flickering up to the rearview mirror. Jungkook seemed to be crying.

*Oh shit. He’s doing it now? Fucking now?*

“Hoseok, it’s Yoongi. We’re coming from quite the shitshow, but we’re all mostly in one piece. The doctor will be going to--fuck, really? That’s...news.”

“What is?” Taehyung asked, curiosity piqued at the surprise evident in Yoongi’s tone and widened eyes.

“I slept with Taehyung,” Jungkook gasped, tears streaming down his face.

Namjoon blinked dazedly, distinctly aware that Jungkook’s tears were making their way to his own face as he stared up at the crying brunette, unable to speak.

“Namjoon,” Yoongi called his name from the front seat.
Namjoon tilted his head to face him, still processing what Jungkook had revealed.

“Why are you crying?” Yoongi asked, confused, but when Jungkook didn’t respond he turned his attention back to the silver haired man. “Namjoon, there’s something you need to know. I was talking to Hoseok to let him know we were on the way and he said...he woke up.”

Namjoon gasped, brain going into overdrive at another piece of momentous information dropping into his lap. He felt overwhelmed and exhausted and depressed and at the same time exhilarated.

“H-he you m-mean that--”

“Yes. Jimin’s awake.”
Jimin wakes up from a dream as reality finds him once more. Yoongi feels the burden of a painful revelation.

Chapter Notes

We are nearing the end everyone! As there is significant angst coming, I offer some softness in this chapter so everyone doesn't hate me :( I'm so sorry for hurting some of our poor babies' hearts!!!

Let me know what you think, darlings!

Jimin had been having the most wonderful dream. He was on a beautiful island far-removed from the rest of humanity, living in a large cottage he had built up in the trees. Every day he would greet the morning and the island’s birds with a song and every night he’d lay in bed and hum a lullaby.

In this dream he wasn’t alone. Of course not. His beloved was there.

“I made you a glass of pineapple guava juice. All the fruit was freshly picked and squeezed mere hours ago,” Namjoon handed him the glass with a glowing, dimpled smile.

Jimin happily accepted.

“What else were you up to while I was sleeping?” he asked once he’d drained the glass, licking his lips to taste more of the sweet tanginess the juice had left behind.

“Nothing of interest. I’m lonely when you’re not with me,” Namjoon pouted, leaning across the counter of their kitchen to reach his lover’s lips.

Jimin obliged, granting him a gentle kiss.
“Charmer,” he giggled.

“But it’s true,” Namjoon protested. “It isn’t until your eyes open that my daily existence truly begins.”

“Namjoon,” Jimin was touched, reaching up to stroke his cheek with his thumb.

“If you’re not with me, I feel incomplete...And I’ve been empty for so long.”

“Why?” Jimin’s brow furrowed, absently noticing his bright island paradise seemed to be dimming, like the colors were suddenly dulling little by little.

“Because your eyes have remained close, my love,” Namjoon’s voice was somber and Jimin’s attention was now solely on the silver-haired man.

“What? They’re open right now and we spend every day together.”

“No, Jiminnie. We don’t.”

“What?” Jimin asked again, eyes widening as Namjoon’s tall figure began to fade. “No! Wh-what’s happening? Namjoon!”

“It’s okay, Jiminnie,” he said soothingly.

“N-no. Please don’t l-leave me,” Jimin pleaded, darting his hand out to grab onto his lover’s forearm, but his hand swiped through thin air as now only Namjoon’s face remained.

“You left me first, sweetheart. But, once you open your eyes, everything will be okay. I promise.”
“Namjoon!” he screamed, tears cascading down his face as his utopia disappeared.

And then he opened his eyes.

No one had been able to reason with Namjoon and despite the leader’s need for medical treatment, he was waving away the doctor and nurse who greeted them upon their arrival at the safehouse, striding forward with an arm wrapped around his ribs.

“Hoseok! Where is he?” he demanded, seeing the man hop up from the couch.

“Oh, thank god you’re here! He’s in his room.”

“How are his vitals? What did the doctors say?”

“He’s fine. Completely recuperated. His body’s been healing the entire time and it seems his brain finally caught up...But, he’s...”

“What?” Namjoon pressed. “Is he experiencing amnesia?”

“No, thankfully it seems all his memories are intact. The issue is...Jimin’s distraught.”

“Distraught?”

“He keeps crying out for you and shouting curse words at all of us because he doesn’t see your face. And he’s repeatedly saying he wishes he’d never woken up.”

“Why would he say that?” Namjoon’s heart dropped in his chest at the words.

“I don’t know. He hasn’t wanted to talk to me. All he says is he was having the most wonderful dream...”
Namjoon didn’t hesitate to enter the room, closing the door after him.

“How did the mission go?” Hoseok asked Yoongi, who was mutely observing the scene.

“As it had to. Suho’s dead,” Yoongi informed him gruffly.

“Seriously? That’s great news! Uh... isn’t it?”

Yoongi shrugged.

“I’m sorry, I would have thought this was cause for celebration. Instead, all of you look like you wish you were dead and buried,” Hoseok observed, only half-jokingly.

“It’s been a long night and we may have won this battle, but the war is far from over. Larkspur’s reaction and retaliation won’t be pretty. I should get in contact with Seokjin. I think it’d be best to meet in person and, ideally, Namjoon would be present, but...he’s otherwise occupied.”

“Can I come?” Hoseok asked, a bit hesitant.

“To see your ex?” Yoongi raised an eyebrow.

“He should know his brother’s awake and I should be the one to tell him. He deserves that from me, at least.”

“Suit yourself,” Yoongi shrugged. “Let’s go. I don’t want to waste any time. In a few hours Suho’s death will be common knowledge and Larkspur will gear up for the final battle. I’d like to have a headstart.”

“Let me get changed. Give me 5 minutes.”
“And you’re sure you don’t want to stay here? Isn’t Jimin supposed to be your best friend or whatever?”

“Trust me, there’s only one person he wants and needs to see right now and it certainly isn’t me.”

When Hoseok went to get changed, Yoongi turned his attention to Jungkook who was curled up on a corner of the couch, staring off into space.

“Jungkook,” he called his name and the younger startled, doe eyes wide and unfocused. “Hey, kid, what’s up with you? Don’t think I’ve forgotten your crying bout in the car...Is this about Namjoon and Jimin?”

Jungkook stared up at Yoongi with watery eyes, gaze flickering over to Taehyung briefly before he released a shaky breath.

“I slept with Taehyung.”

Taehyung nearly collapsed to the floor as he watched as his boyfriend heard the truth. He seemed to process each syllable in near-slow motion, a myriad of emotions flickering across his normally impassive expression.

There was a lot of melancholia there. A lot of anger. But what made Taehyung’s body give out with pent-up guilt and self-deprecation was the profound resignation in Yoongi’s eyes. It was like he’d been expecting this exact moment to occur, like he had never believed he could love and be loved. Yoongi knew his relationship with Taehyung had existed on borrowed time.

The hour glass had broken and now he was left to choke on thick grains of sand.

Jimin had been hugging his knees to his chest and rocking back and forth in a ball of quiet desperation, mumbling things Namjoon couldn’t make out until he shut the door and the sound had Jimin’s head snapping up. The two awed syllables he produced were more than clear.

“Namjoon,” he gasped.
“Hey, Jimin...I-I’ve missed you,” he decided on, letting the words linger in the air between them.

Jimin was trembling as he took in every inch of Namjoon’s towering figure.

“I...I was having the most wonderful dream,” Jimin whispered, tears brimming at the corner of his eyes.

“What were you dreaming about?” Namjoon’s voice was as quiet as the younger man’s and he took a few careful steps until he stood at the foot of the bed.

“You,” he confessed. “Always you,” he shut his eyes, letting the tears stream down his face.

“Why are you crying?” Namjoon asked, feeling his fingers itch to reach forward and touch.

To wipe away those tears and press against Jimin’s smooth skin so he could feel that he wasn’t in some dream world anymore, that they were together again. He wanted Jimin to know with one single touch that he would never allow for them to be apart again.

“You’re here again. Is this just another pretty dream?” Jimin sobbed.

Namjoon stopped resisting his instincts and rushed to sit beside Jimin on the bed, pulling him into a tight embrace that had his broken ribs grinding together. Namjoon groaned in pain, but he didn’t let go.

Jimin’s head snapped up, inquisitive eyes scanning his expression of agony.

“You’re hurt.”

“I’m fine,” Namjoon lied, but Jimin narrowed his eyes and dug two of his small fingers into
Namjoon’s lower abdomen.

“Ah!” Namjoon hissed, forced to pull away and wrap his arms around his midsection.

“Liar,” Jimin shook his head accusingly. “Now, I know this isn’t a fantasy I lost myself in. In no dream of mine would I keep your stupidly stubborn nature.”

“What, was Dream Namjoon at your beck and call 24/7 never arguing or disagreeing with you?”

“Yes, actually.”

“And you didn’t know you were dreaming?” Namjoon had to scoff.

“I didn’t want to imagine it was anything but my life. We were so happy, Joon,” he murmured wistfully, looking away to wipe at his tears.

“We can be happy in this reality, Jimin.”

Jimin turned back to shoot him a skeptical look.

“The last time we spoke--”

“I was too harsh. I didn’t try to understand your circumstances. Your family’s never given you a choice in anything. Why did I expect they’d let you marry for love? I...I should have fought harder, Jimin. For you. I should have fucking burned down buildings or something, I don’t know.”

“But you didn’t,” Jimin reminded him. “Because of...the person you said you could consider loving and being happy with? You said it was your opportunity to move on.”

“I thought it was,” Namjoon sighed, remembering what Jungkook had recently revealed. “I was
wrong and I have no one to blame but myself."

Jimin was quiet for a moment, organizing his thoughts in his head before finally voicing them.

“I almost died in those explosions. I remember the sounds of screams. I remember the smell of burning flesh,” his lovely face took on a haunted look and Namjoon wished such devastation had never had a place in Jimin’s beautiful features. “I remember being so incredibly afraid that I would die alone and that I’d never get a chance to— to,” he stopped for a calming breath. “I worried I’d never get to see you again and that I would die without letting you know how m-much I l-love you and how much I a-always have and always will.”

Namjoon could feel his own face moisten with the tears that had escaped as he watched Jimin stutter through his confession.

“I know y-you may n-not feel the s-same anymore,” Jimin hiccuped through his sobs, but before he could continue speaking Namjoon was cutting him off.

“If you had died, I think I would have died with you... I never told you this for fear of sounding pathetic or overly obsessed, but you should know... Jimin, it isn’t until your eyes open that my daily existence truly begins. A world without you in it is one I have no interest in. I can’t pretend otherwise. Not anymore.”

Jimin nearly stopped breathing as the passionate sentiment the Namjoon of his dreams had uttered was vocalized by the real man before him.

“Jimin?” Namjoon whispered, noticing that the black-haired man’s eyes had glazed over.

“You love me too,” he said with resounding finality. “You still love me,” he met Namjoon’s gaze with certainty.

“Of course I do,” Namjoon gave a hopeless laugh. “What have you done to me, Park Jimin? How did you bewitch me like this?”

Jimin ducked his head bashfully, a rose blush coloring his fair skin.
“Can you say it?” he asked timidly.

Namjoon didn’t need to ask for clarification.

“I love you,” Namjoon murmured, lifting Jimin’s chin with the press of one finger.

“Can...can you kiss me?” his next request was said so quietly Namjoon would have missed it if he wasn’t sharing the same air as the beautiful man before him.

And then words weren’t needed because Namjoon’s thick lips were molding against his once more and Namjoon’s large, strong hands were clutching his. Jimin took a shaky breath and inhaled Namjoon.

This was better than the most magnificent of dreams. Jimin was absolutely sure of it.
Part XXII

Chapter Summary

Jimin and Namjoon's reunion is cut short. In the middle of the war, emotions become suffocating as Yoongi and Taehyung learn.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jimin and Namjoon broke away from each other, startled by the heavy sound of a crash and what seemed like glass shattering. Namjoon instinctively jumped up in a defensive position, but the motion pulled at his injured ribs and he was hissing, nearly bent over in pain.

“Joonie, you need to see a doctor,” Jimin’s tone left no room for argument.

Not that that would stop Namjoon from doing so.

“Not until we figure out what’s going on. Is that…” Namjoon’s face dimmed and he sighed regretfully. “Yoongi’s crying.”

“Yoongi--as in Min Yoongi is crying? I didn’t think it was possible for him to openly display human emotion,” Jimin remarked, seemingly shocked.

“He hates to come across vulnerable, but this...I knew this would tear him apart.”

“This?” Jimin waited for clarification and Namjoon hesitated. “Namjoon? What is it?”

“Yoongi and Taehyung have been dating for a while now and they were really happy together. I pursued that same happiness with...Jungkook, but after you fell into the coma I was devastated and not thinking straight. I was here all the time pacing outside your room and leaning over your beside praying your eyes would flutter open...Jungkook and I argued all the time. He was jealous and angry and hurt. And I...told him I loved him,” he admitted and Jimin let out a little gasp.
“Do you?”

“...Yes. I’ve grown to love Jungkook deeply. He’s been by my side from the start of this war, protecting me in every way possible. And yet, my heart continued to beat for you,” he shook his head. “I gave Jungkook false hope and led him into the pit that is my life. Now, he’s stuck and lashing out, which I can’t exactly fault him for,” he shook his head. “I just wish he’d fucked some random stranger to get back at me and not Taehyung.”

“He cheated on you?”

“But, didn’t I do the same? Emotionally, I did much worse than Jungkook.”

“...You love him. And you told me you loved me.”

Namjoon reached out and lightly grasped one of Jimin’s hands. They were as warm and soft as he remembered them. It gave him a sense of comfort as he gathered his thoughts.

“I never stopped loving you, Jiminnie. I don’t remember what it means to exist without being hopelessly in love with you. When I told Jungkook I loved him, do you know what he said? ‘It’s not the way I need to be loved. It’s not the way you love Jimin and it’s not enough for me.’”

Jimin worried at his lip, staring off into space long enough that Namjoon began to fidget nervously before him.

“I think we need to get our accounts in order,” Jimin finally said.

“And by that you mean?”

“We can’t be together until we finalize the relationships we’re both currently in.”

“Both?” Namjoon repeated, confused, until the sudden realization that Jimin was engaged to another
man caused his expression to darken. “Did you lose the engagement ring in the explosion?”

“Probably. I never wore it and it was in a box I shoved under my bed, so I’m sure it burned,” Jimin shrugged disinterestedly. “My arranged marriage is the least of our problems. My mother is hidden away who the fuck knows where, but she certainly isn’t going to risk her ass by coming to Korea to force me to marry in the middle of this war. And I assume Seokjin has enough on his plate to try anything. You, however, were in a loving relationship with someone who wasn’t me.”

“Are you mad at me?”

“Yes. And no,” he used his free hand to frustratedly brush back his obsidian hair, which had grown longer than he usually wore it. “But, I don’t have the right to be angry, do I? I was the one who showed up in your office on our anniversary with the proposition of renewing only the sexual side of our relationship. When that changed and it seemed like we were on the right path again, my mother pressured me to choose a husband and I didn’t tell you. I should have been honest with you from the start. I can’t blame you for seeking out someone who isn’t as twisted and as damaged as me. You wanted someone better.”

“No, Jimin,” Namjoon refuted firmly. “I didn’t get involved with Jungkook because he was some sort of perfect anti-Jimin. I chose to be with Jungkook because he reminded me of you. Yoongi pointed out the similarities between you and made it seem like I had a “type,” but really I wanted to try and replicate our love in the hopes that the second time it wouldn’t hurt so damn much. Jungkook has a beautiful soul and he was so earnest with his feelings for me...I admit it was easier from the start. He made me feel needed in our relationship. With you, it was different. You’ve always been so independent and when we first began sleeping together, everything was about control and trying to assert dominance over each other because of who our parents were.”

“When my feelings for you began to intensify I told myself it was all because of the thrill of the forbidden and sticking it to Jin and my mother, but I was wrong. Pathetic as it sounds, I think I was made to love you. You and you alone,” Jimin ducked his head. “You never believed in the idea of soulmates and I’m not trying to say we were destined to be together, but what explanation would you give for the way we can’t seem to stay away from this?” he gestured between them.

“You don’t need to be the other half of my soul for me to feel that I was made to love you. Other loves have been ephemeral for me. Before you I thought I loved one of my high school classmates. After you, there was Jungkook and I’m so thankful I got to experience life with him beside me, but...how do I explain this?” he paused. “Okay,” he nodded. “You, Jimin, are like my Halley’s comet.”

Jimin tilted his head.
“Halley’s comet is periodic and it’s only visible over Earth every 75 years or so. Some have been lucky enough to see it twice in their lifetime. People wait their entire lives for one sighting of this celestial object to flash across the sky. It’s this beautiful, ethereal, fleeting moment that makes some feel like they’ve lived. If people could live for multiple centuries, they’d mark their calendars and wait for the comet. Again and again. Because this cosmic body is worth the wait of entire decades. Halley’s comet passes through our solar system rapidly, lingering sometimes a day, a month at most, and then it disappears, but its limited duration only makes it more exquisite...If I could only have a glimpse of you every 75 years, I would consider myself blessed and I would stare up at the sky every day until my eyes fell shut, always hoping for one more look. I’m greedy like that,” he laughed softly.

“Joonie,” Jimin’s voice was hushed with what seemed like wonderment.

“You’re eternal for me, Park Jimin. Today, tomorrow, and a thousand years from now let it be known that I love you. Like I could never love another.”

There was a louder crash from outside and Jimin flinched.

“I think you should go out there, ideally to seek medical attention and then get involved in the drama. I doubt that’s the order you’ll follow, though.”

“You know me too well,” he smiled softly, releasing Jimin’s hand but stopping to press a chaste kiss to his forehead before stepping back. “I’ll come back.”

“I know you will,” Jimin whispered.

“I love you, my beautiful Halley’s comet.”

“I love you too,” Jimin murmured somewhat shyly.

Namjoon used all the self-control he possessed to prevent himself from burying his face in the warmth of Jimin’s chest and letting the younger wrap his arms around him and make him feel small and protected. There would be time for that later. They were planning a future together, but that future required care and patience. Jimin was right. They couldn’t be together until they settled their relationships. Furthermore, Namjoon owed Jungkook closure. He didn’t deserve to be on the other side of the door facing the brunt of Yoongi’s fury alone. Namjoon was just as responsible as
Jungkook for what had occurred.

Namjoon took a deep, steadying breath only wincing slightly as his broken ribs shifted in his mid-section. He pulled open the door and took in the sight of his best friend sobbing in Hoseok’s arms, the latter trying to hold them both up and prevent Yoongi from reaching for more random objects to launch at the floor.

Taehyung was huddle in a ball in a corner of the room, crying into his knees and Jungkook was frozen on one couch, tears streaming down his pretty doe eyes.

Namjoon closed the door behind him and took a step forward, clearing his throat.

“Hoseok, take him anywhere that isn’t here,” he commanded.

“Uh, w-we were supposed to meet with Jin.”

“Then do that. Go. Hyung,” Namjoon addressed Yoongi, who only shook with the force of his sobs, eyes fluttering wildly. “I'll find you later. We can talk like we need to. Right now, you need to leave. You can’t handle this right now. Please go with Hoseok, okay? Please.”

Yoongi seemed to accept Namjoon’s words, giving a shaky nod and going pliant in Hoseok’s grip. The orange-haired man grunted with the added weight, but he trudged forward, leading Yoongi outside to one of the parked SUVs. The door was closing behind them when Taehyung cried out.

“Don’t leave me!”

“Tae.”

“I’m s-sorry, my love. I’m s-so s-sorry,” he crawled towards the door, hand stretching up to the doorknob, but Namjoon moved quickly.

“Tae,” he tried again. “He needs some space. As do you.”
He lifted Taehyung into his arms and walked towards Hoseok’s bedroom, depositing the trembling brunette on the bed.

“Try to get some sleep.”

“Hyung, d-do you hate m-me too?” he cried and Namjoon ran a gentle hand through his disheveled hair.

“I could never hate you, Taehyung-ah. Yoongi doesn’t hate you either before you say that. He just...needs to process everything. We’re all in a shit place because of this war. I wish it hadn’t broken us like this.”

“Jungkookie’s broken, hyung,” he hiccuped through his tears.

“I know...Because I’m the one who broke him,” he gulped.

Taehyung continued to murmur nonsensically as Namjoon tucked him into the covers, turning the lights off except for a small lamp on the armoire and exited the room.

Chapter End Notes

I keep putting off Namjoon and Jungkook’s talk and Yoongi and Tae's because my feelings are over the place about it :( I don't want them to suffer so much (they've had hard enough lives), but the next chapter the inevitable will occur. heavy angst warning :( 
Seokjin nearly tripped over the leg of his own desk chair in his haste to stand up when his assistant announced that Min Yoongi and Jung Hoseok were waiting to see him.

“Send them in,” he urged, taking a deep breath when he was alone again.

He straightened his tie and ran his fingers through his hair, groaning when they caught in horrible tangles. When was the last time he bothered to comb it? He couldn’t remember.

When Hoseok and Yoongi entered they moved as one body, mainly because Yoongi was draped over Hoseok’s shoulders like he couldn’t stand on his own. By the strain on Hoseok’s face that was most likely the case. Seokjin rushed to assist his ex-boyfriend, leading them to the ample couch and laying Yoongi’s small frame on the cushions.

“What happened to him?” Seokjin asked, watching with no small degree of bewilderment as the mighty mafia boss, Kim Namjoon’s feared second-in-command, curled into a ball on his couch and cried himself to sleep.

“Shh. Come on,” Hoseok gestured with his head for them to leave the room, not wanting to disturb Yoongi.

Hoseok knew this building like the back of his hand. It was one of many Park properties, but it had always been his favorite because on the legal front it was a dance school for children. Hoseok was fascinated by the little girls in tutus and the little boys in leotards, pirouetting and tap-dancing across the dance rooms on the first two floors. And yes, the upper floors were full of offices where the criminal side of the organization met to discuss illicit activities, but Hoseok liked to pretend it was just a regular office.

He preferred living in illusions of his own creation, in stark contrast to Seokjin, who’d had pure practicality drilled into him since childhood. Everything he did had a purpose and if human emotions got in the way? He ignored them. It was a wonder they’d lasted as long as they did.
“Coffee or tea?” Seokjin offered when they’d made their way to the private room Seokjin used for shareholder meetings.

“Uh, sure. Tea, please. No milk but--”

“Two sugars and a drop of honey if I have some. I know.”

Hoseok remained silent even when the taller man presented him with his perfectly prepared mug of coffee, wearing a smile that was too beautiful to behold. It made Hoseok feel uncomfortable being in the presence of a man as gorgeous as Seokjin, even though, logically he had spent the majority of his life in that exact situation.

*That was different. We were in love then. I was convinced he was my everything*, Hoseok argued with himself. *What is he now? An ex? A former lover? My biggest regret?*

“Hoseok?” Seokjin called his name gently, not wanting to startle him out of his thoughts, but growing concerned with the extending silence.

“Yeah, sorry,” Hoseok took a quick sip of the coffee, grateful for the steady heat the beverage provided. “This was meant to be a debriefing of the mission Namjoon and Yoongi completed today, but a lot of things happened and it got messy at the safehouse.”

“What? Larkspur’s people found you? Is Jimin okay?” Seokjin shot each question out one after the other, face twisted in fear.

“No, no, that’s not what happened. Jiminie’s fine. Actually...he’s awake.”

“He is?” Seokjin gasped, pressing a hand to his chest. “Oh my god. That--that’s incredible. I’m so glad.”

“Yeah, he woke up earlier today and the moment his eyes opened and he was aware of his consciousness he was...asking for Namjoon.”
“Of course,” Seokjin said, only a touch bitterly.

“A lot is happening in the safe house, all side effects of this damn war, but no one is in physical danger...At least not yet. Yoongi and Namjoon’s mission was to eliminate Suho.”

“What?!” Seokjin sputtered. “And no one told me? What the fuck!”

“It was need to know and they didn’t want to risk anyone finding out. It was only them and Taehyung and Jungkook. They were successful, but they came back messed up.”

“Messed up?”

“They were all, uh, dating.”

“What, all four of them? Yoongi only told me about Taehyung.”

“No no. Yoongi and Taehyung, Namjoon and Jungkook, but apparently Taehyung and Jungkook slept together. I don’t know any of them well enough to offer comfort or even ask about it, but I assume it has something to do with Jimin.”

“My little brother does tend to be the catalyst to set off a million chemical reactions.”

“It wasn’t his fault,” Hoseok instantly defended his best friend. “I’ve told you countless times that his love for Namjoon was powerful and not as trivial as you would always write it off. You put mountains between them, they simply traversed them. It was going to happen one way or another. They were going to find a way back to each other even through arranged marriages or mafia wars.”

Seokjin ran a hand over his face and groaned.

“God, it feels like the most angsty K-drama known to man. Why the fuck is this our lives?”
When Namjoon returned to the living room Jungkook had stood up and was staring in his direction, waiting.

“Can we talk, Kookie?” he asked quietly.

Jungkook only nodded.

“Okay,” Namjoon walked to his own room in the safehouse, hearing Jungkook’s muted footsteps behind him.

He waited until Jungkook had entered the bedroom before closing the door and taking a seat on the bed. Jungkook hovered near the foot of the bed, but Namjoon gestured for him to join him.

“Please. Be comfortable. There’s a lot I have to say.”

Jungkook, looking suffocated by both melancholia and apprehension, took the offered seat on the bed.

“First things first...I’m sorry, Jungkook.”

Jungkook’s eyes widened slightly.

“Why are you sorry?” his voice came out hoarse but mostly audible.

“Because I caused you pain and I took your love for granted. And more criminally, I said I could give you something I wasn’t certain I could give. That makes me a liar.”

“Was our entire relationship a line, hyung?” Jungkook sniffled.

“No, I can promise you that as unsteadily as it began--because of the love I felt for someone else--my intentions were genuine. I wanted to be with you, Kook, and I wanted to fall in love with a soul as kind and gentle as yours. You were my hope for a new beginning and your presence in my life has been healing. I wanted you to be my ultimate salvation and in doing so placed an unfair amount
of pressure and expectation both on you and on myself. You can’t save me if I don’t want to be saved.”

“What do you mean?” Jungkook tilted his head.

“This existence--blinded by darkness and bathed in bloodshed--I never wanted it. It was forced upon me by my father and even with his death I’m not free. A big part of me wants to drop this ‘empire’ I’ve amassed and run. Take my loved ones with me and just escape it all. Yet, a part of me continues to desire power and notoriety. A part of me likes the violence and the danger. How fucked up is that?” he laughed self-deprecatingly.

“It’s all you know,” Jungkook reasoned but Namjoon shook his head.

“It’s a toxic cycle I should have the strength to break instead of dragging others down with me.”

“Namjoon-hyung,” Jungkook’s voice was firm and determined as he spoke. “I joined your organization voluntarily. You didn’t have to use extortion, seduction, or anything else. I was looking for a way out of my old life and this was as radically different as possible. Yes, there was an added plus when I discovered my mafia boss was a Greek god, but you didn’t ‘drag’ me into this life and you definitely didn’t force me to stay.”

“Kook--”

“I need you to know this,” Jungkook cut him off. “I love you and it doesn’t burden me to do so. I know it’s impossible to believe with how things turned out and what I did with...Taehyung, but loving you and working for you has given me purpose, pathetic as it may sound. I don’t live for you, hyung, but I live because of you. If I hadn’t found my place with you I don’t want to think about where I would have ended up. I...contemplated suicide various times throughout my childhood. My parents made it their mission to destroy my self-esteem and self-worth. Nothing I did was good enough for them and when they discovered I was a ‘sexual deviant’ who took it up the ass, they nearly sent me to a gay conversion camp that openly promoted electroshock therapy.”

Namjoon’s eyes hardened at the reminder of Jungkook’s past and the dreadful individuals who had abused him as an innocent child.

“I don’t need you to be my forever. I understand now that you were only meant to be mine for a short time. A fleeting, momentary perfection. I’m thankful for that,” Jungkook smiled faintly. “You’ve taught me to stand on my own two feet and develop strength, both physical and
psychological. If I can protect you from all harm, I can do the same for myself. I like who I am now more than ever.”

Namjoon’s eyes watered by the end of Jungkook’s speech and he released a shaky breath.

“You deserve more than this world has given you.”

“The world doesn’t need to give me anything, hyungie, I’m capable of taking it,” Jungkook assured him.

“I know I’ve said this ad nauseum, but you, Jeon Jungkook, are incredible. One of the few people on this earth I trust 100% and would lay down my life for…I love you.”

“I love you too. Though I know it’s not the same.”

“I’m sorry,” Namjoon repeated, gaze falling to the floor, the guilt apparent in his bowed head.

“I’m sorry too. What I did was wrong even if I felt like our relationship was on the cusp of finality. I-I can’t believe I did that to Yoongi-hyung,” Jungkook clapped a hand to his mouth, his feelings threatening to overwhelm him again.

“I didn’t know Tae and Yoongi were suffering so much. On the outside they presented their relationship as cookie cutter perfect,” Namjoon sighed. “This war--my fucking war--is ruining us all from the inside out.”

“It’s almost over, though, isn’t it? Our mission was successful. Suho’s dead.”

“We weakened my mother’s organization, but what about our own? I’ve never seen my best friend look so broken and Taehyung isn’t doing any better. Jimin just woke up from a fucking coma and I feel like I did too. The strongest of us right now may be Seokjin and I have to admit how unsettling that is. He isn’t on my list of allies even if we have declared a truce of sorts because of Jimin’s accident. Seokjin vowed to hate me until the day I died--which he wanted to be at his own hand.”
“I think things have changed.”

“I guess we’ll see,” Namjoon remarked gravely. “Kook, get some rest. Your eyes are red and you look exhausted. I need to talk to Yoongi and Seokjin. Different matters, though neither conversation will be particularly pleasant.”

“I should go with you.”

“No, you should stay here.”

“I’m your personal bodyguard, hyung, you need me!” he protested.

“I’m not denying that,” Namjoon placated him. “But, more than my employee, you are my friend and what I need more than your protection is your well-being. You’re not up to anything more strenuous than a bubble bath and a nap.”

“Don’t treat me like a child,” Jungkook glared.

“I’m not trying to.”

“Certainly feels like it,” he muttered.

“Jimin and Taehyung are in the safe house. Neither is at full strength, which means that they require protection. Who’s the most qualified to offer it?” Namjoon raised an eyebrow.

“Me, obviously.”

“There’s that winning confidence. Atta boy,” Namjoon grinned.

“Shut up. Fine, get out of here,” Jungkook sighed. “The sooner we end this war the better.”
“I’ll do my best,” Namjoon said solemnly. “Take care of everyone, okay?”

Jungkook nodded. Namjoon hesitated for a second before reaching over to wrap the younger man into a brief hug.

“I love you,” Namjoon whispered and Jungkook’s heart sped up in his chest, but didn’t begin a full sprint.

Acceptance was slowly settling in Jungkook’s chest.

“I love you too,” he said. “Stay safe, hyung.”

In another part of the city an incensed scream of agony and frustration rang out through Larkspur’s underground compound. One of the men of her alpha combat team cowered before her, bent over practically at the knee. He had been the unfortunate bastard that had to tell the boss her son was dead—murdered by her other son—and that all of Kim Namjoon’s people had gotten away safe and sound.

“I’m sorry for your loss,” the man muttered and Larkspur didn’t pause in her screaming fit to whip out a gun and shoot him right between the eyes.

The other members of the combat team flinched but held their formation by the doors of her office. If their boss wanted them dead running or begging for mercy wouldn’t do anything except aggravate her further.

Thankfully, Larkspur’s ire seemed to abate after the kill and she collected herself, dusting off the lapels of her blazer before offering the frightened team a deadly smile.

“I was in the wrong. I see that now. I let my idiot brother-in-law and my foolish son run the show and look where that got them? This organization was founded on my blood, sweat, and tears. If I want something done right, I need to do it myself, don’t I? Yes, it’s the only way. So, if I want the spawn of my bastard husband’s polluted ballsack dead then? I need to do it myself,” she purred, brandishing an array of weapons she always stored in a hollow portion of her desk. “How shall I do it?” she mused aloud, fondling serrated knives, revolvers, and other assorted blades.
The alpha team gulped as their leader began cackling maniacally to herself, mumbling things under her breath and seeming to speak to someone that wasn’t present in the room as she kissed and caressed the dangerous weapons.

Kim Namjoon had pushed Larkspur to the edge, snapping the last shreds of sanity and self-control restraining her longing to burn the world and force it to descend into chaos. He didn’t know what he had unleashed and what was coming straight for him.

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