Dead Leaves

by Wrienne

Summary

In which you (reader) are a homicide detective about to face the biggest hurdle both of your career and life.

Married to probably the kindest but most boring man you’ve ever met and living in a town where nothing ever seems to happen means life for you is dull. Dull enough to drive you crazy with boredom and dissatisfaction. However, life changes abruptly when your old boss retires and a new man takes his place - a man you used to love (and sleep very regularly with) more than a decade ago. Especially when your husband comes home smelling of perfume, you’re unable to resist your more carnal urges and dead women start showing up across the city with unnerving frequency.

Warning: Will contain explicit language, sexual content and twisted themes.

Follow me on Twitter, @AW_Collins!
Starting another story as a compensation for all the weeks I’ve missed posting on MCAF 2. I had the voting done on my Twitter (@AW_Collins) as a poll and Dead Leaves came out as the winner! (Don’t worry, the next chapter of MCAF 2 is coming very soon!)

I know I put warnings in the summary and the tags, but I want to clearly state once more: this will not be a story for everyone. It will contain some dark elements and probably lots of sex, so be prepared for that.

Now and as always, I hope you’ll enjoy reading.

The early September sun burned against your closed eyelids. Though some people might disagree, you didn’t consider yourself enough of a douche to put on your shades indoors. At least not yet. But if the repairmen failed to arrive in order to fix the jammed blinds yet again, you’d seriously consider it. Even if you’d look stupid.

“Hey, wake up, (Y/N)!”

You immediately lifted your head off the desk and aimed your blurry vision at the monitor before you. Blinking rapidly, you did your best to try and act insulted - and awake - as the owner of the playful voice poked his head into your office cubicle.

“Oh, you’re up.”

Four years your junior, Kim Taehyung was undoubtedly attractive - and annoying. Somehow, he looked like everything a girl might ever ask for with his impressive height, physique and handsome and somewhat unusual features. Yet simultaneously, he practically begged for a punch with the things he said. You had grown used to his humor ever since he first came to work at Sangdo Special Investigations Unit for Homicide two years earlier, but you had never expected the innocent-looking boy you had met briefly during an educational trip to a high school seven years ago to become such a pain when he was older.

If you had, you might not have encouraged him to become a homicide detective.

“I don’t sleep at work,” you grunted.

Taehyung arched a brow, his intense brown eyes never leaving yours. “Really?” he said with a growing smile. “But how else do you keep yourself looking so youthful, aunty?”

“Watch it,” you said and glared up at him. “I’m twenty-nine.”

Taehyung grinned and leaned against the edge of your desk. “Just a few months until you’re thirty. Am I gonna have to give you a piggyback ride up the stairs by then?”

“If you’re going to continue insisting on my age, then at least stick to the honorifics.”
He held up his hands. “I’m just saying. If you need my help, you just need to ask.” His voice lowered and he leaned closer with a suggestive smirk. “You know I’d do anything for you.”

You snorted and pushed him away. “Tell that to your girlfriend. Oh, wait, you don’t have one.”

“How can I date anyone when my dream woman is right here in front of me?” he asked indignantly.


Taehyung frowned as he regarded your monitor. “With what? We haven’t had a case since I first started here and even then, it wasn’t an actual homicide.”

“Well,” you began, “I was--I mean, I am reading the latest missing persons reports. The guys downstairs have been having a difficult time piecing things together with the latest three missing women.”

“They’ve probably just run away from an abusive husband or an overbearing family. The chances that even one of them have been abducted or murdered is ridiculously small.”

“Yeah, but--”

“You’re wasting your time,” he said gently, his intense brown gaze leveling with you. “We don’t live in the movies. Nothing ever happens here in Sangdo.”

“Yeah,” you admitted with a grimace. “I know.”

“Disappointed?”

“Of course not,” you lied. “I’m happy to live here. Even if there aren’t any new murders, there’s always a bunch of cold cases lying around, just waiting to be cracked.”

Taehyung didn’t look entirely convinced but he didn’t question you. “Well, Jungkook and I are heading out for samgyeopsal and soju. You on?”

“Do you even have to ask?” you said and immediately turned off the computer.

“Considering your age, I thought you might want to quit while you’re ahead.”

Ignoring his comment, you put on your blazer. “Where’s Jungkook?”

Taehyung grimaced. “Down in the lobby. It’s the third time a girlfriend of his has shown up here.”

“That boy always picks the weird ones,” you muttered as you grabbed your purse. “He might even need more dating help than you.”

“I think I’m more than capable of dating you.”

Without responding, you exited your office cubicle and headed for the glass doors leading out to the elevator and stairwell. Taehyung trailed behind with a smile and kept trying to provoke a reaction out of you while the elevator cab took you to the first floor. You didn’t even raise a brow, but you couldn’t help but frown slightly as you felt your phone vibrating.

You knew who it was and what it was about, but you didn’t bother checking on it. You had stopped caring years ago.

As the elevator doors slid open, the first thing you saw was, as Taehyung had told you, Jungkook
and a girl you hadn’t seen before. They weren’t exactly arguing, but they seemed to be speaking heatedly with each other just outside the double glass doors of the entrance to Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters.

Jungkook was only a year younger than Taehyung and about the same height but appeared even younger in your eyes with his round brown eyes and toothy smiles. He could be a pain in the ass, much like Taehyung, but he wasn’t nearly as flirtatious or bold. You didn’t know how since they were childhood friends, but you were glad Jungkook hadn’t taken after his hyung. Two Taehyungs as your only co-workers would probably drive you mad.

But not because they would be insulting your age.

You and Taehyung reached the entrance doors just as the woman charged off, evidently angry. Jungkook wore a tired expression where he stood leaning against the wall but immediately straightened when his eyes found yours.

“(Y/N)-sunbae-nim!” he blurted and bowed.

You waved him up, feeling uncomfortable by his motion. “Stop bowing already, Jungkook. It’s been a year since we’ve met.”

“Yes, Jungkook,” said Taehyung as he placed his hands on each of your shoulders. “(Y/N) isn’t interested in guys bowing to her. She wants someone a bit tougher.”

You shrugged him off. “You need to take a page out of your dongsaeng’s book and call me sunbae,” you snapped while trying your best to keep your face collected. You didn’t like his insinuation.

For it was far too close to the truth.

“Sorry,” said Jungkook as he gave you a sheepish smile. “How much did you guys hear?”

“Nothing,” you reassured him. “Now let’s get moving before they run out of grilling tables.”

“But it’s just an ordinary Thursday.”

“Tables are the least of our issues,” said Taehyung. “I don’t think all of Sangdo can sustain (Y/N)’s drinking habits if she really decides to go for it.”

“True,” said Jungkook with a poorly disguised smile.

You glared at them. “I’m not paying if you two are gonna be brats.”

“But that’s the reason we always ask you to come. And because you’re much funnier when you’re drunk.” Taehyung slung an arm around Jungkook. “Isn’t that right, Jungkook?”

Jungkook grinned. “Maybe.”

“Actually,” you said as you faked a yawn. “I’m tired. I don’t think I’ll be going out with you monkeys tonight.”

“No, please come!” exclaimed Taehyung, his eyes wide with genuine dismay. “We’re just kidding, you know that, right?”

“Yeah,” said Jungkook hastily, looking as if though he fought against the urge to bow again.

You didn’t respond. You simply looked between the two guys.
“Come on, you’re not going home for real are you?” asked Taehyung.

You remained quiet.

“Sunbae?” he tried.

You smiled. “Fine.”

The lady at the samgyeopsal house greeted the three of you with a wide smile. If circumstances had been different, you might have been embarrassed or even offended by the amount of soju she supplied you in particular with, but you were too weary to care. Even though you knew your drinking had worsened ever since you moved to Sangdo, it wasn’t without reason.

Sangdo was a small big city. It had everything and more, yet nothing ever happened, which made the quite sizable town seem emptier and more boring than if it would have been a small city. The people were nice, the productivity high and the number of crimes was lower than anywhere else in South Korea. You could understand why the real estate business was booming and why the city often bragged in tourist advertisements as “The Nation’s Safest City”.

You hated it.

“What are you thinking about?”

You didn’t know for how long you had been staring out the window at the ever-darkening cityscape, but when you aimed your gaze back toward the table, you found yourself sitting only with Taehyung. “Nothing,” you said. “Where’s Jungkook?”

Taehyung stretched out with a grimace as he responded, and while you would have liked to hear his words, you were temporarily distracted by the way his motion caused the fine fabric of his white shirt to tense against his torso. He was definitely well-built and probably exercised a lot to keep him in shape.

You wouldn’t mind touching him, but you couldn’t.

“Hello? Did you hear me?”

“Sorry,” you said as you shook your head. “I zoned out randomly. What did you say about Jungkook?”

A hint of concern entered his intense brown eyes. “You alright? You’re on your seventh bottle. Normally, you quit at your usual six. You’ve also been kinda absent--”

“I can handle my alcohol so take your detective observations elsewhere,” you interrupted sternly, even though you had to strain to form coherent words. “Where’s Jungkook?”

“His girlfriend called so he ran out to talk to her,” said Taehyung after a brief pause. “Seriously, she’s got that kid around her pinky.”

You reached for your soju cup but then decided to just go for the bottle. After taking a swig, you leaned back against your chair and held back a burp. “Have you met her yet?”

He shook his head.

“Good. It never goes well when Jungkook’s girlfriends see you.”

Taehyung smirked. “Did you just admit that you think I’m hot?”
“No. But if I were Jungkook’s girlfriend, I wouldn’t want him to hang out late nights with someone who looks like you.”

“Hah!” Taehyung snapped his fingers, and his smirk turned into a triumphant grin. “You did just admit that you think I’m hot! Does this mean I actually have a chance?”

“Shut up,” you said, feeling a wave of warmth overflow your probably already red cheeks. “You’ll never get with me. Just get it inside your head already.”

“I can’t.”

You lifted your eyebrows in a silent prodding, but Taehyung was silent for once. He wouldn’t even hold your gaze and wordlessly cut up the last of the grilled meat. Faintly, you had a feeling his reaction was significant in some kind of way, but your brain was frankly too muddled with alcohol to give a shit. Besides, even if it wasn’t, what could you do? Admit that the reason you wouldn’t be able to handle two Taehyungs was that you wouldn’t be able to resist them?

No.

Taehyung livened up when Jungkook returned, and as his intense brown eyes found yours, it felt like the silent moment had never occurred. You tried your best to stay relevant in their conversations and was honestly curious about Jungkook’s latest girlfriend, but you had to drink even more to follow their discussions after that point. You could barely stand by the time you were done eating and, humiliatingly enough, had to ask Jungkook to run after a taxi for you.

It was almost 1 am when you stumbled into your apartment. After kicking off your low-heeled pumps and discarding your blazer, you shuffled toward your bedroom. It was a bit tricky navigating the interior without light, but you had more than enough experience to step over the raised thresholds and hard furniture corners. The smell of newly cooked food nearly made you throw up as you passed the kitchen, but you managed to hold it all back until you reached your bed. You would have liked to throw up, but you hadn’t thrown up from drinking for over a decade and you were too tired to take up the hobby now.

With a deep exhale, you slouched down at the end of the bed. You slowly peeled out of your skirt and blouse and bra before you freed your hair from the tight ponytail you always kept it in. You knew you should brush your teeth or at least drink some water, but you were too exhausted to rise. As such, you merely fell back and crawled across the mattress until you reached your nightstand. You grasped the thin gold band around your finger and dropped it onto the wooden surface before you reached out for him.

Your husband.

You only barely discerned his figure in the darkness. He lay on his side, facing the wall instead of you, and didn’t stir as you poked him in the shoulder. You slid closer and pressed yourself against his warm back, then prodded him again.

“Jimin,” you whispered. “I’m home.”

He still didn’t react. You draped one arm over his side and murmured his name again, a little louder, but his calm, even breathing pattern didn’t change.

Swallowing the urge to yell, you allowed your hand to travel down his stomach until you reached the upper hem of his boxers. You lowered your fingers slowly, carefully, as you started kissing the area beneath his neck. A surge of excitement flowed through you when he remained still, and you felt
your heart pounding against your chest as you drew closer and closer to the root of your desperation.

However, just as you felt the soft skin underneath your fingertips, Jimin jolted.

“Ow!”

You yelped as an elbow struck you hard above your armpit and you immediately pulled away.

“Honey? Is that you?”

Jimin’s light voice was filled with alarm as you heard him turn and shift.

“Who else?” you grunted as you massaged the part he had struck you.

A pair of arms immediately wrapped themselves around you. “Oh no, did I hurt you? I got scared when you touched me! I’m so sorry!”

Even though you wanted to say something about how stupid it was for a husband to be terrified of his wife’s touch, you could feel how rapidly his heart was beating. You really had shocked him, and though it might not have been that much of an accomplishment to scare a soft guy like Park Jimin, you still felt bad.

“No, I’m fine,” you lied. “And I’m sorry, too. I shouldn’t have tried something while you were asleep.”

“I’m sorry for going to bed before you came,” he murmured. “I called and texted you while I was cooking, but you didn’t answer, so I just assumed you were going out drinking again.”

“You could make it up to me,” you said slowly as you put your hands on his chest. “Now that you’re awake, why don’t we do it?”

“Honey…”

“Come on,” you whispered softly as you nuzzled into the curve of his neck. “We haven’t had sex for months.”

Jimin didn’t stop you, but you felt him stiffen as your hands traveled south across his torso. “(Y/N), as much as I’d like to, we’re both tired. And I have tons of essays to go through tomorrow.”

“Please,” you insisted as you kissed his neck. “I really need it. Please, Jimin.”

“(Y/N)…”

“At least let me go down on you,” you said eagerly, already feeling the rejection in his tone. “You don’t have to do anything. Just lie there and relax and let your wife take care of you.”

It wasn’t what you truly wanted, but if you had to choose between having it in your mouth and nothing, you’d pick the first option every time. Besides, you enjoyed doing it - as proved by the growing ache between your legs.

At least you had before sex had become a once-a-year occasion.

“I-I’m sorry, but I can’t.”

And with that, Jimin withdrew, rolling over to his side of the bed. You stared at his back, a slow and now familiar pain spreading across your chest.
Why didn’t he want to have sex with you? Why did he reject you over and over again? You knew Jimin wasn’t nearly as adventurous as you, but you wouldn’t mind having normal sex so long as it was somewhat regular. So long as you didn’t have to please yourself every night when Jimin’s snoring began. So long as you didn’t have to fall asleep wondering whether it was something wrong with Jimin - or you.

You let out a quiet moan as you put away your phone and vibrator, finishing for the third time that night. Jimin didn’t know about the vibrator, so you did your best to sneak out to the bathroom as quietly as your drunken body could. There, you washed your face and teeth - might as well when you could - and the toy before you got back to bed with a somewhat relieved sigh.

You glanced at Jimin, who was still sleeping on his side. After some hesitation, you decided to snuggle up against him again.

“...Love... you.”

It wasn’t more than a mumble, but you couldn’t help but smile as you kissed his back. Sure, things weren’t optimal between you two and yes, Sangdo was the last place you would like to live in, but things weren’t bad. They were far from it. You had a stable, unstressful job, a kind husband who loved you and a safe financial status.

Your parents would probably have been overjoyed to see how far you had come. Or at least, that’s what you told yourself.

Ring, ring.

Initially thinking it was your morning alarm, you tried ignoring the sound the best you could. You hadn’t gotten nearly enough sleep to go through another boring day at the office doing absolutely nothing but breathe and drink coffee. However, as the annoying tune continued even after you blindly smacked your phone, you soon realized it wasn’t your alarm.

It was a call.

With a groan, you left the warmth of Jimin’s back and sat up. You didn’t recognize the number, but since you used your job phone as your personal one, you cleared your throat and listened to your voice twice before you finally answered.

“Detective (Y/F/N) of Sangdo Special Investigations Unit for Homicide speaking.”

You almost dropped the phone as the woman in the other end of the line spoke. When she was done, you even asked her to repeat herself out of sheer disbelief.

For a woman had been discovered - dead.
The First Victim

It was close to 4 am when the taxi slowed to a halt and about thirty-five minutes since you first received the call. Peering out the window, you found that Sunrise Heights Hotel, contrary to its name, wasn’t very sunny nor tall. The dreary five-story building resided in the outskirts of Sangdo’s sizable old industrial area, which wasn’t the city’s proudest side. The hotel was probably one of many buildings that had been built in haste during the financial rise in the ‘70s and ‘80s for the purpose of quick expansion rather than long-lasting design or architectural taste.

You could imagine how impressive the district had been once when people were working the large factories and pumping out products into the nearby warehouses. Nowadays, most of them stood abandoned. The only businesses that had survived the turn of the millennium were small-time restaurants, barbers, apothecaries, convenience stores and, like the building you were about to enter, hotels.

Sunrise Heights Hotel’s dull facade, cube-like shape and gray color made it blend into the dilapidating cityscape without issue, which was, you guessed, its purpose. You didn’t have to look twice to know that it was a so-called “love hotel”, much like a majority of the other hotels in that area. It was a place people went to have sex, then leave.

It wasn’t a typical place for a dead body to show up.

Cold winds blew. As you wrapped yourself tighter in a coat that was too thin for the coming autumn chill, you only barely maintained your balance as you stumbled out of the taxi. You had downed a bottle of hangover cure - Jimin always kept the refrigerator stocked with your favorite brand - during the ride and prayed fervently that it would work its magic quicker than usual as you tossed the bottle aside on the road before anyone could see you with it.

Two police officers in uniform stood guard by the entrance doors. After showing one of them your badge, they instructed you to the top floor where you found the otherwise rather deserted hotel, crowded.

“(Y/N)?”

Taehyung immediately left the conversation he had had with a crime scene investigator and hurried down the carpeted hallway floor until he reached you. His previously collected guise fell away as he regarded you up and down with concern.

“Should you really be here?” he asked. He had tucked his mouth mask underneath his chin and it moved as he spoke.

“What, you don’t think an old lady like me can be up this early?” you parried.

“No, just--” He shook his head. “Nevermind,” he said, then grinned. “Glad you’re finally acknowledging your age, though.”

Ignoring his comment, you peered past him down the corridor. “What’s the situation?” you wondered. There were at least a dozen people there, ranging from patrol officers to fully equipped and dressed crime scene investigators. A general buzz filled the air, and flashes of light occasionally erupted from the only opened room further down the hallway. Everyone wore mouth masks.

“A woman in her mid-twenties was found hanging from the ceiling in a rope,” replied Taehyung, the lighthearted humor in his voice immediately fading. “Looks like suicide.”
"ID?"

"None found. Only a wallet with some cash."

You frowned. "Who discovered her? And how? I mean, this is a strange time for room service, which I doubt this place even has."

"A young couple did. They were drunk and misread the number on their card key. When the door opened, they didn’t think much of it - not until they saw her body."

"So the door wasn’t locked before they came?"

"Apparently."

Your frown deepened. "Where are the couple now? And do we have the front desk clerk here?"

"Yes, they're all in the staff room on the first floor with Jungkook."

Your eyes widened. "He’s here too? When his last five girlfriends all dumped him for working too much?"

Taehyung grinned. "He got here before either of us. Kid’s got a duty heart."

"His new girlfriend is gonna be pissed."

"Probably."

You produced a small notepad and a pen from the inner chest pocket of your coat and started jotting down some hasty notes. "Are the CSIs still working?"

"Yep," said Taehyung as he looked over his shoulder. "They wouldn’t let me in, but I doubt they’d say no to you."

"They can try," you said with a snort. "What about the other hotel guests and staff? Is there anyone else on this floor except for us?"

"Eight of the twenty rooms on this floor had guests in them. They’re being questioned by officers in their rooms, as are the two security guards."

Your brows rose. "There’s CCTV here?"

"No, but this place has had some troubles in the past. I guess the owner hired them just in case something bad happened again."

"Shit," you muttered. "Could have helped out a lot if we had footage."

Taehyung furrowed his brows. "What do you mean? It’s probably a suicide. I mean, why would someone hang another person in this day and age?"

"Don’t rule out anything until we’ve gotten the crime scene and body analyzed," you said admonishingly.

"Alright, alright."

"Come," you said as you started down the hallway.
“Really? In a place like this?”

You sighed. “You can stay where you are and stay pretty or follow me and stay pretty and learn something,” you said over your shoulder. “Your choice.”

Taehyung smirked as he trailed after you. “You don’t need to tell me twice, aunty.”

Without responding, you headed for the only door that was open. The smell of something sickly sweet had permeated the air already by the elevator, but as you drew nearer, it grew nauseating. Glad that you had an iron stomach from all your drinking, you grabbed a mouth mask and a pair of rubber gloves from one of the crime scene investigator’s toolkits in passing and put them on.

Room 503 had four crime scene investigators prodding and photographing different areas of it. The one closest to the doorway sat crouched on the carpeted floor by the bathroom door with a camera in hand when your shadow fell over him. He sighed loudly, but as he glanced up at you, he swallowed any insult or angry comment he might have hurled at Taehyung or Jungkook or any of the regular police officers, then quickly shuffled out of your way. The remaining two crime investigators wore surprised and annoyed looks as they turned around to face you, but their expression quickly melted away as recognition lit their gazes, and they, too, went back to quietly working. You didn’t look at them more than in the corner of your eyes, for there it was.

The dead woman.

Dressed in a rather suggestive, lacy black nightgown, she dangled by the neck from a rope that was fastened to a tiny hook in the ceiling. Her long, black hair fell around her face, completely covering it, and her skin was pale as creme. Despite the mouth mask, the pungent smell of decomposing tissue penetrated your nostrils and made your stomach tumble.

Taehyung stiffened by your side, and as you glanced up at him, you saw that his complexion was bleak underneath his mouth mask. You briefly considered sending him back out, but then thought better of it. If he and Jungkook wanted to become good homicide detectives, they needed to get used to seeing dead bodies. And so, even though it was merely the second time Taehyung had dealt with a deceased, you gestured for him to follow you as you drew even closer to the woman.

Stopping a foot away from the corpse, you parted her long hair, which you, upon closer inspection, realized had been nicely cared for. In combination with her manicure and pedicure, you got the impression that the woman had valued her appearance in life. You scribbled down the thought before you parted her hair again - and saw her face.

While the rest of her body was pale, the skin on her face was deep purple and even blue at places. She bore no particular expression at all, and half-dried, half-fluid red foam trickled out of her nostrils and from the corners of her mouth.

“What’s your name?” you asked the crime scene investigator who was standing closest to you and Taehyung, who was uncharacteristically silent.

“Song Jung-Hwa, Detective Sergeant (Y/F/N),” she said immediately, lowering the camera from her face.

You cringed slightly at the use of the whole title but didn’t mention it. Although you had tried to make people relax a bit around you when you first arrived at Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters, you soon found that nobody under your rank stopped calling you by it. “Sergeant” wasn’t that big of a deal, and the detectives who shared that title in other specializations weren’t treated the way you were. Sometimes, people older and ranked higher than you addressed you with
more respect than they should have. You knew the reason why, and you would have probably behaved similarly if you were them, but it still made you uncomfortable.

“Have you gotten photos of her face, Jung-Hwa?”

“Yes, detective sergeant.”

That was going to be annoying. “How long has she been hanging here?”

Jung-Hwa glanced back toward her colleagues, but none of them looked back. Sheepishly, she found your gaze again. “Judging by the bloating of the body,” she began, “we all agreed on three to five days, detective sergeant.”

So, she could have hanged herself or been hanged anytime from Sunday morning to Tuesday morning that week. “Weight and height?” you asked.

“According to our estimations, she most likely weighed forty to forty-five kilos before her death, detective sergeant. Her height’s a little over one-sixty.”

You peered up at the rope, which was still taut from the weight of the woman’s body, and then crouched beside the trashcan that lay on its side about a meter away from her. It wasn’t unthinkable that the woman had climbed onto the trashcan, tied the rope to the ceiling hook, put her neck through the noose and then finally kicked away her support. It wasn’t unthinkable, but was it the whole truth?

You rose. “Any other injury or trauma to the body?”

“Not what we’ve seen, detective sergeant.”

“Any significant or unusual pieces of evidence?”

“No, detective sergeant.”

Despite the foul smell, you took a deep breath. You had to, or the “detective sergeant” would make you say something you would regret.

“When are you letting her down?” you asked when you had managed to reign in your annoyance.

“Once our supervisor arrives, detective—”

“Alright, thanks.”

Understanding that you couldn’t glean much more than you already had from the woman, you regarded the room instead. It was small, with “sensual” red paint on the walls and generally dark furniture. The carpeted floor was old and rugged at places, and the unmade bed was dressed in tacky fake silk. You found a glass ceiling lamp on the dresser that Jung-Hwa had been photographing, and guessed that it was the thing the hook in the ceiling had been attached to prior to the hanging. Other than that, nothing in the room or the bathroom seemed out of the ordinary. Any belongings of the woman had probably already been bagged and taken away.

Not wanting to touch anything that might disturb the crime scene investigators’ job, you turned around and looked up at Taehyung. He had followed you, silently and obediently, as you inspected the room, with one hand covering the lower part of his face in addition to his mask. His handsome face was frozen in an uncomfortable expression, and his intense brown eyes were wider than usual.

“You wanna look around some more?” you wondered gently. “Or should we go down to Jungkook
and see what we can find out from the couple and staff?”

“The latter,” he managed, his voice strained.

You nodded and exited room 503. Although Taehyung tore off the mask almost before you entered the elevator, you kept it on. Partly to cover as much of your tired face as possible, but mostly because you feared the smell of alcohol on your breath. The last thing anyone would want after seeing a hanged woman was a drunk cop.

Speaking of which, you knew the energy boost - and sobriety - the hangover cure had granted you was merely temporary. The mysterious drink gave the consumer a brief boost before you needed to wait for at least six hours - preferably sleeping - for it to fully fend off the effects of a hangover. You usually drank it first thing in the morning after a night of drinking since you only needed that quick burst of energy to get to work where you could sleep by your desk instead, and cursed yourself for your bad habit. You hadn’t slept much, but you knew you would have felt better if you had drunk the cure before you fell asleep. Now you needed to work quickly and get to bed before you passed out - or worse, started slurring.

A handful of patrol officers wandered about in the front lobby of Sunrise Heights Hotel. You hadn’t seen as many policemen and women as you had that night in a long time, and even though it might have been a bit morbid considering the circumstances, you couldn’t help but feel joy. The life and ambient murmurs reminded you of happier days, when you hadn’t been a homicide detective stuck in a town where nothing happened.

It reminded you of when you had been the proudest to have chosen the detective path - and the person who had inspired you to do so.

“(Y/N)? It’s this way.”

Taehyung had stopped by a closed blue door labeled “staff only”, but you had continued down the corridor toward the rooms on the first floor. It wasn’t until he spoke that you blinked and shook your head clear from thoughts.

“Sorry,” you told Taehyung and walked back to him. “I’m just tired.”

“And drunk.”

“Maybe,” you confessed.

He smiled for the first time since entering room 503. It didn’t quite reach up to his eyes, but it was better than nothing. “You sure you should be here, aunty? Effective sleep is extra important when you’re older.”

“Sure,” you said, then grabbed the door handle and entered.

While you doubted the door was normally unlocked, it swiftly opened for you and Taehyung. He took the lead and headed down the poorly lit corridor until you reached another door labeled “kitchen”.

“...there. I don’t remember.”

Sitting around a large, oval table next to a small kitchen area was Jungkook, a middle-aged man wearing glasses and a cheap suit, and a couple in their early twenties. The young man was sitting in one of the plastic chairs with his face buried in his trembling hands while his girlfriend was whispering quietly into his left ear, both of her arms draped protectively around his torso. Both of
them wore trendy, expensive clothes, but judging by their age, you doubted they were more than university students and part-time workers. They didn’t react at your and Taehyung’s entrance, but the middle-aged man and Jungkook did.

“(Y/N)-sun--I mean, detective sergeant!”

He rose from his chair and bowed before you could tell him not to, but you didn’t really mind it just then. It was important for people to know they had an authoritative figure to trust and, most importantly, confide in. In that room, that was you.

Even if you smelled of booze.

“Good morning.”

You spoke loudly in an effort to gain the attention of the couple and mustered your politest tone as you went on. “I’m Detective (Y/F/N)...”

You nodded at Taehyung, who swallowed nervously before he spoke. “I’m Detective Constable Kim Taehyung,” he said.

“...and we’ll be asking you some questions,” you finished.

“We’ve already answered questions for the last hour,” said the woman with a painful frown. “Can’t you just let us go home?”

“Yes,” said the middle-aged man stiffly. “I would also very much like to leave. I need something to drink.”

“This will be quick, I assure you,” you said quickly, then aimed your focus at Jungkook. “Have you gone through the basics and gotten all of their contact information?”

Jungkook held up a notebook eagerly. “Yes, detective sergeant.”

You smiled faintly despite the title. Poor kid. He never used your rank unless he was extremely nervous and around people he didn’t know. If you hadn’t known, you might have thought that he was pretty calm to work on his first case ever as a homicide detective. His features were carefully neutral, and he was a lot less pale than Taehyung.

Though that probably only meant he hadn’t seen the body.

“Good,” you said, glad that Taehyung hadn’t made a joke during the slight pause you had reviewed Jungkook. He, too, looked composed, but you could practically sense the nervousness emanating from him like heat from a radiator. “Then it will be even quicker.”

“But--” the woman began.

She was interrupted by her boyfriend, who put a hand on her knee. “It’s fine,” he said. “I can talk a little longer.”

She frowned. “But babe--”

“Hush,” he said and kissed her on the cheek before standing up. He adjusted his shirt in the back before he held out a hand toward you and mustered a rigid smile. “I’m Kim Seung-Hee. My girlfriend’s name is Park Na-Yeon. Nice to meet you.”

You shook his hand. “Perhaps if the circumstances had been different,” you replied apologetically.
His smile turned a little more genuine as he sank down on his chair. You grabbed one, too, and took out your notepad and pen.

“What do you want to know?” he asked.

“How did you and your girlfriend end up here?”

“We were out celebrating a friend’s birthday,” said Na-Yeon, speaking before Seung-Hee in a weary tone. “We headed out at eight-thirty, met everyone at a samgyeopsal house, then went to a karaoke place, and then a bar. Seung-Hee and I left our friends at two to go home, but we… er, we kinda decided to take a detour.” She blushed and averted her gaze, as did Seung-Hee.

A needle of jealousy pricked your heart. Not because you were attracted to Seung-Hee or anything, but because you were jealous of their spontaneity and adventurousness. You couldn’t even dream of checking into a love hotel with Jimin after a night out drinking. Partly because he didn’t drink and partly because you guessed Jimin would rather be burned alive than have sex in other places than your bed.

“All right,” you said as you sloppily scribbled down her story. “When you reached this place, did you see anyone else? Apart from the front desk clerk, of course.”

They shook their heads in unison.

Of course not. The body could have been hanging in room 503 for almost a week. You cursed yourself inwardly. The immediate effect of the hangover cure was definitely fading, and since you couldn’t drink another bottle until at least six hours had passed - unless you wanted to run to the bathroom every other minute - you needed to sleep.

Before you could embarrass yourself further, you thanked Seung-Hee and Na-Yeon for their cooperation. They seemed startled and confused by the short interview, as did Taehyung and Jungkook, but you ignored their looks and leveled your gaze with the middle-aged man’s.

“What’s your name?” you asked.

“Kang Chang-Woo,” he replied as he adjusted his glasses slightly.

“How long have you worked here?”

“About five years.”

“Do you…” You heard yourself slur slightly and quickly cleared your throat. “Do you know the name of the woman?”

He shook his head. “I’d have to look in our database to see, which I haven’t had the chance to do yet.”

“Our CSIs estimate her time of death might have occurred up to five days ago. Did nobody report on a strange smell?”

Chang-Woo smiled uncomfortably. “Each room here is smell and soundproofed. It’s part of Sunrise Heights’ business motto.”

You frowned. “I understand sound, but why smell?”

“Don’t ask me,” he said quickly, his face reddening slightly. “I just work here.”
“Okay,” you said slowly as you jotted down the details. “But what about cleaning service? Shouldn’t they have discovered the body the very first day?”

“The maids only enter rooms that have a do-disturb sign on them. It’s to avoid awkward meetings and make the experience as relaxed as possible for the guests. After all, most people pay only for a twenty-four-hour visit.”

“I see.”

You couldn’t take it anymore. It took all your willpower to stand up and say goodbye to Chang-Woo and the couple. The world was spinning sluggishly around you, but you somehow managed to grab your notepad and pen and head out the door before anyone could speak.

“(Y/N)?”

Taehyung’s concerned tone only annoyed you. “I’m fine,” you said without looking back. “I just… I drank way too much.”

“I can tell.”

You were too nauseous to muster a retort to his teasing tone. “Could you… could you take over here? Make sure we get everything we need?”

“Of course,” replied Taehyung, sounding serious for once. “I’ll call for a taxi.”

“I can handle that myself. But…”

“Yeah?”

You grimaced and turned around, glad that the mouth mask covered most of your face. “Jungkook,” you began. “I want him to look at the body.”

Taehyung furrowed his brows. “Why?”

“I want… him to learn.” You pressed a hand against your stomach. “He’s a homicide detective. He’s gotta see bodies sooner or later.”

“But--”

“I’m not gonna force him,” you interrupted. “But I want you to ask him if he wants to see her. If he does, take him to her. The CSIs won’t stop you once their supervisor arrives, so get it done when he or she comes.”

Taehyung pursed his lips, and though the reluctance was clear in his intense brown eyes, he nodded after a while. “Okay. I’ll do that.”

“Good. See you in a few hours.”

He grinned. “Sleep tight, aunty.”

And with that, you left Sunrise Heights Hotel. When you arrived back home at your and Jimin’s apartment, you found him still snoring lightly in almost the same position you had left him. After undressing, you fell right next to him, too tired and queasy to bother cuddling up to him.

Ring, ring.
It felt like you had just closed your eyes when the annoying tune pierced your eardrums. However, as you rubbed your crusted eyelids and yawned, you rose to find yourself alone. Thin slivers of sunshine escaped the tiny spaces in your blinds, indicating another hot day, and the apartment was still. Jimin had already left for work.

Ring, ring.

“Yeah, yeah,” you grunted as you scrambled to your nightstand where you had left your phone to charge. Although you were annoyed to say the least, you quickly stomped down your anger when you saw the caller ID.

Detective Chief Inspector Kim Seokjin.

“Sir!” you blurted. “I didn’t mean to let you wait so long for me to pick up, I--”

A cutting loud laughter was heard from the other end of the line. “Don’t worry, kiddo. Detective Constable Taehyung and Jungkook informed me of your illness. I just called to let you know I’m back from Daegu. It’s today.”

You had to think for several seconds before you understood. “Already?” you exclaimed. “But it’s only--”

“September 8th, just the date I told you kids I would retire nine months ago. So, if you wanna have a last shot at arm wrestling the old bear, now would be the time to try. Though I doubt you’d win.”

“Not when I’m sick!”

“Oh please. Even if you weren’t, all three of you couldn’t take me.”

“Don’t be so confident, old man,” you said as you slowly slid out of bed, so as not to lose your balance. “Taehyung’s grown a lot of muscles during your little tour. He’s stronger than Jungkook now.”

There was a snort. “Let’s bet on it. The winner gets to choose which pieces of the cake everyone gets.”

“With all due respect… that’s the most childish bet I’ve ever heard of, chief inspector. And that’s saying a lot considering I’ve been out drinking with you for almost five years.”

“It’s an ice cream cake. I got it in all your favorite flavors and with tons of toppings.”

You swallowed, stopping halfway to the bathroom and shower. “Really?”

“Yup.”

“Alright,” you said, yielding. “But only if the winner gets to also choose the size of each piece.”

“As long as everyone gets something, I’m fine with it.”

“Great,” you said. “I’m definitely beating you before you retire, old man. I don’t care if my arm’s falling off today. I’m doing it.”

He laughed again. “Sure, Kiddo. By the way, could you buy some coffee on the way?”

“Oh, come on,” you groaned. “That’s something rookies do. Get Jungkook on it, or even Taehyung.”
“They’re busy dealing with the case of the hanged woman.”

“There’s a coffee machine in the lunch room.”

“Does anyone seriously use that thing?”

You sighed. “Fine. What do you want?”

“Just regular black coffee with some sugar and creme. The other kids told me you already know what they want.”

“I do. Alright, I’ll get your--”

“Wait, there’s actually one more person here.”

You frowned. “Who?”

“I’ll tell you when you arrive. But he wants black coffee without anything in it.”

A chill traveled down your back as old memories temporarily filled your mind. However, you quickly pushed them away. It was just a coincidence that the chief’s guest had the same taste in coffee as him.

It had to be.

“Two black coffees, one with sugar and creme in it,” you said dryly. “And a drink each for Jungkook and Taehyung.”

“Perfect. See you soon, (Y/N).”

After a quick shower where you scrubbed your teeth unforgivingly in order to remove any remaining odor of soju, you grabbed a bottle of hangover cure and headed out by 10 am. Traffic was unusually forgiving that hour, and you managed to get to Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters before Taehyung and Jungkook’s icy drinks even began reacting to the heat inside the taxi. Glad that your first bottle of hangover cure had begun kicking in, you walked through the entrance with ease, and you were even smiling to yourself in the elevator ride.

It would be nice to see the chief again, even if it was for a farewell. Kim Seokjin was the only reason you hadn’t completely lost your mind out of boredom ever since you relocated to Sangdo five years ago. Albeit annoying sometimes, his childish humor was refreshing to witness in a sixty-year-old man and it somehow always spread to you. Though, you had to admit it might have been your mutual love for soju that truly cemented the friendship between the two of you.

But it wasn’t to say that you didn’t respect him on a professional level. You did. You respected him greatly. He was a great detective, experienced in everything from homicide - his original specialization - to organized crimes and narcotics, which probably was the reason police academies all over the country had wanted him to visit before his retirement, which in turn led to the nine-month-long tour he had been on until that day.

So, yes, you were smiling, even though it had wounded your pride slightly to be out buying coffee for everyone like a grunt. You were happy, for although you doubted you would actually win against him in an arm wrestling match, at least you could try to make him sweat a bit. And he’d brought ice cream cake: the perfect remedy for a hangover.

However, as you reached the ninth floor of the building, your smile vanished. You would have
dropped the paper bags with the drinks in them, and probably also fallen to your knees if it weren’t for the fact that your whole body had frozen. You didn’t breathe, you didn’t blink, you didn’t feel your heart beating.

For through the glass doors leading into Sangdo Special Investigations' Department of Homicide, you caught the unmistakable profile of someone you had thought you would never see again. Someone you had met over a decade ago when you were young and dumb and stupid. Someone you had been inspired by and looked up to and who ultimately made you choose a future as a homicide detective. Someone you had spent countless of naked hours with and given your heart to - only to have it stomped, torn and tossed to the side before anyone else could see.

Just like the bottle of hangover cure you had thrown away earlier that morning.

Min Yoongi. His name was practically burnt into your heart.

For you hated him more than anyone or anything else in the world.
“(Y/N)-sunbae-nim?”

You blinked. Jungkook peered through the double glass doors leading to the homicide department, a curious and somewhat worried expression on his face.

You would have liked to answer, or react, but you couldn’t. For through the now open doors, you heard his voice.

“What are you--”

The elevator doors closed. You quickly moved the paper bags with the drinks to one hand and punched the button to open the doors. As they did, you saw Jungkook jogging the short distance from the glass doors to the elevator, his thick brown eyebrows furrowed in concern.

“I’m just hungover,” you said before he could say anything, and shuffled out of the elevator car.

“You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

You had. A ghost of your past. Or at least what you had thought was - and would remain - your past.

“Lemme take those.”

Jungkook grabbed the bags with the coffee and headed back toward the doors. He pushed them open using his hip and allowed you through before him. You would have normally been annoyed by his gestures since you could very much hold two light paper bags with drinks in them and open a door on your own. But you were too focused on a certain someone to care.

A certain someone who barely deigned to glance at you as you and Jungkook approached.

Standing between Taehyung and Chief Inspector Kim Seokjin by one of many abandoned office cubicles, Min Yoongi’s cold piercing eyes made you shiver. He was shorter than all the men and not much taller than you, but his modest height did nothing to dampen the aura of dominance he exuded. His expression was dull, almost bored, even as Taehyung and Seokjin laughed loudly and patted each other on the back, and there wasn’t even the slightest hint of recognition in his gaze as he scrutinized you briefly, then returned to the conversation at hand.

His instant dismissal felt like a slap in the face and hurt almost as much. You thought you had gotten over him a long, long time ago when he first let you down. And you had frankly forgotten him over the many years that had passed since the two of you first encountered one another. Had he perhaps forgotten you, too?

You didn’t think you looked that different. But eleven years was a long period of time. You had gained a bit of weight, your hair was longer and your style had changed drastically from your less-than-pure youth.

Yoongi, on the other hand, looked exactly the same.

He wore the same disinterested expression and the same kind of dark suit with a shirt in one neutral color and a black tie. His black hair was in an unassuming cut, just the way you remembered it, and despite the fact that he was almost a decade older than you, not a single line or wrinkle marked the pale skin of his face. He radiated the same abrasive, unapproachable air about himself, and his eyes
were just as cold and piercing as always.

It almost felt like you were dreaming, conjuring up your deepest desires in an attempt to satiate both your hatred - and lust. For despite how you currently felt toward him emotionally, your body still remembered an echo of your past relationship together.

A relationship that had involved a lot of fucking.

But you weren’t dreaming. A matter made clear when you and Jungkook reached the abandoned desk and Taehyung and the chief finally saw you.

Taehyung’s face brightened. “(Y/N)!”

“There you are, kiddo!” called Seokjin.

“Hey,” you replied quietly, not completely trusting your voice. Not even when Yoongi seemed to pretend he couldn’t see you. “I brought the coff--”

You were interrupted by Seokjin practically squeezing all your organs together in a powerful hug. You gasped from pain while Taehyung and Jungkook just laughed at the ease with which the broad-shouldered chief lifted and spun you around several times before finally releasing you.

You grimaced as you massaged your ribs. “That your way of weakening me before the arm wrestling match, old man?” you managed in between breaths.

“Oh, come on kiddo!” Seokjin grinned as he grabbed his coffee from one of the bags Jungkook still held. “I know you’re sick, but was that any way of welcoming your boss after nine exhaustive months of lecturing at police academies all over the country? A weak ‘hey’?”

“Sorry for not being able to lift you up and crush your organs, chief inspector.”

His grin widened. “Apology accepted.”

Jungkook handed you your coffee, then Taehyung, then finally, Yoongi. Seokjin seemed to finally realize he had forgotten to address the elephant in the room and hurriedly cleared his throat.

“I’ve already introduced him to these two kids,” he began as he craned a thumb toward Jungkook and Taehyung, “but I guess you have no idea who this is.” He tilted his head in Yoongi’s direction.

You hesitated, but when Yoongi made no initiative to protest and simply looked down at his coffee, you decided to abstain from the truth. “No,” you said stiffly.

Seokjin slung an arm around Yoongi. “This here is Detective Inspector Min Yoongi from Daegu Metropolitan Police Agency. Even though he looks pretty unassuming--” he grinned but Yoongi’s features remained carefully neutral, “--he’s the best homicide detective I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with. And I’m not just saying that because he’s a dear hoobae of mine - his clearance rate is one of the best in this country.”

If the praise pleased or bothered Yoongi, you could only guess at. His features remained indifferent and his cold, piercing eyes projected nothing but just that - coldness. There was not a trace of recognition or acknowledgment as the chief released Yoongi in order to sling his arm around your shoulders instead.

“Inspector,” started Seokjin, this time aiming his words toward Yoongi. “This is Detective Sergeant (Y/F/N). She’s from Daegu, just like you, and she’s--”
“I know.”

Your eyes widened. Was he finally going to admit that he knew you?

“Oh.” Seokjin blinked. “You know her? Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I don’t know her.” Yoongi’s tone, sharp and emotionless, cut through you like a knife, as did his cold, piercing eyes. “I know of her. Every detective and police officer in Daegu knows of the Girl Genius who solved the decade’s biggest murder mystery already as an academy student, graduated two years early and got promoted to sergeant as soon as she received her detective’s badge.”

You cringed. You hadn’t heard the nickname “Girl Genius” since you first arrived at Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters five years prior to then. It had taken you over a month to get people to stop calling you that - and everyone but Jungkook and Taehyung addressed you as sergeant still - but you still heard it occasionally in whispers. Also, though the rest of his sentence would have sounded like praise or admiration in any other person’s voice, Yoongi made your achievement sound almost like a crime in itself.

“Yes, of course.” Seokjin released you and cleared his throat. “So, now that the introductions are over, I guess you’re all wondering what he’s doing here,” he said as he looked from you to Taehyung to Jungkook.

All three of you nodded.

Seokjin smiled and patted Yoongi on the shoulder. “I know this will probably come as a surprise to some of you—” he winked at you, “—but today’s my last day here. And although I know nobody’s ever going to top me as boss, I’m sure the inspector will do a great job trying to reach my level of greatness.”

You frowned and opened your mouth to speak, but Taehyung was quicker.

“Hold on,” he began, confusion written all over his handsome face. “Are you saying he’s our new boss?”

Seokjin’s smile broadened. “That’s precisely what I’m saying. He’s my final gift to you.”

“But doesn’t the inspector work in Daegu?” you asked. You knew it was kind of childish, if not outright rude of you, to talk about someone, especially an inspector, which was someone higher in rank than you, in third person when he was right there. But you couldn’t bring yourself to address Yoongi directly. Partly because you doubted he would answer and partly because you wanted to avoid him in any way and as much as possible.

For he wasn’t just an ex to you.

Even though it was embarrassing to admit, even to yourself, you couldn’t deny the feelings you once had harbored for Yoongi. It sounded cheesy and not at all like you since you didn’t believe in “love of one’s life” or any of that bullshit. But if you had, you would have to admit that Min Yoongi was the closest thing to such a person. He had been the love of your life.

That is, until he crushed your heart underneath the sole of his well-polished shoes and walked away from you as if you were nothing to him. As if you had always been nothing to him - and would always just be nothing.

Absolutely nothing.
Buried temporarily in your resurfacing anger and hurt, you almost missed the quick glances Seokjin and Yoongi exchanged before the former responded.

“He’s being relocated to Sangdo due to understaffing starting next week,” said Seokjin casually. “It was a lucky coincidence that I ran into him in Daegu when I did.”

You frowned. That didn’t make any sense. A homicide detective with one of the highest clearance rates in the country would hardly be placed in a city where nothing ever happened. And the homicide department had been understaffed and operating on an ever-shrinking budget for years before you started working in Sangdo - it didn’t make sense for the upper brass to send someone so qualified all of a sudden, and without any clear reason other than “understaffing”.

You glanced at Jungkook and Taehyung. Judging by the looks they shared, they, too, seemed to doubt the chief’s answer. However, neither of them made any attempt to object against the unlikely explanation.

“So, now that the introductions are all over, how about some ice cream cake?”

Perhaps sensing the slight tension in the air, Seokjin was quick to change the subject. During any other circumstances, you would have spoken up. However, with Yoongi, you just couldn’t somehow. It was like a mental barrier, hindering you from prying further.

Either that or the cold, unfriendly gaze he fixed on you.

“Not until I’ve beat you in arm wrestling, old man,” you told Seokjin.

The chief laughed and started toward the break room, one hand waving for the rest of you to follow. “Sure, kiddo,” he said over his shoulder. “By the way, Taehyung, (Y/N) told me you’ve been bulking up and that you’re stronger than Jungkook now. She even thinks you can beat me.”

Taehyung’s eyebrows rose as he peered down at you with surprise in his intense brown eyes. “She did?”

“Yup!” called Seokjin from the break room.

“Please,” you mouthed soundlessly. “We made a bet about the cake. Please win for me.”

The confusion immediately faded from Taehyung’s face. Instead, a softness entered his gaze briefly before it was swapped out by cockiness. “Sure, chief,” he said loudly before lowering the volume of his voice. “I’ll do it for a date.”

Jungkook frowned as he looked at his hyung. “What the hell? You can’t ask (Y/N)-sunbae-nim out on a date, hyung.”

“What, were you planning on asking her?”

Jungkook’s face flared up. “No! But she’s our sunbae - and married!”

As soon as the final word left his mouth, a shiver trailed down your back. Not because you were scared or sweaty, but because the cold, piercing gaze of someone who hadn’t spoken at all after he had addressed your former glory days landed on you.

And for the first time, a spark of recognition lighted his dark eyes. Recognition - and something else.

“You kids coming or not?”
You felt like a deer caught in the headlights of an approaching car, frozen stiff in the middle of the road despite the danger of the situation. Yoongi’s face was in an unnervingly calm and unreadable mask, which disguised any emotions he might have been experiencing. He said nothing, however, as he strode in the direction of the break room.

But you knew you hadn’t imagined the look in his eyes. He definitely knew who you were, not only because of your reputation.

And he now knew you were married.

“Do we have a deal or not?”

“Fine,” you told Taehyung, too wrapped up in thought to consider the consequences of your choice. “But I get to pick time and place.”

Taehyung grinned, and his brown eyes were overflowing with cheer. “I wouldn’t have it any other way, aunty.”

Jungkook opened his mouth to say something, but ultimately just bit his bottom lip. He gave you an inquiring look as the three of you trailed after Yoongi toward the break room, to which you responded with a calming gesture. You had managed to resist Taehyung for years; you weren’t planning on letting him woo you now. You weren’t planning on letting anyone woo you.

Even though it was difficult to deny the magnetic pull you felt toward Min Yoongi in both heart- and body.

Taehyung won the arm wrestling tournament. Seokjin was beaten in the final game, and Jungkook before that, though not without putting up a lot of resistance. Yoongi didn’t partake at all. You came in last, but you blamed it on your “sickness”, which was starting to dwindle, even more so after the enormous amount of ice cream cake that you just knew you would hate yourself for eating when you went to the gym later. However, the sugar strangely cleared your mind and you realized, to your great embarrassment, that you had forgotten the dead woman - and the reason for your heavy eyelids - entirely.

Not wanting to kill the atmosphere with a corpse, you decided to wait with it until after the chief had left. A decision you came to slowly regret. Because after the arm wrestling tournament and the cake-eating, he showed Yoongi around the department, which took a while since he insisted on opening every single door in the entire floor. Yoongi’s guise didn’t shift, but you had spent enough time with him in the past to read the disappointment in his eyes.

It didn’t surprise you. Coming from Daegu yourself, you knew what an investigative department should look like. Even though you, Jungkook and Taehyung had half the floor for yourselves, meaning you had access to always available bathrooms, a spacious, clean break room, several private office rooms and ten cubicles that were all equipped with computers and free desk space, that in itself was the very problem of Sangdo Special Investigations’ Department of Homicide. There was just a bunch of available spaces and cheap, outdated furniture. No people and no fresh cases. And although nothing was outright broken or unusable, a lot of things were gradually falling deeper into a state of disrepair and age. The chairs creaked, the computers lagged and the place was always either too cold or warm.

A part of the headquarters’ archives took up the whole other half of the floor, dedicated to cold cases and solved murders. But one could only spend so much time reliving history through the surprisingly low amount of homicide cases Sangdo had experienced the last century.
The poor state of the office aside, you knew the unit was also an issue. As talented as Taehyung and Jungkook were, they were still rookies. Young rookies with no experience at all. Taehyung’s first case two years earlier had been a suicide and judging by the findings at Sunrise Heights Hotel, you were pretty sure Jungkook’s first case also was a suicide. If things continued in the same direction, they would learn nothing of murder or murderers and essentially become useless workforce unless they, too, moved elsewhere - just like every other homicide detective that had come to work in your department so far.

You didn’t want to lose them. Or perhaps, if you were more honest with yourself, you didn’t want to be left alone. Because you couldn’t move away from Sangdo. As much as you hated the city, you just couldn’t.

Not unless you divorced Jimin.

However, when you looked back at the five years you had worked there, you wouldn’t be surprised if the chief superintendent decided to rename the homicide department to the suicide department. In fact, you were already hearing people whisper about it on the other floors. Mostly as a joke, but it wasn’t without truth.

You probably sounded like a heartless dick, but as Seokjin dragged you all out for drinking that Friday evening, you really wished there was more to the hanged woman than a suicide.

“(Y/N)?”

You peeled open one eye and found yourself looking straight into Taehyung’s intense brown eyes. “Hmm?” you managed.

“You fell asleep on the table.”

“Oh.”

You blinked several times as you slowly sat upright. The interior of the bustling barbeque house spun before your eyes, and you had to close your eyes again and lean your forehead against the cool surface of the table to avoid sliding off the chair due to imbalance. The smell of grilled meat, which had made your hungover stomach growl with hunger just a few hours earlier, threatened to turn the contents of your belly inside out.

“What’s wrong?” you heard Seokjin say. “Kiddo?”

You merely groaned.

“She drank too much again,” replied Taehyung in a concerned tone.

“I’ll get a taxi.” The sound of a chair scraping against the floor followed Jungkook’s voice.

“I’ll come with you.” It was Taehyung. “She’s going to fall asleep on the street unless someone helps her to her apartment.”

“You can’t leave, Taehyung!” exclaimed Seokjin indignantly. “I can’t drink with only little Jungkook here!”

“But--”

“It’s my last chance drinking with you before I move back to Seoul with the wife. Are you really going to deny an old man’s final night out with his hoobaes?”
“I understand, but--”

“I haven’t had anything to drink. I’ll take her home in my car.”

Yoongi’s voice jolted you back into consciousness. However, you were too nauseous and weak to protest as Taehyung reluctantly gave in to Seokjin’s demands.

“I’ll bring the car around. Get her outside within five. And ask for some tissue and opaque plastic bags.”

“But (Y/N)-sunbae-nim doesn’t--”

“Was I unclear?”

You wanted to defend Jungkook and protest against the general “she's too drunk to decide for herself” statement, but you couldn’t muster more than a murmur even as Taehyung or Jungkook or perhaps both helped you out into the night air. Your powerlessness irritated you, but you were more upset about your pride and image. First day at his new workplace and what did the prestigious homicide detective Min Yoongi find? Two guys that barely qualified as detectives and a past fuck - in the literal sense, not as an insult - who couldn’t control her drinking? What did he think of his “promotion”, or whatever else had forced him to rot away in Sangdo?

Why the hell was he in your life again?

“We’re here.”

Yoongi’s sharp, emotionless voice penetrated your drunken haze. When you opened your eyes and saw the apartment building you and Jimin lived in from where you sat in the front passenger seat, you guessed Jungkook or Taehyung must have told him your address, for you definitely hadn’t. You hadn’t spoken to Yoongi at all yet, at least not directly.

And neither had he until that point.

You opened your mouth but then shut it just as fast. You knew you should thank him for driving you home in his nice car despite the risk you posed as drunk, or at least mutter a goodbye. Or really, just say anything a normal human being would have been able to say. But you didn’t know how to. Partly because Yoongi had continued to pretend as if though the two of you had never met prior to the stiff introductions in the office and partly because you had no idea what you might accidentally say.

“I didn’t know you worked here.”

You could scarcely believe your ears. Had he finally acknowledged the fact that you two knew each other from before?

You discreetly glanced to your side. With one hand still casually draped over the wheel, Yoongi kept his cold, piercing eyes locked onto the car he had parked behind. If he noticed your staring or found the situation awkward, you didn’t know. His bored expression was more impenetrable than ever.

You soaked your lips and looked down at your lap. “Yeah… I asked to be placed here five years ago.”

“Because of your husband?”

You stared at him in disbelief. “How--”
“Don’t insult my intellect. It’s painfully obvious.”

You wanted to retort - and add an insult to the retort - but then thought better of it. “Aha,” you said merely.

“Where’s your ring?”

“I forgot it,” you confessed. You had been too busy and distracted to put it on before you headed out to buy coffee for everyone.

“Is he a high or a middle school teacher?”

“Okay, that’s too much.” You stared at Yoongi again. “How did you know he’s a teacher?”

He didn’t even glance at you. “There was a big news report five and a half years ago of understaffed high and middle schools in Sangdo, which was particularly peculiar considering the lack of teacher positions everywhere else in the country.”

“And you remember that?”

“Of course.”

Yoongi finally met your eyes, but instead of relieving the tension in your shoulders, it made you stiffen further.

“Or do you think I’ve spied on you?” he asked in a neutral tone. “Perhaps investigated you prior to my arrival?”

“No,” you blurted.

“Good. At least you’re not as self-absorbed as Detective Constable Taehyung.”

“He’s not self-absorbed.”

Yoongi looked elsewhere with a disdainful curl to his lips. “Really, now?”

“Okay, so he might be a little more confident about his appearance than other people,” you admitted. “But that doesn’t make him bad. And he’s more than just a handsome guy. As is Jungkook. They have everything that’s required of great detectives.”

“I’ll let them prove that themselves,” he said without much conviction.

You swallowed. “Why… why did you lie to the chief? About knowing me?”

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes found yours again. “Why did you lie about it first?”

You averted your gaze. “I… I don’t know. I didn’t want to make it weird, I guess. And you looked like you didn’t remember me.”

“How could I not?”

Your eyes were wider than ever as you stared at him. Yoongi, however, instantly broke away from your gaze, and although his face and eyes gave away nothing, you caught his fingers suddenly tighten around the curve of the wheel.

“Leave,” he said coolly. “Before you start vomiting.”
You frowned. “I don’t vom—”

“Get out.”

You gritted your teeth as you stumbled out of the car. The urge to yell and insult him was overwhelming, but you somehow managed to rein it in as you grunted a curt “thanks for the ride”, then slammed the car door as hard as you could. You didn’t even have the time to turn around when Yoongi started the engine, his expensive-looking car giving off a low roar as he drove away from you with enough speed to warrant a ticket.

You hated him.

You hated him so much that it scared you. Yet in some fucked-up way, you still wanted him. You wanted him perhaps even more now that you truly knew how much you hated him. And that scared you more than anything else.

Because you had never really been able to control yourself - or your lust - around him.

And nothing seemed to have changed that. Not the eleven years that had gone by or the fact that he was your new boss and the principle that job relationships should never go beyond friendly was etched into your brain.

Not even the familiar ring you felt resting on your nightstand when you went to bed that night. Or your peacefully snoring husband, who you, for once, didn’t curl up next to as you drifted off to sleep.
Perfume

By the time your morning alarm went off and you groggily came to, Jimin was gone. You knew he wasn’t at work since it was a Saturday, and as you dragged yourself out of bed and to the kitchen to grab a hangover cure, you found a written note with familiar handwriting on the table.

At gym. Going to the grocery store afterward. Love you.

You sighed before you chugged down the sweet, grain-based drink. You would have liked to snuggle with him before you left for work. Not because you were a particularly cuddly person; you just needed someone to touch.

Someone who wasn’t Min Yoongi.

If it were five years ago, you would have woken before the alarm and headed off to work before you could finish the hangover cure. You would have eagerly anticipated another unpredictable day at the office and you would have been more than excited at the prospect of a new murder case.

However, as the familiar sensation of the energizing beverage filled your veins, you shuffled back to bed. Although you couldn’t really fall asleep due to the energy boost, you didn’t want to leave the comfort of your bedroom. You had no desire to get refreshed and dressed and head to work only to fall asleep at the desk instead and find out later during the day that the CSI possessed conclusive evidence that the hanged woman indeed was a suicide. You could find that out from home.

Also, you didn’t want to see Yoongi again.

You hadn’t had a choice in the matter the day before, but now that you had the freedom to choose, you’d rather just lie and call in sick so that the HR-department wouldn’t bother you. In retrospect, you couldn’t believe what had happened. Why was Min Yoongi in safe and secure Sangdo? Of all the cities he could have been relocated to, why Sangdo?

And why had it sounded like he admitted to not being able to forget you?

You shook your head clear from thoughts. If it was one thing you were sure of after all your years of drinking, it was that you couldn’t trust your senses while intoxicated. You couldn’t trust that you had heard what you heard or felt the strange tension inside the car. Yoongi didn’t care for you. And if you were to judge his actions eleven years ago, he never had. You knew that. You understood that.

Yet, why the fuck did you still think about him?

You got out of bed again. Desperate to flee your thoughts and the hollow ache in both your chest and further south, you began cleaning the house. It wasn’t something you did often, if ever, since Jimin usually took care of all the household chores. But you needed to do something with your hands before you went crazy.

Before you realized just how badly you wanted Min Yoongi.

The apartment was relatively easy to clean. You went through every corner and nook within two hours, then decided to deal with laundry. There wasn’t much to wash other than the shirts Jimin had worn to work that week, but since you wanted to iron his shirts and your blouses at the same time if you still couldn’t get your mind out of the gutter by the next day, you went for it anyway.

That’s when you noticed it.
It was faint, very faint, but the otherwise odorless environment of the bathroom made it easy to detect. You brought one of Jimin’s shirts up to your nose and sniffed the fabric twice.

Vanilla. Vanilla and something of a floral nature.

You didn’t recognize it.

Before you could do anything, before you could even frown or begin to form a more cohesive thought, you heard the front door open. With a jolt, you shoved Jimin’s shirt into the mouth of the washing machine and slammed the tiny door shut.

“Honey? Is that you?”

You checked yourself in the bathroom mirror, just to make sure you could muster a normal expression, then darted out of the bathroom. You nearly ran into Jimin in the hallway outside, who managed to halt just in time. On one hand, a plastic bag filled with groceries dangled, and from the other, a plastic bag bulging with the familiar shape of your hangover cure drooped. His black hair was a bit damp, and the strong, masculine scent of his shower gel surrounded him.

Jimin smiled at you before he placed a quick kiss on your cheek. “Good morning,” he said cheerfully.

“It’s lunchtime,” you said immediately.

He laughed as he walked past you toward the kitchen. “You’re right. What do you want to eat? I’ll make you anything you want.”

There wasn’t anything wrong with what he said. In fact, it was exactly what you imagined most wives and girlfriends and, well, really anyone in a relationship would like to hear from their significant other every weekday morning. And Jimin wasn’t being sarcastic or laying out the first bricks of a cheap joke where he ultimately parried your response. No, he meant every word he said. He always put you first when he could.

But as endearing as it might be sometimes, you were beyond tired of it.

Because you didn’t want to be first. Not all the time. Not when you were so desperate for sexual pleasure that you couldn’t fall asleep before getting off. Not when your biggest turn-on was having someone else in complete control.

But how could you demand that of someone as meek and caring and soft as Jimin?

“I’ll get something at work,” you said as you leaned against the hallway wall.

Jimin lifted the bags onto the kitchen counter. “You sure?”

“Yeah.”

Jimin stopped suddenly, then looked around briefly, a look of confusion on his face. However, when his kind dark eyes returned to you, they beamed with fondness.

“You’ve cleaned the house,” he said. “And do I hear the washing machine going?”

You didn’t respond immediately, which caused Jimin to furrow his brows.

“Honey?” he asked. “Is everything alright?”
The fragrance. Of vanilla and some kind of flower. You hadn’t imagined it.

“Yeah…” You swallowed. “I just remembered I have a meeting to get to.”

Jimin brightened instantly. “Ah, okay.”

You mustered a smile, then started toward your bedroom. You didn’t really have a meeting to attend, but you were about to arrange one. You needed someone to talk to. Someone who knew more than you about guys and what they might do if they were cheating. And though you didn’t have any friends in Sangdo, you knew there were at least two people you could be a bit more personal with.

Jungkook and Taehyung. But since you didn’t want the two of them to talk, albeit probably - hopefully - in concern, behind your back, who were you supposed to choose?

While getting ready, you considered who might be the best option. Truth be told, you’d rather hold a conversation of a sensitive nature with Jungkook, who had a softer disposition than his hyung. But at the same time, you didn’t want to burden him with your relationship issues. He wasn’t a kid, or even that young really, but you couldn’t help but feel more protective of him than Taehyung.

Also, you wanted the insight of someone who could be a cheater. Someone who could understand and predict a cheating man’s mentality. Of the two guys, you honestly had a much easier time imagining Taehyung as a cheating asshole than Jungkook, who always seemed so dedicated to his girlfriends. And Taehyung had been single - but probably not completely unoccupied - ever since he arrived at the department. He had a great body, a scandalous sense of humor and he was undoubtedly good-looking. If anyone fit the cheater mold, it was him.

Besides, this would be a golden opportunity to pay him back the date you owed him.

Jimin was preparing lunch when you headed out. After a hasty goodbye involving nothing more than a fleeting and strained smile, you exited the apartment and called Taehyung. He answered before the elevator hit the ground floor and agreed to meet you at a Korean restaurant near headquarters within the next thirty minutes.

“You know, when you promised me a date as a reward for beating the old chief in armwrestling, I never expected it to turn out like this.”

You looked up from your bowl of steaming hot ox-blood soup just as Taehyung glided into the seat in front of you. “What do you mean?” you asked innocently.

Taehyung took off his jacket and draped it over the back of his chair. “Oh, nothing. I’ve just never been on a date at a hangover soup restaurant.”

“You should have known better when I texted you the address,” you said dryly. “Besides, did you seriously think I would agree to a real, romantic date with you?”

You could have imagined it, but for half a breath, a flash of genuine pain crossed Taehyung’s handsome features. But then, in the blink of an eye, it was gone, replaced instead by a playful grin.

“I guess I should have been more precise with the details,” he said.

“You should have known better when I texted you the address,” you said dryly. “Besides, did you seriously think I would agree to a real, romantic date with you?”

You could have imagined it, but for half a breath, a flash of genuine pain crossed Taehyung’s handsome features. But then, in the blink of an eye, it was gone, replaced instead by a playful grin.

“I guess I should have been more precise with the details,” he said.

“Or just not let me decide.”

His grin broadened. “Or that. But tell me now, aunty: why did you wanna meet up all of a sudden?”

“Couldn’t I just have called you because I had a debt to pay?” you grunted.
Taehyung regarded you closely with his intense brown eyes before shaking his head. “No, that’s not how you work. It’s obvious you have something on your mind.”

You stared down at your soup, a bit embarrassed by the transparency of your motives. “Alright,” you said as you stirred it around. “You got me. I have something I’d like to ask you.”

“Yeah?”

“It’s kinda sensitive.”

Taehyung’s tone adapted a playful tone. “Meaning?”

“Meaning, if you talk to anyone about it, I’ll make you read cold cases out loud for me for the rest of your life.”

“Whoa, you mean I can’t even tell Jungkook?”

“You especially cannot tell Jungkook,” you replied sternly as you looked up from your bowl. “That kid doesn’t need to hear about distrusting partners.”

The smile on Taehyung’s face melted away instantly as understanding illuminated his intense brown eyes. “Are you saying what I think you’re saying? Do you think Jimin is--”

“No,” you interrupted, holding up a hand. “I'm not saying anything. I'm just wondering what you would think if you were a woman and you smelled perfume or something on your husband’s clothes.”

Taehyung’s eyes widened. “What the hell?”

“Just answer the question, Taehyung.”

“I mean…” He paused as an older woman arrived with rice and a bowl of steaming hot soup for him too, continuing only after she had disappeared out of view. “It depends on what you mean by clothes. Did you smell the perfume on his underwear?”

You glared at him while chewing your food. “Are you intentionally trying to provoke me?” you asked sharply after you had swallowed.

“I'm serious,” he said quickly. Not even a hint of humor colored his tone. “What garment did you smell the perfume on? And what kind of fragrance was it?”

“Vanilla,” you said with a hundred percent certainty. “And something floral. I smelled it on one of the shirts he wore to work this week.”

Taehyung poked around his soup with his chopsticks. “Well, that's better than his underwear.”

“You think I'd be asking you for advice if that were the case?”

He shrugged. “I dunno. Got any other signs that he might be cheating on you?”

“Well…”

Taehyung raised a brow at you when you wouldn't finish your sentence and instead just continued eating your ox-blood soup. “Well, what?”

You swallowed another spoon of soup and rice. "He's always tired and he’s been working extra as
of late. We've also pretty much completely stopped having sex.”

“You don't want to, or…?”

You sighed and rested your head in the palm of your left hand. “No, it's him. He doesn't want it.”

“Like, nothing at all?”

You nodded as you, with some embarrassment, remembered the day before yesterday when you offered to go down on him. “Absolutely nothing.”

“Well,” began Taehyung’s slowly, “although there are some warning signs, I can't tell if he's cheating or not for sure. But I can tell he's got a loose screw or two. I mean, if I were lucky enough to be your husband, I'd--”

“Not interested,” you interjected. “So you think there's a possibility he’s got someone on the side?”

“Yup.” Taehyung blew on a spoonful of his soup. “And it's probably someone a lot younger than you. Maybe even a guy.”

You felt all the color drain from your face. “‘A guy’?” you echoed.

“Hey, I meant no offense to you. Jimin just feels like he’d swing that way.”

You shook your head. Anything but a guy. You’d much rather find out Jimin had been cheating on you with a girl, ten girls, than to find out he never even was attracted to you. That you had never even had a chance with him. That he had just used you.

Just like Min Yoongi had eleven years ago.

“Check his phone and computer and his other clothes. If he’s really cheating on you, you will find proof of it somewhere. And if you want some professional help, I know a few chicks at the tech department—”

“You will not fucking share this to anyone,” you snapped as you glared at him. “Not to Jungkook and definitely not to some random girls in another department. Nobody. Alright? Not unless you really want to read cold cases out loud for the rest of your life.”

Taehyung held up his hands in resignation. “Hey, hey, I get it. My lips are sealed.”

“They’d better,” you grunted and resumed eating.

Taehyung momentarily seemed a bit taken aback by your harsh response, but he was quick to recover. He launched gleefully into a conversation about what had happened after Yoongi drove you home the day before, and was soon drawing unwanted attention from everyone in the restaurant due to his loud voice and laughter. However, you didn’t really care about the volume of the conversation, even though you ought to since you were his sunbae.

You were too worried about the perfume - and the prospect of a secret lover.

You put down your spoon. You couldn’t eat. Not when it felt like you were going to throw up what little you had managed to ingest.

“Done already?”

You nodded stiffly. “Want the rest?”
“Nah. I’ve gotta watch my shape.”

You gave him a dry look, then rose from the table.

Taehyung’s eyes widened, spoon brought halfway up to his mouth. “Hey, where are you going?” he asked.

“HQ,” you said. “Didn’t have time to call the CSI department yesterday due to the chief and his random ideas. Gotta know what they’ve found out from the hanged woman.”

He frowned slightly. “I thought things were clear enough from what we found at the scene. Unless you think the couple or the clerk was lying.”

“No,” you said slowly. “I don’t think they were lying. And I know it’s probably just another suicide, but I don’t exactly have anything better to do.”

“Jimin’s at home, huh.”

You pulled out a few bills from your wallet. “Here,” you said instead of answering. “Get to the office when you’re done.”

“You know I don’t work extra,” he said lazily. “There’s no need for it.”

“Until I get the final decisive call from the CSIs, you’re staying at the office with me.”

Taehyung raised his eyebrows at you, but when your face remained stony, he let out a sigh. “Fine,” he said as he glanced at his soup. “I’ll be there in ten.”

“Five.”

“Eight.”

You narrowed your eyes. “Seven.”

Taehyung studied your face for a while before his face broke into a wide grin. “Alright, alright,” he said, waving you off. “See you in seven.”

You left the restaurant without responding.

By the time you reached Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters and rode the elevator to the homicide floor, you expected to find the office space abandoned. Just as abandoned as it had been for the last five years. Just as abandoned as you always expected it to be. And for once, you wouldn’t have minded it. You wouldn’t have minded sitting or sleeping in your cubicle doing absolutely nothing. You wouldn’t have minded wasting another day of your life in a city you hated. Anything to just get your mind off Jimin and the smell of vanilla and something floral.

And as you entered through the double glass doors, the department really appeared deserted. You relaxed by your desk and contacted the CSI unit downstairs, who, surprisingly, told you they, as of yet, had found no evidence that suggested the hanged woman was anything but a suicide case. Although you had considered calling Jungkook to the department, too, you decided to let it be since you doubted the hanged woman would lead anywhere.

The day would be uneventful. Or so you thought.

“Where’s my dream woman?”
Taehyung’s playful tone broke the peaceful silence at the office. You let out a heavy sigh before you cleared your throat. “Don’t call me that!”

“You sound irritated. Did I wake you from your beauty sleep?”

You glared at Taehyung when he entered your view from where you sat in your cubicle. “You’re late,” you told him as you checked your phone. “What did you do? Get lost on your way over?”

“That’s mean,” he said with a laughter. “Even for you.”

You aimed your focus back at your monitor. “Well?”

“Got you some flowers.”

You were ready to sigh and come with another retort when your vision all of a sudden was blocked by a bundle of stiff roses in an unnaturally metallic red. It took you a beat before you realized they were fake. And not only fake, they were--

“Chocolate roses?” You raised your brows at him. “Really? How old are you?”

Taehyung placed the bundle carefully on your desk. “Well, I wanted to get you something nice and romantic, but I don’t get why women like roses so much. Especially real ones. At least you can eat and enjoy these.”

“You really need help on how to date women,” you muttered underneath your breath.

“Hmm?”

“No, nothing.”

Taehyung grinned and leaned against the edge of your desk. “Nothing? Not even a thanks? Or a ‘Taehyung, you’re my favorite hoobae’ or a ‘Taehyung, you’re unbelievably handsome and caring. I think I’d like another date with you’.”

You snorted. “I’d pick Jungkook over you every time.”

“Really?”

You glanced at the roses. “Definitely.”

Taehyung moved closer, his voice adopting a lower, more suggestive volume. “Is that why you wanted me to beat the chief in armwrestling yesterday? Why you told him I was stronger than Jungkook?”

“That had nothing to do with who I like the most,” you said. “I just didn’t want to let the old bear go without tasting defeat.”

Taehyung leaned down until your faces were mere inches apart. “Oh, really?” he asked softly, his intense brown eyes glittering with dark amusement. “So you’re telling me you feel absolutely nothing for me? That little Jungkookie has a better chance with you?”

You stared him dead in the eye. “Pretty much.”

“Wanna bet on it?”

You furrowed your brows. “Maybe,” you said hesitantly. “What kind of bet are we talking about?”
Taehyung drew even closer and placed a hand on each side of your swivel chair. “It’s easy,” he began. “Give me one hour with you.”

Your heart started beating faster but you kept your composure. “One hour to do what?”

He grinned. “I think you know what I mean.”

“I’m hoping I don’t,” you replied.

“Oh, come on.” Taehyung straightened and peered down at you with a sympathetic frown void of any flirtatious undertones. “If Jimin’s cheating, why can’t you?”

“I thought you said you couldn’t tell if he’s cheating or not!” you said angrily.

“I can’t,” he admitted quickly. “But, I mean, the perfume says enough, doesn’t it? So what’s the harm?”

You rubbed your forehead with a sigh. “Would you seriously be fine with that?” you wondered. “Let’s say I agree to your moronic bet and that Jimin’s cheating on me: would you seriously be fine wasting your time on a married woman?”

“I wouldn’t be wasting my time. Not with you.”

You hesitated, then went for it. “Not even if I were to tell you you’re good enough to get anyone in the entire world?”

Taehyung’s intense brown eyes softened. “Not even then.”

You pursed your lips. You knew you were treading on dangerous ground - and had been for a while now - but you hadn’t been able to stop yourself. As much as Taehyung annoyed you, he had been a good co-worker and friend for two years. And he was attractive. Very attractive.

But, and perhaps most importantly, he wanted you. He had wanted you for a while and that was more than you could say about Jimin, who was supposed to be your husband.

Jimin, who might have been cheating on you for who knows how long.

You opened your mouth to answer when a third voice entered the conversation. A voice that belonged to a person you really should have expected to find working on a Saturday.

Min Yoongi.

“Detective Sergeant (Y/N). And Detective Constable Taehyung.”

Wearing a dark suit and tie, Yoongi’s sharp, emotionless voice pierced the atmosphere like a needle. You just barely managed to catch yourself before you could swear out loud. Because of course. Of fucking course, he had to be there. You didn’t know if he had seen you and Taehyung enter the office and simply decided to ignore you or if he had missed you somehow while being at the archives or in one of the vacant office rooms. Whichever the case, one fact was crystal clear: he had heard some amount of the conversation. You didn’t know how much, but even if he hadn’t heard more than the tail end of the conversation, it was bad. Horribly bad.

Because you didn’t want him to think your marriage, in truth, was pretty unstable. You didn’t want him to think you were unsatisfied and that Jimin was the most boring man you had ever been with. You didn’t want him to think that you weren’t fully capable of loving a new, a better man than him.
You didn’t want him to think another person wasn’t capable of loving you better. Of loving you the way you deserved. Of loving you and treating you much better than he ever had.

You didn’t want him to think any of that. Especially after the way things had ended the night before.

“I Inspector!” blurted Taehyung as he spun around and bowed deeply. “I-I didn’t know you were in.”

“I didn’t know either,” you managed, somehow maintaining a neutral tone.

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes scrutinized both of you briefly. “I was getting acquainted with the archives,” he said in that cool, emotionless way of his. “Where’s Detective Constable Jungkook?”

“At home,” you replied, sensing Taehyung’s nervousness and unwillingness to speak.

Yoongi arched his right brow slightly. “Why?”

“The department hardly needs more personnel than one or two detectives,” you said matter-of-factly. “There’s honestly nothing to do.”

“What about the hanged woman?” asked Yoongi.

“You probably already know what’s going on,” you said stiffly. “You probably knew before any of us.”

Yoongi’s dark eyes narrowed. He didn’t immediately correct you, however, which almost made you chuckle. You had been right. Oh, how you knew him.

Oh, how you wished you fucking didn’t.

Yoongi abruptly turned around and started away. You were just about to release a breath of relief when your blood turned into ice.

“Sergeant, follow me to my office.”

He spoke calmly, but that only made your heart beat so much faster.

Taehyung gave you a significant look, but neither you nor him said anything as you quietly got to your feet and shuffled out of your cubicle. You spotted Yoongi waiting outside one of the individual office rooms with his back turned against you, yet, somehow, he seemed to know he could head inside without risk of losing you.

His confidence annoyed you. Almost as much as it annoyed you when he wordlessly gestured for you to sit in the chair in front of his desk. You felt like you were seventeen again, or maybe even sixteen or fifteen, and that you had been called in for an “important” meeting with the school councilor. Or your homeroom teacher. Or the principal. You had gone through it all.

But you obeyed, nevertheless - just as you had when you were a teenager.

You heard the door shut and only barely resisted the urge to pout as Yoongi slowly walked to the chair on the other side of the desk. He sat down, still without speaking, and regarded his monitor briefly before he aimed his cold, piercing dark eyes at you.

“Are you aware of all the department rules and policies?”

You frowned. A question about office regulations was the last thing you had had in mind for being called into a private - and very tense - meeting with your new boss. But it strengthened the
impression you got from the meeting as well as Yoongi.

The impression that he was trying to either put you in place or showcase his authority - or even both.

“Yeah,” you said. “Of course.”

Yoongi crossed his legs, his attention never straying even an inch away from your face. “Really?” he said dryly. “Then why are you flirting with the constable?”

Your eyes widened. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“I haven’t gotten a good sense of the dynamics of this unit,” began Yoongi. “But it’s obvious how much the young constables look up to you. Constable Taehyung more so.”

“And?” you asked, unable to believe what he was suggesting.

Yoongi interwove his fingers over his knee. “I don’t know how Chief Inspector Seokjin handled things, but I don’t want any job romances. In fact, I don’t want anything even remotely close to job romances. Especially not between you and one of the constables. It’s not appropriate. Am I being clear?”

You opened your mouth, but closed it just as fast. You dug your nails into the palms of your hands, reigning in your frustration and pride for a silent - and very difficult - moment before you cleared your throat and finally responded.

“Taehyung and I are just friends,” you said calmly. “He’s a bit of a flirt, but you shouldn’t take him seriously. I know I don’t.”

For a second, you almost thought you saw something akin to relief in Yoongi’s dark eyes. If it was relief over the fact that he wouldn’t have to deal with an office romance or something else, you didn’t know. But you did know his answer pissed you off to no end.

“Am I being clear?”

You clenched your jaw. “Crystal.”

“Inspector.”

You looked at him in bemusement, which caused his face to harden.

“Inspector,” he repeated in a cold, unwavering tone. “You will address me properly, sergeant. Is that understood?”

Cold claws ran down your back. But it wasn’t an altogether unpleasant feeling. No, it was the contrary, actually. The number of times Yoongi had commanded you in that exact same, demanding manner eleven years ago… you couldn’t count that high.

You also couldn’t count the amount of times he’d made you bend over a desk in order to fuck you until you couldn’t even stand anymore, but that was unrelated. Or well, perhaps not.

You shifted uncomfortably in your seat. Just thinking about sex in general was usually enough of a turn-on, but reminiscing about the best lay you had ever had almost made you blush. Especially since he sat just a meter away from you.

Especially when he looked at you with his cold, piercing dark eyes, just waiting for you to reluctantly give in to his unwavering demands. Just waiting for you to bend and swallow your pride
and do whatever he wanted you to do no.

Just waiting for you to give in.

Of course, you were just imagining it all. After all, you hated him so much you only barely managed to keep the venom out of your voice. And you hated him even more for making you want him so much you physically felt it. In your abdomen - and further below.

“Understood,” you said finally, your throat feeling parched despite the few words you had spoken. “You won’t have to worry about anything… inspector.”

You couldn’t tell if Yoongi was satisfied or not. His stony guise hadn’t changed in the least since the beginning of the conversation and you doubted it would change anytime soon. If it would change ever.

“Good. You may--”

Brr. Brr.

Yoongi took out his phone from the inner chest pocket of his blazer and lifted it to his ear. “Inspector Min Yoongi from the homicide department,” he said.

You hesitated, but when he silently nodded in the direction of the door, you simply nodded in return and got up from the chair. Relief rushed through your body, and you were desperate to get to the toilet and wash your face with cold water. However, you didn’t get very far.

“Sergeant.”

You had just placed your hand on the door handle when Yoongi’s voice stopped you. “What is it?” you asked as you peered over your shoulder.

Yoongi rose from his chair. “You need to take me to the medical examiner’s office. They’ve discovered something odd about the hanged woman.”

“What do you mean ‘odd’?” you wondered.

“Her ears have been removed. Cut off, presumably.”

Your eyes widened. “You’re fucking kidding.”

For the first time in eleven years, you saw Yoongi smirk. It was a sight that made your heart ache - for better or for worse.

“You’d better call the other young constable,” he said. “We’ve officially got a murder case to solve.”
Discoveries

The twenty-five-minute drive to Sangdo Forensic Science and Medical Center was... *uncomfortable* to say the least. You, Yoongi and Taehyung didn’t share a word among one another as you drove to pick up Jungkook at his apartment, and Jungkook seemed to sense the tense atmosphere in the car immediately as he got seated next to Taehyung in the back. You caught them exchanging significant looks with each other before Taehyung’s attention drifted to the rearview mirror where he found your gaze. He gave you a strained smile, to which you would have liked to respond with one of your own.

But even though Min Yoongi didn’t look at you even once during the whole journey, you couldn’t help but feel his attention fixed upon you like predator upon prey.

Several students, probably from Sangdo Metropolitan University Hospital nearby, passed through the hallways of the building, all the way up to the Office of Forensic Death Investigation on the fourth floor. The females were, unsurprisingly, drawn by Taehyung’s good looks and physique, which he very much seemed to enjoy.

Yoongi, much less so.

You didn’t have to brag about a past relationship to notice his cold, piercing eyes burrow into the back of Taehyung’s head more than once during the walk to the right department. It made you tense up, especially since you knew - or at least used to know - Yoongi so well.

He did not like attractive guys. And Taehyung was pretty much the most attractive guy you, and probably a lot of other people, had seen.

With an internal sigh, you made a mental note to warn Taehyung later about your new boss’ prejudice. Outwardly, you mustered a polite smile as all four of you finally reached your destination.

The Office of Forensic Death Investigation was underwhelming. Almost as underwhelming as Sangdo Special Investigations’ Department of Homicide. And judging by the slight flexing of Yoongi’s jaw, he seemed just as disappointed at the sight of the empty rooms, dated interior and the many old but pristine autopsy tables that bordered the corridor walls as he had been by the dreary state of your office. His expression remained that way even as all of you reached the main examination room, which, actually, wasn’t that bad.

Jungkook, on the other hand, seemed spellbound.

You abruptly paused before the double metal doors and turned around fully. Yoongi halted by your side, his cold, piercing eyes meeting yours without a shred of neither confusion nor curiosity. He simply was. Taehyung and Jungkook, however, both lifted their brows in mild surprise.

“Jungkook,” you began with a grimace. “Have you seen the body?”

He paled and immediately glanced at Taehyung, who shook his head. Jungkook soaked his lips, then shook his head as well.

“Not really,” he said, almost guiltily. “I… I went to see her-- it together with Taehyung, but when I reached room 503, I just couldn’t. The smell was bad enough.”

You placed a hand on Jungkook’s shoulder and squeezed it gently. However, just as you were about to respond, Yoongi’s sharp, emotionless tone penetrated the air.
“That is unacceptable behavior, constable. You and I will discuss a suitable disciplinary procedure later when we return to HQ.”

You frowned. “Wait, no, what--”

“Understood?”

Jungkook looked frightened, but he quickly gathered his features and bowed stiffly. “Yes, sir.”

And with that, Yoongi pushed open the metal doors and entered the examination room. Taehyung balled his hands into fists, an angry frown tugging at his handsome features. He opened his mouth and started after Yoongi, but before he could say or do anything, you and Jungkook both stopped him by grabbing his arms.

“Oh, no,” you said sternly. “Don’t even think about it.”

“It’s fine, hyung,” murmured Jungkook. “He’s right, I shouldn’t have chickened out. I deserve a punishment.”

Taehyung glared after Yoongi until the doors closed after him. Only then would he let out a sigh, his whole posture relaxing.

“What a huge fucking dick,” he grunted.

Shamefully and remorsefully enough, you couldn’t have agreed more.

The head examination room was large enough for three autopsy tables to fit with enough space around each of them for shelves, sinks, medical cabinets and people. Yoongi conversed quietly with a woman in a lab coat and graying ponytail by the autopsy table closest to the door. A white fabric covered the autopsy table, clearly revealing the silhouette of a body underneath, but Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes never left the woman’s face while he fervently scribbled notes in a small, black notebook. Not even as you, Taehyung and Jungkook approached.

“What did we miss?” you asked in a neutral tone, hoping neither Taehyung nor Yoongi would continue where the previous conversation had been cut off.

The woman exhaled through her nose and gave you, Taehyung and Jungkook a weary look over her shoulder. Her face carried more wrinkles than you had expected, but her small eyes were wide-awake and attentive behind the transparency of her glasses. She scrutinized you briefly, then returned her attention to Yoongi and craned a thumb toward you.

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Young-Hee sighed again before she glanced down at her clipboard. “Ju Si-Yeon. Twenty-five years old, legally and biologically female. ETD is anywhere between 9 pm and midnight last Sunday. Cause of death: asphyxiation by ligature strangulation, though not by hanging.”

You took out your notepad and a pen and began writing down everything she said. Thus far, you acknowledged the fact that the body really had remained undiscovered for five whole days, which bemused you. But not as much as when Young-Hee drew back the white sheet from the autopsy table, revealing the slim but bloated naked figure of Ju Si-Yeon.

The victim of the first murderer you had encountered since moving to Sangdo five years ago.

It was completely silent as Young-Hee dropped the clipboard inside the huge pocket of her lab coat, pulled on a pair of medical gloves and stepped closer to the body. Ju Si-Yeon’s long, black hair had been gathered into a tight bun on the crown of her head, and in the corner of your eye, you saw all the color drain from Jungkook’s face as Young-Hee pointed at a tiny hole on the side of Ju Si-Yeon’s head. A tiny hole surrounded by yellow fatty tissue and exposed muscle.

A tiny hole where an ear should have been.

“Both ears have been removed.” Young-Hee grasped Ju Si-Yeon’s face carefully and slowly turned her head to show the other side. “The cuts are not very precise, but they were done with enough force to completely remove the ear and all its combining tissue. Our perpetrator most likely used a knife, though of which nature, I cannot precisely tell.”

You would have liked to say something reassuring to Jungkook, but since you didn’t want to give Yoongi more reason or material to administer disciplinary measures, you kept your attention at the corpse and Young-Hee.

“Did the cuts occur post-mortem?” you asked.

“Yes,” she replied, then released her hold of Ju Si-Yeon’s face to instead gesture at the many tiny red and purplish spots in the area around her closed eyes and nose. “As you can see, there’s petechial hemorrhaging around her eyes, nose, inside and outside her mouth and across her scalp. There are no bruises anywhere on her body, but the tongue and lips are heavily swollen even for a five-day bloated body.”

“Petech… petechial-what?” you heard Taehyung whisper behind you.


Young-Hee ignored them as she moved down to Ju Si-Yeon’s neck, which was marked with a big, red line. “There are rope burns and the hyoid bone has been fractured, both of which are also clearly indicative of strangulation. And since there are no bruises or fingerprints, it’s safe to assume she died from the rope, though not by hanging.”

Your eyes narrowed. “So, she might have been killed somewhere else?”

Young-Hee snorted. “Maybe. Or she might have been strangled in the hotel room and strung-up afterward.”

You clenched your jaws. For once, you missed the impact of your fame from your younger days, because Young-Hee showed you as little respect as she did Jungkook and Taehyung, two rookies. Or perhaps she did recognize you and simply didn’t care.

You didn’t know what circumstance annoyed you the most.
“Anyone can tell that she’s been strangled to death. Get to the details.”

You glanced at Yoongi in surprise. He had silently regarded Ju Si-Yeon’s body while Young-Hee updated you, Taehyung and Jungkook on the details, and though his face gave away nothing, the fully scribbled page of his notebook spoke volumes of his thoughts. You didn’t manage to steal more than a quick peek at the page, however, before he angled himself away from you.

It was too late, though. You had already seen his handwriting and it was just as same and familiar as the rest of him.

It fucking hurt. And suddenly, you regretted stopping Taehyung earlier.

Young-Hee picked up her clipboard and browsed through the pages on it. “When we investigated the contents of her GI tract, we found methylcellulose in her colon. And while it might a bit difficult to explain as to why a compound often used industrially as artificial thickener was there, it’s not impossible to believe the victim used methylcellulose for, albeit somewhat unconventional, dietary reasons. It is fully edible, and aids bowel movement.”

“However,” she continued as she turned over a page. “We also found traces of a mixture consisting of methylcellulose, H2O, fructose and sodium chloride on her face, hands, breasts, abdomen and external genitalia. We found more of the mixture inside her mouth, GI tract and inside her genitalia as well, which is why I doubt she consumed it due to constipation.”

“H2O?” muttered Taehyung behind you. “Fructose? And what was the last thing?”


You heard a snap of someone’s fingers, followed by Taehyung’s triumphant tone. “Oh, yeah!”

“Hush,” you said over your shoulder, then aimed a solemn gaze at Young-Hee. “Does the body show signs of sexual trauma?”

Young-Hee sent a glare in the direction of Jungkook and Taehyung, but didn’t confront them as she turned another page. “Impossible to say,” she said after a quick skim. “But it’s fully possible the victim was a porn actress or a sex worker of a similar kind. Methylcellulose adopts a glue-like consistency in combination with H2O, and appears very similar to male ejaculation - something the porn industry takes full advantage of.”

“Or she might have just used the mixture privately,” you said before you could think.

Judging by the curt nod from Young-Hee and the continued attentive silence from Jungkook and Taehyung, the three of them probably didn’t even think twice about what you said. However, there was one person in the room who definitely did. Unfortunately, it wasn’t the dead woman.

No, as fucked-up as it was, you frankly wished it had been. For if that were the case, you wouldn’t have had to see the look in Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes.

A look of empty public bathrooms, limited car space and low-lit bars where nothing cost more than a few thousand won. A look of sore jaws, burning scalps and days on end where you couldn’t sit or stand due to various reasons, all of which involved some sort of punishment or reward.

A look that practically dripped of past pleasure - and pain.

But then you blinked and it was all gone. Nothing but the cold, piercing nature of Min Yoongi’s agonizingly familiar eyes remained. And you realized, to your horror, that it must have been a wistful
reflection.

For you knew you meant nothing to him - and never had.

Yoongi turned his gaze toward Young-Hee. “Anything else?”

She shook her head. “No, inspector.”

You snorted. The chief medical examiner barely deigned to look at you, Taehyung and Jungkook, but she called Yoongi “inspector” effortlessly.

“Send over the full autopsy report immediately, together with individual reports of each piece of forensic evidence the CSI uncovered.”

“Individual reports?” echoed Young-Hee, the corners of her mouth moving downward.

“Did I stutter?”

“No,” she blurted, her aged face warming like an embarrassed newcomer fresh out of university. “Of course not, inspector.”

Without a word or another glance, Yoongi put his notebook in the chest pocket of his coat, then strode out of the examination room. You took that as your cue to leave as well and waved Jungkook and Taehyung after you. All three of you managed to catch up to Yoongi by the elevators.

“What are we doing next?” you asked, admittedly unsure. You remembered how things had been in Daegu, but you didn’t want to somehow provoke Yoongi. Not because you were afraid of what he might say but because you didn’t want Taehyung and Jungkook to get caught in the crossfire.

For it was getting increasingly hard to resist telling Yoongi what you really thought of him - and what you really wanted to do with him.

“Nothing.”

Your eyebrows rose. “Nothing?”

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes locked with yours. “I don’t know if it’s some kind of bad habit or if everyone in Sangdo is half-deaf. Tell me, what makes you so incapable of listening the first time I say something?”

While Jungkook stopped breathing by your side, you felt Taehyung tense from head to toe. Again, in consideration of your hoobaes, you managed to swallow down your initial response, which ran along the lines of comparing Yoongi’s sour mood to rotting fruit.

“I apologize,” you said and lowered your head quickly. “I didn’t mean to insult you, inspector. I was just surprised. Why are we doing nothing?”

You hated bowing in general, but it was even worse with Yoongi. For there was neither arrogance nor humility in his gaze.

There was only frigid acceptance.

“Your evidence department is atrocious,” he said dryly as he aimed his focus at the closed elevator doors. “When I called to demand the crime scene report, they told me they hadn’t even started it. And when I asked them to print out every picture from the scene, they asked me why. Why? What kind of imbeciles operate here?”
The elevator doors opened suddenly. Yoongi stepped inside, and you, Jungkook and Taehyung followed in awkward silence.

“So, we can go home?” you asked gingerly.

“Yes,” replied Yoongi. “But I want all three of you in the department at 7 am tomorrow. You should have familiarized yourselves with the autopsy file by then.”

If it were anyone else, you could have bet your entire paycheck that Jungkook and Taehyung would have groaned and tried haggling up the hour to 8 or even 9 am. But the atmosphere was completely different around Yoongi. It was as if though he had an invisible aura that dampened--no, debilitated the spirits of everyone around him. And worse, he seemed to know it.

And, again, not give a damn shit.

You checked your phone. It was mid-afternoon and a Saturday. Since that meant Jimin would be back at the apartment, you could just go home and try to actively do something to improve your marriage. Instead of being suspicious, discussing scenarios with and being tempted by Taehyung, you might try to talk things out with Jimin and admit your jealousy. Have a mature, grown-up conversation about your relationship and how the lack of intimacy made you so horny you had to struggle to not think about Min Yoongi in very inappropriate ways.

Inappropriate not only because you were married, but inappropriate because you didn’t want to care about the fact that you were married.

You just wanted him to fuck you. And you hated him even more for it.

“(Y/N), you up for samgyeopsal and soju?”

The four of you had returned to Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters. Yoongi had stepped out of the car almost before you parked it in the small parking area outside the large building. After ordering Jungkook to follow him, he had disappeared into the building without a goodbye, which left it to you and Taehyung in the parking lot.

“No,” you said as you leaned against the side of the car. Your purse was still at your desk, but you needed to be outside for a minute.

You needed to get Min Yoongi out of your head.

“Alright, we’ll leave as soon as--wait, what? You’re not up for samgyeopsal and soju?”

You let out a tired sigh as you glanced at Taehyung. He sat on the hood of the car with his arms crossed over his chest, and his intense brown eyes were wide with surprise as they met yours.

“No,” you said wearily. “I’m going straight home.”

Taehyung furrowed his brows. “(Y/N)... about Jimin, you--”

“Not another word,” you snarled, unable to hold back some of the anger that had been building within your system over the course of the day. “I told you not to speak about it, didn’t I?”

He frowned painfully and got to his feet. Slowly, he approached you.

“(Y/N),” he began, his arms spreading to his sides as if he were about to hug you.

You dodged past him and charged toward the entrance doors. “I’m leaving!” you called over your
shoulder in what you hoped was a normal tone. “Have fun with Jungkook! Now that you’re just guys, go to a bar or club or something and have him get you a girl!”

There was no response. Or well, there might have been. You were inside the building before your ears were able to catch anything, however, and Taehyung didn’t follow you. Perhaps he realized there was something more to your bad mood than sheer exhaustion or a hangover or concern over your marriage.

Jimin wasn’t home. It surprised you since you had expected him to be holed up in the small second bedroom-turned-study. You didn’t find a note on the dinner table either, or a missed call or text on your phone, which even made you worried. Jimin was probably just at the grocery store again, getting an ingredient he must have forgotten, or perhaps he was at school to print out some test.

In lack of better things to do, you grabbed a beer and plopped down on the sofa. The alcohol and the TV-shows could only keep you so interested, however, and you soon fell asleep. Later, you roused until a pair of cold lips pressed against your forehead.

“Tired, honey?”

You rubbed your eyes and blinked rapidly as you sat up. “Where were you?” you asked instantly, unable to stop yourself.

Jimin smiled sheepishly as he held up the backpack he always carried to work. “Forgot to print out a handful of students’ essays. And since I took the car, I thought I might as well stay there and work. If I knew you were home already, I would have driven home immediately. How was work?”

“There’s been a murder,” you said.

Jimin paled. “Really?”

You nodded, once. “Yeah. Went to see the body just a few hours ago. A young woman, discoveries on her body point her in the direction of being a prostitute or pornstar. Was strangled to death with a rope even though we found her hanging. Oh, and her ears were cut off.”

Jimin’s face grew even whiter, and he almost lost his balance as he sank down on the sofa next to you. “Oh my god,” he said breathlessly, then grasped your hands tightly. “It must have been a horrible sight.”

“Not really,” you admitted. “I’ve seen worse.”

Jimin managed a small smile. “Of course. My wife is the best detective there is. You’ll catch the perpetrator in no time.”

His words warmed your heart, and you leaned closer for a kiss. However, just before you were about to touch his lips with yours, he turned his head to the side, leaving you to plant a gentle peck on his cheek.

You almost screamed.

“I’ll get to cooking as soon as I’ve taken a shower,” said Jimin and rose abruptly. “It won’t take long.”

You didn’t respond. No, you simply waited until you heard the shower turn on in the bathroom. Only then did you gain enough courage to rummage through Jimin’s backpack, which he had left on
the floor next to the sofa, for his phone. It wasn’t there.

You got to your feet and padded over to the entryway. Jimin’s jacket dangled from a coat hanger next to a mirror, and as you drew close enough to touch it, it hit you again.

Vanilla and the smell of something floral.

You found the phone. Not that it accomplished something since it was protected with Jimin’s face or a password lock you were too scared to prod. It didn’t exactly help that Jimin finished his shower while you were still holding the device. You managed to convince him that you had mistaken some noise from the TV for the ringtone of his phone, but it was entirely due to Jimin being about as gullible as a child.

A kind, sweet child that you were tricking.

Sleep escaped you that night. Partly because of your unplanned nap, but mostly because you were just too anxious. By 3 am, you couldn’t hold it in anymore.

You allowed your jealousy to rule.

Slowly, you slid out of bed. After making sure Jimin really was asleep, you snuck out of the bedroom and slipped inside his home study. You shut the door behind you and carefully began investigating.

You didn’t bother with his laptop since you were a hundred percent certain that it was password protected. You did, however, bother with each storage furniture. The two wardrobes gave away nothing but piles upon piles of paper, folders, whiteboard pens and other things related to Jimin’s job. The sole dresser was filled with out-of-season apparel and bedclothes. Nothing was out of the ordinary.

Or so you thought until you discovered two tiny boxes and a card hidden in between the linens.
Guilt Against Desire

Your heart lodged itself inside your throat, pounding so hard you could neither breathe nor swallow. A cold sensation wrapped itself around your body, and your hands were trembling as you picked up the two tiny boxes and the card and placed them on the floor mat.

Your brain whirled with thoughts. Why would Jimin hide something from you? Was he really cheating on you? Were these present for his lover?

You almost wanted to wake Jimin and confront him with the discovery right then and there, but you held back. And that was fortunate, for all your tension ran off of you like raindrops on lotus leaves when you picked up the card.

On the front, a simple red rose adorned the center of the white card with no words whatsoever. However, you soon found that the exterior was drastically different from the interior.

To the love of my life, (Y/F/N), on our anniversary day.

Familiar handwriting in fine black ink practically suffocated the pages inside. From corner to corner, Jimin had written how much he loved you and how happy and lucky he was to have married you and only you. You nearly teared up, both because of the bitter sting of remorse as well as the warmth and tender emotions the words elicited inside your chest.

Because of course. Of course, Jimin wasn’t cheating. Of course, it was just you being a complete moron who forgot her anniversary day with her husband. September 22nd almost seven years ago. The day of your umpteenth blind date to get over a certain someone and the day you met the kindest, sweetest man in the world. The man who became your husband after after a year and a half of dating.

Of course, he wasn’t cheating. Of course, he loved you.

You regarded the boxes. Or well, to call them mere “boxes” might be a bit ineloquent. Judging by the deep blue velvet exterior and the rectangular shape of the tinier one, it had to contain some piece of jewelry. And as you opened it up, you found that your observation had been correct. A delicate gold necklace with a small flower pendant rested in the black softness inside, coupled with a pair of matching earrings. It was a lot girlier than your usual style, but it was pretty and dainty and elegant, all of which were words Jimin had used in the card.

The bigger box had a more mysterious appearance with its cube-like shape and simple black packaging surrounded by thin plastic. However, as you held up the box and shook it, you felt and heard liquid move inside it. Probably the perfume Jimin’s shirt smelled of. He must have tested it in the store and gotten some of it on his clothes.

You sighed and cursed yourself. You had been so suspicious of the unfamiliar fragrance that you even went to confide in and ask Taehyung for advice. But before that, you had--no, were allowing yourself the dark luxury of constantly considering having sex with Taehyung - and now also Yoongi. You stayed out almost every night to drink with your hoobas, avoided his calls and you couldn’t remember the last time you had had a meal with Jimin. And now you were up in the early, early morning rummaging through Jimin’s private stuff - only to discover gifts he had prepared for your seventh year together.

If anyone had the right to be suspicious, it was Jimin. You were an awful partner and wife. You
couldn’t believe how big a heart he truly must have to love you so much despite your faults.

As you put everything back, you came to a decision: the least you could do for Jimin was to stop trying to push him to sex. If he didn’t want you to touch or kiss him any more intimately than he wanted to, you had to respect that and love him and stay truthful and honest regardless.

Yes, you couldn’t let yourself be tempted. Neither in body nor mind.

A little less than two hours later, you were awake and making waffles in the kitchen. It was barely past 5 am on a Sunday, but since Yoongi wanted you at headquarters by seven and Jimin was an early riser, you needed to start extra early if you wanted to surprise him with breakfast. Jimin, that is, not Yoongi. You had to stop thinking about him. But it was hard.

Especially since the smell of freshly made waffles inevitably brought your mind back a decade ago. To a time when you had been standing in an entirely different kitchen with an entirely different apron wrapped around your waist - and an entirely different person to please.

You shook your head. You seriously needed to stop letting your mind bring you astray and focus on the present, not the past. Not what could have been. Only what was.

“Jimin,” you called softly as you pushed open the bedroom door with your foot. You balanced a heavy tray of hot waffles, coffee and honey in your hands, and only barely managed to lower it on your side of the bed before you crouched next to Jimin’s face.

His features were completely relaxed and his black hair, tousled. He slept peacefully, snoring lightly in tandem with his breaths, but the calm, quiet sound had always comforted you.

You smiled faintly as you pressed a hand against his soft cheek and caressed it. “Jimin,” you tried again. “Wake up, my sweet prince. I made you breakfast.”

The snoring stopped and slowly, a smile spread across Jimin’s face. “I haven’t heard that in a long time.”

You grimaced. You rarely called him anything but Jimin. You had nothing against nicknames but they sounded so awkward in your own voice. And since you were the same age, you couldn’t even settle for the good old regular “oppa”. “My sweet prince” was nauseatingly sweet - literally - and probably really cheesy, but the nickname instantly got stuck in your head the first time you saw Jimin smile. For he really looked like the sweetest prince when he did. Or really, when he did anything.

But his smile was what had truly made you fall in love with him.

“If it makes you cringe,” you started apologetically as you withdrew, “I won’t say it again.”

“No.” Jimin finally opened his eyes, which were slightly puffy from sleep. “I like it. I was just saying that it’s been a while since you called me that.”

You stood and brushed some hair out of his forehead. “Well, my sweet prince. I’ve gotta get ready to leave for work, but I made you waffles and coffee.”

He sat up, his eyes widening as he spotted the tray of food you had prepared. Brimming with pride, you grabbed the tray and placed it in Jimin’s lap. He inhaled deeply with his eyes closed, then beamed at you.

“It smells amazing,” he said. “And you’re in a very good mood today. Did you have a nice dream or is something going on today that I’ve missed?”
There was a slight tentativeness in his voice, which caused your guilt to worsen. You quickly turned around, afraid your face might give some away, then began rummaging through your wardrobe for clothes.

“Nothing is going on,” you assured him in what you hoped was a neutral tone. “I just felt like making something for you.”

“It’s delicious.”

You threw a quick smile over your shoulder. “I’ve gotta shower and get ready for work. I don’t know when I’ll be back but I will try my best to get back before dinner. We haven’t eaten together for so long. I’ve forgotten what your cooking tastes like.”

Jimin’s eyes widened. “You’re coming back home for dinner?” he asked excitedly. “Really?”

“I can’t promise I will,” you said truthfully since you didn’t know how Yoongi had planned the day. “But I promise I’ll try.”

“I’ll make something special.”

After a final smile, you grabbed your clothes and headed to the bathroom. You didn’t return to your and Jimin’s bedroom after that point, and you were just about to leave the apartment, all dressed up and ready, when Jimin came out with the tray.

“Good luck at work!” he called after you. “I’m guessing it will be extra tough today!”

You froze in the middle of slipping into your low-heeled pumps. “What do you mean?” you asked with a frown.

You heard some noise from the sink being turned on before Jimin’s head poked into the hallway. “The murder,” he said as he held up his phone. “It’s all over the news.”

Fuck. That wasn’t good. Not only because media - and therefore public - loved hating on the police but because you had a feeling this wasn’t going to improve Yoongi’s mood. And as you reached Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters, which was surrounded by reporter vans and journalists and cameramen, you found your conjecture right.

“How the fuck did the press learn about the hanged woman?”

Yoongi’s guise of cool disinterest, almost boredom, had slipped slightly as he entered the meeting room at exactly 7 am where you, Jungkook and Taehyung already waited. There was steel in his sharp, emotionless voice and ice in his already cold, piercing gaze as he settled in front of the wall-wide whiteboard, staring down the three of you. He hadn’t even taken off his coat on the way in.

You stiffened, and you saw Taehyung and Jungkook, who both sat across the oval table from you, visibly freeze as well. Although you didn’t want to be the first to speak up, you really didn’t want Yoongi to take out any of his irritation at your hoobaes.

“I don’t think anybody can answer that question, Inspector,” you added hastily when Yoongi’s attention landed on you. “But there were a lot of patrol officers on the murder scene. Any one of them might have tattled.”

Yoongi regarded you for a long time before he exhaled and sat down at the head of the table. There were several folders tucked underneath his arm that he tossed in front of you, Jungkook and Taehyung before he took out his notebook and pen from inside his coat.
“The hanged woman,” he said without looking up from his notebook. His bored guise was back on, and it was impossible to tell what he was thinking or feeling underneath it. “I got the reports from the forensics team and the tech team as well as all the photos of the crime scene. Go through it and speak your thoughts out loud for me. Constable Jungkook?”

Jungkook’s back straightened as he, wide-eyed, looked in Yoongi’s direction. “Yes, sir?”

“You’re on whiteboard duty today.”

Jungkook came to a standing and grabbed one of the whiteboard pens. “Do you want me to write sorta like a mindmap?” he asked tentatively.

“Obviously.”

Jungkook swallowed before he turned around toward the whiteboard. “Understood, sir.”

“Contribute,” said Yoongi, still without looking away from the contents of his notes. “All three of you. I want to hear what you can come up with.”

Taehyung narrowed his eyes at Yoongi, who browsed through his notebook with seemingly no interest in his environment. However, to your great relief, he seemed to hold back his anger on his own.

“It’s awfully quiet in here,” continued Yoongi. “Start talking or get out. And don’t come back.”

“Victim’s name: Ju Si-Yeon,” you said immediately as you glanced down at the autopsy report you had managed to print out just before Yoongi arrived. “ID confirmed through driver’s license found hidden among her belongings. Female, age twenty-five. Found hanging from a rope in room 503 of Sunrise Heights Hotel in Sangdo’s old industrial area. Estimated time of death: Sunday a week ago, late evening between nine and twelve. Cause of death: strangulation, not hanging. Both ears were removed post-mortem. Traces of a mixture containing methylcellulose were found on various parts of her body - including the genitalia - as well as inside her mouth, genitalia and GI tract, or more specifically, her colon.”

“The mixture.” Taehyung spun around in the chair to look at Jungkook, who was scribbling down and connecting everything you had said on the whiteboard. “Didn’t the chief medical examiner say that it’s some kind of fake semen the porn industry uses?”

You had a difficult time not looking at Yoongi at this but somehow, you managed. “Yeah, she did. And considering we found her in a love hotel, the chances are high that she was a sex worker of some sort.”

“Maybe she was a prostitute or escort who met a bad client?” said Jungkook while writing down the words “love hotel” and “potential sex worker”.

You and Taehyung both nodded.

“Maybe,” you said as you retook some notes in your notebook. “What about her personal life? Have we found a boyfriend or girlfriend or any relatives?”

Taehyung turned his chair back around and went through one of the folders Yoongi had brought. “About that, a chick--I mean, coworker, from the tech department told me yesterday evening that her phone was wiped. The contact list, call and message log and even the memos were all empty. She told me it was probable our victim deleted everything on habit.” He paused as he read through a page, then handed it to you. “Yup, here it is. Forensic investigation of the phone reveals nothing. I
called Jungkook to tell him about it, and I would have called you, too, but I figured it was too late to call you without pissing off your husband.”

In the corner of your eye, you thought you saw Yoongi’s features tighten ever so slightly, but when you glanced at him, nothing had changed.

You almost slapped yourself for looking. What did it matter to you what Yoongi thought about you and Jimin?

“That’s strange,” you said after you had scanned the short, one-page report, completely ignoring Taehyung’s final comment. “What about pictures? Or was her gallery empty, too?”

“Oh, that’s a whole different story.”

Taehyung rifled through the pages until he reached the bottom of the stack. He produced another folder, a smaller one, and slid it over to you. He said nothing initially, but he continued as soon as you opened the folder - and discovered Ju Si-Yeon in a bed wearing nothing but lacy red thongs that covered, well, as much as thongs can cover.

“There were over a thousand pictures on our victim’s phone,” he told you. “Some were normal selfies and pictures of food and drinks, but ninety percent were nudes or lingerie shots.”

“Did your contact mention anything about a social media presence?” you asked as you skimmed through the folder filled with pictures of Ju Si-Yeon. “Or an online presence whatsoever? And what about her belongings? Was there anything interesting among those?”

Taehyung scratched the back of his head as he sent you a sheepish smile. “Well, we didn’t do much talking after that. But they must have mentioned it somewhere in the report.”

“Oh,” you said simply.

A flash of regret momentarily filled Taehyung’s intense brown eyes, but you just pushed away the smaller folder and jotted down the new details of the victim on your notepad. You avoided his gaze not because you were hurt or anything, but because you had no business knowing what - or rather, who - he did when he wasn’t at work. After all, he was just your hoobae. A coworker and friend. And you hoped your disinterest proved just that.

For Taehyung deserved better than a woman like you.

The conversation had halted awkwardly, but Yoongi kept his eyes on his notebook. You wouldn’t be surprised if he had already gone through all the material and established at least one possible lead the unit could pursue, but kept quiet since he wanted to see how you, Jungkook and Taehyung performed. If you were in his position, you would do the same.

“Since I doubt we have much more to say,” you started, “let’s just see what we can find out from the material we have. Jungkook, come sit and help out.”

After a hesitant glance at Yoongi, Jungkook slowly returned to his chair. He helped the two of you go through the autopsy report, the pictures of the crime scene, various possible witness statements from the hotel staff and other guests at the time the hanged woman had been called in and the heavy folders filled with individual reports of each piece of possible forensic evidence thus far. For some reason, all of the reports had been jumbled together with neither rhyme nor reason within the folders Yoongi had brought. It therefore took a lot of time for the three of you to go through what the CSIs and technicians had uncovered.
If it were five years ago, you would have been able to process the information presented to you a lot faster. Or well, that’s what you told yourself as you read it through. It took time.

Too much time.

“Enough.”

You immediately looked at Yoongi, and you caught Taehyung and Jungkook mimicking your motion.

“Inspector?” you said hesitantly.

Yoongi lowered his notebook and scrutinized you, Jungkook and Taehyung with narrowed eyes. “This whole organization is disgustingly disorganized and sloppy. I would laugh if it weren’t for the fact that your pathetic incompetence affects me directly since I’m the head of the investigation.”

Before any of you could respond, Yoongi dropped his notebook and pen into his coat pocket and rose.

“You two--” Yoongi looked at Taehyung and Jungkook, “--will go through all the material here. Make a complete mind map with all the details of the case and the victim. Don’t forget what (Y/N) pointed out regarding an online presence. I want Constable Jungkook to update me through calls whenever you run into something interesting.”

“Of course, sir,” said Jungkook immediately.

“You’re leaving, sir?” asked Taehyung as he raised one brow.

Yoongi nodded before his cold, piercing gaze locked with yours. “And you’re coming with me.”


Yoongi didn’t respond. He simply exited the room.

In bewilderment, you hastily scrambled together your things in your handbag, made a detour to your cubicle where you grabbed your blazer and coat, then hurried toward the elevators. Yoongi wasn’t there, and he wasn’t in the entrance lobby either. It wasn’t until you asked the desk clerk that you found out where he had gone.

“Please, detective! Any statements?”

Refusing to acknowledge their existence, you held your head high as you walked through the crowd of reporters and cameramen crowding the concrete steps leading up to the entrance of Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters. They continued to batter you with questions and pushed phones, microphones and cameras in your face - all the way to the parking spot where the department vehicle, a dark gray Hyundai, was parked.

“Inspector,” you began as you entered the front passenger seat of the car. “I don’t want to speak above my position, but--”

“Then don’t.”

Yoongi’s sharp, emotionless tone cut through your sentence like scissors through a ribbon. He didn’t look at you as you shut the door after you, and was out of the parking lot before you even got your seatbelt on. The reporters gave up trying to catch up quickly.
You weren’t going to lie: your heart was definitely racing. It was racing in that same addictively exhilarating way as when you were a teenager. When you danced between the border of mild delinquency and misbehavior and outright danger.

When you first met and fell in love with the man right next to you.

“Where are we going?” you asked carefully without looking at him, unable to calm the rapid beating of your heart. The situation was all too familiar. You and him in a car, driving who knows where just to get out of view.

“The crime scene. I need to see it with my own eyes.”

“You know the address,” you couldn’t help but say. “Why not go alone?”

There was a brief pause, during which you gathered enough nerves to glance at him. Yoongi’s posture was relaxed, his back resting comfortably against the gentle curve of the seat. He gripped the wheel with both of his hands, but his grip was loose, lazy almost. His cold, piercing eyes were glued to the road and traffic.

“Well?” you prodded when he didn’t respond.

“You were done speaking?” he parried coolly.

“Yeah?”

“I didn’t hear an ‘inspector’. ”

“Inspector,” you said slowly, only barely able to stop yourself from putting as much sarcasm as you could into the word. “Why pick me?”

“Your skills have probably dilapidated severely from your academy days,” said Yoongi without emotion. “But you’re still a better choice than the young constables. Also, they’re clearly uncomfortable around me and distracted by you.”

You frowned. “What do you mean ‘distracted’?”

He tossed you a dry look before aiming his focus on the street again. “Don’t pretend you don’t know how much the young constables look at you. Constable Taehyung especially.”

“There’s nothing going on between us,” you said in a low, yet firm tone. “Any of us.”

“It doesn’t matter,” said Yoongi dismissively. “I’ll eventually make sure their attitudes change. But for now, they’ll work better without us present.”

You wanted to hurl an insult at him, but you bit down on your bottom lip and swallowed your anger. The accusation that Taehyung and Jungkook were incompetent because they were too busy staring at you was infuriating enough; the more subtle, underlying accusation that you, somehow, did it on purpose was what really made you want to call Yoongi something indecent. Something that you would lose your badge for.

The two of you said nothing during the rest of the drive to Sunrise Heights Hotel. In fact, neither of you spoke even once while Yoongi looked around the hotel and the crime scene, which was guarded by a single patrol officer. You simply followed him around, too nervous and uncomfortable and really not just in the mood of starting and maintaining a conversation. It wasn’t until after Yoongi’s phone rang and he stepped out of room 503 for a few minutes that he broke the silence.
“They found an account on some webcam modeling site,” said Yoongi as he returned. “There were also several sex toys for women listed on the belongings file as well as various bottles of lubricant. Some containing methylcellulose.”

You had been inspecting the hook in the ceiling while Yoongi was out and peered over your shoulder at him. “So, it’s pretty much certain: Ju Si-Yeon was a sex worker, though of the webcam variety.”

“Probably.” Yoongi glanced at the hook. “See something interesting?”

“Well…” You looked at the hook as well and pointed at it. “How much weight do you think that thing can handle? The victim was admittedly slim, but still: five days. Can a hook designed for ceiling lamps really handle the weight of a body for so long?”

“What are you trying to say?”

You scratched your head. “I’m not sure, actually,” you admitted. “I would have to go through the rest of the material before I’m able to come up with a more substantial theory, but there’s something odd about this whole set-up. The hotel door was unlocked when the couple first discovered the body. That means our murderer didn’t want to take the key.”

You crouched on the carpeted floor and inspected the material. “I haven’t seen any signs of dried blood or any attempts at scrubbing it away. And the removal of the ears simply must have been a bloodbath. The perpetrator probably just came here to dump the body and make it look like a suicide.”

There was a snort. “Do you even hear yourself? Why would the murderer try to set up a suicide when he bothered cutting off the ears post-mortem? Does that make sense to you?”

“No.” You frowned as you stood up and returned your focus at Yoongi. “That’s what worries me the most.”

His features didn’t change but the look in his eyes did. He didn’t have to say anything. You knew he agreed with you.

“We’re heading out.”

You checked the time on your phone. It was clearly time for lunch. Although your stomach was and had been growling for a while, you hadn’t said anything out of fear of irritating Yoongi further.

“Where are we going, inspector?” you asked when the two of you were back in the car.

“Food,” he said simply as he started the GPS. “The chief recommended a few spots I should try out.”

“Oh.”

He glanced at you. “Not hungry?”

“I am, inspector,” you said. “It’s just…”

“You don’t want to eat with me.”

You didn’t reply.

“What’s your husband’s name?”
You stared at him, momentarily wide-mouthed. “What?”

He met your gaze without much emotion. “I was thinking a meal together would lighten the mood. Make it easier for us to get to know each other as co-workers. But since you don’t want to eat with me, I’ll just be completely straightforward. I’ll drive you back to HQ meanwhile.”

“Alright,” you said hesitantly. “His name is Park Jimin. He’s a high school teacher.”

Yoongi twisted the key, causing the engine to come alive. “How long have you two been married?”

“A little more than five years,” you said in a neutral tone. “We met seven years ago through blind dating.”

“Any children?”

You held back a laugh. “No,” you said, hiding your mouth behind your hand. “I couldn’t handle kids, I’ve told you that.”

Instantly, you froze. You hadn’t meant for the last part to slip out; you hadn’t even had the time to think it before you spoke.

Because for a moment, for a very brief, delicious moment, you had forgotten the eleven years that had passed. You had forgotten all the heartache.

You had forgotten you stopped loving Min Yoongi ages ago.

You were too afraid to look at Yoongi. Too afraid to see something you shouldn’t—no, couldn’t see. Too afraid to perhaps, just perhaps, see some emotion. Regret, jealousy, hurt - anything.

Because if you did, you didn’t think you could stop yourself from doing something awful. Something that would hurt Jimin immensely.

Something you had been yearning for ever since you saw Yoongi from the elevator a few days ago.

“You married early.”

His tone was impossible to interpret; his face even more so. The guise of indifference was back on, glued harder to his features than ever, and his cold, piercing eyes were like a starless night as he stared out into traffic.

“He proposed a year and a half into the relationship,” you said matter-of-factly. “And since I loved him, I said yes.”

“You ‘loved’ him?”

“I mean,” you blurted, immediately hearing how bad it sounded, “I still do. I love Jimin.”

Yoongi said nothing but you caught his fingers tightening around the wheel. If it was due to the intense traffic or the subject, you could only guess at. Or well, really, who were you kidding?

Yoongi had never felt anything for you.

You opened your mouth to ask about Yoongi’s private life, but then refrained. What was the point? If he had a girlfriend or wife, you would only be jealous, and if he hadn’t, you would only be tempted. Both options were beyond moronic, you knew that, but you couldn’t deny what your heart was telling you. You couldn’t deny your more carnal urges.
Besides, Yoongi was kind of nice at the moment. He wasn’t glaring you down or scrutinizing you with eyes you couldn’t read. His voice, albeit still sharp and emotionless, was softer than at the office and a lot softer than the way your conversation had ended the day before. You didn’t want to ruin it.

For even though it hurt both your pride and your heart to admit it, you couldn’t lie: it felt good talking to him again. Even if it was a bit stiff. Even if you still hated him from the bottom of your heart.

Even if you still, despite the promise you had made yourself and Jimin, wanted him to fuck you like he used to.
Despair

Chapter Notes

Accidentally wrote more than I should have for the last update, so here’s the next chapter already! Also, warning: sexually explicit content will start from this chapter and only get worse/better (depends how you see it) from now on.

By the time Yoongi dropped you off at Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters, a majority of the reporters were gone. You still saw the vans nearby, however, and guessed their disappearance was merely temporary.

“I’ll return to the department in thirty. I’m expecting you all to be present and working on leads for the case when I arrive.”

Yoongi had parked by the side of the street, right in front of the entrance. His tone was neutral.

“Yes, inspector,” you said, glad to finally be out of the car. “Anything else?”

“No.”

You shut the door and headed for the entrance stairs. It wasn’t until you saw the reflection of the dark gray Hyundai in the double glass doors that you realized Yoongi hadn’t departed already. However, the car immediately disappeared out of view when you peered over your shoulder.

“Weird,” you muttered before you continued through the doors.

When you entered the homicide apartment, the smell of something fried wafted from the meeting room where you also heard two familiar voices. As you drew near, you discovered that Taehyung and Jungkook had ordered Chinese food, enough to feed you and another guy their size. They were both surprised but happy to see you back and eagerly updated you on everything they had uncovered. It was a pleasant change of surroundings after spending the whole morning in silence, then uncomfortable car talk with Yoongi.

A lot more pleasant.

“You should have seen Jungkook’s face when we clicked the webpage,” said Taehyung with a playfully mocking smile, chopsticks in hand. “I don’t think he’s ever really realized that dildos and vibrators are things people actually use. He’s probably always thought they were just for prank gifting like in the movies.”

You laughed as Jungkook aimed an angry glare Taehyung’s direction.

“I have not,” said Jungkook indignantly, even though his face was turning redder by the seconds. “I just didn’t know all the terms like you, hyung. You dirty pervert: how did you recognize every single… toy on the report?”

“You’re a specialist on sex toys?”

He lifted both of his hands into the air. “Hey, there’s two kinds of guys in the world. Guys who
don’t know how to please women and guys who do.” He grinned smugly. “I belong to the latter. Jungkook, clearly, do not.”

“Is that why you don’t have a girlfriend and Jungkook always does?” you parried.

“Exactly,” said Jungkook with a wide grin. “Try to answer that, hyung.”

“I’m not a player.” Taehyung’s smile suddenly fell and his intense brown eyes drifted over to you. “Call me cheesy or old-fashioned, but I believe in ‘The One’. There’s only ever going to be one woman for me.”

“Clearly,” you said in an attempt to change the suddenly very intimate flow of conversation. “That’s why you met up with that chick yesterday. Yes, we all heard you calling one of the tech specialists ‘chick’ in front of Yoongi.”

Jungkook and Taehyung both furrowed their brows slightly.

“Youngi?” echoed Taehyung.

You cursed inwardly. “The inspector,” you amended hurriedly. “You know, I don’t think he likes you very much.”

Taehyung snorted and grabbed a piece of fried pork. “He doesn’t like any of us. I wouldn’t really care, if it weren’t for the fact that he’s a complete asshole and our new boss as well. I can’t believe Chief Seokjin left us with him.”

“He’s kinda scary.” Jungkook reached for his water bottle. “I can’t believe you survived the whole morning with him, sunbae-nim,”

You chuckled joylessly as you, too, picked up a piece of fried pork with your chopsticks and dipped it in the sweet-and-sour sauce. “Neither can I,” you muttered.

“How old do you think he is?” asked Taehyung while chewing. “He doesn’t have any wrinkles but he’s clearly older than aunty here.”

You tried to kick him in the shin underneath the table, but he just grinned and moved his leg out of reach.

“Thirty-five, maybe?” suggested Jungkook. “Give or take a year or two.”

You stiffened slightly and chewed your fried pork in silence.

Taehyung swallowed and reached for another piece of fried pork. “He’s kinda small. Like, he’s both thin and short. I can’t wait to see his face when he reads the victim’s belongings report.”

“What about it?” you asked with a frown.

“Well, since he doesn’t wear a ring and is way too old to have a girlfriend, I bet he’s just as clueless about female pleasure as little Jungkookie. In fact, I’m pretty sure he’s never even been in a relationship. His personality is fucking awful. Who would date someone like him?”

At this, you nearly choked on the pork. Alarmed by your sudden coughing fit, Jungkook and Taehyung hurried around the oval table. The former helped you down some water while the latter patted you gently on the back, his intense brown eyes wide with concern.

“I’m fine,” you croaked when your lungs had calmed down. You waved them both away and drank
some more water. “Just swallowed too fast.”

“You’re actually getting old,” said Taehyung amusedly. “Right, Jungkook?”

Jungkook grinned. “Yeah.”

You hit them both in their stomachs, causing them to hunch over and grunt in surprise. “Unless you monkeys want another punch,” you began, doing your best to keep from smiling, “clean this food up and get back to your chairs. It’s been thirty minutes - he’ll be back any second.”

While Jungkook backed away, Taehyung grasped your hand. The palms of his hands were soft, gentle and reassuringly large. You felt a strange warmth blossom inside your chest. That is until he came to full standing and slanted you the most impish, shit-eating grin.

“Come on,” he managed, strain weighing heavily on his voice. “Can you imagine his face when I tell him about the special edition rainbow-colored, horse-sized mega--”

You punched Taehyung again. Not because what he saying was offensive but because Yoongi had shown up in the doorway. He looked bored, as always, but his cold, piercing eyes immediately zeroed in on Taehyung’s hand, which almost fully embraced yours. And then his eyes narrowed.

Fuck.

“Tell me about what, Constable Taehyung?”

Yoongi’s voice was ice. Taehyung withdrew as quickly from you as if he had been burnt and went back to his chair.

He cleared his throat awkwardly. “Nothing, sir.”

“No, tell me.”

Yoongi slowly approached the head end of the table where he put down both of his hands. There was nothing outright threatening about his demeanor or voice, but the tension in the room was nearly tangible.

“Well…”

“It was just a bad joke,” you said before Taehyung could continue. “Nothing that needs repeating, inspector.”

“I want to hear it,” said Yoongi icily. “What did you want to tell me?”

“It was just--” started Taehyung quietly.

“Nothing,” you interrupted, sending Taehyung a firm glare to keep quiet. “Let’s just continue on the case, inspector. Jungkook and Taehyung dug out a lot while we were out, which will take a while to review, but there’s still some folders left.”

You kept your tone as meek and accommodating as you could, hoping—no, praying Yoongi would end the current conversation. It was difficult enough having to worry about your and Yoongi’s strained and uncertain relationship - you had neither the time nor patience to bother trying to keep things peaceful between Taehyung and Yoongi as well.

Taehyung looked nervously at you, but you silenced him with one glance. The silence in the meeting room continued for almost a minute before Yoongi let out a small huff and went to the other head
end of the table. He draped his coat over the back of the chair he had been sitting in that morning, took out his notebook and pen and sank down.

“Begin,” he said coolly.

You let out a breath of relief, and you thought you saw Jungkook and Taehyung do the same.

Even though it was beneath you, you offered to clean up all the takeaway. Partly because Jungkook and Taehyung had awful penmanship and had to explain their wild scribbles and doodles on the whiteboard. Partly because you just wanted to get away from Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes. There really was nothing going on between you and Taehyung - you knew that more than ever - but Yoongi had walked into you two holding hands. You, too, knew it wasn’t appropriate at work, but it wasn’t as if though you had wanted to hold Taehyung’s hand.

You had just punched him. You hadn't expected him to hold your hand afterward.

The atmosphere in the meeting room seemed a lot better when you were done with everything and returned from washing your hands. Jungkook and Taehyung were still standing by the whiteboard pointing and clarifying things. You tried to catch up to what they were talking about, but you quickly realized there wasn’t a lot of new information to absorb.

By the time they were done, Yoongi ordered you all to go through the rest of the material, including every picture of Ju Si-Yeon. It was difficult enough rifling through the pictures of a homicide victim; it was even more difficult when the victim was a young, pretty female posing in… suggestive ways. Really suggestive ways. Toys included.

You weren’t interested in women, but you would lie if you didn’t find the pictures somewhat stimulating. You caught Jungkook’s face reddening more times than you could count while Taehyung just seemed mildly amused. He wasn’t smiling, exactly, but there was clearly amusement dancing in his intense brown eyes. Though if it was due to the pictures or Jungkook’s reactions, you didn’t know. Yoongi, however, regarded the pictures with cool indifference, which definitely was the most respectful way to approach them.

It took two and a half hours to go through all the pictures. But even after that time, there was nothing to add really to the whiteboard. That’s when it first dawned upon you.

There was an obvious lack of leads.

It was every detective’s worst nightmare. And after a few more hours, you found your fear confirmed. There was nothing. Not even the slightest thing to add to the whiteboard. The statements from the other hotel guests said nothing. As did the statements that patrol officers had gathered from the staff the day after the discovery of the murder. There was no CCTV in the area and Ju Si-Yeon had carried only cash, suggesting she pretty much had worked off the radar. The tech department wasn’t done tracking the movements of her phone, so until that point, she could have been practically everywhere and anywhere. The forensic team wasn’t done analyzing the chemical components of the lubrication - in order to compare it to the mixture found on Ju Si-Yeon’s body - and they had found no traces of blood anywhere in the hotel room. Not even on the victim. Unknown hairs and fingerprints had been discovered, but it didn’t exactly say much. Sunrise Heights Hotel was a love hotel, after all. If the data logs you had gotten from the hotel said anything, almost a hundred people had used room 503 since the beginning of August.

All in all, the case was already looking like a fucking nightmare.

Yoongi allowed you all to leave at 5 pm. You were exhausted, and you guessed Jungkook and
Taehyung were just as tired as the three of you exited the department doors.

“Soju and samgyeopsal?” asked Taehyung as he pressed the elevator button.

“Not tonight,” you said as you peeked over your shoulder. Yoongi was still in the meeting room. Although you were glad he hadn’t ordered you or Taehyung to stay, you didn’t want to stay longer than necessary. What he had said in the car about how he would “make sure their attitudes change” alarmed you.

“You ditching us again?” he exclaimed. “Are you actually listening to my advice for once, aunty?”

“Are you feeling down, sunbae?” asked Jungkook carefully, a furrow of concern between his brows. “Or is it something with your husband?”

“No, we’re both fine.” You checked your phone as the three of you entered the elevator car. Jimin hadn’t called yet. “But I promised to have dinner at home with him today.”

Genuine disappointment and something more flickered in Taehyung’s intense brown eyes, but it disappeared after he blinked. “Alright,” he said cheerfully. “See you tomorrow then.”

You nodded. “Bye.”

Even though you tried to clear your head in the unusually crisp September wind, your thoughts were still swamped with the details of the case by the time you reached your and Jimin’s apartment. And how could they not be? The eerie sensation that the homicide unit was missing something vital had only grown stronger after you went through all the material and realized there were no potential leads. Also, the fact that Yoongi had remained quiet during the review of all the reports made things even more worrisome. You doubted he would sit on information just to feel superior. His ego was too big for him to bother about petty stuff like that.

You sighed as you searched your handbag for the apartment keys. You had almost screwed everything up by addressing Yoongi by name when you were talking to only Jungkook and Taehyung at lunch. It wasn’t as if though you and Yoongi had made a secret deal to keep your prior involvement secret, you knew it would look bad if the guys found out about your past together. You could only pray that neither Jungkook nor Taehyung would remember your misstep. And you seriously needed to start thinking before you spoke.

Unless you wanted another uncomfortable moment with Yoongi.

The smell of warm dough, mozzarella cheese, tomato sauce and herbs practically smacked you in the face as you opened the door. Your stomach growled in appreciation as you discarded your coat, handbag and heels and padded across the dark hallway until you reached the kitchen where you found the source of the lovely smell.

Standing with his back toward you, Jimin was handling dough on an oven tray that rested on top of one of the counters. He didn’t seem to have heard you entering over the noise of whatever TV-show he was watching on his tablet, and repeated some lines in heavily accented English. The silhouette of a pizza glowed in the oven.

With a wide smile, you quickly snuck up behind Jimin and wrapped your arms around his waist. He jolted and let out a surprised yelp, but when you wouldn’t stop laughing at the expression on his face, he merely smiled.

“Honey,” he began and turned his head sideways in order to look at you. “That could have been
dangerous! What if I were cutting something?”

The urge to kiss him was so great you had to clench your jaws together. “I knew you weren’t.” You dragged a fingertip across some of the flour spread across the counter top and wiped it on his cheek, one arm still wound tightly around his waist. “I didn’t know you knew how to make pizza.”

He furrowed his brows slightly. “Really? But I’ve made it before. Don’t you remember?”

“No, you haven’t,” you said as you withdrew from him to check on the pizza in the oven. “Trust me, I would eat home a lot more often if I knew. You must have made it on your own while I was out with the monkeys.”

“Oh.”

“The pizza is looking good.” You sent him a smile. “Do we have beer?”

Jimin didn’t answer immediately. His eyes were locked on the piece of dough he, until then, had been kneading, and he briefly appeared completely lost in thought.

You frowned. “Jimin?”

He shook his head and beamed at you. “Yeah!” he blurted. “I bought four of your favorite brand. They’re in the fridge.”

You had to walk past him to reach the refrigerator, and caressed his back on your way past. “Thank you, my sweet prince.”

“Anything for you, honey.”

After pouring up the beer in a glass, you helped set the table while Jimin finished kneading and filling up the second pizza. He started telling you about the class he was homeroom teacher for, and how talented and unique all the students were. You simply sat by the table and listened in silence, occasionally humming or nodding or sipping your beer. You had already heard most of it before, but you didn’t mind just watching and listening to him.

You felt happier than you had in a while.

“Perhaps I should stop drinking out with the boys.”

Jimin’s right hand, equipped with a heavy slice of mozzarella, basil, tomato sauce, onion and mushroom, stopped midway to his mouth. “What? Why? It’s a good thing to spend time with your hoobaes. Especially since you’re the only people working at the department.”

“I like being home with you more,” you said simply. You were on your fourth beer already and the familiar, relaxing feeling of the alcohol was gradually filling your veins. “I’ve missed being with you. Besides, those monkeys always make me pay for everything. I could probably have bought us another car by now if I hadn’t spent so much on food and soju these last years.”

“That’s not true,” said Jimin gently. “You only started paying after the detective chief inspector left on his tour, right? So that makes it about nine months.”

“Get out of here with your logic,” you said with a smile. “I’m trying to make a point here, alright?”

Jimin giggled as he lifted the pizza slice to his mouth, causing you to chuckle as well. The sight of his happiness was simply too contagious.
“So,” you said, “what do you think? Should I stop drinking after work?”

“Do whatever you want,” said Jimin tenderly and placed a hand over yours.

You stiffened slightly. A response like that was the last thing you had wanted to hear. It reminded you only of what you wanted from a man, which wasn’t complete and utter compliance. You wanted a challenge.

“Oh right, I almost forgot!”

All of a sudden, Jimin dropped the slice of pizza he had been holding and wiped his hands on a kitchen towel he had tucked beneath the straps of the apron he still wore. He stood up and disappeared into the hallway without any further explanation, returning after almost a minute.

“Close your eyes, honey!”

Jimin’s voice came from the hallway, but you couldn’t see him from the angle where you sat.

You furrowed your brows as you quickly chewed and swallowed your food. “Wait, why?”

“Just do it! And don’t turn around!”

“Jimin,” you said firmly, “if you’ve bought a puppy or kitten, I swear to--”

“I haven’t, so just please, close your eyes!”

You sighed but obeyed. The suspense made the hairs on your neck stand on edge, especially since you heard Jimin’s footsteps draw near. There was a long, breathless pause before you felt his hands on your shoulders, and his cheek against your ear.

“Alright,” said Jimin happily. “You can open your eyes, honey.”

You had a feeling you knew what it was and did your best to appear surprised as you opened your eyes - but your heart stopped for real when you saw what was resting on the table in front of you.

Not because he had lied and really bought you a pet - a matter which you had already discussed with Jimin - or because it was some delicious cake or a bouquet of beautiful roses or anything like that. No, it was because you recognized the two items. The black perfume box and the card.

Two. There were only two items.

“I know it’s not yet our anniversary day, but since you’re home now and I never really know how your schedule can swing, I thought we might celebrate tonight.” Jimin’s hand squeezed gently around your shoulders. “Come on, open the box.”

Stiffly, you unwrapped the black box and produced a simple glass perfume bottle filled with a transparent liquid. You aimed the spray at your wrist and slowly lifted your hand to smell it.

Vanilla. Vanilla and something floral.

“What do you think? I found this amazing little store a few blocks away from the big Lotte department where the customer can design their own perfume. I was able to decide the measures of everything in the smallest detail! This--” he tapped the perfume bottle with a finger, “--is really one of a kind. Just like you.”

“Thank you,” you managed even though your heart didn’t beat. Even though a sudden emptiness
had replaced all your earlier warmth.

Two. Two items.

Jimin smiled, then rose to his full height. “Come on,” he said as he pulled your arm gingerly, his voice lowering into a more suggestive murmur. “Let’s go to the bedroom.”

You opened your mouth, but no words came out. You shut your eyes briefly and screamed at yourself to just calm down. That the necklace might just come later. After the sex.

That Jimin loved you and he wasn’t cheating on you and that he loved you and that the fucking necklace wasn’t another bitch’s present.

You downed the last of your beer before you followed Jimin to the bedroom. Anger, excitement, anxiety and fear all mingled together in a sickening mixture in your stomach, but you managed to hold it all in as you and Jimin undressed on each side of the bed. You managed to hold it all in as he struggled with both the condom and the wrapper while you sat down in bed and watched. You managed to hold it all in as he turned around and admired you with eyes that beamed of love, all the while his dick was suffocating inside the slightly lubricated condom. It was a sight that would have made you laugh out loud and run if it weren’t for the sad fact that the half-flaccid, barely-there boner belonged to your husband. To the one person, you had promised to love and cherish forever.

To the one person, you once had honestly actually loved enough to give such a promise.

You managed to continuously keep the nausea at bay while Jimin crawled on top of you and threw the blanket over both of your naked bodies. You managed to keep it at bay even as you felt something slippery touch you below. Even as you mechanically parted your legs and just waited for him to put it in, an act that took much longer than it should have.

You managed to keep the nausea at bay even after a handful seconds of weak thrusting before Jimin’s features tightened with effort and he let out a loud gasp and rolled to the side.

You stared up into the ceiling, feeling neither satisfied or really aroused in the first place. Jimin lay prone next to you, his cheeks flushed and his breathing rapid and uneven, seemingly completely exhausted. You waited for him to pick up the jewelry box from beneath the mattress or perhaps the pillow - or really anywhere - and tell you how dainty and pretty and elegant you were, just like the necklace and earrings.

But he didn’t. He just continued to lie there with his eyes closed. Just catching his breath.

That was the breaking point.

Doing your very best not to sprint out of the bedroom like it was on fire - like you really wanted to - you slid out of bed and casually walked to the bathroom. As soon as you locked the door behind you, however, you immediately turned on the faucet and threw yourself over the toilet seat.

You hadn’t thrown up since you were fourteen and seriously ill in food poisoning. And you had never thrown up from drinking alcohol - not even when you drank soju for the first time with the neighborhood boys and girls and finished a whole bottle on your own on a dare. Not even when you drank the most disgusting concoction of different liquors at a party after losing a bet.

Not even when you drank yourself unconscious with wine and beer and tequila every day for almost a whole month when Yoongi abandoned you eleven years ago.

The bile burned in the back of your throat, your nostrils and the roof of your mouth. Your face felt all
hot and sweaty, but after flushing, cleaning and brushing your teeth, the bathroom mirror merely reflected a bit of a paler version of you than normal. A paler version with lifeless eyes.

Who had Jimin bought the jewelry for?

Ring, ring.

You ignore the noise as you stepped into the shower. It was probably just a drunk Taehyung who wanted you to come out and drink and play with them. Or a concerned Jungkook who wanted you to come save him from Taehyung’s drunken adventures. Whichever the case, you didn’t want to go out.

You just wanted to stay underneath the hot spray of the shower forever.

“Honey? You in the shower?”

You nearly slipped at Jimin’s voice and quickly turned off the water. “Yeah? Why?”

“Your phone’s been ringing constantly for the last couple of minutes. It’s probably important.”

He sounded a bit worried, but there was nothing to suggest he had heard you vomit, which was good. You didn’t want him to suspect anything was wrong.

“I’ll be right out!” you called.

After wringing as much water from your hair as you could, you wrapped yourself in a body-sized towel and headed for the door. As you unlocked and opened it, you found Jimin instantly averting his eyes.

He might as well have stabbed you.

“Here.”

Jimin held out your loudly ringing phone in front of him. When you took it, he quickly darted out of view.

“I’ll clean things up in the kitchen, honey.”

You didn’t respond. You simply stared at your phone where an image of Taehyung making the ugliest face ever filled half the screen.

The Ugly Monkey (liar, I know you think I’m hot) is calling...

Despite everything, you couldn’t help but smile as you swiped the answer icon and lifted your phone to your ear. “Did you change your contact picture and name again?” you asked, doing your best to maintain a stern tone.

“Oh, you haven’t noticed until now? Naw, that’s a shame.”

“You know it’s illegal to go through a person’s phone without their permission unless you have a warrant, right?”

“Aw, come on!” Taehyung chuckled. “It wasn’t completely without your permission. You were just too drunk to protest.”

“I’m going to punch you so hard next time I see you.”
“Well,” he began, all the humor disappearing from his voice, “I’d better get ready then.”

You rolled your eyes. “Are you gonna try to lure me out with soju again? It’s not going to work. Now hand Jungkook the phone so us adults can talk about what we’re going to do with you.”

“It’s not that.”

There was a brief pause, but then your heart stopped for the second time that evening.

“There’s been another murder.”
Traffic was heavy that Sunday evening. The taxi ride to KL Hotel took a good forty-five minutes, but as you stepped out into the remaining summer heat, you felt nauseous for reasons other than the expensive fare or long ride. You felt worse than being hungover - much worse. Because while you hoped and prayed that Jimin wasn’t cheating on you and that you were being overly jealous or dramatic for a silly thing such as a “missing” box of jewelry, you couldn’t stop thinking about it.

You couldn’t get the very thought of another woman - or hell, a man - out of your mind.

KL Hotel was also situated in the old industrial area of Sangdo. And as you waved your badge to the patrol officers warding off the area around the entrance from the reporters that somehow had managed to get there before you, you knew it had to be another love hotel, albeit a little more run-down than Sunrise Heights Hotel. The innocent, nondescript facade and the discreet color palette of the interior made it obvious. However, for the first time since you had applied for the police academy in Daegu, you hoped you were wrong.

Because you had a very bad feeling in your stomach about the second murder you had ever encountered in Sangdo.

“Sunbae-nim!”

You had barely stepped out of the elevator on the third floor when Jungkook’s voice caught your attention. The corridor was crowded with crime scene investigators and patrol officers, but you managed to discern Jungkook’s brown hair and eyes before he reached you. Two-thirds of his face was covered by a clinical mouth mask, but the discomfort and nervousness were clear enough in his eyes. He handed you a similar mask as well as a pair of gloves.

“Thanks,” you said with a quick smile and immediately put on the mask. You had mint-flavored chewing gum in your mouth but you still didn’t want to risk anyone catching the scent of beer on your breath. “Is Taehyung here?”

Jungkook nodded. “He’s talking to the people who discovered her.”

“Her?” you echoed as you pulled on the gloves.

Jungkook bit his bottom lip and lowered his gaze. “It’s another woman. The inspector is here, too, but he’s investigating the crime scene. He actually threw out all the CSIs, so he’s in there alone.”

The bad feeling in your stomach turned into a hard knot. Another woman. Another love hotel.

“Take me to the body,” you said.

Jungkook nodded again and led you down the corridor until you reached an open door to your left. Four fully dressed crime scene investigators blocked the doorway, and though they glared at you as you wordlessly pushed past them, you couldn’t have cared less. For the cause of the bad feeling in your stomach, the cause of the trepidation you had felt as you realized KL Hotel was another love hotel and Jungkook told you the victim was another rather young woman - the suspicion that the second homicide was tied to the first was confirmed.

There was another female corpse hanging from the ceiling.

You noticed Jungkook tensing next to you and quietly murmured for him to leave and help
Taehyung interview the people who had found the body as well as the hotel staff. As much as you wanted to expose him and Taehyung to dead bodies in order for them to improve as homicide detectives, you didn’t want to give either of them nightmares. Jungkook in particular.

And the expression on the dead woman’s face was enough to give even you shivers.

“‘You’re late.’”

You jolted as Yoongi suddenly exited the bathroom, which was located next to the doorway. He was in his black suit and wore a mouth mask and a pair of gloves as well. His cold, piercing eyes first burrowed into you, then shifted to something or someone behind you. Glancing over your shoulder, you saw that the crime scene investigators awkwardly dispersed and disappeared out of view.

You frowned as you turned back to Yoongi. “What do you mean, late? It’s not like I knew in advance that there would be another call-in this evening. Inspector,” you added at the very last second.

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed. “The constables arrived twenty to thirty minutes ago.” He checked his wristwatch with a gloved hand. “It’s been almost an hour since I called Constable Jungkook and told him to contact you and Constable Taehyung.”

“Well, inspector, I was drinking so I couldn’t drive here like them.” Your frown deepened as you truly registered his last sentence. But even though you wanted to ask him why he used Jungkook to reach you or Taehyung, you decided not to. You didn’t want to get into an argument and you definitely didn’t want to irritate Yoongi more than you already seemed to do. Besides, you had a far more pressing matter at that moment.

The dead woman.

“Do we have an ID?” you asked as you walked past him toward the body.

There was a brief pause before Yoongi responded. “Chung Yoon-Sook.”

You stopped in front of the hanging body and regarded it closely. On paper, Chung Yoon-Sook shared a very similar description to Ju Si-Yeon. She was also very slim and wore nothing but underwear. Her long hair was tied up in a tight ponytail, revealing her horrified grimace and bulging, heavily bloodshot eyes. The only significant difference, really, was that the rope around her neck was made out of plastic instead of fibers. A fragile end table in wood and plastic lay overturned at about an arm’s length away from her dangling feet.

“Age?”

“You tell me.”

There weren’t any real wrinkles on the victim’s face, and her skin was still youthful-looking, even in death.

“Mid-twenties,” you said. “Probably going toward her thirties.”

“When did she die?”

You reached out and carefully squeezed her exposed arms and legs. “Her muscles aren’t really that stiff,” you said. “But they’re cold. She’s probably been dead for at least thirty-six hours.”

“How do we know that she’s been murdered?”
“I… I don’t know, inspector,” you confessed.

He snorted disdainfully. “Look at her mouth.”

You stepped closer and squinted up at Chung Yoon-Sook’s swollen lips. To your embarrassment, you almost immediately spotted the dried blood in the corners of her slightly foaming mouth.

“She’s bled orally,” you said. “But why? I don’t see any bruises to her face or abdomen, inspector.”

“Her tongue has been cut off.”

A shudder trailed down your back and you stiffly turned around. “Do you think it’s the same perpetrator, inspector?”

Yoongi’s usual guise of indifference, almost boredom, didn’t change. “Perhaps,” he said simply. “The victims match each other. As do the crime scenes. We’ll need a medical examiner to look at her throat, but it’s very likely this woman also has been garrotted. It’s too early to say anything, however, and you shouldn’t form an opinion until you have all the evidence before you.”

The last thing he said struck a chord within you. A very familiar one. Because you had adhered to that same principle ever since you first began investigating for real at the academy. You had even told Taehyung to be wary about preconceived notions or ideas when you encountered Ju Si-Yeon. It was a sensible thought, really, and you had never really considered where it originally came from.

You had never considered that it was something you had gotten from Yoongi.

“Was Chung Yoon-Sook also a sex worker of some kind?” you wondered.

Yoongi gestured for you to follow him to the dresser. Confused, you obeyed. When he pulled out the top drawer, however, the creases on your forehead instantly vanished. Instead, an uncomfortable warmth flowed over your features.

“You get the picture,” said Yoongi in an emotionless tone as he picked up a neon pink vibrator. He shut the top drawer and pulled out the one below, revealing a whole armory of fake handcuffs, latex, whips and far more adventurous equipment you had seen only in BDSM porn.

There were things in the dresser that you would have loved to try yourself, and you couldn’t control your own physical reaction as Yoongi silently showed you a brief overview of the contents of the drawer. Especially since it was he who did it.

Especially after what had happened earlier with Jimin.

“Do you think it means something, inspector?” you asked immediately after Yoongi had shut the bottom drawer, desperate to get your mind on other matters and squash your growing desire. Partly because it was more than disrespectful toward the dead—no, murdered woman hanging a few meters away from you. And partly because there was this dangerously uncontrollable hunger in your chest—a hunger for mindless fucking with the best sexual partner you had ever had.

You didn’t know how much longer you could resist it. Not with Yoongi around.

Not when you had always been reckless in body, mind, heart and soul with him.

“Other than the possibility that she may have been a sex worker when alive, this could all just be a hobby. We know too little, still.”
“I wasn’t talking about the accessories or the… toys, inspector.” You awkwardly averted your gaze.
“I meant the cut-off tongue on this victim and the ears on the previous one. If we assume they’re
done by the same person, do you think it bears any specific significance?”

Yoongi’s brows furrowed slightly. “Neither of us are psychologists. We can’t answer that question
so why even bother hypothesizing?”

“Just thinking out loud, inspector,” you said quickly, then peered past him toward the corridor
outside. The crime scene investigators were crowding the doorway again, but they hastily looked
away when they saw that you were looking in their direction. “You should really let them get back to
work. I think their supervisor is here”

Yoongi snorted and adjusted his coat. “I suppose. But I can’t stand looking at their sloppy work. I’ll
drive you home.”

“I can make it back on my own,” you managed, completely taken aback by his offer. “But… thank
you, inspector.”

“7 am. Not a minute past.”

“Understood, inspector.”

He gave you a curt nod before you left.

Although you would have liked to check in on the people who had called in the dead woman as well
as Jungkook and Taehyung, you couldn’t keep up a somewhat neutral face any longer. The
nauseating feeling that had followed you all the way from your and Jimin’s apartment haunted you
still, and you kept your mouth mask on during the whole taxi ride back. You didn’t care about the
fact that you probably looked like you had some kind of infectious disease. And despite the still hot
weather, despite the happy smile and warm hug you received from Jimin as you crawled into bed
with him for the night, you felt cold inside.

Cold and lonely.

That might have contributed to the pleasant surprise you felt upon seeing Taehyung’s car when you
stepped out of the apartment building the next morning. Even though he most likely put a target on
your back by poking his head out the driver’s side window and yelling your name so loudly it
echoed throughout the complex, you found yourself smiling at the dumb grin he sent you.

“What the hell are you doing here?” you said as you jogged to the window as fast as your low-
heeled pumps allowed you, not wanting him to yell again.

He grimaced, even though his intense brown eyes still beamed with amusement. “Before Jungkook
and I left KL Hotel yesterday, the inspector found us and told us to make sure you got to HQ on time
today. He gave some weird-ass explanation about how you had been late to the crime scene but I
didn’t listen. Why did you leave without saying anything? I didn’t even know you were there!”

“Didn’t Jungkook tell you?”

“He told me he forgot.” Taehyung tsked as he shook his head, but then grew solemn. “But I guess I
can’t really blame him. I… we both saw the body. It was like the one from Friday morning, only
worse. Do you think it’s tied to the first one?”

You hurriedly climbed into the car. “I know it’s just us,” you began, “but you really shouldn’t talk
about the cases your working on in public. It’s a bad habit that might get you in serious trouble one
Taehyung just smiled. “I know you’ll protect me if management or any of the higher-ups go after me, so why should I worry about getting into ‘serious trouble’?”

“You’re cute. Now just drive before we’re both late.”

“I need some coffee first,” he said as he started the engine. “And maybe a muffin or a cookie. Or both.”

Your eyes widened. “Now? It’s six twenty in the morning! And I thought you said you need to stay in shape!”

He patted his flat stomach with one hand and grinned. “A cookie and a muffin won’t harm this instrument. You wanna have a feel, aunty?”

“You want a punch?”

Taehyung just laughed.

After grabbing some caffeinated beverages - as well as a muffin and a cookie - you and Taehyung reached the department within the appointed time. There were even more news reporters and cameramen than the day before, waving mics and smartphones and cameras in your faces, as well as vans and cameramen outside the building.

As the two of you rode the elevator to the homicide department, you were laughing at something stupid Taehyung had said. Not necessarily because it was funny, but because you simply were in a good mood, which was a drastic change from what you had been feeling the evening before.

But that was simply because Taehyung actually was a pretty good guy, somewhere beneath his often inappropriately playful and flirty ways.

Jungkook came just after you and Taehyung had settled in the meeting room. He stole more than half of Taehyung’s muffin and cookie and drank half of your latte even though he told you he had already had breakfast. When Yoongi arrived, the four of you went through the new case, or at least, what little valuable information you hadn’t uncovered the evening before. The crime scene report and the autopsy report weren’t done, and since Yoongi had insisted for them to be just as detailed as they had been with Ju Si-Yeon’s case, you weren’t expecting any new information to arrive within the next twenty-four hours. And since Ju Si-Jeon’s case had no visible leads, you were all left with no other choice but to going through the material once again to see whether you had missed anything.

“Hey, aunty, you awake?”

You were sitting in your cubicle going through Ju Si-Yeon’s pictures - a task given to you by Yoongi, since he probably didn’t want any of the guys to be looking through more than a thousand sexy images of a woman during job hours - when Taehyung’s voice cut through the otherwise silent office.

You put down the picture you had been scrutinizing and leaned back in your chair as you slowly twirled to face Taehyung. “What is it?”

“You remember the day we went through how the archives were organized?”

“You mean the day I explained how the shelves in the archives were organized and taught you how
He grinned. “Yeah, that day. Remember it?”

“Yes?”

“Great. ‘Cause I don’t and I would like to dig around in the cold cases for clues.”

You sighed and gestured at the large stack of photos you had yet to go through. “Do you see that? I have work to do. Why can’t you ask Jungkook?”

Taehyung pouted. “He doesn’t want to help his hyung. Told me I need to take responsibility for once.”

“He’s right about that,” you muttered.

“Pretty please? I did buy you coffee today.”

“Fine.” You rose and started toward the glass doors. “Follow me. I’ll go through everything again, so try to listen - and remember - this time.”

Taehyung smiled as he trailed after you. “I’ll try.”

Nobody was inside the Department of Homicide’s archives. Still, you tried to keep your voice below a conversational volume as you guided Taehyung through the shelves and aisles, as well as the manner of organization since you doubted he knew the difference between regular old libraries and archives. He appeared to listen attentively, but since he had appeared to listen attentively two years ago when you first went through the archives with him, you decided to help him.

“What exactly are you looking for?” you asked. The two of you had finished the “tour” in a small room equipped with two extra security computers furthest inside the archives. It was 10.52 according to your phone, leaving you with about an hour long window before you needed to eat.

Taehyung arched a brow, a taunting smile tilting the corners of his mouth as he leaned against the doorframe. “What, can’t get enough of me?”

You rolled your eyes. “Just let me help you while I’m being nice.”

“You know, if you were really being nice, you would let me ask you on another date.”

Frowning, you opened your mouth to respond. However, Taehyung was quicker.

“Oh, come on,” he said as he slowly approached you. “The one you gave me wasn’t fair. We went to a hangover soup restaurant to discuss your husband’s potential infidelity.”

You cringed inwardly and prayed fervently that the jealous nausea wouldn’t show on your face. “It was nice,” you said in disagreement. “And I paid for us. Just like I usually do when I hang out with you and Jungkook.”

A slight furrow appeared between Taehyung’s brows. “Yeah, well, that’s exactly it. I wanted it to be a little more special. You know, for me to dress up and pick you up - just like I did this morning - and drive you to a nice restaurant. I want to pay for your dinner, for once.”

“That’s ridiculous,” you said, even though your chest warmed at the thought of a romantic dinner with Taehyung. “I’m married.”
“I know.”

There was not even a shred of amusement or playfulness in his eyes or tone anymore. Taehyung hesitantly grasped your hand and raised it in level with your eyes. “This ring you wear reminds me every single time I look at you that I can’t make you mine. And that hurts.”

“Taehyung…” you began.

“Is this so wrong?” he asked as his intense brown eyes locked with yours, his hand still gently holding yours. “Is this so wrong of me to feel just because you’re married?”

“It’s not wrong of you,” you admitted. “But it isn’t right of me. I’m married and that’s not something that’s going to change. I love Jimin.”

It was true. You felt it, deep inside your chest. The fact that you felt so strongly toward Jimin potentially having another woman - or man - on the side confirmed it. You still loved him and you weren’t going to throw those feelings, those seven years together, just because of suspicion or jealousy or, perhaps, paranoia. You weren’t going to give up on your marriage until you saw Jimin cheating on you with your own two eyes.

You both deserved as much.

“But it can change. I mean,” continued Taehyung quickly, “you’re already suspecting he might be cheating on you. What if he is? Will you divorce him then? Will you stop loving him then?”

“Yes,” you confessed after a brief pause.

Taehyung’s expression immediately brightened. “Will you give me a chance if that day comes? An honest one.”

You pulled back your hand, away from Taehyung’s. “I can’t answer that,” you said, your thoughts admittedly traveling in the direction of Yoongi.

Taehyung carefully leaned closer. Not enough to make you uncomfortable, but enough to encroach upon your personal sphere.

“Not even a maybe?” he asked, his voice a mere murmur.

Your heart was beating hard against your ribcage. The already small room felt even smaller suddenly, and you were a lot more aware of how your senses interpreted Taehyung. He smelled of aftershave and something sweeter, perhaps fabric softener. His tanned skin looked warm to the touch, and his body was deliciously muscular with neither too much muscle nor fat. He was good-looking, far more good-looking than any of the guys you had met when you were younger and desperate for a good lay, but he was also caring and cheerful and never seemed far from a smile or a teasing comment.

And you had also considered having sex with him more times than you could count.

“Taehyung, I--”

“What’s going on in here?”

Your heart ceased its rapid beating and your body froze immediately. In front of you, Taehyung seemed to petrify momentarily as well before he, in what felt like slow motion, withdrew - and revealed Yoongi standing in the doorway.
Because of *fucking* course, he would be there.

“Well?”

“Nothing,” you blurted, feeling exactly as you had the time you and an older boy had been caught making out on the roof of your old high school building.

Yoongi didn’t respond. His cold, piercing eyes scrutinized your face, then Taehyung’s, then yours again. You weren’t breathing, and you didn’t think Taehyung was breathing either as Yoongi seemed to consider the options he had. Though, it wasn’t as if though you started to breathe again when Yoongi finally spoke.

“Leave us, constable.”

Yoongi’s tone was emotionless, his expression bored, but the cold steel lining his words was unmistakable. Taehyung must have felt it too, for his Adam’s apple bobbed as he swallowed and he practically leaped out of the room with an almost strangled: “Yes, sir.”

Yoongi appeared to follow Taehyung with his eyes for a moment before he shut the door. You couldn’t help but gulp as his eyes pierced into you, cold and hard, yet at the same time completely detached. You didn’t think he was angry, but at the same time, you didn’t think he wasn’t angry. And that’s what scared you the most.

For the inability to gauge what exactly happened underneath Min Yoongi’s guise of indifference made anything possible. He could be furious, disappointed, happy, or really anything and everything at once. The outside world would never know.

You would never know.

“I thought we discussed this.”

“We did,” you said hurriedly. “But--”

Yoongi crossed his arms over his chest. “If there’s anything I truly despise, it’s people forcing me to repeat myself. Don’t make me repeat myself, sergeant.”

“I can explain,” you said, desperately scrambling for any sort of purchase in the metaphorical jagged mountainside that was the conversation. “I know it might look bad, but--”

“I don’t want to hear your excuses,” interrupted Yoongi. “You’re leading a younger, less experienced and, most importantly, subordinate detective on. Just because you’re a woman and he’s a man doesn’t change the fact that your relationship is wrong - and extremely unprofessional.”

You frowned, a spark of anger lending courage to your, until then, slightly trembling voice. “I’m not leading him on. I’m being completely honest with him and I’ve told him what I think about his advances. I’ve tried to make him stop, but it’s not like I can force him to stop somehow, can I?”

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed. “How would that sound coming out from a man’s mouth? Or do you think you’re exempt from the general regulations just because you’re a female? Or do you not care? Do you not care about your husband?”

“Shut the fuck up.”

You had had enough. All of your frustration from your previous meetings and conversations with Yoongi had accumulated and blended together with the fear and jealousy and concern you felt
regarding Jimin and the necklace, forming the water of a dam that had reached its maximum limit. Your temper and patience had worn thin over the last couple of days and you were completely swept away by the powerful current, propelled by all of your conflicting emotion.

You couldn’t hold everything in anymore. And so you continued, even though your brain screamed at you to stop. Even though you knew you might lose your detective’s badge.

Even though you had this eerie feeling that your words would take you past a point of no return in regard to your already difficult relationship with Min Yoongi.

Your new boss - and old lover.

“Just shut the fuck up with your ‘gender role reversal’-thing,” you snarled, your nails digging into the palms of your fists. “When the fuck did you become someone who cares about shit like that? I’ve been nothing but nice and polite to you and tried to keep a professional relationship with you despite the fact that we used to fuck each other eleven years ago. But you don’t give a fuck about anything I have to say.”

You let out an incredulous snort. “You know, if I didn’t know better, if I didn’t know that you’re an unfeeling asshole, I’d actually fucking think that you’re jealous of Taehyung. Can you believe it? I’d actually think that the great and brilliant detective Min Yoongi with an ego the size of the sun is jealous of another man hitting on a past fuck!”

Not a single muscle on Yoongi’s face moved. Seconds ticked by, then turned into minutes. You breathed heavily after your outburst, and your face was burning, though more out of fury than any embarrassment. However, you refused to stand down. You refused to apologize or run out of the room, both of which were options your brain was more than comfortable with.

Because you wanted to hear Yoongi’s reply. You wanted to know what he felt beneath that mask of his.

“Fine,” he said, his tone cool and noncommittal. “I am jealous. But not because I have any feelings for you.”

You nearly gasped in pain, your heart torn asunder by old scars ripped anew. But you held your scowl. “Then why?” you demanded. “Explain: why the fuck are you jealous?”

There was another long pause during which you heard and felt nothing but your galloping heart. But then Yoongi started approaching you, and he finally answered in a voice practically vibrating with absolute dominance - and nothing less.

“Because,” he began calmly, “I’ve been wanting to fuck your brains out ever since I first saw you step out of the elevator. And the more you curse at me, the more you look at me with those rebellious eyes of yours, the more I want to break you. Until you can’t stand. Until you don’t want to stand. Do you want that, too?”
Your jaw fell slack as you stared at Yoongi in utter shock. If he had been Taehyung or anyone with a brighter disposition, you would have expected him to burst into laughter or just tell you straight up that he was joking. If he had been any other person that Min Yoongi, you would have laughed in disbelief or just punched them in the face for their boldness.

But with him, things were different. With him, things had always been different.

“...What?” you managed, not knowing whether the fluttering inside your chest was nervousness or fear - or even excitement.

Yoongi stopped at an arm’s length away from you and crossed his arms over his chest. His guise had still not shifted, and he stared you down with his cold, piercing eyes.

“I don’t care about your husband,” he said in a calm, even tone. “And judging by your blatantly obvious interest in the young constable, neither do you. Or were you not about to bend over and let Constable Taehyung fuck you?”

Irritation sparked within you, cracking the surface of surprise. “How dare you--”

“Am I wrong?”

You wanted to slap him. The audacity required to say what he just had said spoke volumes of his shamelessness and ego. Because he spoke like it was natural to find you in a secluded corner with a guy. Like it was natural for him to just walk on in and offer you his dick.

Like nothing had changed between the two of you, despite the years that had passed.

Back in the days, this was how your “meetings” usually had begun. Yoongi initiated it, be it vocally or physically, and although his initiations practically forced you to follow his lead, he always made sure you were fully onboard before he went any further. It was an unwritten ritual, programmed into you - and probably Yoongi alike - since the beginning of your relationship eleven years ago. And you couldn’t fight against it. You felt like one of Pavlov’s dogs. Only, instead of salivating to the stimuli of your conditioning, there was a warm, exhilarating feeling spreading throughout your lower stomach and even further below.

For you were experiencing a whole different kind of appetite.

“I wasn’t going to have sex with him,” you said truthfully as you struggled to keep your desires at bay. “And even if I were, who the hell are you to try and stop me? Even if I have a husband, who I sleep with or kiss is none of your business.”

“It is if they’re my subordinate, which Constable Taehyung is. You are, too, so whether it’s you or Taehyung who start something, I’ll have to get involved no matter what.”

You snorted incredulously. “So, it’s not fine with Taehyung trying to get into my pants but it’s fine with you?”

“I’m not interested in you like the young constable is. I don’t want any romance.”
“You just want sex?”

Yoongi didn’t respond. He simply regarded you with an almost bored look across his features, which was pretty incredible considering what he had just said.

How a person could be so cold was an enigma you doubted you would ever find the right answer to. If there even was a right answer.

You clenched your jaw. While part of you - the proud part - wanted you to leave with your head held high and a stinging palm, another part of you, a much bigger and more desperate part, begged for you to stay. It begged for you to wait and see what Yoongi would do should you accept his offer.

“I’m married,” you repeated, unable to decide between your conflicting sides.

“I’ve already told you I don’t care,” he said coolly, before his voice lowered and he took another step toward you. “And I’ve also already told you I hate people who make me repeat myself. So, unless you leave right this moment, you’d better get down on your knees. Before I make you.”

Your heart jolted in fear, but there was also a surge of familiar, addictive exhilaration rushing through your system as you stared back at Yoongi. His cold, piercing eyes held yours in an iron vice, and though he looked as unfazed as always, he couldn’t conceal the tension in his jaws or the glimmer of anticipation in his gaze. He didn’t want you to go. But he didn’t want you to obey either. He wasn’t going to let you.

You didn’t know what you wanted, but you knew you didn’t want to leave.

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed before he placed a hand on your shoulder. His grip was tentative at first, barely there, but when you didn’t react, he began to steadily push you down. You lowered your gaze to the floor, not wanting him to see how excited you were as your exposed knees connected with the dark, carpeted floor. Your heart was beating rapidly, and you could practically feel your pulse in your temples when Yoongi’s hand moved from your shoulder to your head.

“Look up.”

You kept your gaze glued to the floor. That is, until Yoongi grabbed hold of your ponytail and yanked your head backward, leaving you no choice but to obey. His cold, piercing eyes remained distant, as did his stony expression, but you didn’t have to look very far to discern the sudden bulge in his black slacks.

“There,” he murmured, perhaps more to himself than you. “You’re finally where you belong - on your knees.”

“I hate you,” you blurted before you could stop yourself.

Yoongi didn’t even blink. “I know. Unbuckle my belt.”

When you remained still, he pulled at your ponytail even harder, enough to send a burning sensation across your scalp. You winced at the pain, but it was nothing compared to the kindled fire in your southern regions. As crude as it was to admit it, you wanted nothing more than to feel him inside of you.

Even if it cost you your pride.

It didn’t take long for you to unbuckle Yoongi’s belt. The action came as second nature to you, so deeply ingrained into your finger muscles that it happened without any conscious thinking.
“The buttons and the zipper.”

This, too, came naturally easy to you. The buttons and the zipper all came undone within a few seconds, revealing black boxer briefs that only barely seemed able to contain the expanding bulge beneath the soft cotton. Even though you wanted to go further on your own, you simply waited for the next command. Even though the desire to touch it, to touch him, was so great it blurred the scorching hot anger and hatred boiling deep inside of you.

You truly hated Min Yoongi. You truly hated what he had done to you - and what he still was doing to you.

However, as painful as that fire was, it was nothing compared to the deliciously sweet urge between your legs. An urge that needed to be fulfilled before you would lose your mind.

“What now?” you asked quietly when Yoongi didn’t speak.

He tilted his head slightly, his cold, piercing eyes never straying away from yours. “Don’t talk unless you’re directly spoken to, sergeant. I don’t care if you’re hurting or you can’t breathe. You’ll never talk before me. Is that understood?”

“Yes, inspector;” you said.

For the first time since your stiff reunion, for the first time in eleven years, you watched Yoongi’s expression soften ever so slightly. Yet, somehow, the change hurt rather than warmed your chest.

Because he was back.

Or well, not fully. But the shadow was there. The echo of the man you had fucked, become infatuated with due to the amazing sex, then fallen head over heels for - in that exact order - was standing right there in front of you. And as his other hand carefully freed his hard and impressively large member from his underwear, you found your heart racing even faster and due to reasons other than a beautifully erect dick, something you hadn’t seen in real life in a while.

No, it was racing because you were with Min Yoongi again.

“Touch it.”

Yoongi’s voice remained carefully controlled and emotionless, but he couldn’t fully conceal the hungry restlessness in his eyes. Glad to see that you, alone, weren’t the only horny person in the room, you slowly reached up and grasped it using both of your hands. As you did, you almost stopped breathing. The length, the girth, the warmth - everything was just as you remembered it. Truly, as you sat there on your knees before Yoongi, it felt as if though no time had passed.

It felt as if though he had never broken your heart and you had never stopped loving him.

“I’m waiting.”

You shook your head clear from all your distracting thoughts and emotions. “What?”

Yoongi arched an eyebrow ever so slightly. “I thought you knew what to do with a dick by now,” he said almost admonishingly as he literally peered down his nose at you. “Especially since you’ve been together with your husband for seven years.”

“Don’t talk about him,” you snapped, angry at him for reminding you that you actually owed your fidelity to someone. Someone who wasn’t him.
Instead of getting annoyed or perhaps tugging at your ponytail as you had expected, Yoongi appeared amused. “There they are,” he murmured. “Those rebellious eyes of yours.”

“I’m leaving if you so much as mention Jimin again,” you said firmly, ignoring his words.

“Try it. See if I’ll let you go when you’re already so nicely planted on the floor with my dick in your pretty hands. When you’re so desperate for sex you were willing to let your subordinate bend you over just a few minutes ago.”

“I’m not desperate,” you said, flushing red with anger as you released your hold of Yoongi’s member. “And even if I were, I’m not desperate enough to have sex with you.”

“Good. Because I’m not looking to fuck you right now.” Yoongi trailed a faint line across your cheek before he gripped your jaw. “Open your mouth.”

Your heart was beating so fast you felt dizzy. “No.”

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes narrowed. You stared defiantly up at him, but you didn’t make any other attempts at resisting. For a part of you still enjoyed the situation, perhaps more than him. A part of you still refused to give in, still refused to bow, yet wanted to remain. It wanted to be punished. For, unfortunately, you knew that it was all a charade. You knew that you were always, ultimately, going to give in. For there was nothing that was more of a turn-on than a challenging man.

You just wanted to brave the challenge for as long as you could.

Yoongi studied your eyes for a few more seconds. But then, he slowly forced your face closer to his groin, utilizing both the iron vice he had of your jaw as well as the grasp he still had of your ponytail.

“Open your mouth,” he repeated.

“No,” you said again, even though you wanted to.

You thought you caught a glimmer of genuine exasperation in Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes. However, before you could inspect it any further, panic shot through your body like lightning. For Yoongi had pinched your nostrils together mid-breath, abruptly cutting off your primary airways. You only barely managed to refrain from gasping in surprise, but you knew you wouldn’t be able to hold your breath for very long. Your face felt hotter and hotter as the lack of air began to affect your vision, but with each second that ticked by, Yoongi only appeared increasingly more satisfied.

Finally giving in, you opened your mouth - only to have it blocked as well. You tried to jerk away, but your head immediately struck the edge of the table, causing a brief, inner blackout. You grabbed Yoongi’s wrists, but he was much stronger than his modest height and slim build conveyed. It would have been easier moving a brick wall.

“You may only breathe once I tell you to breathe. Just like you may only open your mouth when I tell you to. Is that understood?”

You nodded frantically, tears stinging the corners of your eyes.

“Open your mouth.”

You opened your mouth. Yoongi released you, but didn’t give you even a second to recover from your collision with the desk or your oxygen-deprived body. He simply grasped your head and guided you to his groin, and though his movement in no way was forceful, you were too weak to put
up with even the slightest resistance. As such, he easily slipped past your lips.

And he was inside.

“Wider.”

Blinking desperately to regain your vision, you wiped your eyes just in time to see a look of utter relief on Yoongi’s face. It disappeared just as quickly as you spotted it, however, and by the time you could fully see again, his guise was back on.

“Wider,” he said again, almost impatiently. “And use your hands.”

You obeyed eagerly. Not because he wanted you to, but because you wanted to do it. Despite the dizziness, you wanted to feel him and taste him and please him, as proven by the growing dampness in your underwear. You wrapped your fingers around his member, covering him from base to shaft, and gently sucked at the tip. All your senses were on alert, the feeling and smell of soft skin over hard muscle impossible to beat, the dominant aura Yoongi exuded affecting you like pheromones.

It had never felt better giving someone head.

“This is depressing.”

Your eyes widened, but Yoongi blocked you by placing both of his hands behind your head, making it impossible for you to withdraw. “You must have forgotten everything I taught you,” he continued coolly. “When was the last time you sucked someone’s dick or jerked someone off?”

You furrowed your brows, but since you couldn’t speak with a large dick down your throat, you raised your fingers to signal the amount of time that had passed since Jimin allowed you to go down on him.

“Five months?”

You, somehow, managed to shake your head.

“Five years?”

You nodded.

Yoongi released the hold he had of your head, allowing you to pull back. While your face still felt all flushed and warm, his complexion was just as pale as always. And to your horror, his dick was no longer fully erect.

Maybe it really was your fault Jimin avoided having sex with you.

“Who did you suck off?”

“My husband.” You frowned as you wiped the saliva from your mouth using the back of your hand. “Who else?”

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes widened slightly. “You’ve never cheated on him?”

“Of course not.”

You almost thought he was going to smirk, but in the end, he merely let out a snort.

“Isn’t that sweet,” he mumbled. “You say it with such a straight face even though you choked on my
dick just a few seconds ago.”

Indignation caused your face to redden again, but before you could say anything, Yoongi grabbed your head and pulled you close again. Instinctively, you resisted, but that only seemed to make him even more excited. A familiar surge through your lower regions reminded you that he wasn’t alone in enjoying the encounter.

“Open your mouth,” he said quietly. “Relax your jaw and neck. Let me show you how I want it. Also, don’t expect to be breathing any soon.”

You didn’t have the time to speak or protest. Suddenly, your whole mouth was filled with dick, far more than you were used to handling. It stretched out your jaw muscles and blocked your airway completely. You couldn’t believe the difference between Yoongi and Jimin, especially since you quickly realized the tender hardness between your lips was growing longer and thicker.

Instinctively, you placed your hands on Yoongi’s thighs in order to push away from him, but you caught yourself in the last second. It wasn’t scary or painful, and even though it was uncomfortable, it wasn’t unpleasant. Not at all. For despite the firm hands keeping your head in place, you remembered going through a lot rougher treatments from Yoongi.

And you remembered just how turned on you had been in those oppressive, impossible-to-escape situations.

Yoongi suddenly released you. You retreated and gasped for air, not having realized just how much your lungs burned from lack of air. Your throat felt sore, as did your jaw, but as you looked up to find Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes, you understood that he was merely waiting.

He wanted you to do it on your own.

Gingerly, you grasped Yoongi’s member, which was completely soaked in your saliva. You didn’t wipe it away, however, since you knew Yoongi - at least used to - liked it messy.

Almost as much as you.

You began caressing him from tip to base, occasionally mixing in a sloppy kiss to prevent too much friction. Yoongi’s dick remained hard, but it was nowhere near as tense as when he had forced it down your throat, which, frankly, hurt your ego a bit. Or well, not just a bit. A lot. It hurt a lot. Because apart from Jimin, you had never engaged in anything sexual with a dick that wasn’t fully erect. In fact, it wasn’t until you met him that you began to question your sexual prowess.

Sex with Yoongi had always been merciless in the best ways possible.

Yoongi suddenly yanked at your ponytail, forcing you to meet his cold, piercing eyes. “Enough with the teasing,” he said. “Show me what you can really do with that mouth of yours.”

Although you had a strong desire to disobey and just continue to jerk him off, you had an even stronger desire to obey. As such, you continued to tease him with your gazes still locked. But only until you saw him clench his jaws and your scalp began burning again. When that happened, you finally parted your lips and took him in.

“Yes, just like that. Take it all the way in.”

You nearly choked as Yoongi pushed in before you were ready, but you managed to relax your throat and jaw enough to avoid triggering the vomiting reflex. There was still a part of him exposed, however, so you continued to touch him with your right hand while your left hand traveled to his
abdomen. Although his stomach was flat, it was soft and not very defined at all. He didn’t need abs for you to find him soaking hot but you remembered teasing him for it when you were both younger.

Much younger.

“Concentrate, sergeant. Or do you want me to take over?”

Returning from your depressing reverie, you focused on the matter at hand. You sucked harder, and gripped him with both of your hands before you methodically moved them up and down his length. The tiniest moan drew your attention, and as you looked up at Yoongi, dick still firmly held in place by your lips, you saw his mask slip completely for half a breath. There was a look of complete relaxation on his otherwise so impenetrably expressionless features, and you could feel his fingers loosening around your ponytail. He still had a hand resting on the back of your head, however, and as you continued to look up at him while you licked and tugged, the hand started to stop you from pulling away.

And with that, you knew he was close.

You increased the pressure around his girth, which elicited another muffled moan above you. Yoongi’s eyes fluttered close, and you were briefly mesmerized by the change in his whole demeanor. The demanding aura of authority and control was gone, replaced instead by a look of absolute vulnerability. It remained even as he suddenly clutched your head with both of your hands. Even as he sandwiched you between his groin and the table behind you, leaving you no room to wiggle or withdraw as the inevitable drew near.

It was beautiful. He was beautiful. And you fucking loved him still. Time had done nothing to changed or convert your feelings, no matter how much you claimed to hate him.

And that knowledge, that realization hurt you far more than the forcefulness of Yoongi’s orgasm. For at that point, you realized just how pathetic and hopeless you were.

Married to a guy you had been seeing for seven years, yet still, you yearned for the taste and sensation of another man’s dick. Even a man you had sworn to never see again after what he had done to you. A man who had broken your heart so utterly and brutally you thought the pain would kill you.

And still, the wetness between your legs grew.

Yoongi let out a quiet groan before he finally released you and took a step back. Your throat hurt more than ever, and the bitter taste of his semen was overwhelming. Some of it trickled down the corners of your lips, mixed together with even more saliva, but before you could wipe it off, Yoongi clasped your wrist.

“Don’t even think about it.”

He was sweaty underneath his black bangs, and his cheeks were rosy. However, the coldness in his piercing eyes was just as ruthless as always, and you didn’t have to ask to know what he was demanding.

Even though the bitter taste was far from appetizing, you wordlessly licked up what remained of Yoongi’s orgasm. After cleaning your mouth and fingers, you immediately shuffled closer to him and reached for his member. One hand buried deep in his black tresses, Yoongi initially flinched away and continued to back in tandem with you crawling closer. However, as you began to delicately caress him with only your tongue, he stopped and allowed you to envelop him again.
Yoongi was no longer as thick or large as before, but judging by the clenching of his jaws, he seemed a lot more sensitive. Amused, you deliberately took your time with him. By the time you were done, there was a slight furrow between his brows and his tie had come undone. His uncharacteristically tousled hair and messy clothes made him irresistible. Even more so, since you knew it was a product of your making. It was you who had made uptight and proper and emotionless Min Yoongi’s facade drop.

“Meeting room in an hour. Bring the constables.”

You frowned as Yoongi began to adjust his hair and clothes, his face turned away from you. “But,” you began, before you bit your lip and stopped yourself.

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes found yours over his shoulder. “What?”

“I’m also, you know--”

“You’ll get your reward once you’ve earned it.”

Your frown deepened. “How do I earn it?”

Yoongi glanced at his wristwatch. “When you can make me cum in less than five minutes, I’ll consider it.”

“‘Five’?” you echoed incredulously.

“You’ve succeeded before.”

“I…” You fought back a blush as your thoughts briefly drifted down memory lane. “I don’t think I can pull off that move again. I’m too old.”

“Then you’d better figure something out, my puppy.”

You froze. And judging by the sudden rigidity that spread across Yoongi’s body, so did he. You opened your mouth to say something, but he was out of the door before you had the time to take a breath. You scrambled after him, but your legs were too weak. Besides, you still had a very wet situation in your underwear that you needed to take care of.

My puppy. It had been your nickname back in the days, both while he fucked you so hard you almost lost consciousness and while he drove you back to your grandparents from wherever place he fucked you. It had been your nickname back in the days, both when he spontaneously showed up outside your high school just to get a blow job or hand job - or any other quickie - and when he ordered you to sneak out in the middle of the night wearing a big mouth mask and a cap so that people couldn’t really guess your age as the two of you checked in on cheap love hotels for a few hours of non-stop sex.

That had been your nickname when you realized you loved him from the bottom of your heart - and the words you had clung to when he all of a sudden vanished from your life, leaving you with nothing but memories. Memories and a, perhaps, forever bleeding heart.

Chapter End Notes

So, my first time ever writing a smut scene. I have no idea how I did since I’ve never
written anything similar, not even privately. It was therefore really difficult and took a lot more time to write than a usual chapter. Anyway, I hope you thoroughly enjoyed it and you can look forward to more in the rest of the story!

Also, just as a heads up, if things were too much for you this chapter, I've got some bad news: it's only getting rougher and darker from here on out. So, even if you despise the smut parts, I hope you can bear it for the sake of the story!
When you had gathered yourself enough to rise - and remain standing - you headed immediately for the bathroom. Fortunately, nobody was in the office, not even Yoongi, which meant nobody saw and noticed for how long you were locked inside, doing your best to… well, wash up and appear presentable.

Your reflection in the mirror filled you with shame. Both because you really looked like you had been sucking a dick, and because you looked ecstatic to have been sucking said dick. There was color in your cheeks, and you couldn’t deny the excitement coursing throughout your body like adrenaline. Your heart felt numb and everything in your head stood still, yet you didn’t think you had ever felt so fully alive. Not since Yoongi had left you.

It was humiliating, yet exquisitely exhilarating.

You wanted to punch yourself. What had you done to yourself? And what the hell were you thinking? You were married, yet here you were, brimming with anticipation and eagerness over another man’s dick.

It was wrong. No, actually, it was more than wrong. It was unnatural. Especially since you, in your head, knew that you still loved Jimin and that you despised Yoongi. You knew you did.

Only, your body didn’t.

There were several texts and a missed call from Taehyung as well as Jungkook, but you ignored them as you headed to a nearby café. They both probably knew you well enough to realize something more than a stern conversation had occurred between you and Yoongi. Not that you thought they would be able to tell that you had been drooling over his crotch, but still.

You couldn’t let anyone know that you’d lost your resolve.

After lunch, you were last to enter the meeting room. Taehyung and Jungkook waited quietly in their seats, giving you a quick glance and a smile when they saw you. There was a silent inquiry in Taehyung’s eyes as he gestured at his phone discreetly, but you simply shook your head. You doubted you would be able to text during the meeting, and even if you could, you had nothing to tell Taehyung.

What had happened in the archives was an accident. A mistake. It wasn’t going to happen again.

Or at least, that’s what you tried convincing yourself.

“You’re late, sergeant. Again.”

Yoongi didn’t look up from his notebook. He looked as bored and indifferent as always, not even a hair or wrinkle out of place. You didn’t know where he had gone after the incident, but you couldn’t rid yourself of the image of how he had appeared just an hour ago. Rosy cheeks, disheveled hair and undone tie aside, you couldn’t forget the change in his expression. You couldn’t forget his face at the moment just before his climax. When his mask had slipped and you had caught a glimpse of the man underneath.

The man who made you feel like you were young and stupidly in love again.

“I’m sorry,” you said, balling your hands into fists underneath the table. “It won’t happen again,
inspector.”

Your eyes widened slightly in surprise. You hadn’t forgotten it for once, and judging by the cold, piercing glance Yoongi aimed your way, he had noticed it too.

And for a split second, you thought you saw the corners of his mouth rise.

There was a brief pause. Barely long enough to draw any attention from Taehyung or Jungkook, but long enough for you to suffer in the suspense. Your emotions were at war with one another, as were your heart and brain, constantly trying to pull you in different directions.

One part of you just wanted to run out of the station and find Jimin and confess to what you had done and beg for forgiveness. A second part of you wanted to wait until the meeting was over so you could talk to Yoongi in private and explain that you had made a mistake, after which you called Jimin to, again, beg for forgiveness. But a third and much larger part of you wanted to tease Yoongi underneath the table just to provoke a reaction and another encounter where he completely overwhelmed you. It wanted more, much more, so much you couldn’t handle it and then some more. It wanted him.

You were brought out of your reverie when Yoongi put down his notebook and patted the thick folder in front of him.

“I have photos of the crime scene and part of the autopsy and crime scene report in here,” he began coolly as he looked at the three of you in order. “The remaining details of the autopsy will take at least another twelve hours since they aren’t done with the final testings yet, while the more technical details of the crime scene report should arrive tomorrow. The tech team is working on her phone and laptop as we speak.” He paused and leveled his gaze with Taehyung’s. “Constable Taehyung, get on the whiteboard.”

“Yes, sir,” said Taehyung, immediately obeying.

Yoongi looked from Jungkook to you. “Begin with the victim profile.”

“Name is Chung Yoon-Sook,” you said, remembering the name from the day before. “She shares similar characteristics as our other victim and was found hanging from the ceiling as well.”

“Cause of death is also the same,” said Jungkook after opening the folder. He scanned the page on the top of the stack before sliding it over to you.

“‘Asphyxiation by ligature strangulation but not by hanging,’ you read out loud. “Petechial hemorrhaging, swollen lips, fractured hyoid bone… it’s all the same. Well, except for the tongue and ears.”

“Had both been removed?” asked Taehyung, pausing in the middle of his scribbling.

You grimaced. “No. Just the tongue. Her ears were still there.”

“Weird. Is it the same killer then?”

You glanced at Yoongi, but he didn’t even blink as he looked back at you in silence. “Maybe,” you said. “How much does the press know?”

“You think it’s a copycat?” asked Jungkook, pausing in his browsing of the folder.
“I admit it’s a bit early for that,” you replied, “but I don’t know how much got leaked. We can’t rule out any possibilities.”

“I think they know a lot,” said Taehyung, who was looking at his phone. “The first article I found wrote about the hanging, and that the victim died prior to the set-up and had her ears cut up post-mortem. They also wrote that the victim was a sex worker.”

You frowned. “That’s not something a patrol officer would know. Either the leak is from a sergeant in one of the involved departments or…”

Jungkook arched a gentle brow. “Or?”

You shook your head. “No, nothing. It was a stupid thought. Anyways, you find the crime scene report yet?”

Jungkook and Taehyung both eyed you for a moment, and you felt the weight of Yoongi’s gaze as well. However, you were adamant about not finishing the sentence. It was stupid, it really was.

Because if the leak wasn’t from a sergeant in another department, that meant it was one of the people around the table. And you weren’t going to suspect anyone there. It simply wasn’t possible.

“Here,” said Jungkook, handing over another sheet of paper.

You skimmed through the page. “Nothing of interest. Chung Yoon-Sook was most likely also a sex worker. We won’t know if she also was a webcam girl until the tech department are done digging. What about the people who found her?”

“It was the hotel clerk,” said Taehyung while writing. “He had gotten complaints about a smell for a while and finally headed up to check the room. He called the police immediately after opening the door.”

“What did he know about the victim?” you asked as you grabbed your pen, ready to write down potentially important details in your notepad.

He paused and turned around to meet your eyes. “Just that she was out a lot, especially at evenings, and that there were times when she was gone for a day or two. She always paid for her room though.”

“How long had she been staying there?”

“About three weeks.”

“Did he ever see her bring back company? Or talk to someone on her phone?”

Taehyung shook his head. “She was a quiet and discreet woman.”

You rubbed your forehead and leaned back into the chair. “That’s not helpful at all. Do we at least have some of her family’s contact information?”

“Yes.”

Your brows rose as you, Taehyung and Jungkook instantly shifted your attention to Yoongi. “We do?” you asked.

His cold, piercing eyes narrowed, and you realized you had made him have to repeat himself.
“Yes,” he said icily as he rose. “You and I are going to meet the victim’s parents to deliver a death notification. The constables will remain put and go through the material we have.”

You stiffened. Not because you were going with Yoongi again but because of what he had said. Death notices were never pleasant, neither as a receiver nor a notifier. You had avoided the task in Daegu, going merely when you were forced to by an inspector. To be completely honest, you weren’t eloquent or perhaps empathetic enough to notify receivers with the compassion you had witnessed among your former superiors. It was an art form, and you were nowhere nearly skilled in the area.

That is why Yoongi completely stunned you when the two of you sank down in the living room of Chung Yoon-Sook’s parents.

“I’m devastated to be the bearer of such bad news, but your daughter has unfortunately passed.”

Everything about Yoongi had changed. His sharp, emotionless voice; his indifferent expression and cold, piercing eyes. Even his unwavering demeanor and posture had been replaced by a softer figure, a kinder and gentler man filled with nothing but compassion and sorrow.

You couldn’t believe your eyes.

Completely enraptured, you merely listened to Yoongi, barely acknowledging the presence of Chung Yoon-Sook’s elderly parents, who both burst into tears upon hearing Yoongi’s words. You couldn’t tear your gaze away from him during the conversation, and almost forgot to say goodbye as the two of you left the house. It wasn’t until you were in the Hyundai that you fell out of your daze.

“What…” You cleared your throat. “What was that? Inside the house?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Unless it’s your inability to speak a single word of comfort to a pair of grieving parents.”

“You,” you said simply. “…I’ve never seen you that… that gentle.”

Yoongi had just been about to turn the car key when he aimed a sharp glance your direction, lowering the hand with the key to his knee. His guise was back on, and his voice was as unrelenting as always.

“How else would you deliver the news of a woman’s death to her parents?” he asked.

“I didn’t mean it in a bad way,” you said quickly, averting your gaze. “I just didn’t expect it from you. I mean, I could never do that. Be as gentle as you were.”

“You can. You just need some more experience.”

You turned back toward him, eyes wide. For a moment, he met your eyes with a surprisingly soft expression, his head leaned back against the headrest. Your heart managed to beat twice before his hard guise returned and he started the car.

“Any news from the constables?”

You checked your phone. It had taken a while to drive to Chung Yoon-Sook’s parents since they lived outside the city, but there were no news other than a text from Taehyung wondering if you wanted to drink with them later.

“Nothing,” you said. “You haven’t gotten anything from Jungkook, right?”
Without looking away from the road, Yoongi unpocketed his phone and gave it to you. “Check.”

A little surprised by the gesture, it took you a few seconds extra before you obeyed.

“Nothing,” you said again and returned his phone.

Yoongi took it wordlessly.

An awkward silence fell. Yoongi wasn’t a big fan of the radio, so you knew you couldn’t expect some music or ambient talking to lighten the mood. You considered looking through the news on your phone when he broke the unnervingly quiet atmosphere.

“How’s your throat?”

You frowned momentarily, not understanding what he meant. Then you did.

“I’m a bit sore.” You reached up and caressed your neck. “But I’ll be fine. I was just a bit… overwhelmed.”

“You always are.”

“Yeah,” you confessed, averting your gaze. It was kind of the point.

“Was it too much?”

“No,” you said truthfully, admittedly surprised by his concern. “You… you’ve been a lot rougher with me.”

There was a snort but nothing else.

You stared down at your lap. You didn’t know how you felt about Yoongi referring to or acknowledging old times. It felt strangely good, in a reassuring kind of way. Like the two of you hadn’t just spent eleven years apart. Like you had simply gotten over him after meeting Jimin, and that the two of you were merely former coworkers. Maybe even old friends.

But it also felt as though he reopened your wounds and poured salt in them.

You cleared your throat. “Look, what happened back at the archives… it’s not going to happen again. I don’t know what the hell I was thinking, but I’d appreciate if you could just forget what happened and pretend like we’re just co-workers.”

“We are just co-workers.”

“You know what I mean. Co-workers that just work together and maybe drink together. Nothing more.”

You finally mustered enough courage to look at Yoongi. He wore an emotionless expression, his cold, piercing eyes glued to the road outside, his hand draped lazily along the curve of the wheel. Nothing but his lips moved as he replied.

“Did you or did you not want to give me a blowjob?”

“I…”

He sent you a sharp, sideways glance. “If you think you can lie to me, you’re stupider than you were ten years ago.”
Your hands balled into fists. Anger rose within you, your temper provoked by the reminder and the memories of him that inevitably returned to haunt you. “With all due respect, inspector--”

“You haven’t called me inspector even once this conversation. Don’t try to play sophisticated. Just get to the point.”

“Yoongi,” you said firmly, feeling increasingly exasperated and annoyed. “I don’t want anything else to happen between us. I’m married. And my husband is actually a really good person.”

Yoongi opened his mouth almost before you finished your sentence but then clenched his jaw. There was a brief pause before he responded.

“I don’t want a relationship with you,” he said curtly. “As I’ve mentioned, I just want to fuck you sometimes. That’s it.”

You managed to hold back a “why?” in the last second which was fortunate since you doubted your heart could take his answer. An answer that was bound to be as heartless as him.

“I’m not gonna cheat on Jimin,” you said firmly. “Not again.”

“You’re not cheating on him,” said Yoongi matter-of-factly. “We feel nothing for each other, right?”

“Yeah?” you said in what you prayed was a casual tone.

“I just want to feel you,” he said in an unusually gentle voice. “You make me harder than anyone. You always have. At least you used to.”

He threw you a sideways glance. “I don’t know how good you are in other situations, but it’s obvious you haven’t treated your husband right.”

“It’s not me,” you said sharply, returning a furious glare. “It’s him. He doesn’t want anything. I mean, I can barely kiss him. He can’t even get a hard-on.”

“He’s gay.”

“What?” you exclaimed, eyes wide.

“Either that, or he’s cheating on you.” Yoongi leaned back against the headrest again. “You two married young. That’s what happens when you make such a huge commitment at your age. It’s terrifying.”

“You speak like you’re that much older than me,” you said, crossing your arms over your chest. “You’re just seven years older.”

“Seven years is a lot. I was shooting three-pointers and playing the piano when you were born.”

You gave him a dubious look. “You’ve never played the piano.”

“I have. Still do, sometimes.”

“Liar. And I doubt you could shoot three-pointers in first grade.”

He made a light shrug.

You regarded him closely. Although his guise was still on, Yoongi seemed a lot less uptight and strict. His posture was relaxed, and the ice in his eyes wasn’t fully as cold as it was at the office.
Once again, you couldn’t help but think about what could have been.

“I’m not going to force you into something,” began Yoongi suddenly, his voice calm and collected. “But we’re both adults who like sex. Since your partner doesn’t, and most likely is cheating on you already, what’s stopping you? I won’t tell anyone, and I won’t let it interfere with our duty. Once you want everything to stop, we’ll stop. Once you want to start again, we’ll start again. If you really never want me to approach you again, give me a clear answer now, or I won’t be able to stop myself from bending you over my desk.”

“You wanna go when we get back again?” you asked, eyebrows raised. “Already?”

“I want you to suck my dick now. You’ve gotta decide if you want to or not.”

You stared at him in disbelief. “You’re driving,” you said.

“What a clever observation.”

“I’ve never done that,” you said. “We’ve never done that. Not while you’re driving. What if people see me? We’re on the highway now, but what about when we reach Sangdo?”

You could have sworn the corners of Yoongi’s mouth tilted upward before he looked at you, a stern mask in place of his features.

“You’d better hurry up and decide then.”

You shifted your gaze to the roads and passing scenery outside. What were you going to do? On one hand, you were afraid to give in. You were scared of where the road might lead and terrified of how it might affect you. How Yoongi might affect you.

You hated him; you loved him. Honestly, you didn’t know. Whichever the case, you knew you felt strongly toward him one way or another, and you had always been impulsive around him. Probably because you met him when you were seventeen and far too young to fall so violently in love with someone who probably only wanted to fuck you. Just like he wanted to fuck you more than a decade later.

Nothing more, nothing less.

On the other, you knew that you loved Jimin. You felt it, from head to toe. Mind, heart and body all agreed that you did not want to lose him. His beautifully innocent and sweet smile, his kind demeanor and gentle personality. How he always put you first, even though you did not want him to. You didn’t want to hurt him.

But you did not want him to hurt you either. And he had been hurting you for years.

Just the thought of being replaced by a younger, prettier and probably a lot nicer woman - or man - made your blood freeze. Not only would it mean that he had never loved you - it would mean that despite your best efforts of moving on from Yoongi and the massive scar he had left on your soul, you had gotten nowhere. Nowhere in your career and nowhere in your life.

It would mean you were still the naive, stupid little seventeen-year-old girl who fell head over heels in love with an older guy who was just looking for fun, no strings attached.

That jewelry set wasn’t for you. It was obvious since he had kept the presents together, hidden, but only given you the card and the perfume. A perfume you barely could look at, even less use. You had put it with the rest of your bottles and flasks on a dresser in your and Jimin’s bedroom, far in the
back where you couldn’t see it, not even when you focused.

That necklace and those earrings weren’t meant for you. Yoongi, or at least his dick, was.

Yoongi’s expression didn’t change in the least when you placed your hand on his thigh. Not even when you unfastened yourself from the seat and began leaning over. He did, however, unhook his own seatbelt, thus exposing his belt, and spread his legs slightly.

You unbuckled his belt and zipper with fingers trembling from anticipation and excitement. Having sex at unconventional places - and in unconventional ways - had always been a huge turn-on. Almost as huge a turn-on as Yoongi’s rough, demanding and dominating nature. So, even though you knew how risky it was, especially in broad daylight, that only made it more exhilarating.

There was already a bulge in Yoongi’s boxer briefs. It grew immediately when you caressed it with your hand, and even more when you hooked a finger underneath the elastic waistband.

“We’re twenty kilometers from Sangdo,” said Yoongi abruptly. “You have about twelve minutes before we’re inside the city. If you can make me come earlier, I might feel generous enough to reward you, depending on how quickly you work.”

Nervousness settled in. “What if I fail?” you asked as you peered up at him. “What if I can’t make it on time?”

Yoongi finally glanced down at you, his eyes cold, yet with a glimmer of dark satisfaction. “If you can’t make me come before that, I’ll have you drinking my cum all the way to the station. Even if we’re surrounded by buses and cars and pedestrians. Even if we’re stuck in traffic and a whole kindergarten class passes by. Everyone will see how much you enjoy sucking my dick.”

You would have crossed your legs if you had more room. Since you didn’t, you simply squeezed your thighs together, a lower tension coiling between them.

Yoongi’s attention had returned to the view outside. His features remained unreadable when you freed his member, even as you began stroking it with one hand. You couldn’t see his face as you placed your lips around him, but you felt his thigh tense up when you enveloped more of him.

Glad to at least feel a physical response from Yoongi - something you had struggled to illicit in Jimin for years - you moved your other hand further up his thigh, both to support yourself and to touch more of him. It was perhaps on the pathetic side, but you couldn’t control yourself. Your body moved before your mind could think, and you could only hope that Yoongi didn’t interpret your gestures as anything other than just that - a gesture.

He must never know that you felt something, anything, for him.

“Deeper.”

A weight on the back of your head pushed you firmly down onto Yoongi’s member. You were just about to protest and resist, the width of his shaft too intense to withstand for any longer, when his thigh tensed further underneath your palm, and you heard a quiet, almost muffled groan from him. Stupid as it might sound, it filled you with a sense of accomplishment. You had always liked hearing guys make sounds during acts of sex, especially when it was involuntary.

A stinging pain coursed throughout your scalp as Yoongi grasped your ponytail, bringing your head back up. You gasped for air, feeling slightly lightheaded, which was an intoxicating sensation in itself.
But it didn’t leave you in the best state to talk.

“You’re doing better,” said Yoongi, his eyes still on the road.

“T-thank you, inspector,” you managed, your voice croaky.

“You’re learning.”

He didn’t give you the chance to talk before he forced your head back down. You were taken by surprise and barely managed to take a breath before you suffocated around his girth. It was overwhelming and intense - almost too overwhelming and intense. But just before you reached a point where you couldn’t take it anymore, Yoongi released you.

“Seven minutes.”

You took a few deep breaths to calm your panicking lungs and systems before you wrapped your mouth and both of your hands around Yoongi’s member. It was a bit of a tricky situation since you had to avoid the gearshift as well as hold yourself up without any support. But you adapted and quickly built up a rhythm that made Yoongi moan underneath his breath once more.

“That’s it,” he murmured. “Just continue like that.”

Glad that you apparently weren’t as pathetic as you had been in the archives, you tightened your grip. He grew harder, making it difficult to fully swallow him up, but you ignored your protesting jaw and vomiting reflex, too turned on yourself.

This was it. What you wanted. Someone who wanted to be touched by you in every way. Someone who didn’t make you feel like an abnormality for enjoying anything that fell under the category of sex.

You began reaching for your own point of pleasure, but Yoongi grabbed your wrist before you could move your hand anywhere. Frowning, you raised your head from his groin, both in order to speak with Yoongi on equal eye-height and to see if there were any cars driving alongside yours. Fortunately, there weren’t.

Unfortunately, you realized you were much closer to Sangdo than you had thought. Much, much closer.

“You’ve failed.”

Your frown deepened as you looked at Yoongi. “What?”

He released your wrist and draped his hand over the wheel. “You’re not going to make me come in the time that remains until we’re in the city,” he said. “You might have actually succeeded if you just kept on going, but you got greedy.”

“I can’t touch myself?” you asked, feeling both confused and irritated, though more out of disappointment than anger.

“You touch yourself when I tell you to touch yourself. You breathe when I tell you to breathe.”

A shiver trailed down your spine, but you managed to keep your face neutral. Hopefully.

Yoongi slanted you a cold glance. “Get back on it,” he said before focusing on driving again.

When you didn’t immediately obey, he seemed more satisfied than annoyed. “I don’t have to look at
you to know that you’re glaring at me. But if you think that will make me anything but harder, you’re wrong. I like it when you resist. I prefer it to your sloppy blowjobs actually.”

“It’s not fair,” you said, only barely managing to maintain a scowl on your face. His words had made your blood rush.

“I’m not fair,” he said without pause. “I don’t want you touching yourself.”

“Not even when I’m home?”

“Never.”

“Why?”

“I don’t like sharing anything that’s mine.”

For a moment, your heart stopped. But it quickly resumed its vital beating when Yoongi continued.

“Your body is mine,” he said like he was stating what kind of weather it was. Not even the tiniest hint of passion or emotion flickered across his hard mask.

He was simply speaking.

You averted your gaze and crossed your arms over chest. Both because you wanted to show him how exactly you felt about his statement and because your chest felt like it was about to burst. It hurt so badly you could have cried.

Of course, he just wanted your body. You had always been nothing more than a quick, easy fuck buddy. Nothing in your heart or head mattered to him. Despite what he had said in the car when he drove you home a few days ago, he had most likely forgotten you completely when he ended things between the two of you.

Yet he was your first love and someone you could never fully forget.

Traffic inside Sangdo was thick as syrup, leaving the car to merely crawl across the asphalt. Yoongi zipped up his pants and put on his seatbelt during a red light, mentioning nothing of his earlier threat. You didn’t know why he didn’t force you down his dick, seeing as he had had no troubles doing it in the archives, but you were glad for it.

You didn’t think you could play along at that moment.

“Tell the constables you may all leave for the day.”

Yoongi had parked the car in the parking lot of Sangdo Special Investigations Headquarters. He didn’t look at you, but he didn’t immediately step out of the vehicle. It felt almost as if he were waiting on something.

Almost as if he knew what you were about to say.

“I…”

You pursed your lips, inwardly smacking yourself with an imaginary bat. What were you going to say? That you wanted to fuck him but also didn’t because you were afraid to be hurt by him again? That you still had feelings for him, despite the many years that had passed, despite the fact that he ended things with you just by ignoring your calls and texts? Without even a goodbye or an explanation or a proper break-up?
That you loved him and hated him and wanted him even though you were married?

“I was wondering if you wanted to follow me and the guys to a samgyeopsal place,” you said finally, speaking rapidly in order to make up for the brief pause. “Having food and drinks around could break the ice and make it easier for you to get to know Taehyung and Jungkook.”

“No.”

“‘No’, you don’t want to come or ‘no’, you don’t think it will be easier for everyone to get better acquainted?”

“Both.”

You furrowed your brows as you glanced at Yoongi. His face gave away nothing.

“But--” you began.

“I’ve got no interest being with you or the constables. Unless we’re fucking or working, don’t bother with me.”

And with that, he exited the car.
“Aunty, aren’t you drinking too much again?”

You pointed loosely in the direction of Taehyung’s voice, admittedly too drunk to bother with eye contact. Also, you were too lazy to raise your head from the nice, smooth surface of the table. You liked tables. They were nice. Polite. They didn’t have needs. They were your friends.

“Hey, aunty, are you listening?”

“I’m not,” you said, slurring with every vowel. “I’m… not drinking too much. Besides… who do you think you are? My… dad?”

There was a gentle sigh, but Taehyung didn’t sound altogether offended as he replied.

“Here she goes again. Jungkook, I’ll get her home this time.”

“By yourself?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you sure, hyung? I don’t think she can stand.”

“I didn’t go to the gym for all these years for nothing.”

The world turned as you felt yourself being lifted from the chair. A less experienced drinker might have thrown up, but you definitely didn’t. Instead, you merely groaned.

Before you knew it, you found yourself leaning face-first against the familiar surface of your apartment door. You didn’t remember how exactly Taehyung got you into the taxi, even less home, and were struggling to wrap your head around the sudden change of environment when a hand patted you amicably on your back.

“There, there,” you heard him say softly. “Let’s get you inside.”

“Not yet,” you managed. “I don’t… want to go back yet.”

“But it’s your place.”

“Yeah, well…”

You slowly maneuvered around, supporting yourself against the door as you turned, and peered up at Taehyung. He didn’t look like he had been out drinking, other than that his shirt was buttoned-up in the neck. His hair also wasn’t as carefully styled as it usually was at the office, looking instead as if though he had dragged his hand through it more than a handful of times. Your purse dangled from his shoulder.

“You look good,” you said without really feeling your lips moving.

“Oh, come on.” Taehyung slanted you a friendly smile as he rummaged through your bag. “Don’t tease me like that. I might actually think you mean it.”

“I mean it.” You pushed off the wall lightly and reached up to touch his hair. “I like your hair more like this…” You withdrew and leaned back up against the wall again. “You know, you’re really
pretty for a guy. Little Jungkookie too.”

Taehyung averted his gaze, his smile fading away. “(Y/N), I--”

“Do you think Jimin is cheating on me with a pretty guy like you? Are you his secret boyfriend?”

His jaw dropped as he stared back at you. “Of course not! Why would you even suggest that?”

“I don’t know,” you said, your throat suddenly thickening. “It just feels like he’s out of reach for me. That he’s always been out of reach for me. That I’ve never been good enough. That I’m just there to be his sex toy.”

Taehyung frowned slightly. “Wait, I thought the issue was that Jimin didn’t want to sleep with you?”

Shit. You had been talking about the wrong person without even knowing it.

“Oh yeah, that’s what I meant.” You rubbed your face with both of your hands and chuckled. “I’m fucking wasted.”

Taehyung gave you a faint smile. “I can tell. Well, let’s get you inside.”

“I still don’t want to.” You took a step closer to Taehyung and, a bit hesitantly, reached for his arm. “Can’t I stay at yours? I can sleep on the sofa or on the floor.”

He made a face. “Even though I wouldn’t mind normally, my place is a mess right now. Been redecorating and throwing out old furniture. The floor is too dirty for you to sleep on.”

“Please, Taehyung.” You eliminated more space between the two of you and draped your arms over his shoulders. “I’m desperate. We can share bed. I just don’t want to sleep next to Jimin tonight,” you added before he could protest. “I can’t.”

You could see Taehyung at conflict with himself, frantically chewing at his bottom lip as he looked down at you. The struggle he went through was obvious in his eyes. But then finally, he sighed and shook his head.

“As much as I’d like to, I can’t.”

You immediately backed away, physically hurt by the rejection. “Why?”

He opened his mouth, then shut it again as he dropped his gaze to the floor.

“I wouldn’t be able to stop myself.”

“I wouldn’t want you to,” you said plainly.

“Well… still.” Taehyung finally seemed to find your keys and unlocked the door, holding it open for you to enter. “You would regret it immediately after it happened. And I don’t want you to regret anything you and I do together.”

You wanted to insist that you wouldn’t, but in truth, you knew you would regret sleeping with Taehyung. Perhaps not in ten years when who knows what happened between you and Jimin. But in ten hours, for sure.

However, ten minutes later, when you were finally in your bed next to your blissfully ignorant husband, you were craving human touch more than ever.
Although you considered getting on a website with your vibrator again, you decided not to. Partly because you were too drunk to bother, and partly because you were just not in the mood. Or well, you were in the mood, but you weren’t in the mood doing it with yourself.

There was also that little car ride with Yoongi when he told you he didn’t want you touching yourself.

Glancing at the faint silhouette of Jimin’s body lying on the side, you considered cuddling up to him, if only for some warmth. If only for some small sort of reminder that you and he were still together and that nobody else was in the picture. No lover and no Min Yoongi or Kim Taehyung.

But your stomach wanted to turn itself inside out at just the thought of Jimin with another man or woman. It was ridiculous how jealousy tore at your frazzled nerves, pushing—no, *dragging* you to do something drastic. Like just turning on all the lights in the room and confronting him. Like shaking him awake and demand that he would show you some love.

Like putting your clothes back on and leave the apartment for good.

You stared up at the ceiling. You were glad that Jimin hadn’t allowed you to install a mirror directly above the bed, for how could you look at yourself right then? How could you look at yourself when you were so filled with wretched jealousy while having cheated, both physically and mentally, yourself?

What kind of expression did a bad woman and bad wife like you have?

You rose from the bed. It was hard, but you managed to shuffle quietly around the house in search of Jimin’s phone. When you finally found it on the coffee table in front of the sofa, you swiped it and returned to the bedroom.

After checking that Jimin was completely out, you carefully placed his thumb against the fingerprint-sensitive button on the phone. You knew it was illegal, but you couldn’t stop yourself. It was like you had been possessed, driven by a sickening desire to know, to make sure, to confirm that you truly weren’t wrong.

However, as you clicked through his messages and emails and gallery and contacts, using your own phone to search phone numbers and names on social media and the like, you found nothing. There was no “other woman” or man, for that matter. No sexy texts, no provocative images, no talk about money - since there was a possibility Jimin was paying for company - nothing.

You went to bed feeling more awful than ever.

At work the next day, you were barely conscious as you hauled yourself toward the meeting room. You knew you were late, and that Taehyung, Jungkook and Yoongi all looked at you as you walked in - some with concern, others with an icy chill - but you didn’t care to apologize or even say “good morning”.

You seriously needed to stop drinking.

The uncomfortable silence persisted for a few moments before Yoongi patted a few folders he had on the table in front of him.

“IT’ve got the postmortem report from the chief medical examiner, as well as further details from the crime scene and the tech and IT-team right here.” He looked at you for a few seconds before he aimed his cold eyes in Jungkook’s direction. “Whiteboard duty.”
“Yes, sir,” said Jungkook, immediately rising.

Yoongi leaned back into his chair. “You know the drill,” he said as he pushed the folders away from him and crossed his legs. “Get to it.”

At first, you could barely read the autopsy report. The hungover cure you had drunk on the way was working its way through your system, however, and your muddled mind was starting to clear up quickly. You didn’t look forward to when your energy would inevitably drop, but what else could you do?

“I can’t hear you.”

“The circumstances of Chung Yoon-Sook, the second victim, are eerily similar to Ju Si-Yeon, our first one.” You swallowed. “Tests indicate she’s been dead for approximately five days, anal and oral swabs revealed the same kind of substance containing methylcellulose that they found in Ju Si-Yeon and it says here that it’s impossible to determine whether the victim was exposed to any sexual abuse or not. Her hanging was also staged, she was wearing lingerie at the time of the discovery and her tongue was removed past death. We mentioned the other victim attributes yesterday and these papers confirm it. Though…”

“What?” demanded Yoongi immediately.

You felt the eyes of everyone in the room on you. “I know we shouldn’t just assume that the victims were murdered by the same person, but isn’t this evidence enough?” You waved the autopsy report. “It can’t be a copycat - the press wouldn’t know the exact contents of the substance.”

Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes held yours briefly before he shifted his attention to Taehyung. “What do IT say?”

“Phone gave away nothing, nor did the laptop,” said Taehyung quickly as he scanned through the page he was holding. “Just like Ju Si-Yeon, Chung Yoon-Sook kept her phone clean. Well, except for her gallery. It’s filled with provocative selfies.”

He opened one of the folders only to find another, smaller folder underneath the stack of papers inside. A thick bundle of pictures spilled out as Taehyung opened the smaller folder and with but a look, you gathered that most of the second victim’s images were of a sexual nature.

“Doesn’t IT have a telecom-unit?” asked Jungkook, standing by the whiteboard with his brows furrowed. “They should be able to recover messages and call logs, or at least get in contact with someone who can.”

“They’re on it.” Taehyung shuffled around his papers and eyed them as he continued. “But they’re still working on Ju Si-Yeon’s sim card. Since she used a prepaid, single-use card from a no-name business, it’s been difficult tracking down the right people to talk to. I guess I could call them and ask them to push it up to high priority status on orders of the inspector--”

“Did Chung Yoon-Sook also use a similar sim card?” asked Yoongi sharply.

“Yes, sir.”

“Then make it a priority,” he said. “There’s gotta be something in the messages or call logs that can tie the victims to our perpetrator.”

“I thought--” You cut yourself off before you could continue, reddening slightly when Yoongi, Jungkook and Taehyung showed you a spectrum of different curious looks. “I mean, are we now
going to treat these cases like they’re tied? Meaning, they were committed by the same man or woman?”

“I think the forensic evidence says more than enough.” Yoongi arched his brow at you. “What do you think?”

“Well, yeah,” you said simply. “I was just making sure we really were going forward with this. The press office is going to want a statement.”

“I’ll email them,” said Yoongi to your surprise. “Now go on, you three. Continue.”

“We know Ju Si-Yeon was a sex worker,” you began as you put away the postmortem findings and picked among other pages within the folder closest to you. “A webcam model to be precise. Has the tech department been able to dig around some more?”

“No really,” said Taehyung dejectedly, pausing briefly to read one of the reports on his side of the table. “Says here that the girls at IT found a webcamming page as one of our first victim’s bookmarked pages on her Internet browser. They cooperated with the forensics team, but ultimately couldn’t find her username and password written down anywhere. Fortunately, the girls were able to contact support and get Ju Si-Yeon’s username and password. Unfortunately, they couldn’t find anything on her page. No names, no messages, no nothing.”

“Why not?” asked Jungkook while scrawling on the whiteboard.

Taehyung spun around in the chair to face him. “Apparently, there’s this trend among webcam and other similar services to keep things as secretive and anonymous for both the customer and the models as possible. As a way of ensuring both parties’ ‘safety’. The tech girls also managed to get a hold of a representative of the website who confirmed this. He or she said they don’t store any of the customers or the models’ messages or transactions unless said parties both agree to it, which they, more often than do, don’t. And what’s even better is—”

“Let me guess,” you interrupted. “There’s an app. And that app doesn’t store anything either unless both parties agree.”

Taehyung swung back around and tossed the report gently onto the table. “Yep. So even if the girls at the tech department manage to recover the deleted text messages and call logs—”

“There might not be anything interesting there in the first place,” you said, nodding to yourself. Taehyung chuckled. “Yes, which means—”

“We’re only wasting our time and resources on investigating the sim cards.”

“Read my mind,” said Taehyung with an amused smile.

You couldn’t help but smile back. Admittedly, you hadn’t meant to interrupt him the first two times, but the last one had been an intentional interjection. You had to confess you had meant to provoke him, but the way he played along was frankly better.

And judging by the way his eyes glittered back at you, Taehyung seemed to agree.

“How can you two be smiling?”

Yoongi’s sharp, emotionless voice pierced your eardrums like a pistol shot. You blinked several times before you glanced his direction, nearly freezing from head to toe when you felt the chill of his
cold eyes.

“If the IT-team is correct, that means we have nothing to go on in regard to the first victim and honestly probably also the second victim’s phones, which, usually, is a huge giveaway of whom the perpetrator may or may not be. We’ve got even less to work with than before.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” said Taehyung as he looked down at the table.

You cleared your throat. “Sorry, inspector. I wasn’t smiling about that.”

Yoongi’s jaw flexed momentarily as his eyes darted Taehyung’s way. “No? What were you smiling about?”

Fuck. Your toes curled inside your heels when you realized you had said the wrong thing. Not that it hadn’t been the right way to apologize in professional circumstances. Because it had.

It just hadn’t been the right way to apologize to Yoongi.

“Can’t… can’t we still track their phones?”

You looked at Jungkook with wide eyes, surprised at his sudden idea, though also just as happy that the subject changed - and that you could avoid Yoongi’s frigid gaze.

“Yeah, we could,” you said. “How so?”

Jungkook propped himself against the edge of the table with one arm and pointed at one of the reports with his other. “Statements from the hotel staff and the clerk stated that Chung Yoon-Sook was out a lot, right? That means we should be able to find people to interview at other locations that might have seen or spoken to her. That might help us understand what she… er, worked as. Because she wasn’t a webcam model, right?”

“Nope,” said Taehyung. “The tech girls couldn’t find anything that tied her to a webcamming site.”

“Right, so, if we can talk to people that saw her when she was out, then maybe…”

Jungkook blushed suddenly. Although you could see that Taehyung was struggling to burst out laughing, you held your calm.

“Then maybe what, Jungkook?” you asked gently.

Jungkook’s face turned even redder and he approached the whiteboard, blocking your view of his expression by standing with his back toward you.

“I don’t want to sound like I’m judging her or anyone with that many… gadgets,” he began, “but since she stayed at a love hotel and was known to be out a lot, especially during evenings and sometimes for several days, there is a chance she might have worked as an… er, escort. Or something like an escort since… since I think most escorts have a rule of not sleeping with their customers.”

“That’s a good line of inquiry,” you said simply, kicking Taehyung’s shin underneath the table when he bit his bottom lip to keep from grinning. “Have ‘the girls’ looked into it, Taehyung?”

Taehyung had grimaced after your kick and seemed to lean forward to rub a spot on his leg. “Uh, yeah--I mean, no. I mean, no, I don’t know. I can only read so quickly, you know.”

“Get on it.”
He gave you a lazy smile as he grabbed one of the reports. “As you wish.”

“Nice idea, Jungkook,” you told Jungkook again, who still seemed too embarrassed to turn around.

“Thanks, detective sergeant.”

With a smile of your own, you shook your head at him. Typical.

“Have we ran Ju Si-Yeon through the missing persons database?”

“Yes, inspector,” you said after finding the relevant report. “No hit.”

His unreadable guise gave away nothing, as usual. “What about tracking their credit and debit cards?”

“They only carried cash, sir,” said Jungkook, who finally had seemed to regain enough dignity to return to the table. “Both of them. Is… is there any point in checking for fingerprints?”

Yoongi shook his head. “It’s a waste of time. Trust me, unless it’s drug or gang-related, analyzing fingerprints on cash is useless.”

“Oh, alright.”

Jungkook’s eyes had widened at Yoongi’s response. You couldn’t blame him. It was probably the first time Yoongi had spoken without sounding demeaning or uninterested.

It was… weird.

“Found it.”

You, Yoongi and Jungkook all looked at Taehyung whose eyes were glued to the paper he held.

“You found what?” you asked.

“What the girls at the tech department managed to uncover on Chung Yoon-Sook’s potential Internet presence,” he replied. “Seems like she wasn’t big on social media or escort networks or anything like that. But she did use a smaller website advertising a range of more ‘exclusive’ escorts. So, you were right, Jungkook. She was an escort.”

You gave Jungkook, who was blushing again, an encouraging few nods before returning your attention to Taehyung. “And are they also a fan of the ‘privacy’ thing?” you asked.

Taehyung made a slight face as he peered over the paper at you. “Unfortunately.”

“Another dead-end.”

All three of you gazed toward Yoongi, who had crossed his arms in addition to his legs. His guise was impenetrable, but you thought you saw a shred of uncertainty in his familiar eyes.

“What do you want us to do, sir?” asked Jungkook tentatively.

Yoongi looked at nobody in particular as he responded. “I want CCTV footage on both of the women. I’m aware the areas they stayed in are rather liberated from cameras, but they have to have been seen somewhere. And I liked the suggestion of making an inquiry into the movements of the second victim’s phone. Make it happen; call in patrol officers to perform door-to-door investigations when you’ve been able to discern her routes. Do the same with the first victim.”
“How far back should we tell the IT-team to research?” you asked.

“I’m not completely certain,” said Yoongi to your shock. “But I have a feeling whoever the murderer is, didn’t do this on a whim. You don’t just string someone up after strangling them to make it look like a suicide, twice. Or maybe it was on a whim the first time, but the second time definitely wasn’t a coincidence. Especially not since both victims are missing a body part. Either the perpetrator took a liking to it while performing this heinous crime the first time and decided to continue with it, or it was planned from start. Either way, this is his or her own personal killer ritual. We cannot let the press know more than they already do, or we’ll run the risk of diluting the knowledge of who knows and who doesn’t, which will make things difficult if a copycat appears.”

You, Jungkook and Taehyung all stared. Not because you had never heard Yoongi speak for that long before - you had. You definitely had.

But not in eleven years.

If Yoongi was bothered by the shocked stares, you didn’t know. His expression didn’t change in the least as he continued.

“We’ve still not been able to find the first victim’s next-of-kin or family, correct? Or her movement and living patterns?”

“Er, no,” you said after a brief pause. “At least, I don’t think so.”

You looked at Taehyung, who shook his head immediately, then Jungkook, who shook his head after browsing through the reports for a moment.

“Then that’s our first priority,” said Yoongi as he rose, grabbing his notebook and pen. “Our second is to find out more about the websites these women were on.” His eyes landed on you. “That’ll be your task, sergeant.”

You frowned. “But I’m the highest ranking detective here, inspector - apart from you, of course. I should go; I’m overqualified for simple computer work.”

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed. “Are you questioning my judgment, sergeant?”

“No,” you blurted instantly, and shamefully enough more out of old habit and reflex than anything else. “I… I just…” You looked at Taehyung and Jungkook. “Do you know what you’re supposed to do?”

Taehyung shrugged while Jungkook gulped.

“We should probably interview the hotel clerk at Sunrise Heights again,” said Jungkook hesitantly. “Then talk to the maids.”

“And after the maids?” you asked carefully, fighting with your desire to get out of the office and do some real detective work as well as your want for Jungkook to gain some confidence as a constable both in front of you - and Yoongi.

“CCTV,” he said, then hesitated before he went on. “The… the autopsy revealed that Ju Si-Yeon had been drinking wine and eating pasta around the time of her death, so we could also make inquiries into Italian restaurants.”

“There’s gotta be at least a hundred places selling pasta in all of Sangdo,” said Yoongi in a neutral tone. “Do you think we have the resources or time to visit each and every place?”
Jungkook cleared his throat and averted his gaze. “Ah, well, if not that, then we could check where she bought her clothes and fixed her hair and nails.”

“That will also be too exhaustive of an operation.”

Jungkook seemed mortified. “Oh, okay.”

“But it’s not altogether bad,” said Yoongi suddenly. “Just overambitious and narrow-minded. But, if we were a bigger unit and you were a sergeant, I might have considered it.”

Jungkook flushed. “Thank--”

“For now, however,” interrupted Yoongi as he strode out of the meeting room, pausing in the doorway just to finish speaking, “I’d like you and Taehyung to do just what you said you would do up until recovering and reviewing the CCTV. But instead of running around like a hen with its head chopped off in search of the right pasta place or salon, get to the hospitals, the city hall and the regular police stations. You might be able to find a birth certificate, hospital records and perhaps convictions. Be sure to look into the second victim as well - there might be more pieces to the perpetrator’s pattern of choosing victims than we know.”

Jungkook had started to scribble down Yoongi’s words a third way through his instructions and nodded eagerly as the latter finished. “Of course, yes, sir.”

“Sergeant, you’ll stay here and look into the websites. Understood?”

“Understood,” you said numbly.

Yoongi didn’t even look over his shoulder as he left.

For a moment, you were frozen in your seat, too baffled to move or speak. But as Jungkook and Taehyung started organizing the folders and reports on the table, you roused from your brief paralysis and rose to your feet.

As pleasantly surprised as you were by Yoongi’s responses toward Jungkook, you weren’t going to accept being grounded, practically. Or at least, that’s what it felt like. It felt just like when your parents had grounded you when you had been a teen and far less lawful and controlled than you were now.

It was perhaps a childish, brat-like pride that drove you to knock on Yoongi’s office door, but you knew you weren’t made for sitting at your desk in the office while junior detectives went out investigating. It was an insult to your rank, your competence.

“Your worth.”

“What is it?”

Even though you were angry, you weren’t angry enough to slam open the door like you would have wanted to. Especially not when Jungkook and Taehyung were still at the office. Instead, you merely cracked open the door and poked your head inside.

Yoongi sat behind his desk with his hands on the keyboard. His cold, piercing eyes were locked onto the screen, but he did peer over the monitor when you spoke.

“Do you have time to talk, inspector?” you asked gingerly.
“I’m wording my email to the press office,” he replied, sounding neither angry nor happy at your appearance. He was emotionless - like usual - and the smattering of his keyboard didn’t cease.

Since he didn’t outright tell you to get the fuck out of his sight, you decided to step inside. The rhythm of the keys halted immediately, but you managed to gather enough courage to shut the door and approach the front of his desk where a chair rested. Yoongi said nothing as you sank down on it, but the look in his eyes was telling enough.

This better be fucking good.

You touched your ponytail, too nervous to keep your hands still. “Why did you choose Taehyung and Jungkook for the field investigations?”

Yoongi regarded you for a while before he finally replied.

“Constable Jungkook would be too embarrassed to go through the websites while Constable Taehyung would sit in his cubicle, giggling to himself like a twelve-year-old. As horrified I am by the state of this unit, I’m afraid I had no choice but to put you at the task.”

“Well…” You struggled to figure out a response since his argument was surprisingly solid and reasonable. “I’m still a sergeant. Deskwork is beneath me.”

Yoongi put one leg over the other and he leaned his head back against the headrest, placing his fingers gently over his knee.

“Nothing is beneath you when I make the calls,” he said coolly. “Got it, sergeant?”

Goosebumps rose all over your arms. You didn’t know if you had imagined the underlying message - if you had or hadn’t, Yoongi gave no answer. He simply looked at you, waiting for a reply.

“Got it,” you said quietly. “Was… was that the only reason you wanted me in today?”

You couldn’t help it. The dark tremble in your chest, in your knees - between your legs. Your anger, which until that point had been stark and alive and raging, was subdued in an instant, like a burning cigarette utterly and completely extinguished and suffocated by a sudden downpour. There was you, a mere pebble on the shore of an ocean so cold and heavy and oppressive and mysterious that there wasn’t even a question of how you might escape or avoid its crashing waves.

You didn’t want to give in to your desires. You didn’t want to run the risk of getting hurt again. You honestly didn’t want to drink as much and often as you did. You knew alcohol wasn’t good for your body, both in appearance and health. You knew you didn’t need more emotional baggage or bad memories with men. You knew you were just desperate for a lay because something was wrong with your marriage and you were too cowardly or weak or just stupid to deal with it.

But knowing and doing were two completely different things. And how Min Yoongi could affect you so utterly and truly that you just couldn’t give less of a fuck about right and wrong was a question you were both desperate and scared to find an answer to.

Maybe you were just an awful person in general.

Yoongi didn’t respond. Or at least, he didn’t respond within what you would deem a usual range of time for a person to respond. You couldn’t read his expression, but his fingers tightened around his knee.

“Stand up.”
You obeyed.

“Turn around.”

You turned around.

“Walk to the door.”

You frowned as you strode toward the door, feeling both confused and hurt. Was he rejecting you?

Were you not good enough even for no-strings-attached sex?

“Lock the door.”

Your heart rate immediately shot up. You could almost feel it pulsing in your neck as you twisted the knob beneath the handle.

*Click.*

There were no more orders. You furrowed your brows, briefly wondering whether you might have missed hearing Yoongi’s command or not, and were just about to peek over your shoulder when there was a hand on your waist and a presence against your back.

“Did I tell you to look over your shoulder?”

Yoongi’s voice, low, quiet, yet no less demanding, slithered into your ear, causing a deliciously gentle shiver to trail down your spine.

“No,” you said breathlessly without moving. “No, you didn’t.”

“Why did you move then?”

“I-” you started.

“There’s no excuse or explanation that will satisfy me.” His lips moved closer, until you almost felt them against your ear, and the hand on your waist moved south. “You know that.”

“I do,” you breathed.

“Then why the fuck are you talking?”

You gulped, but not because you were scared. Excitement coursed through your system, pumped around by your frantically beating heart.

“How do you want me?” you asked, your voice a mere whisper.

There was a snort. “I don’t think you’re understanding what I’m saying,” murmured Yoongi into your ear. “Turn around.”

You turned around slowly and nearly moaned when you felt Yoongi’s body pressing against yours. It was pathetic, but you had almost forgotten the feeling of a man’s body against yours. Despite the fabrics separating you, stopping the two of you from touching directly skin to skin, it was far more intimate than the countless nights you had curled up naked behind Jimin.

However, when you finally came face-to-face with Yoongi, things all of a sudden got too intimate.
Mere inches apart, with one arm supporting his weight against the door, Yoongi stood close enough for you to kiss. No, he stood like he was going to kiss you. You knew, for the two of you had been in that exact situation countless times.

You wanted to kiss him so badly you could hit something.

“I don’t give a fuck about what goes out of your mouth. I just care about what goes in. So, get down on your knees and open your mouth - unless you want me to do it for you.”

Your heart stopped, but your body didn’t. After doing what he told you to do, his hand ghosting across your backside and back as you kneeled, Yoongi looked down at you like you were a piece of dirt. Like you weren’t even worthy of a single, disdainful glare.

It was humiliating. But you couldn’t close your mouth. And you couldn’t stand up and leave.

You wanted him.

“Belt.”

You undid his belt buckle.

“Button and zipper.”

You unbuttoned the single button on the top of his black slacks and pulled down the zipper.

“Touch it.”

You saw his erection before you felt it, but the hard, warm muscle underneath still startled you as you freed it. There was just so much of it. Even as you grasped it carefully and began stroking it, you couldn’t believe that it actually fit in your mouth.

Even less where you really wanted it to go.

“Faster. And grip it a bit harder.”

As you obeyed, Yoongi let out a small moan and closed his eyes. He moaned again, this time louder, when you pressed your lips against him. Yoongi opened his mouth, probably to protest, but you enveloped him and started moving before he could push you away or withdraw.

“Ah… fuck it.”

A pained yelp involuntarily escaped you when a hand grabbed the tie to your ponytail and unceremoniously pulled it off, releasing your hair. You wanted to protest this time since you didn’t want to get saliva or something else in your hair, but Yoongi didn’t let you slip away. He grasped you by your hair and pushed you further down his length, making it impossible for you to move out of place.

The sudden intrusion made your eyes widen, and since you couldn’t breathe, your body started to panic. However, you managed to stomp down the urge to resist and fight back. Not because you thought Yoongi would mind - on the contrary, he would probably like it more if you put up a struggle - but because you didn’t want to make a lot of noise. You could still hear Jungkook and Taehyung, albeit very faintly, discussing something some distance away from Yoongi’s office.

“Good girl.”

Yoongi finally opened his eyes. There was nothing but satisfaction in his cold, piercing gaze, and his
posture was relaxed, slouched even. It almost made you moan.

“...You didn’t become sergeant for nothing.” He tilted his head, his hand still firmly buried beneath your tresses. “How many dicks did you tire your jaw out on to become promoted already as an academy student?”

You furrowed your brows slightly, unsure if he wanted you to really answer or not. You got your answer when he thrust another inch into your mouth.

“Answer.”

You wanted to say that you couldn’t answer, but that would mean you actually could, which you couldn’t. Or well, not intelligibly.

“What was that?”

Yoongi arched a brow as he locked eyes with you. When you tried to answer his question again, he merely looked at you for a handful of seconds, then pulled you off his member.

“Did you just try to talk?” he asked softly. Dangerously softly.

“I thought...” You cleared your throat. “I thought you wanted me to answer your question.”

“Not by words.” Yoongi blinked once. “I hate repeating myself. I’ve told you that, correct?”

You nodded with a nervous gulp and stared down into your lap.

“And I told you I don’t give a fuck about what comes out of your mouth--” Yoongi gripped your chin with his other hand, forcing you to look up at him, “--only what goes in.”

And with that, he slowly pushed two fingers inside your mouth.

“No teeth.” Yoongi smirked. “But there’s still that defiance in your eyes that makes me so hard it almost hurts.”

You knew what he was talking about, but you didn’t want to acknowledge it. You tried opening your mouth wider and reach for his member again, but Yoongi stopped you and removed his fingers from your mouth.

“Stand up,” he demanded.

You rose to your feet.

“Turn around.”

You obeyed and immediately felt him press up against you. All of him.

“Do you know how badly I want to fuck you?”

You would have liked to turn around to look at him, but Yoongi still had your hair in a tight grasp.

“You’re not answering.”

You wiped saliva from your mouth with the back of your hand.

“Finally, you’re learning.”
You wanted to respond with a retort or a witty remark, but you wanted him inside of you even more. You needed it.

“Lean forward.”

You put your arms and hands against the door and leaned against it.

“Spread your legs.”

You parted your legs as far as your skirt allowed you to.

“Back up a bit and lean forward some more. Arch your back.”

Your scalp started burning after you had gotten into position, your lower back even more so after a minute or two standing like that. It didn’t take long for you to realize, despite the rush in your body, heart and mind, that that was precisely what Yoongi had wanted.

And as your skirt gradually was pulled higher and higher up your thighs, you knew you wanted it just as much. You were ready. You were ready for him. To give yourself up and let him do away with you, to hell with both Jungkook and Taehyung who were probably just about to leave the office. You didn’t care if they could or would hear.

You just wanted him to fuck you as he told you he would. Until you couldn’t stand anymore. Until you didn’t want to stand anymore.

But what he gave you was something entirely different.

Fingers. They weren’t inside you, but you felt it in an instant, familiar and experienced enough to be able to differentiate between the rigid, controllable stiffness of bone and of the tense warmth of a hard, unyielding dick.

It wasn’t what you wanted.

“I want to fuck you,” whispered Yoongi into your ear, “but you haven’t proven yourself enough yet. You failed me now, and you failed me yesterday in the car when I explicitly told you what the punishment would be. That’s unacceptable.”

“But I don’t want your fingers,” you managed. “I want you.”

“Don’t be greedy. You only failed yesterday because of your greed. You should be grateful that I even bother using my fingers - you’re already dripping.”

“I haven’t had good sex in a lot of years,” you said impatiently, wrestling with your embarrassment as well as the harsh reality of the truth. “Please, Yoongi. Just give it to me.”

He didn’t respond.

“Please.” Your hands balled into fists and you were tempted to bang on the door, if only to get out your frustration. “Please, just--”

You inhaled sharply as something entered you. Although you had a sneaking suspicion that it wasn’t what you really wanted, you couldn’t think coherently enough to form interconnecting notions, even less try to protest.

It felt too good.
“Shh… Not so loud. The constables are just leaving, but they might still be able to hear you.”

You barely recognized Yoongi’s voice slipping into your ear, too distracted by the gathering pressure between your legs. Sweet and addictive, you felt your legs shaking beneath you, and the pain in your scalp and lower back was gone, overridden by the immense pleasure of Yoongi’s touch. You fleetingly registered him putting a hand over your mouth as he continued to take you closer to a state you hadn’t been in for over a decade.

Since Yoongi left you.

Pleasuring yourself with toys and porn was nothing compared to him. It was nothing compared to when you felt him add another finger and push them in so abruptly and deeply you thought you would tear. It was nothing compared to when the hand he had held over your mouth gradually lowered until it was around your throat, barely giving you enough oxygen to keep your vision straight.

It was nothing compared to the dark, twisted promises Yoongi whispered into your ear as you came closer and closer to your breaking point.

However, just as you felt yourself tense around his fingers and you readied yourself for your first real orgasm in eleven years, Yoongi stopped.

You would have cried, if he gave you the opportunity. But he didn’t. Before you could do anything, say anything, you were drooling around his dick and there was semen running down your throat.

But you didn’t mind.

For Yoongi, sweaty, rosy-cheeked and with his hair and clothes disheveled, his suit jacket since long discarded on the carpeted floor, looked just as irresistibly sexy as in the archives. His eyes were closed and his mouth slightly parted as he moaned, his body remaining tense all throughout the orgasm.

His mask was gone and the person beneath was there again. The person you truly fell in love with.

It hurt almost as much as it warmed.

“…Fuck.”

When he finally released you, Yoongi barely seemed to have enough strength to stand. He backed awkwardly until he hit the desk, upon which he immediately sank down.

“I didn’t mean to surprise you,” he said, panting as he gripped the table edge with one hand. “But when you moan like that, I can’t stop myself. I don’t think any sane man can.”

“Was I that loud?” you asked after you had wiped your mouth and face, your face warming at the thought of having been heard in the whole building. It was a genuine question because there had definitely been times in the past when Yoongi seemed to intentionally have wanted you to be loud.

Yoongi seemed to understand that immediately. “No, I kept you under control this time.”

“What about Taehyung and Jungkook?”

“The constables left a while ago.”

You shakily got to your feet, leaning against the door for support. “I… I should get to work, too,”
you said as you fixed your skirt and blouse. “I’ll… I’ll be in my cubicle if there’s anything—”

“You didn’t come.”

You opened your mouth to object but Yoongi held up a hand. “It wasn’t a question,” he said, some of his hard, unreadable mask returning to his features. “You didn’t come.”

“I didn’t,” you admitted. “You… ended it just before.”

“Fuck. I’m sorry.”

Your jaw dropped. “Y-you’re what?”

Yoongi pushed his fingers through his bangs and gave you a tired glance. “I was going to make you come just now, but I didn’t. So, I’m sorry. I still don’t like repeating myself, sergeant.”

“Sorry, inspector,” you blurted, your posture straightening. “It won’t happen again.”

Yoongi glanced at his hand. His fingers seemed covered in something sticky. He looked back at you with a faint smirk.

“Oh no, it will - and I’ll be looking forward to it. Now get the fuck out of my office, sergeant. I’ll be expecting results in a few hours.”
Easier said than done. As the hours trickled past, you clicked through dozens upon dozens of webcamming pages and escorting services that were of both legal and somewhat less legal nature. Not that you had the time or strength to bother reporting all of them; and even if you had, you didn’t want to get involved with other people’s sex lives. Or rather, lack thereof.

You had enough trouble in your own life.

Yoongi. Your thoughts kept trailing in his direction but even though he was a mere office away, you might as well have been in different buildings. Although your senses were on alert and you kept hoping - vainly, pathetically - that he might peek out of his office and call for you, or perhaps even show up in your cubicle, the department remained silent enough for you to hear dust settle. Yoongi never once exited his office even though you wanted more of whatever treatment he deemed you worthy of.

Not until Taehyung and Jungkook returned.

“What did you uncover?”

Yoongi eyed you, Jungkook and Taehyung with cold, expressionless eyes. The four of you had reconvened in the meeting room with all the scribbles on the expansive whiteboards after Taehyung and Jungkook came back from the field.

“Nothing, inspector,” you said, just barely keeping your nervousness out of your tone. “I’ve found the victims’ profiles but there was nothing in particular that either separated them or connected them to each other - or any other available girl. And when I logged into their accounts, I couldn’t find any further clues that might tie into our perpetrator. The messages were all deleted or never there in the first place.”

Yoongi’s gaze landed on you. “What were the similarities?”

“Well,” you said, picking up your notepad to read through your scrawls. “It’s mostly physical. The victims are both a little over one-sixty, slim to the build, in their mid to late twenties, and have long black hair. Then there’s the fact that they were both working someway or another in the sex industry, and that their murders were made up to look like suicides. Other than that, I can’t really see any defining trait or feature that they specifically exhibit.”

Yoongi was quiet. He was still watching you, however, and with intent. You felt more than a little bit uncomfortable, but somehow managed to keep from fidgeting as you cleared your throat and continued.

“Both of them had one facial feature removed, ears and tongue respectively. Can that have a symbolic meaning?”

“Maybe they were involved with some gang,” suggested Taehyung, nodding along to your thought. “Maybe Ju Si-Yeon heard something she shouldn’t have and maybe Chung Yoon-Sook’s tongue was cut off because she tattled or spoke out of line.”

“There are no gangs like that in Sangdo,” said Yoongi flatly. “And even if they were, that doesn’t explain why the women were garrotted then hanged.”

“Is there any way we can tell if there’s more than one killer?” asked Jungkook carefully. “Or do we
know that it’s a sole perpetrator?”

“Not really,” you said. “Even though both of the hotel rooms are crime scenes, we don’t know if they are the homicide scenes. The CSI supervisor wrote in her report that she doubts the murders were performed in the hotels due to the massive blood loss the removal of the ears and the tongue would have caused - not to mention the immense pain and screaming that surely must have accompanied it. There would have been some kind of trace, whether that be blood traces or witness statements. Therefore, it’s just as likely that it was one person as it were several.”

“It’s one person.”

You, Jungkook and Taehyung all stared at Yoongi in a synchronized movement that was, frankly, growing kind of usual. But this time, you doubted any of your startled gazes was due to being surprised by his uncommon behavior.

“One person?” you echoed.

Yoongi’s features had been neutral, but his eyes narrowed at you after you had finished. “Yes, sergeant. Did I stutter?”

Fuck. You smacked yourself in the face inwardly and prayed your embarrassment wouldn’t show.

“Sorry, inspector,” you mustered. “It… you just sounded so sure.”

He tilted his head slightly, his frigid gaze piercing effortlessly through you like a needle through fabric. “And?”

You briefly forgot about your emotions, focusing on the case instead. “Have you found conclusive evidence that there is only a single perpetrator?” you asked eagerly.

“No.”

“But then--”

“A feeling.”

Yoongi crossed his arms over his chest, replicating the silhouette of his already crossed legs. He said nothing for a beat while you, Taehyung and Jungkook merely waited, watching him stare out into space. But then, he finally continued.

“The homicides are too specific. Both victims are similar but not too similar. Both crime scenes have evidence but not useful evidence. It all feels too meticulous, too manufactured and detailed for it to be more than one perpetrator. Besides, the manner in which both women were found doesn’t make sense: why make them out to be suicide victims when it’s clear for even the simplest and freshest of CSIs and detectives that their bodies have been mutilated postmortem?”

You had a feeling the last was a jab toward Taehyung and Jungkook’s inexperience, but neither of them seemed particularly offended. They merely seemed shocked, Taehyung more so than Jungkook, even though you were the one who originally had suggested the oddity of stringing up one’s victim in a way that suggested suicide even though the mark of murder was evident. It wasn’t obvious, especially not since Jungkook’s lips had parted in surprise. But you knew Taehyung well enough by now.

“Anything you would like to add, sergeant?”
You returned to find Yoongi’s cold eyes, the only flicker of emotion in the emotionless guise he always wore. “No, inspector. I sent an inquiry to the IT-team in regards to tracking the movements of the second victim’s phone but they haven’t called back yet.”

His gaze landed on Jungkook. “What did you find? Speak up properly, constable.”

Jungkook soaked his lips before he responded. “We interviewed the hotel employees that were working during the estimated time of death for both of the victims but they didn’t know much, sir.”

“It’s been a while since both our victims passed,” added Taehyung quickly, perhaps wary that Yoongi might scold them for finding nothing. “It’s no wonder they couldn’t remember since I’ve heard that both Sunrise Heights Hotel and KL Hotel are big hitters among young couples and the like. And, I mean, think about it: how often do you see maids when you’re at a hotel? Never, right? And even if you saw one, it’s not like you would start up a conversation with them - especially not in love hotels.”

“After the interviews, we headed for SMUH.” Jungkook looked down at his notes as he went on, as if he were too scared to look Yoongi in the eye. “We asked if there were any hospital records of Ju Si-Yeon, but they couldn’t find any. We checked the nearby police office for convictions as well but they also came up empty.”

“She was most likely born and raised in a different city than Sangdo,” said Taehyung. He was the only one at the table without a notebook or similar and gazed at Yoongi without issue. “But again, it’s hard to say for certain. The people we spoke to weren’t exactly administrative geniuses. And human error is always a factor, so it’s not like we can completely cross her out from being native to the city.”

“Anything else?” prodded Yoongi after a brief pause.

“No, sir,” said Jungkook, casting down his eyes. “Apologies.”

Yoongi arched a brow. “For what?”

“F-for not coming up with something more, sir. You sent us out in the belief that we would find something, but we disappointed you.”

“You did what I ordered you to do, constable,” said Yoongi, gradually reforming his indifferent expression. “If that failed to render any results, it’s not on you, it’s on me. Everything always falls on me, so do not apologize.”

Jungkook looked up, surprised, before he stared down at the table again. “R-right, sir. Understood.”

Yoongi looked at his wristwatch. “It’s almost six pm. We’ll end it for today.”

All three of you bowed your rose together with Yoongi and bowed slightly as he left, thanking him for today’s work. Taehyung had seemed a long way from smiling with Yoongi around, but sent you a grin as soon as the latter had stepped out of the meeting room.

“How was office work, aunty?”

“You said and rolled your eyes. “I bet you wished you were me instead today, huh? And get to look at tons of scantily clad girls all day long.”

Taehyung wriggled his eyebrows, his grin only growing wider as he regarded you gather all your documents and notes. “I do wish I were you today. But not only because I would get paid to watch
"Taehyung," said Jungkook sternly as he, too, were collecting his belongings. “You can’t say stuff like that to (Y/N)-sunbaenim. It’s practically harassment now.”

“I can take some teasing,” you said hurriedly, not wanting Jungkook to, perhaps, report Taehyung’s inappropriate behavior to one of the higher-ups - or worse, Yoongi. At the same time, you didn’t want Jungkook to think you were half as flattered by Taehyung’s constant attention as you actually were. “But Jungkook is alright. Taehyung, I won’t go out on a date with you. Ever.”

A flash of hurt crossed the surface of Taehyung’s intense brown eyes before his earlier glee returned. He shrugged and let out a light huff. “Your loss, aunty.”

“I’m only twenty-nine,” you said as casually as you could, hoping he couldn’t sense how provoked you were by his nickname.

“Exactly.”

You hurled your notebook at him. He dodged it easily, and taunted you with a teasing smile.

“See?” he said. “Your reflexes are dying. Better get installed at a retirement home soon. But what do you say about going out for soju tonight?”

“Gonna have to decline, unfortunately,” you said sarcastically.

“Got a date with your husband, sunbaenim?” asked Jungkook pointedly, aiming a sidelong glance at Taehyung.

“Something like that,” you lied. There was nothing planned at all after the fiasco in the bedroom, your first sexual encounter with Jimin since… well, a while. But for once, you didn’t find yourself wanting to drink. Whether it was the difficult homicide case or just a random dip in the waves of life, you didn’t know. The more honest answer would perhaps be that you were too distressed by your own actual infidelity to relax and drink with your hoobaes.

Or perhaps you were wanting to go home early to see if you could catch Jimin in the act.

After saying goodbye to a very disappointed Taehyung and a less disappointed Jungkook, you headed home. The apartment was empty but there was cooking in the kitchen and you found a note from Jimin saying he was out to buy some more tofu. You didn’t know for how long he had been gone, but it gave you the opportunity to search through the study undisturbed.

The jewelry set was where you had found it. Safely confined in its dark blue box, the delicate necklace and earrings set didn’t seem to ever have been worn.

It had to be a gift to a woman. You couldn’t imagine a guy, however flamboyant or feminine, to honestly lean toward such delicate jewelry. But that was the only thing you could somewhat ascertain from the gift. And even that was an uncertainty.

You exhaled heavily as you stared down at the jewelry set. How could you call yourself a detective if you couldn’t even figure out something as simple as your own husband’s infidelity? How would you possibly be able to solve the most difficult homicide case you had ever encountered in a city where nothing happened?

It wasn’t normal to be sent home so quickly during a murder investigation, especially not a case that was as sensational as the one before you. And now that the media somehow knew every detail of the
circumstances around the victims, there was even more pressure for the homicide department to perform. Although he hid it adeptly, you could tell that Yoongi’s cold mood was due to more than just general displeasure. He must feel incredibly pressured by both the upper brass since his clearance rate apparently was one of the best in the country according to the previous chief. You couldn’t imagine the stress in his position.

You also couldn’t imagine what you had allowed him to do in his office.

A mixture of shame and self-hatred and disappointment melded together in the pit of your stomach. One time was one times too many. But you had given in to your lust more than once. You had practically thrown yourself at Yoongi’s feet, begging him to give you what you wanted from your husband.

Yet, a tiny part of you - or actually, a pretty large one - wondered, truly, if you would have been able to resist Yoongi even if Jimin was everything you had wished for and more.

You gave up eventually and returned the box to its hiding place. Staring at the jewelry set was hardly going to reward itself, especially since Jimin was bound to come home any moment. And your prediction came true: the front door unlocked just as you stepped out from the bathroom after a brief shower. Jimin seemed surprised but not displeased as he saw you and gave you a quick peck on the cheek.

After a delicious dinner, you offered to clean up. You needed the time to get your mind off things and household chores strangely had that effect on you. Busy grading his students, Jimin remained in the study for the remainder of the evening, which gave you free reign over the rest of the apartment. Not that you had any particular need for it. But at least you didn’t have to consider what kind of face you were having while you were musing over work and Yoongi.

Always Yoongi.

“I’ll go to bed now, honey.”

Jimin poked his head into the living area, giving you a warm smile as he saw you sitting on the floor instead of the sofa while watching the latest drama. “Aren’t you tired after working so hard all day?”

Guilt twinged at your heart as you recalled the scene in Yoongi’s office. “I’ll go to sleep soon,” you said, holding up your half-empty beer can. “Gotta finish this first.”

“And that,” he replied cheerfully, aiming a glance at the male romantic lead who currently lay beaten and bruised on a hospital bed. “Have they kissed yet?”

“Nope,” you said numbly. “I think the girl wants to but the guy seems too busy chasing down the gang leader who killed his friend.”

You looked closely at Jimin, wanting, wishing for a reaction of any kind. But there was none. He merely smiled at you like always and nodded.

“Ah, it’s a revenge story?”

You stiffened slightly, struck by Jimin’s words even though he impossibly could have known what you had done. “Something like that,” you said.

“Well, sounds interesting.”

Jimin came over, his lips barely brushing over your cheekbone before they were gone. “Goodnight,
honey."

You were tempted to grab him by his t-shirt and pull him close but at the same time, you couldn’t bring yourself to do it. Partly because you knew how much he would dislike it and partly because your conscious was too bad. How could you demand that Jimin would love you when you had betrayed him? How could you demand that he would show you any kind of affection after you had allowed your new boss - and very old flame - to put his dick into your mouth? After you had allowed him to do whatever he wanted to you?

You were a bad woman. And an even worse wife. But you couldn’t help it. As soon as you thought Jimin was asleep, you started going through his stuff again. You looked through his backpack, his desk and even his students essays, searching for any sort of clue that might allude to his infidelity. But there was none.

Nothing that could conclusively determine whether Jimin was cheating on you or not.

Despair fell over you like thunderous clouds. And as exhaustion settled in, you decided to give up. Perhaps Jimin wasn’t cheating after all. Perhaps you were the only scumbag in the relationship.

Perhaps you should tell him the truth.

With a loud yawn, you padded toward your bedroom, using your phone as a flashlight. Jimin was peacefully asleep, blissful to your presence. Despite the thorns in your heart, the sight made you smile faintly and you re-hung Jimin’s slacks from where they had fallen from the hanger. In what little illumination you had, you only barely caught sight of a tiny, crumpled piece of paper on the floor where the trousers had fallen.

Immediately, you tensed. Your heart rate increased as you slowly crouched down to pick it up, only to come to a screeching halt as you unfolded the note.

A phone number.

You stopped breathing. Stiffly, you unlocked your phone and put the number in the search bar. A female name came up, native to Sangdo.

Heo Jae-Kyung.

You immediately put into looking up a person with that name in the city, taking to social media accounts. There were a few with a variant of the name, and less that had that exact name. However, you weren’t sure you had found the right profile until you started clicking through each of the profiles.

There was more than one Heo Jae-Kyung. But the determining factor came down to one final detail.

*Went to Sangdo Co-Educational High School with Creative Fields of Study.*

It was the high school Jimin taught in.
Ice pierced your heart from all directions. You clutched at your chest, unable to comprehend the complicated mixture of emotions in your heart.

A high schooler. Well, she wasn’t a high schooler anymore - according to her profile, she was twenty. But she had been, once.

She had been while Jimin was a teacher.

Heo Jae-Kyung was a pretty girl. At the height of her youth, you doubted she had ever touched alcohol or cigarettes or other drugs in her entire life. There was this sort of luster and glow in her images that you knew you couldn’t mimic no matter how hard you tried. Your teenage years had been far from pristine and you had tried every addictive substance underneath the sun during high school. You would have spiraled into a deeper addiction, you were sure of it, and ended up a loser, a scrap at the bottom of society with nothing to win or lose.

You would have never been able to get away from all of that stuff, all of your bad influences and poor life choices, if it weren’t for Yoongi.

You rose stiffly and went back to the study. While going through Jimin’s belongings, searching for clues, you had been going through his planner as well. You hadn’t really bothered going through it by detail since there had only been appointments related to school scribbled into it. Or so you had thought. But after seeing the owner of the phone number’s name, you realized you recognized it. You hoped you were either so tired or tipsy that you weren’t as aware as you felt you were. However, that wish was immediately thwarted once you opened Jimin’s planner.

Because there it was.

[September 13th] Wednesday: Lunch appointment with Heo Jae-Kyung, 12.00.

Tomorrow. He was meeting her tomorrow. You couldn’t find any previously planned meeting but that didn’t mean he hadn’t met her before. That didn’t mean he had cheated on you with her.

But it also didn’t mean he hadn’t cheated on you with her.

There was an address written beneath the reminder. You wanted to wake Jimin up and confront him with both the planner and the phone number. But you didn’t. Partly because you were too upset to hold a proper conversation that wouldn’t devolve into an outright argument. Partly because there was a chance he would feed you with lies upon lies, upon which you would lose the advantage you had at the moment. So long as you knew about this “Heo Jae-Kyung” and Jimin wasn’t aware of your knowledge, you had the upper hand. You had the freedom to think and decide what to do without having to worry about what Jimin might or might not do.

And you knew what you wanted to do.

The next day, you were barely able to concentrate during the morning meeting and it was by sheer strength of will that you managed to keep yourself from yawning or dozing off. You thought you were hiding your apprehension and exhaustion pretty well, and as the meeting came to a conclusion, you came closer to a point of relief. Yoongi had tasked you with going through the documents that IT had sent the department in regards to both the victim’s moving patterns. You figured you could sleep some in your cubicle to charge up. That is, until Yoongi paused in the doorway of the meeting
“Sergeant. My office.”

He didn’t look over his shoulder and left before you could reply. Sharing tentative looks with both Jungkook and Taehyung, you put the two thick folders Yoongi had handed you back on the table and headed for Yoongi’s office. He was already seated by the time you had mustered your expression into a neutral one and peered coolly at you from over the rim of a blank white mug as you entered. The smell of coffee lingered heavily in the air.

“Inspector,” you began, mouth dry. “Did you want to discuss something?”

“No.”

“Then what do you want?”

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed as he lowered the mug onto the desk. “A few days ago, I spoke to Constable Jungkook. He mentioned you drink a lot. Is this correct?”

You frowned, confused by the topic of conversation. “Of course not. I mean, I drink occasionally, but I don’t have a problem.”

“When was the last time you consumed alcohol?”

“Yesterday,” you lied. Truth be told, you hadn’t been able to sleep after you found out about Jimin’s lunch plans. And although you had decided to drink less, you hadn’t been able to stop yourself, unable to fall asleep until the early morning hours. So, the more accurate answer was that you had been drinking all night.

“How much did you drink?”

“Just what fits in a regular-sized beer can.”

Yoongi crossed his legs and tilted back his head against the headrest of the chair. “You don’t drive to work. Wouldn’t it be cheaper and quicker to take your own car here? Don’t you and your husband own one?”

“Yes, but I let him use it since it’s further from the school he works at compared to the department.”

You spoke rapidly, not wanting to leave room for any signs of hesitation. Yoongi regarded you hard for a long while after you had finished speaking but said nothing. Not that he needed to vocally express how much he doubted your words - you could feel it in the way his cold, piercing eyes probed you, analyzed you.

Suddenly, he rose. You remained where you stood before his desk with a neutral expression as he circled around to stand behind you. Inwardly, your heart was beating madly with both expectation and fear. You didn’t want Yoongi to think you had any drinking problems and you didn’t want him to tempt you to commit adultery once more.

Yet, at the same time, you wanted him so much you had to steel yourself and grit your teeth as not to beg. As not to grovel and beg.

As not to fall for him once more.

“Your breath reeks of alcohol.”
His voice was harsh in your ear, filled with both disappointment and disgust. While part of you wanted to just leave and run away from being humiliated and embarrassed, a bigger part of you wanted just that.

“If I do an alcohol testing on you right now, do you think you would pass?”

The hairs in the back of your neck all stood on their ends as the sound of an unbuckling belt reached your ears. You tensed, but this time more in anticipation than anything.

You were a bad woman. You deserved punishment.

“Let’s try, shall we?”

Firm leather wrapped itself around your throat. You swallowed, enjoying the friction between your skin and the unyielding material, only to temporarily lose all ability to breathe as the belt tightened from all sides. You jolted and reflexively grasped at the belt. However, you knew it would only become worse if you put up resistance and reluctantly gave in.

Your vision grew hazy as less and less oxygen reached your head, and your knees started quivering, the lack of air sapping you from all strength. You could feel your consciousness creeping closer and closer to the edge of oblivion, but just as it started to become painful for real, the pressure around your neck faded. You gasped for air and was unable to put up any resistance as a hand settled on your shoulder and forced you to the floor.

“On your fours, sergeant.”

Yoongi’s voice was void of any emotion. You wanted to glance up at him to see his expression, his face. But as soon as you started turning your head, you felt a sudden yank at your provisional leash, rendering you breathless once more.

“I didn’t say you could look at me. And do I really need to repeat myself?”

You hurriedly lowered yourself onto your floors, desperate for oxygen. You were rewarded with enough leniency to breathe, but it wasn’t easy. You felt the pull from the belt from above and behind you, and Yoongi held it in an iron grip. You tried lifting your head to ease some of the tension, but it didn’t help.

You were completely in his power.

“Stand up.”

You obeyed.

“On your fours.”

You fell down onto on your hands and knees again.

“So you can listen.”

You didn’t respond even though you really wanted to. You knew Yoongi was intentionally trying to provoke you, wanting another reason he could tug at the belt.

“What a good puppy.”

Yoongi’s voice was a mere whisper that trickled into your ear like poisonous honey. You gulped, readying yourself for something, anything as his presence pushed closer. A hand on your backside or
on the inside of your thighs. A rough uplifting of your skirt. A touch down below. And perhaps this
time, he would finally fuck you this time and stop with the teasing.

But instead, the belt around your throat slid off and you felt him step away.

You turned around in confusion and, admittedly, disappointment. Yoongi’s expressionless guise was
impossible to pierce, but you thought you saw something akin to concern in his eyes before he
looked down and put on his belt.

“I thought I told you to stop drinking so much eleven years ago. But it’s only gotten worse.”

His tone was calm, collected and not as sharp as you were used to. But that wasn’t what made your
heart and mind freeze over.

He remembered.

“I’ve never told you I would stop drinking,” you lied, hoping you could elicit some kind of emotion
in him. However, Yoongi didn’t even blink as he responded.

“Stop relying on a crutch like alcohol. You’re not a little kid anymore. Deal with your problems like
an adult.”

You couldn’t help it; you snapped.

“What about you?” you demanded angrily as you quickly came to standing. “When was the last time
you smoked a cigarette? This morning before work?”

“Eleven years ago.”

You couldn’t hide your surprise. You gaped at him, dumbfounded.

“Liar,” you managed eventually.

Yoongi didn’t respond. He merely went back to sit in his chair and glanced at his computer monitor.

“The next time you decide to drink before work, don’t bother showing up,” he said finally.

You set your jaw and dug your nails into the palms of your hands. “Understood.”

“Understood...?”

“Understood, inspector.”

Yoongi glanced at you briefly before he looked at the screen again. “Give the telecom unit’s reports
to one of the constables. I want you back home for today.”

Your eyes widened. “But--”

“Return sober tomorrow and I’ll let you work.”

“You can’t do this to me,” you said, too shocked to care that you were rude toward your superior.

“This has been my job for five years now. You can’t just swoop in and kick me out just because I
had trouble sleeping yesterday!”

Yoongi arched a brow. “You drink yourself senseless because you couldn’t sleep? You really are a
child.”
You bit your bottom lips so as not to hurl out an insult. “Yoongi,” you said sternly, skipping the inspector completely. “You can’t do this. We have to find the killer as soon as possible. Cutting out your most competent detective even for a day is unwise.”

Yoongi’s gaze chilled considerably. “Don’t you think I know that? Don’t you think I’m aware of how pathetic this department is? How childish are you?”

“Stop comparing me to a child,” you snarled, only barely refraining from shouting. “And stop treating me like one. I won’t drink before work ever again, but you can’t send me home when we have as much work to go through as we do. Think about what’s important here!”

“I am.”

You opened your mouth but closed it just as fast. “What?”

Yoongi didn’t elaborate. His cold eyes were unwavering as they met yours, and his tone was hard as ice. “I don’t negotiate, sergeant. Come back tomorrow when you’re sober or leave your badge and never come back. The choice is yours.”

One didn’t need to have known Yoongi to sense the palpable tension in the air as he eyed you. You knew you weren’t going to win this one, and reluctantly resigned, letting out a small exhale before you responded.

“Fine,” you said as you turned back toward the door. “But I’m coming back tomorrow.”

“Sober.”

“Sober,” you muttered before you exited Yoongi’s office.

You gave the two folders containing the victims’ phones’ movement patterns to Jungkook, trusting him more than Taehyung with dense paperwork. After coming up with a vague excuse - and lie - that you were feeling sick, you headed back toward your and Jimin’s apartment. Since it was a weekday, Jimin was gone, but you didn’t mind. In fact, it was better that he wasn’t around.

You hadn’t been able to face him since you fell asleep on the sofa that early morning. Seeing his smile was painful, and the jealousy and bad conscience and self-hatred you had for already having cheated melded together into a sickening brew in the pit of your stomach. Although your marriage had been far from perfect in your opinion, you had always considered yourself lucky to have married someone like Jimin.

You had been happy.

As soon as the front door was shut and locked, you couldn’t help but let out a frustrated scream. Not loud enough to disturb the neighbors but loud enough to let out some of your pent-up steam.

Who the fuck was this woman? This Heo Jae-Kyung? This little high school girl-turned-adult? Why the hell had she written down her number and given it to Jimin? What was their relationship?

Was she fucking him better than you were? Was as she the reason he wouldn’t let you touch him?

Was she the reason he no longer loved you?

Although you had told Yoongi that you needed to stay at the department due to the workload, truth is, you hadn’t really been considering the homicide cases. You had been thinking about yourself. At the office, you had work and both Jungkook and Taehyung to distract yourself with. Left alone in
your home where you had so many memories of Jimin, you couldn’t stop yourself from imagining where he may or may not have been having sex with Heo Jae-Kyung. You wondered if they had been doing it on the kitchen counter. Perhaps on the dining table. Definitely in the bed. Maybe even in the bathtub or shower.

And all of these places Jimin had refused you in.

“I’m going insane,” you mumbled as you sank down in bed. You freed your hair from your ponytail and stared up at the ceiling. “I’m going fucking insane.”

You tried falling asleep but peace evaded you once more. Too distraught to relax even after the energy boost of the hangover cure you drank that morning had faded, you changed into casual wear and headed out once more.

The address you had found in Jimin’s planner led you to Sangdo’s central commercial districts. A rather generic coffee shop with two floors seemed to be your final destination, and as you headed inside, you found your conjecture correct. You didn’t know what you had expected or if you had expected anything at all. What kind of place did men go to with their mistresses?

It was only 10.23, but you would have actually lost your mind if you stayed any longer at your place. Not that waiting around for Jimin and his potential mistress in another place - and a public place at that - was that much better. But since you were outside, the professional part of you could treat it as a stakeout. You were simply there to observe a meeting between two suspects.

There was nothing more to it.

After ordering your food and drink, you settled in an off-to-the-side seating area in the corner of the first floor. You had brought a book, partly to keep yourself busy and partly as a prop. If anyone walked into the coffee shop, they would hardly be inclined to look at a woman reading a book, even less so since you had chosen to sit angled away from the entrance. You kept a travel-sized makeup mirror in your lap, opening and lifting every time you heard the door open to check who it was walking in. Your hair was loose for once, hanging free past your shoulders, and you had made a good attempt at wearing clothes that were as far away from your usual officewear as possible.

Upon looking at your reflection in the window, you didn’t look half bad.

An hour trickled by. You had brought a crime novel, hoping it would help speed up time, but it did the opposite. You kept rolling your eyes at the dramatic plot turns, the needlessly convoluted plot, the excessive relationship drama and the obvious bad guy. It was so obvious to you who the perpetrator was as well as how the ending would conclude, yet you persevered, if only to refrain from looking like an idiot or weirdo who just sat around doing nothing in a coffee shop.

You heard the entrance door open for the tenth or fifteenth time. The story had admittedly gotten a bit better and you decided to wait to check on who the new guests were until you had finished reading the page. As you discreetly lifted the makeup mirror and angled it toward the counter far behind you, you held no expectations. But you still felt like you had been punched straight in the gut when you spotted Jimin.

For he was with a woman.

You almost dropped the book. You might have if it weighed more. Fortunately, a little muscle strength still remained with you from your former glory days and you kept your posture steady, which was fortunate. Jimin was glancing around the coffee shop. Not suspiciously, just through browsing. His gaze even landed on you once, but he looked past you before you had the time to
freeze up.

You were in the clear.

You were too far away to hear what Jimin and the woman were saying, but both of them seemed amicable with each other. Like they had known each other for a while. You recognized her from her photos online, concluding quickly that she was the right suspect.

Heo Jae-Kyung. The woman whose phone number had been in Jimin’s trousers. The woman who had gone to the high school where Jimin taught.

The bitch that may or may not be Jimin’s secret lover.

After their drinks were done, you were briefly concerned the two might head upstairs. Fortunately, the coffee shop was sparsely populated and Jimin and Jae-Kyung seemed content with a seat by the windows.

It was a good sign, you told yourself as you watched them settle by a table in your makeup mirror. You doubted a cheater would want to sit with his mistress in plain view where plenty of passersby and potential acquaintances could see them. Everything was fine. You were in one of the most populated areas in the city and it would be insanity for Jimin to try and be out and all lovey-dovey with a woman that wasn’t his wife. Especially since he knew his wife was a detective.

As you watched Jimin and Jae-Kyung converse in nothing but a friendly manner, you couldn’t help thinking that you might be overreacting. Because even if she had been a student at Jimin’s school and they seemed to have known each other for a while, that didn’t amount to anything. Jimin was the sweetest and kindest person you had ever met - he wouldn’t deny a meeting with an old student. And although he had never mentioned her, he wouldn’t keep it secret intentionally. Jae-Kyung was probably just like a friend. Just because she was pretty didn’t automatically mean you had to be so jealous and assume and jump to conclusions.

He wouldn’t fuck a former student of his. Even if the age difference wasn’t that far off.

Even if you had slept with Yoongi when you were seventeen and he was twenty-four.

Jimin was a better person than Yoongi. He wouldn’t betray you, especially not with someone who was barely more than a teenager. He wouldn’t throw away your marriage for some… some child.

But then Jimin leaned over the table and kissed her and you thought your world would end.
“Another bottle of soju, old lady!”

You finished what remained of your eighth soju bottle of the evening before you slammed it into the table. The utensils and plates spread across the grilling table shook, and the loud noise caught the attention of plenty of others. But you didn’t care that they stared or muttered snide remarks.

You didn’t care about anything.

“(Y/N)…”

Just by glancing in the direction of the voice, the world seemed to spin. You blinked, having a difficult time focusing on Taehyung’s blurry features. In fact, if he hadn’t spoken, you doubted you would have recognized the fuzzy, vaguely humanoid-shaped blob before you as the constable.

“Haven’t you had enough to drink for tonight, aunty?”

Even though he sounded amused, he couldn’t fully disguise the concern in his voice. It annoyed you.

“Wh… who the hell do you think you are to tell me that I should stop?” you demanded, aiming an accusatory finger at him. Or at least where you thought he was sitting.

“(Y/N)…”

You faintly acknowledged it as Jungkook’s voice. Slowly turning your head in the other direction, you found another indistinguishable blob. It was saying something with Jungkook’s voice, but it felt like you were underwater, and you were unable to distinguish a single word. And as the vague shape of another soju bottle appeared before you, you sank deeper into a dark, warm ocean that seemed more than eager to drag you from the surface and swallow you whole. It was a comforting feeling, and so familiar it felt like you came home for the first in a decade. Which you technically were.

You didn’t think you had been as drunk as you were getting ever since Yoongi left you.

However, the pleasant, reassuring sensation started to fade as soon as you had emptied your ninth bottle of the night. You lifted your arm to demand another one when the world seemed to be turning upside down - and real quickly. A wave of nausea washed over you, but you managed to force down the contents of your stomach by sheer strength of will. It was either that or the fact that you hadn’t eaten anything all day.

“…gotta take her home.”

“…know. I’ll pay; you should…”

You were resting your face on the smooth surface of the table when someone abruptly lifted you up. Too tired to protest or even open your eyes, you just fell slack in the person’s arm, not wanting to make it easy for them to take you away from the only thing that could soothe the rupture in your chest.

The only thing that could save you from knowing what you did.

The person carrying you kept speaking but you couldn’t understand what he or she was saying. Or well, who were you kidding. It was either Jungkook or Taehyung. You didn’t know anybody else in
You swallowed, feeling parched. “Where… where am I?”

“You’re almost home, aunty. Just gotta get your keys out of your bag without dropping you--ouch!”

“Let… me… down!”

You tried to struggle against the person’s grip - a person you now knew was Taehyung. But he didn’t let you go, even as you pushed at his face and chest.

“Hey, take it easy! I’m ticklish!”

“Let me… down!”

You were slurring. It felt like you were floating farther and farther out of your body. Still, you didn’t want to be taken to your apartment.

Because you knew who would be waiting there.

“Alright, alright.”

Gravity pulled you downward, which wasn’t that strange considering Taehyung had put you down and you felt solid concrete underneath your soles. However, it continued to drag you down, causing you to stumble as you took your first step forward.

“Hey!”

“Fuck,” you muttered as you rubbed your knees. Not because they hurt - you barely felt anything in your current state - but because you knew there would be bruises by the next day.

“(Y/N)!”

The world was a mess of gray walls and weak lights. But as Taehyung crouched next to you, you managed to focus on his handsome face, which was twisted in concern.

“Are you really alright?” he asked. “I know you had to go home from work a because you felt a bit sick. When you called us a few hours and said you wanted to hang out, maybe I shouldn’t have told you where Jungkook and I were.”

“Hey,” you said as sternly as you could. “I’m your senior. You shouldn’t be talking to me like that. When I want to go drinking and hanging out with my cute little hoobaes, you guys have no choice but to comply.”

The creases between Taehyung’s brows multiplied as he sat down, placing your purse to the side.

“You didn’t answer my question,” he said, searching your face with his intense brown eyes. “Did something bad happen today? Is that why you drank so much?”

“Don’t be stupid.”

You grasped his tie with both of your hands. Taehyung’s eyes widened when you pulled him closer, and a blush crept over his face.

“(Y/N)--” he began.
“What if I were just so happy to be with you and Jungkook that I couldn’t stop drinking?” you interrupted, letting your breath warm his cheek. “What if I told you I just called to hang out with you because I really, really like you?”

“That… that would be a lie.”

Taehyung placed his hands gently over yours and his expression softened. “You don’t have to lie to make me feel better about myself. Especially not when you’re the one crying.”

“I’m… crying?”

Startled, you lifted your hand to your eyes. Your fingers came away wet.

“So, that’s why the world is so fuzzy,” you said, more to yourself than Taehyung.

“No. You’re just hella drunk.”

You chuckled as you wiped your cheeks with the back of your hands. “I am, aren’t I? I don’t think I’ve drunk this much since I was a teenager.”

“What, seriously?”

“Yep.”

You tried to rise, but your legs wouldn’t budge. “I got into so much shit when I was young. I drank, got into drugs, were out partying almost everyday… I barely passed high school.”

“I would have never guessed that about you.”

You snorted. “Cute. I know what kind of person I am.”

“No, seriously.”

Taehyung’s eyes were wide when you found them. “I thought you were the type to be class president and who caught the other students while they were making out on the roof or trading cigarettes during recess.”

“No,” you said, grinning. “I was the one doing all that stuff. And I was the best at it. If it weren’t for Yoongi, I would have continued to waste my life away on partying and drugs.”

“Yoongi…?”

Taehyung frowned. You faintly realized you had said something you shouldn’t have, but you were too drunk to care. You regarded his confusion with amusement and leaned closer.

“I loved him,” you murmured, smiling as you studied Taehyung’s face. He really was good-looking, even up close - especially up close. “I think I still sorta do. But he’s such an asshole. He won’t fuck me even if I beg on my knees. Even if I suck him off.”

There was a look of hurt across Taehyung’s shocked expression. “(Y/N), what—”

“Hush.”

You shuffled closer to kiss him. However, just before your lips connected, Taehyung scrambled away. His back hit the apartment door you vaguely recognized led into your home. Panic flashed across his intense brown eyes. He was just about to stand up when you started toward him, on your
fours.

“But you won’t reject me, right?” you whispered, reaching for his long legs.

You had never seen Taehyung’s face any redder than it currently was. It surprised you since he
never hesitated from cracking sexual jokes or innuendos of even the most vulgar variety. And that at
the office or in a restaurant.

Satisfied and even a little proud over your accomplishment you freed your hair from the ponytail you
had confined it in while drinking. You pushed a hand through it and grinned when you saw
Taehyung’s eyes drift from the crown of your head to your chest, as if he were transfixed to the
movement of your hair.

You smiled as you moved closer, letting your fingers drag up the lengths of Taehyung’s dark dress
pants. “You’ll fuck me if I beg you, Taehyung. Won’t you?”

“(Y/N), I--”

“If I treat you nicely,” you interrupted as you leaned down toward his crotch, “you’ll reward me,
right?”

“We’re literally outside your apartment,” said Taehyung, eyes wide in alarm. “Someone can walk
out on us anytime.”

“It’s past midnight,” you said dismissively. “And this is a nice neighborhood. Everyone is asleep.”

“But your hus--”

You instantly placed a hand over Taehyung’s mouth.

“Not a word about him,” you said with what you hoped was a convincingly drunken smile. “I just
want you, Taehyung. Nobody else.”

Starting from his defined jawline, you spread a haphazard trail of light kisses down his body. You
kept your hand where it was over his mouth until you had reached his waistband where you needed
both of your hands to undo his button and zipper. However, no sooner had you begun to undo his
dress pants when he stopped you.

“No.”

Taehyung had grabbed both of your hands in his and his face was serious. More serious than you
recalled seeing it in a while.

“We can’t do this,” he continued.

“Of course we can,” you said, trying to free yourself from his grip. “As long as you want it and I
want it, there’s nothing wrong.”

You lowered your face until your lips were mere millimeters away from touching Taehyung’s crotch.
“And you want it, right? Just be honest, Taehyung: you’ve been wanting my lips around your dick
since you started at the department.”

“Yes,” admitted Taehyung, blushing once more. “But not like this. Not when it feels like I’m using
you.”

“You aren’t using me,” you blurted. In truth, you were the one using him. “We’re both consenting
adults. Do I have to spell it out for you or sign a contract?”

“You’re so drunk you can’t even stand up,” he said, swallowing. “And you’re behaving differently. You usually refuse to let me carry you even while you’re wasted. But now you already want to…”

His voice trailed away but his concern didn’t. And you didn’t think he was faking it. Despite your advances and your proximity to his privates, you couldn’t discern any physical reaction at all. It should have been enough of a sign for you to back off with what little remained of your dignity. But instead, the discovery only made you feel worse. Inept.

Worthless.

“What’s so wrong with me?”

You hadn’t meant to shout but you couldn’t help it. There were just so many emotions churning and swelling inside of you; it had only been a matter of time before they burst out of you like the flesh of overripe fruit. Ugly and foul.

The worry on Taehyung’s features turned into regret within an instant as your vision started to blur again. You saw him opening his mouth to speak, but you didn’t bother listening. You felt humiliated and more undesirable than ever. If not even Taehyung, someone who had practically begged to be with you for two years straight, wanted you when things finally unfolded, who would want you?

In the end, was it perhaps your fault that Jimin cheated on you?

You shakily got to your feet. Taehyung’s words were indiscernible over the rapid beating of your heart. He tried helping you stand on your wobbly legs, but you flinched away from him, supporting your weight against the wall instead.

“Don’t touch me,” you snapped, hurting at the cold in your own voice. “Get my keys from my purse. I want to go inside.”

“(Y/N)…”

You flexed your jaw. “Now.”

Taehyung opened his mouth, then shut it. He got to his feet, swiping your purse from the floor as he did. The apartment door was unlocked within a few seconds. You slipped inside as quickly as you could.

“(Y/N), wait! About this ‘Yoongi’--”

You shut the door in his face, locking it immediately. Unable to stay upright on your own strength, you fell back against the door, sliding against it until you were plopped on the doormat amid shoes.

Someone knocked gently on the door. You sensed the hesitancy in the sound, but you refused to let it sway you even as the quiet knocking continued. Eventually, it ceased. Instead, your phone vibrated incessantly, indicating incoming calls.

You ignored them all.

Sitting in the gloom of the entryway, you waited until your phone stopped vibrating before you rose. With quivering knees, you looked through the peephole in the door.

Taehyung had left.
You were barely able to look, even less walk straight as you headed for the living area. Doing your best to avoid knocking into furniture, you managed to get to the sofa somewhat unscathed. Even if you hadn’t, you doubted you would feel any pain.

You felt nothing anymore.

The air inside the apartment was hot and cramped. You threw away your blazer and undid your blouse and skirt before you fell face-first onto the sofa. Although you tried to unhook your bra in the back with one hand, your fingers felt numb and you couldn’t tell your skin from the soft material of the bra. Annoyed, you tried to sit up straight and use both of your hands. However, a wave of darkness quickly washed over you, dragging you away from the shores of your consciousness.

You woke after what felt like a few seconds of shuteye to the piercing morning alarm of your phone. Too hungover to get up, you tried to block out the sound using a cushion. You vaguely heard someone’s footsteps hurry through the apartment and let out a breath of relief when the irritating sound ceased.

“Honey?”

You didn’t answer. Partly because you were too drunk and exhausted to formulate any cohesive sentences. Partly because you recognized the voice.

Jimin.

He didn’t try to wake you. After a moment of silence, you felt a blanket draped over your almost-naked body. A hand patted you carefully on your shoulder.

“There’s plenty of hangover cure in the fridge. Do you need anything else?”

His voice was soft. Gentle. Normal. As if nothing had happened; as if nothing had changed.

You didn’t respond. You couldn’t.

It hurt too much.

“I’ll prepare a fruit salad that you can eat once you’re up. Should I call the department and tell them you’re sick?”

You gritted your teeth, glad that you had put a cushion over your head in order to block out the sound of the alarm. You didn’t want Jimin to see your face.

You didn’t want him to see the tears streaming down your cheeks.

“I’ll call them. Do you want me to stay home to take care of you?”

“No,” you managed, barely able to keep the tears out of your voice.

“Are you sure, honey?”

You swallowed. “Yes.”

“Alright. Don’t hesitate to call or text me - I’ll drive home anytime.”

You couldn’t muster a reply. The large rupture in your chest only felt like it was ripped open further by the kindness in Jimin’s tone. You couldn’t stand the pain.
You couldn’t stand to remember the truth.

You didn’t know when sleep took you, but the living room was much brighter the next time you involuntarily awoke due to a disturbance. A high-pitched sound rang throughout the apartment. At first, you thought someone was calling you. But you quickly realized that it couldn’t be your phone. When you groggily rose from the sofa, you found it lying on the coffee table right next to you, completely drained of power.

Someone was ringing the door. And not stopping.

“Fucking hell…”

You rubbed the crusts out of your eyes and hauled yourself to the bathroom. You didn’t know if it was a very dedicated delivery man or some desperate, door-to-door salesperson. But whoever it was, you doubted he or she would give up before you had the time to relieve yourself, especially since they must have been ringing the doorbell for a while to get you up.

Your head was killing you, and you took your time washing your face, removing all the tears and ruined makeup from the night, as well as washing down your awful morning breath with toothpaste, water and hangover cure. The person kept ringing the door, causing your temper to rise with each passing second, and you crumbled up the plastic bottle of hangover cure when you had finished it, tossing it in the trash.

“Yeah, yeah, take it easy - I’m coming!”

It wasn’t until you passed the hallway mirror that you realized you were in nothing but your underwear. With a loud groan, you shuffled back to your bedroom and pulled out an old tunic that reached halfway down your thighs. Perhaps not the most appropriate article of clothing you could have chosen to greet a stranger, but you were too weary and angry to care. Frankly, the first thing you wanted to do after you had opened the damned door was to punch the person in the face.

But all you could do when you had opened the door was to stare. It was the last person you had expected to see.

Yoongi.
“What the fuck?”

The words tumbled out of your mouth. With no regard to the fact that he was your superior, both in age and rank, you aimed an accusatory finger at him.

“What the hell are you doing here?” you demanded, anger lending you the necessary strength to remain coherent in your speech, albeit in a rude way.

“I could ask you the same.”

Yoongi narrowed his cold, piercing eyes as he inspected you from head to toe, then back up again. Judging by the way his lips thinned, you didn’t think he liked what he was seeing.

“Why aren’t you at the office?” he asked coolly.

You scowled as you positioned yourself at an angle behind the front door, hiding as much of your body as you could. Not that there wasn’t anything he hadn’t seen before. Or touched. Or owned.

“I’m sick,” you said sardonically. “As if that weren’t obvious enough just from looking at me.”

For a tenth of a second, you thought you might hint something akin to genuine concern moving underneath Yoongi’s impenetrable guise. Or it might have just been your hungover, sleep-deprived mind playing tricks on you. Giving you inputs you knew you shouldn’t be having.

In the fragile state you were in, you wouldn’t be able to deny him anything.

“I don’t believe you.”

Yoongi took a step closer. You tried to shut the door as soon as possible, but his foot was already planted firmly on the threshold. The hard material of his shoe resisted the pressure from the door.

“Back off,” you snarled. “I’ll call the cops.”

“We’re already here.”

If it were anyone but Min Yoongi, you would have interpreted it as a dry joke. A deadpan comment. However, since it was him, you had no idea how to think. Not because he couldn’t be funny.

But because he could.

“Leave,” you said sharply. “I don’t care if you’re my boss. I want you to step the hell--”

“You’ve been drinking.”

Your breath almost caught in the back of your throat. “What? No.”

Yoongi leaned closer to the gap between the doorframe and the door. You leaned as far as you could in the opposite direction without losing your hold of the door in order to keep him from smelling you. But it must have not been enough.
“Yes, you have. And you’ve been drinking a lot.”

If only you could tell what Yoongi was thinking. If only a smidgen of emotion could surface on the mask he wore so well.

If only you could get any sort of rise out of him. Any sort of reaction that would reveal how he felt in regards to you.

Something that would answer the question you had been too cowardly to ask over a decade ago.

You gulped, still standing as far away from the door as you could without losing your grip of the handle. “So what? Are you gonna fire me because I was drinking out of job hours? Or because I’m too hungover to work?”

Even though you were taunting him, you weren’t a hundred percent certain that he wasn’t going to take your badge away. You were playing with fire, aiming for some kind of reverse psychology that wouldn’t result in the loss of your job.

If that went away, you would have nothing left to live for.

“No.”

You couldn’t hide your shock; you stared at him in disbelief.

“No?” you echoed.

“No.”

For once, Yoongi didn’t seem annoyed at you for making him repeat himself. His voice was neither as harsh nor cool as it usually were, an early spring breeze rather than a whipping winter gale. The sudden change should have felt nice, like a step in the right direction - perhaps toward the prospect of reaching a healthier relationship between you and him in the future.

But it didn’t.

“Why are you here, Yoongi?”

Yoongi frowned. “Are you asking why an inspector has come to visit his only sergeant during the city’s first real homicide investigation in years? When she mysteriously called in sick just a few hours ago and the department already is understaffed? When said sergeant is suspected to abuse alcohol to the point that it may very well become detrimental to a high profile investigation? I thought you were smarter than that.”

You ground your teeth, humiliated by his words. “I see. So, you are just here to find a reason to fire me.”

“That is not what I said.”

“Does it matter?” you demanded, angered. “It’s what you mean anyways.”

“It’s not,” he said, sounding strangely… honest.

“Don’t try,” you began, growing increasingly agitated by his continued calm. Time after time, moment after moment, he was always just so stony. So expressionless. Like there wasn’t anything in him that cared.
Perhaps that’s why you hated his mask so much.

“I know you don’t want me around.” you continued, voice dripping with venom. “I know it’s weird and uncomfortable to be working with somebody you used to fuck over a decade ago. But this is unacceptable. You can’t just show up outside my door and threaten to fire me because I called in sick, even if we’re understaffed. That’s just dirty.”

Yoongi’s expression didn’t change in the least. “I’m not here to fire you.”

“Then fucking leave!”

Tears were dangerously close to spilling out your eyes. You did your best to swallow them, but they encroached upon your voice, thickening it ever so slightly.

But Yoongi didn’t seem to need anything more to realize things were wrong.

“What is really going on, (Y/N)? Why are you drinking so much?”

Your lips parted in surprise. While you never seemed to be able to glean anything from that emotionless mask of his, Yoongi always seemed capable of cutting through your facade with all the precision of a surgeon’s knife. Cold and sharp, his eyes and tone peeled through your defenses as if they weren’t even there. As if you were utterly unarmed and helpless before him.

“Did something happen yesterday?”

The question felt like a slap straight across your face. Not because it was him who asked but because of what the inquiry pertained to. A memory, an image so painful you felt like your chest had ruptured, leaving a gaping hole.

A gaping hole that nothing but fury could adequately fill.

“No,” you hissed, pushing the door with renewed strength. “I want you to leave now. Before I smash your foot.”

Yoongi didn’t even blink. “No.”

“Yes,” you said through gritted teeth. “I’m hungover and tired as hell so don’t you try to fuck with me. Get the hell off my door before I do something that’ll seriously lose my detective’s badge.”

Yoongi didn’t reply. But he didn’t move away.

“Are you deaf?” you snapped, pushing the door harder against his nicely polished dress shoe. The leather bent inward slightly, but it didn’t give in. Neither did Yoongi.

“I’m not leaving until you tell me why you didn’t show up to work this day.”

His eyes pierced into you, so familiar, yet so distant all the same. The pain in your chest doubled, nearly causing you to fold over. That agony fueled your anger, fed into your temperament.

“Are you fucking serious?”

You didn’t care about the neighbors perhaps overhearing. Judging by your blurring vision, your tears were already bordering on falling. If there was something you never wanted Yoongi to see, it was you, weak. It was you, crying.

It was you, begging and pleading with him to love you as you loved him.
“Get the fuck out of here!” you yelled, your patience running thin. “I want you to leave me the hell alone! If losing my work is what it takes to get rid of your sour-ass fucking presence, then fine! I quit!”

Yoongi’s expression cooled considerably. But he didn’t manage to hide the flash of surprise in his eyes quick enough.

“Stop screaming,” he said calmly. “And don’t tell me you’re quitting.”

“Oh, but I am.”

You released the door, darting to your purse where it rested on the hat shelf. Rummaging through it, you pulled out your badge and turned around to face Yoongi in the entryway, barely at an arm’s length away. Part of you smacked you over the head for your mistake of letting him inside. But that part was quickly drowned out by the sound of your anger.

“Here!”

You shoved the badge toward his chest. Yoongi stood surprisingly firm, even as your hand struck him. “Take this and get the fuck out. You won’t have to care about whether one of your subordinates shows up to work or not. Because I’m never going back.”

“Stop this,” said Yoongi, a small furrow forming between his brows. “You’re still too drunk to think properly; you must have drunk yourself to sleep last night. Why?”

“That’s none of your fucking business,” you snarled, nudging the badge harder against his chest. “Take this and leave. Now.”

“No.”

You gritted your teeth. “Yoongi--”

“You’re not yourself,” he said, stepping closer. “What happened yesterday? What’s wrong?”

When the final question left his lips, you felt something break inside of you. Unable to stand the emotional burden of your discovery, you felt the tears running down your face before you spoke.

“My husband, Jimin… I saw him with another woman.”

For the briefest of moments, you saw something cross Yoongi’s face. A shadow of a shadow, it vanished before you could catch it. Like cigarette smoke drifting up into the sky.

But you could have sworn for an instant that Yoongi had appeared… guilty.

What kind of guilt, you did not know. You did not care to know. Because no sooner had the words left your lips when you felt it. The overwhelming, crushing sense of hopelessness, pain and betrayal. The truth of your situation, of your marriage, your life - of broken-heartedness. Of an unforgettably hurting experience that was far too familiar to what you had experienced once before.

And that with the man before you.

“Are you sure?”

Yoongi’s voice was quiet. Dampened. But even though his mask remained firmly affixed to his face, you could tell that he wasn’t asking about whether you were sure that you had seen Jimin with another woman. He knew you weren’t that dumb as to draw too hastened of a conclusion. No, he
was asking if you knew for certain that Jimin was cheating.

Your tears made your head too heavy to hold up. Made it too heavy for you to stare back at Yoongi, to meet his eyes. Your gaze dropped to the floor where it remained as more and more tears surfaced and fell, covering your face in hot, salty trails. The taste of your sadness, of your despair, coated your tongue like altogether too sweet coffee or soda, taunting your already nauseous stomach.

“Yes,” you managed between one agonizing breath and another. “I am sure.”

Silence descended over the entryway. Over the whole apartment, in fact. All you felt and heard where the painfully pathetic sniffs from your nose and the hard, hard beating of your ruptured heart.

It was somewhat of a relief. For a moment, you had forgotten that your heart existed. For ten years, you had allowed it to hide and safely recuperate from the aftermath of your relationship with Yoongi. Every painful thud reminded you that you were still alive.

That nothing you would do would ever change what destiny seemed to have in mind for you - heartbreak. Rejection and loneliness and desperation.

Love for men that did not love you back no matter how much you tried.

A pair of arms surrounded you suddenly. You jolted in surprise, but before you could protest or push him away, Yoongi embraced you. He held you tightly, more so than you could ever recall, removing any space between the two of you. You opened your mouth to say something, but he silenced you.

“Hush.”

It was a quiet sound, and gentle. Just as gentle as the hand that caressed your back comfortingly. Just as gentle as the other hand holding your head to his chest. The even beating of his heart filled your ear, pressed against your cheek, a calming rhythm that lulled the roiling thunderstorm inside of you.

You closed your eyes, sending out a fresh wave of tears that quickly melted into the smooth, silken fabric of Yoongi’s dark suit. You encircled his waist with your arms, returning the embrace slowly, gradually, before you finally held him so tightly your fingers and arms numbed. So tightly you always had wanted to hold him but been too afraid to try.

The smell of Yoongi’s clothes, of his aftershave and something else more natural, human, filled your nose. All familiar scents. Pleasant, like old friends visiting.

Past memories emerged from the bottom of your mind. Your crying intensified and you buried your face into his chest. You didn’t know if it was because of his fragrance or the shocking sincerity in his embrace or the fractured pieces of your heart that cut into you from the inside. You didn’t know if it was the feeling of time having turned back to when you were seventeen and he was twenty-four and all your issues fell into the backdrop that was your relationship. You didn’t know if it was the anguish that bled out of you like blood from a fresh open wound, obvious for anyone and everyone to see.

But when you lifted your head from Yoongi’s chest and reached up to kiss him, he did not resist.

His lips were thin and small but much softer than his stony expression suggested. You were tentative in your advance, unsure if or when he would withdraw. But when he remained still, holding you tightly against him, you were spurred on to continue.

Spreading your arms and fingers across his back, wanting to touch as much of him as possible, you
deepened the kiss. At first, his mouth neither opened or closed, remaining petrified in a state in-
between. You didn’t mind - the feeling of kissing and hugging him after so long felt like the first
breath of air after too much time underwater. It felt like you were finally out of a long, windowless
and doorless corridor that had stretched through darkness and more darkness.

It eased the agony of your reopened scars.

“Kiss me back.”

Without pausing from pressing kiss after kiss into the uneven line of his jaw, you murmured the
words, too insecure to say them any louder than you had. It had been a gamble saying them in the
first place since you knew you wouldn’t be able to take another rejection at that point.

It would break you. Completely.

Yoongi didn’t reply. A cold chill crept over you, gradually stopping you in your generous
distribution of kisses. You withdrew, wiped a tear or two from your eyes and met his gaze.

To your surprise, he didn’t seem detached from the situation for once. His cold, piercing eyes gauged
your expression, taking in your eyes and lips with an almost analytic calmness. But there was
sympathy there, and hesitation as well, an emotion you never would have associated with his
straightforward self-assuredness.

“Do you really want this?” he asked quietly.

“I do,” you said, sniffing.

“Are you sure? Because you should know by now that I cannot give you what you really want. I
can’t be that person to you.”

The statement shouldn’t have come as a shock to you. But it did.

Because that meant he knew about your feelings toward him. He had maybe known all along.

Humiliation washed over you. Your previous fury grew louder and stronger with indignation, but
you beat it into submission - at that moment, you didn’t need more than what he could offer you.
And he had been open and honest about it for once instead of avoiding the subject like when you
were younger. He had told you straight up now and before anything more serious had elapsed
between the two of you.

Maybe Yoongi really had changed to the better, while you had just confined yourself into living in a
bubble. A comfortable world of your own making where nothing and nobody could hurt you.

Like you were a child.

“I’m…”

Your voice wavered until it fell away, brittle and incohesive. Like the cigarette bumps that Yoongi
used to tap away with a few careful flicks of his middle finger.

Yoongi didn’t speak. He merely regarded you, waiting for you to give him an answer. An honest
one. And this time, you really knew it; you really felt compelled to be truthful. Not only toward him -
but also yourself. You wanted to admit to him how much you loved him and how much he had hurt
you. That he had crushed your heart so decisively, so utterly, that it had marked you for life. That
you wouldn’t be able to keep your emotions out if he kissed you. That it would be better for both of
you if he just backed away permanently and treated you as nothing more than a subordinate and co-
worker.

That it was time for you to finally move on from both him and Jimin - and find love with men who
would love you the same.

But you didn’t.

Instead of answering vocally, you kissed him again. Yoongi stiffened but he didn’t push you away.
In fact, he came to slowly relax before he started to return your administrations. First with a slow,
careful tenderness that might have led you to believe that he had never kissed anyone before. But
you knew better. And as one gentle kiss led to the next, you noticed that growing hunger of his,
hidden just beneath the surface of every touch.

It kindled your desire like a match ignited a heap of crusted dry wood.

You started to tug at his belt. However, Yoongi stopped you before you could undo anything.
Without releasing your mouth from his, he grabbed your backside and hoisted you up. You
immediately wrapped your legs and arms around him, allowing him to carry you to the bed upon
where he gingerly placed you. He withdrew from your lips, but not for long. A kiss or two found
their way to different parts of your face, neck and shoulders as he helped you out of your tunic.

You had been naked with a man countless times. Both when you had been much younger and freer,
and with Jimin. It hadn’t always been in a sexual situation with Jimin, especially not after marriage,
but you still had more than enough experience being completely exposed before a person. But even
though you were still in your underwear, you felt anxious and self-conscious as Yoongi’s cold,
piercing eyes scoured your body. You were just about to say something, perhaps crack a joke to ease
your tension, when he spoke.

“You’re beautiful.”

It wasn’t something major. It was perhaps the simplest compliment a person could receive from an
interested partner. Jimin had told you that every day.

But it was different with Yoongi. Like all things were with him.

You tried to muster a confident smile but there was no denying the warmth in your cheeks. You
hoped it wasn’t half as obvious as it felt like it was as you scooted closer to the edge of the bed and
rose. Without saying anything, you started to undress Yoongi. First his suit blazer, then his tie. When
you had unbuttoned his shirt, exposing the naked skin beneath, you paused.

“Can… can I touch you?” you asked quietly.

Usually, Yoongi was the one in charge. Control and domination seemed to be his biggest turn-ons
and you didn’t mind that at all. In fact, that’s what had drawn you to him in the first place. And you
couldn’t remember a single occasion where that hadn’t been the case.

But things were different this time.

“You don’t need to ask.”

Even though Yoongi still wore his emotionless mask, the impact of his response didn’t slip past. He
was handing over the reins to you. You were free to do whatever you wanted and he would follow
your lead.
You didn’t know if the strange flutterings in your heart were because of nervousness or something else. You hoped for the former.

Now that you had his permission, you didn’t allow yourself to hesitate. Without excuse or the pretense of shyness, you threw off his shirt and began exploring Yoongi’s torso with your hands and mouth in a descending pathway. His pale skin felt warm and smooth underneath your touch. Some parts were thinner than you remembered, making you wonder fleetingly whether he was eating well. It was a heartaching thought, however. You did your best to shove it into the darkest and most forgotten corner of your mind, together with your reason and dignity.

By the time you kneeled in height with the waistband of Yoongi’s dark dress pants, you had forgotten all about your previous concern. After removing his shoes and socks, you made quick work of his belt, buttons and zipper, letting the fabric fall to the floor where it pooled around his ankles. Yoongi regarded you for a beat before he stepped out of the small pile, shoving it behind him with a quick motion of his foot.

Both of you were in underwear. Both of you had already seen each other naked numerous time. But your knees still quivered as you stood up.

Yoongi searched your face. You didn’t know for what exactly or if he found what he had been looking for. But when he leaned closer and placed his lips over yours, you completely forgot about it. And any hesitation that you might have had vanished with your curiosity.

Because you wanted Yoongi more than ever.

Although he had indicated that you were in charge, you didn’t really want that. You draped your arms around his shoulders and neck, kissing him in return, but you didn’t do more than that. It didn’t take more than a few seconds for Yoongi to take the hint.

He moved closer, eventually forcing you to fall back onto the bed. Before you could sit up or crawl further up the bed, Yoongi crawled over you, melding your lips together once more. You put your legs around his waist again and arched your back, letting him slide a hand underneath you to undo your bra. The familiar sensation of the strap loosened, and you relaxed against the mattress when Yoongi pulled away from the kiss and tossed your bra unceremoniously to the side.

The way Yoongi’s eyes touched your exposed breasts nearly made you blush. Even more so when he leaned down to kiss you, from right to left. You moaned as both teeth and tongue grazed over the most sensitive points, and instinctively tightened your legs around his waist.

Yoongi could have resisted or pushed your legs off him. But yet again, he didn’t. Instead, he pressed his bulge against you, making deliberately slow, grinding motions against you below. The cotton material of his boxer briefs created delicious friction, causing you to release another moan as Yoongi’s engulfed your breasts with hand and mouth.

“Please,” you whispered, barely able to speak due to the pleasure coursing through you. “Please don’t stop.”

Yoongi withdrew from your breast. A flicker of dark amusement warmed the ice in his eyes.

“I’m gonna have to,” he said. “I’ve been wanting to fuck you too long to let you off like this. I’m going to make you scream.”

A knot formed in your lower stomach, but not from nervousness. You were burning with desire, to be touched and felt and satisfied in a way only men knew.
In a way that only Yoongi truly knew.

Yoongi stopped tending to your breasts. His absence made the air around suddenly seem so much cooler. But you didn’t have much time to protest - or even think - as he moved downwards, sliding between your legs until your thighs rested on his shoulders. You fought against the urge to cover yourself as he sat kneeling on the floor right next to the bed, looking from you to you.

“You’re this wet already?”

The tsked disapprovingly. You opened your mouth to snap a retort but nothing came out except for a gasp.

His finger was inside of you. Yoongi had pushed your underwear to the side and slowly sawed his finger back and forth. Your whole body tensed when he inserted another digit.

“Is it already too much?” he asked in a condescending tone. “You’re not gonna fit me if you can’t even handle two fingers.”

“It’s too quick,” you said, doing your best to relax both outwardly and inwardly. “You need to give me more time to get ready.”

“Judging by how wet you are, I sincerely doubt it.”

“I-I…”

“Don’t believe me?”

Yoongi removed his fingers from you and held them up. Something sticky and transparent ran down his hand, glistening in the sunlight that spilled in through the window.

You felt your face grow hot in embarrassment. “That’s entirely unrelated. You know how quickly I get wet.”

Yoongi wiped his hand on the blanket. “I also know how much I like fucking you when you aren’t ready. When I can see and hear just how much you enjoy being hurt by me.”

The knot in your lower stomach tightened. You would have tightened your legs as well but you couldn’t due to Yoongi being in the way.

“Maybe I should just fuck you,” he continued matter-of-factly. “You’re tight as hell and I’ve imagined fucking you in you and your husband’s home ever since I heard you were married. Especially in your bed. Fuck, I’m so hard it hurts.”

You swallowed. On one hand, you wanted exactly what he did - merciless fucking. But he had been astonishingly patient and gentle with you so far. You wanted to see how long you could take it.

“Please,” you began. “Not yet. I’m not ready.”

Yoongi’s eyes leveled with yours where you lay on the bed. His guise was impenetrable as he responded in a dangerously low voice.

“That just makes me want to fuck you even harder.”

A shiver trailed down your back, ending at the base of your spine. You gulped again, your heart racing in anticipation as you waited for Yoongi to act. For him to take you the way he wanted to.
The way you wanted him to.

“But I guess I can hold myself back a little bit more. Take off your panties.”

You obeyed immediately, throwing the fabric aside. Yoongi’s eyes were filled with content as he parted your legs with his hands, letting them ghost up and down your inner thighs. He eased his two fingers back into you, kissing you along the side of your leg when you tensed at his inner caressing.

The kisses started off as comforting and soft, a brief flutter of lips that accompanied the movements of his fingers. You started to relax and got swept back into a haze of pleasure as you got used to the rhythm, whining quietly when he pushed in a third finger. But the kisses quickly turned sloppier, with more tongue and bite, the closer he got to where his fingers worked into you. It was too late when you realized what he was doing.

When Yoongi licked your most sensitive spot, the world went blinding white. Your body tensed up more than ever and you thought your legs would cramp. A sharp intake of air whispered past your gritted teeth, a panicked reflex to the enormous strain your body had been induced into.

“Did you come?”

Yoongi sounded strangely worried. You looked down with a grimace and found him already peering back at you.

“N-no,” you said stiffly. “But almost.”

“Good.”

Yoongi pulled out his fingers. However, you had gotten close enough to coming that you were clamped hard around him, making it painful, even difficult for you to lose him. He had to remove one finger at a time, and even then, it made you grimace. The knot in your stomach was strung tighter than ever. The slightest sensation would have you flying over the edge.

That’s why your heart almost stopped beating when Yoongi got to his feet and started to remove his underwear.

“Wait!”

Yoongi stopped, thumbs digging in beneath the elastic waistband his boxer briefs. They were solid gray except for a big dark spot in the front. You had no doubt it was from when he had grinded against you.

“What?” he asked.

“Protection,” you said, even though it wasn’t your first thought.

“Not needed.”

“Of course it’s needed,” you said sharply, sitting up with your arms over your chest. “I don’t want kids.”

Yoongi’s eyes were cool when they pierced into yours. “I won’t get you pregnant. I’ve had a vasectomy.”

“Oh.”

That was news to you. Yoongi had never worn a condom with you before. But he had asked you if
you were on birth control, which you had been at the time. That meant he must have gotten the surgery done sometime after your break-up. Or maybe he just hadn’t told you about it anyway.

Yoongi began sliding out of his underwear but stopped once he saw you tensing. He arched a brow.

“Spit it out,” he said.

You hesitated. But when his eyes narrowed, you were quick to reply.

“I’m so close,” you pleaded, crawling toward him. “I just need one more touch. Just something quick and easy.”

Truth was, you didn’t think you could take Yoongi right then. Even though his physical attention had loosened you up at first, he had wound you up so much more as he brought you close to climax. Just by sitting at the edge of the bed with the bedding against your skin below, you felt close to orgasming at the slight friction. And it had been painful when he pulled his fingers out of you, your body feeling tighter and more strung-up now than when you hadn’t been wet.

“Please,” you said, bringing your face closer to his crotch. With one hand, you rubbed the back of his thigh. With the other, you touched his stomach. “Just let me come first. I’ll do anything you want after that.”

You didn’t care if you sounded or looked pathetic. Your body begged for the euphoria and sweetness of release. You wouldn’t be able to take him whole.

Yoongi looked down at you for a long while. When he opened his mouth, you thought that he was going to deny you. However, he didn’t.

“Get on your fours.”

You brightened, immediately obeying by crawling onto the bed and turning away from him. You shivered when you felt his hands caress your backside and legs. When you peered over your shoulder, you saw him crouching behind you, face in level with your most private part. Yoongi caught you looking and narrowed his eyes.

“Eyes forward.”

You turned your focus forward, too desperate and trembling in anticipation to bother putting up a resistance. Your obedience was rewarded with a wave of hot breath, then a few quick kisses around the area. You moaned into the blanket, closing your eyes when what felt like his thumb brushed up and down your slit. He pressed hard enough to accumulate more tension and fluid out of you, but not enough to send you spiraling.

“Stop… teasing,” you managed, desperate to feel his thumb inside you. “Put it in.”

His thumb stopped just at your opening.

“Beg,” he demanded.

“Make me come, please,” you said immediately. An annoying whine had entered your voice, but you didn’t care. You didn’t care that Jimin could walk in on you. You didn’t care that Yoongi had your heart but you would never have his.

You just wanted him to make you come in the way only he could.
Yoongi’s thumb dipped less than a centimeter inside. You stretched against it, a mixture of tingling pleasure and burning pain.

“More,” he said.

“I’ll do anything.”

You spoke so quickly you were barely cognizant of what you were saying. “I’ll let you fuck me however you want. Wherever you want. I’ll swallow everything. I won’t complain. I’ll listen and obey. You can even use my asshole. Just please put your thumb--”

You nearly blacked out. Cut off mid-sentence by the most intense pain you had felt in eleven years, you fell slack against the mattress, shocked by the sensation of something familiarly enormous filling you up from base to tip. Your body was locked up in surprise and agony, just like the time you and all the other cadets were struck by a stun gun in the police academy.

You were powerless to resist as you felt Yoongi lean over you. Still sheathed deeply inside you, he snaked his arms around yours and lifted you until you were standing on your knees, flush against his body. His breath whispered against your earlobe and neck, dark amusement lining his tone as he murmured.

“You didn’t seriously think that I would miss an opportunity to fuck you with my dick when you’re so tight my thumb barely fits?”
Pleasure and Pain

Chapter Notes

The smuttiest, sourest piece I've written to date.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was too much. He was too much.

You tried to squirm out of his grip, relieve the painful stretching of your muscles below. You were untrained, unused. Every inch seared through you, spearing you with pain that you hadn’t felt in a very, very long time.

It was all-encompassing, wreaking havoc on your nerves. It was agonizing, paining you more than anything.

You couldn’t handle it.

But Yoongi didn’t let up. Instead, he pulled you more tightly against him, arching your spine until it ached. A hand slithered up your torso, pausing briefly at your breast before it settled around your throat, just beneath your jaw.

“Did I surprise you?”

Yoongi’s raspy voice dragged over each syllable with far more amusement than you were used to hearing. At least, that’s how it had been lately.

But he sounded no different from the man you had met eleven years ago.

“Yes,” you managed, barely able to squeeze out your voice due to Yoongi’s hand. “You… you lied.”

“I did not. I told you to get on your fours and you did.”

“I wasn’t ready,” you said, a sliver of anger entering your strained voice.

“I know.”

You struggled but were unable to free your arms of the lock Yoongi had on them from behind. He had hooked his arm around both of yours, keeping them at just the necessary angle to stop you from putting up too much of a resistance. You were exposed, defenseless and invaded with no power to resist should Yoongi decide to take you harder, rougher, more brutally than what you were prepared for.

That’s what made the situation so much more arousing.

Even though you resisted, you didn’t really want to get away. It was a game where you maintained a semblance of dignity and integrity. It was a game where Yoongi was the villain who ignored all of that and fucked you whether you wanted it or not. Where he humiliated you, hurt you - yet made you come all the same.
It was the most addictive game in the world. One that mixed pleasure with pain. And as you peered around to find Yoongi’s cold, piercing eyes, you saw that his thoughts were the same.

Hurting you was his pleasure. Humiliating you was his pleasure.

Pushing you past the brink of euphoria was his pleasure.

“Eyes forward.”

Yoongi’s expressionless guise was there, but you could tell that it was a mask more than ever. The anticipation in his gaze, the satisfaction in the small smirk that spread across his lips as he tightened his grip around your throat, causing you to grimace - it revealed more of the person beneath.

More of the man you loved.

You pushed the notion aside. Now wasn’t the time to be mopey about your lost love. Even though your heart bled more after Yoongi had revealed that he knew and might have always known about your feelings, you couldn’t let that affect you.

Or else, you didn’t think you could let him continue. And you needed him to fuck you.

Because if he wasn’t there to distract you, you knew that your thoughts inevitably would drift back in the direction of Jimin - and his betrayal.

“No.”

Instead of obeying, you maintained eye contact with Yoongi. He arched a brow, scrutinizing you through narrowed eyes.

“I despise repeating myself,” he said softly, dangerously so. “Are you going to make me say that again?”

You set your jaw, staring defiantly back at him.

“I heard you,” you mumbled, unable to speak normally due to the positioning of his other hand underneath your jaw. “I just don’t want to--”

The rest of your protest was muffled into silence. Without warning, without changing even the slightest in expression, Yoongi had pushed you into the mattress, face first. He had released your arms, but your shoulders felt numb from having been suspended in such an unnatural position as before, leaving you too weak to prop yourself up or in any way defend yourself.

As such, you could do nothing but whimper incoherently when Yoongi pulled out - only to intrude forcefully once more.

“Hmm? What was that?”

Yoongi didn’t hide the amusement in his voice. His hands settled on your hips, caressing your backside slowly.

“Speak properly,” he said.

Even though your heart was racing and your body was tensing in pain, you supported yourself on your wobbly arms and threw an irritated glare over your shoulder.

“I said--” you began.
Nothing escaped your lips. Yoongi had withdrawn again, then pushed in with enough force to make your eyes water. Your arms failed you, making you plant face-first into the mattress again. You felt like you were burning, like he was tearing you asunder. It was even more painful than before, causing your breathing to hitch.

Yet, the pleasure was immense. The familiar width of Yoongi as it filled you, all of you, aside, the forceful relinquishing you had of all control was liberating. There was no doubt about who was in control. There was no doubt about whether he was going to be gentle or not.

Yoongi was going to take whatever he wanted to, even if you resisted. Even if he ruined you. That fact brought you closer to the edge than anything.

But that didn’t mean it only hurt a little.

“Again. Look at me with those rebellious eyes of yours.”

You turned your head sideways. Yoongi stared down his nose at you with all the condescending pride in the world. A cold smirk tugged at the corners of his lips when your eyes locked.

“There it is,” he said quietly, his voice too soft, too gentle to fit with the perverse satisfaction in his cold, piercing eyes. “Do it again. Try to defy me.”

Slowly, without looking anywhere else but at him, you rose on your arms, making you stand on your fours. Yoongi watched you, anticipation burning brighter, more eagerly than ever in his otherwise so unreadable guise.

“I don’t want to look away from you,” you said sternly, excitement thrumming through your own veins as well.

Yoongi’s features didn’t change. But this time, you were ready for it.

Although you tried not to, you still moaned helplessly as Yoongi burrowed into you. You almost dropped to the mattress again, and maybe would have if it weren’t for the merciless grip Yoongi had of your hair. He pulled, hard, making your scalp burn almost as much as your core.

“Again.”

“No,” you mumbled, even though you wanted to obey. Even though you wanted to beg him to stop with his endless teasing and just fuck you.

“What was that?”

You glared at him. “You heard what I said. I don’t like to repeat myself either.”

For a moment, Yoongi just regarded you with a detached sort of iciness. Your heart was pounding against your ribcage, but you refused to back down. Partly because of your pride, but primarily because there was nothing more you enjoyed than disobeying Yoongi. Because the consequences that came of that was always more pain - and pleasure.

And he never disappointed.

Within one breath and the next, Yoongi pushed your face into the mattress again. He released your hair and removed himself from you. But not for long.

Yoongi tore a yelp from you the next time he sheathed himself. You blinked and grimaced against
the burning pain, the tingling pleasure. But before you could recover, before you could regather what pieces remained of your self-respect, Yoongi moved against you again. He stole another breath from you, one that hissed between your teeth as delicious tension started to build between your legs.

“Again.”

Yoongi pulled your hair harder when you refused to respond and wrapped his other hand around your neck. The sensation was exhilarating, especially when you felt him lean over you, dangerous and dominant as he entered you more deeply than before.

“Try to disobey me.”

His breath danced along the curve of your ear. A shiver trailed down your back, and you glanced backward as far as Yoongi’s firm grasp of your neck allowed you to. You found him peering down at you, equipped with perhaps even more superiority than ever as a smirk tugged at his thin lips.

“There it is.”

Your eyes fluttered closed when he slid in and out of you with enough speed and power to make you cry. You clutched the bedding, desperate for some kind of leverage, some sense of stability, when Yoongi repeated the motion, sending waves of pleasure up your spine.

“Did you like that?”

“No,” you breathed.

Yoongi immediately gathered more of your hair around his wrist. He pulled, hard enough to force your head to lift toward him as your back arched once more. You supported yourself on your hands on reflex but quickly found yourself swiping at air. The fingers around your neck slithered forward, grasping your throat instead. He squeezed at just the moment he slipped out and inside of you.

Your moan was caught between his fingers. A strangled yelp whistled past your teeth and you coughed against the uncomfortable sensation. Uncomfortable, but not altogether unfamiliar.

Or unpleasant.

“Say that again.”

When you opened your mouth to reply, Yoongi silenced you. He filled you so abruptly, so ruthlessly, that he left you breathless, even without the added pressure around your throat. Tears surfaced once more in the corners of your eyes and you struggled like before, attempting to escape his callousness. Your attempts were much weaker, your strength sapped with every exquisitely painful and pleasurable swing of Yoongi’s hips as he penetrated you like he couldn’t have cared less. Like you were a piece of meat, an item without the right to consent or reject him.

In the end, it did not matter. It was all just a game. A game that both of you had played countless times.

In another scenario, you would have been terrified by the absolute lack of remorse or care in Yoongi’s cold piercing eyes when his motions quickened into a rhythm that matched your galloping heart. You would have kicked and elbowed and struck at him with every ounce of strength that you possessed when he pushed your head sideways into the mattress and grabbed you by your hips, pulling your lower half flush against him. You would have screamed for help and cried rivers of panic when he spread your legs with his and grabbed your backside with enough fervor to leave bruises, leaving you utterly exposed to him.
But you were just barely able to cling on to sanity when Yoongi’s cock slowly parted layers of slick, tingling muscle, settling deep within you, before he leaned over to whisper in your ear.

“I’m going to make you scream, my puppy.”

And scream you did.

Your vision - and consciousness - flitted in and out between thrusts that made you cry and come, both at once. It would have been embarrassing if you had had the ability to be embarrassed with your head floating past stars in the waves of painful euphoria that crashed into you, relentlessly, repeatedly, without any regard for whether you could handle it or not. But since you were hardly in your right mind - in any mind - you were too absorbed, too fulfilled to care about the fact that Yoongi made you orgasm with no effort. Like you were a wanton whore, too frenzied and in need of a dick to care about anything except for that.

Like nothing existed beyond the cusp of where your body and his connected.

The haze of lust clouded your already failing vision, thickened the adrenaline-filled blood rushing through your veins, making you so much less aware of anything and anyone, yet at the same time pushing your senses to their very edges. You lost all control of your limbs and you didn’t discern anything that Yoongi whispered between growls, bites and low, arrogant demands.

But at the same time, you felt him. All of him. His fingers around your throat, in your hair, down your spine, around your breasts; searching, scouring, squeezing - pleasuring. The length and width of his sex as it emptied and filled you with a greedy rhythm that mounted and expanded into a release like no other. His teeth against your earlobe, your neck, your shoulder, your breasts once he flipped you around, perhaps growing too bored with the previous position.

Yoongi’s guise still hid the man underneath, observing your face with cool detachment. But that didn’t discourage you. In fact, the iciness of his piercing glare, the conquering weight of his gaze had the opposite effect.

It cemented the fact that you were truly in his power. And that launched you far up the skies again with no extra effort on his part.

When Yoongi penetrated you anew, you came with a resounding cry. But now that you were facing each other, his hands pinning your wrists above your head, his face mere inches away from yours, you felt self-conscious. Your cheeks were already flushed but you felt even more warmth surge to your face when dark amusement flickered in Yoongi’s eyes. You wanted to say something, to protest and say that he shouldn’t flatter himself by thinking he was solely responsible for your pliable body. That it was your lack of intimacy for the last five or more years, locked in a sexless marriage that now seemed more ludicrous than ever.

But just as you opened your mouth, Yoongi kissed you.

His tongue invaded you, as cruel and hungry as his intrusion below. But that didn’t stop your limbs from stiffening as you crested another climax. You moaned into his mouth, unable to keep your eyelids from closing when he chuckled quietly and ended the kiss. His pace never relented, his hips crashing over and over into you as his lips traveled down the line of your jaw, resting finally at your ear.

“Did you like that, my puppy?”

His murmur caused you to groan, even your ear turned sensitive from your heightened state. You
were too out of it to construct anything coherent, deciding instead to answer in the only other way you could. By wrapping your legs around his waist, you hoped he could tell just how much you were enjoying him. How much the burning and tingling and agonizing, forced stretching of your most sensitive part filled you with bliss.

Judging by how your hands numbed from how tightly Yoongi’s grip around your wrists grew, you were guessing he had understood.

Another obscenely loud moan filled the room when Yoongi released your hands and pushed your legs over his shoulders, folding you in half. His stamina impressed you as always but you didn’t know how much more you could take. Sweet, painful and ecstatic, you never wanted it to stop. But when another orgasm threatened to make you forget your name, the face of the man you loved and fucked, and your legs quivered uncontrollably in the air as Yoongi pulled out, you were as desperate for an ending as you had been for a beginning a while earlier.

“Yoongi,” you breathed when he parted your trembling legs before him. “I… I c-can’t.”

You had forgotten how to speak cohesively. Words were strangers in your mouth - except for his name. That was something you did not forget, no matter how often he sent your thoughts swimming past the borders of sanity.

Yoongi wiped the sweat off his brows as he looked down at you, kneeling between your legs. His features were flushed, but he peered down at you with not a little smugness.

“Already?” he asked, his otherwise so harsh, impersonal tone filled with sly amusement. “I have just been warming up. Taking it slow.”

You tried to snort, but all that came out of you was an exhausted huff.

“Right,” you muttered sarcastically.

“You don’t believe me?”

“Even if I did, I can’t take any more.” You pressed a palm to your chest, grimacing at the rapid beating of your heart. “I… I’m done.”

Yoongi arched a brow. He raked his fingers slowly through his hair, pushing matted strands of hair from his forehead.

“How odd,” he said matter-of-factly. “You actually believe you have a say in this.”

You opened your mouth to protest but all that came out of you was a strangled yelp. His fingers were wrapped around your throat once more and he was clutching you harder than ever. Your vision blurred, though by lack of oxygen or your tears, you did not know. It did not matter.

Yoongi was inside again. Hard, unyielding, relentless. He filled all of you, blinding you with pleasure and pain as he released your throat with one hand, using it to prop himself over you. Your body shook, bounced in resonance with his determined thrusts.

You couldn’t get away.

At first, you tore at his hands, desperate to free yourself, to breathe once more. But the more Yoongi moved, the more pleasure built in your lower stomach, originating from the friction between your legs. What was yours and what was him. Despite orgasming over and over, you found yourself yearning for another high.
Yoongi smirked when you stopped resisting. He leaned closer and whispered crude, coarse expletives, insults and commands into your ear, each word winding you up tighter and tighter. You didn’t care that your body was spent, that every muscle and nerve begged for the torturous thrill to stop. You curled your legs around his waist, angling your hips higher, meeting his motion, his overwhelming presence, halfway. You dug into his shoulders and neck with hungry nails, hungry lips, tasting his sweat on your tongue. The faint aroma of his aftershave remained on his jaw still, a sharpness that pierced the thick, heavy scent of sex that blanketed the room.

“You’re so fucking tight. You really haven’t had a good fuck in years.”

You couldn’t respond. Even though Yoongi’s fingers had relaxed around your throat, you weren’t able to breathe. You had fallen too deep into delirium, unable to speak or move. All you could do was hold onto him and moan in tandem with his intrusions. It was just too good.

Too liberating.

A low rumble filled your ear, poorly disguised chuckles slipping into your ear. You blushed when Yoongi’s eyes found yours, feeling indignant again. However, you were unable to even try to stutter out a protest.

His gaze was uncharacteristically soft. Gentle.

Loving.

Yoongi must have discerned the surprise on your face because his expression immediately changed. His mask slipped back on and he narrowed his eyes at you in disdain.

“You’ve stopped screaming.”

You cried out when his fingers found the very apex of your thighs. Raptured in satisfaction, you orgasmed harder than any of the previous times. Fleetingly, you felt your fingers rake up and down Yoongi’s shoulders and back before you clenched around him, arms, legs and, well, below. But he didn’t stop. Propelling his body into yours, rubbing between your legs with enough celerity to make you grimace in pain, in too much pleasure, you came again.

“Yoongi,” you gasped when you reached climax for the third time in short succession. “I-I…”

“Shut it.”

You were unable to keep your eyes open, closing them as the muscles in your stomach coiled once more. “Yoongi, I-”

“You breathe when I tell you to breathe, my puppy.”

Yoongi’s threat was followed by an increased pace, eliciting more obscene sounds from you. You didn’t know if you were pleading or screaming, begging or crying, resisting or relenting. Your muscles had locked around him, all of him; the weight of his body pinning you down, the sensation of his breathy taunts against your neck, jaw and ear, the way his hands kneaded and squeezed, pinched and tore into you.

You wanted it to end. You were losing your mind.

“Yoongi,” you whispered, furling your fingers into his scalp. You didn’t dare to say anything else, afraid that he was going to plunge deeper and faster than he already was. You didn’t know if you were tightening around him or if he was growing harder. But the friction between your bodies was
climbing to heights you hadn’t reached in years.

Yoongi didn’t respond. It took you a few thrusts before you gathered enough brainpower to realize why.

He was getting close.

You repeated his name, a breathless, exhausted moan. Your thighs were quivering again, overwhelmed with the repeating, building waves of pleasure. He felt so deliciously hard inside of you when he turned you around and shoved himself inside unceremoniously. You came apart once more, flattening against the bed.

Yoongi didn’t pause. Even though you tried to scramble away from him, unable both physically and mentally to receive more. Even though you screamed as he shoved himself inside of you with a sort of uninhibited self-indulgence, with far less deliberation or thought than anything so far. Even though hot tears streamed down your face as he took you, again and again, deeper and deeper, perhaps emboldened by your continued convulsions.

You loved every second of it. You were unable to gauge how many times you came as Yoongi’s fingers tightened unnecessarily around your throat and upper arm. As he pressed closer, practically suffocating you underneath his body. As his growls were replaced by groans, first evenly, in rhythm, then doggedly. Unconstrained.

The less control he seemed to have, the more aroused you felt. It was that ferocious hunger of his that you recognized from years ago. The kind that was never satiated without taking you and hollowing you out. Without leaving marks on you that would not go away.

Without taking you so mercilessly that you feared you would break, even as you climaxed and all manner and sense left you.

“Yoongi,” you managed when your voice returned to you. “I… You--”

You were cut off by a hand around your throat.

“I’m not fucking you… to hear you talk.”

Each word was punctuated by a thrust that came and went so quickly that it rendered you breathless. His fingers curled harder into your flesh, sending fresh tears down your face. Gargled yelps tumbled out of your mouth.

“Yoongi,” you whispered. “I c-can’t--”

“Shut the fuck up.”

“I-it’s too much--”

Despite the pressure around your windpipe, you screamed. It was a pained sound, something that you elicited as much as he squeezed out of you. It bounced harshly against the walls of your bedroom, a cutting noise that nearly deafened you when the speed of Yoongi’s thrusts increased into an agonizingly blissful pace. The weight of his body as he slammed into your backside, spread you wide apart, positioned your hips upward at an angle that left you whimpering as he took you. *Fucked* you.

Utterly and completely.
Yoongi’s breathing was ragged, exhausted. He was growling into your ear, spitting slanderous, shameful comments about your body, your cries, your insatiable lust for his cock; how weak you were, how much he enjoyed watching you squirm and resist underneath him, how fucking good it felt to fuck you in your home where you and your husband slept. Where Jimin had fucked you.

Where Yoongi was fucking you.

You didn’t know how many times you climaxed. Each peak brought you past the brink of reason, past the brink of consciousness. You vaguely felt his fingers sinking further and further into your hips, holding you up since you were incapable of controlling your trembling limbs. His hands were wet from touching the slickness covering the insides of your quivering thighs, from the sweat that gathered on your skin. But it was nothing compared to the wetness that was running down your legs. The sound coming from both your mouth and where Yoongi’s body entered yours were growing louder but you were too absorbed in ecstasy to care.

The pressure in your core climbed and you knew that you were orgasming again. However, this time, you didn’t think you were going to be alone.

Vulgarities trickled into your ear, sweet and malicious like poisoned honey, causing you to convulse from within. Your system flooded with endorphins, making you laugh and cry at the same time. You were overwhelmed with contradicting signals and sensations, the harsh tugging of your scalp, the painful nails in your backside and thighs, the teeth that sank down into the outer curve of your ear; the softness of his whispers, the kisses that followed each cutting bite, the careful caress of his palm after he had slapped you so forcefully that parts of your body had numbed.

“Scream.”

You cried before you knew it. Not because Yoongi had told you to. But because you came immediately once more.

For Yoongi’s profane words had been wholly replaced by raspy groans that reached a hoarse crescendo once his thrusting came to a stuttering halt.

Chapter End Notes

I know it's been a while since this story updated. I explained it all in my update of AHPH, but since all of you may not read that, I'm doing a bit of a copy-paste here!

The last month and more, I've been busy finishing up The Essence Thief. Some of you may know, but it used to be a story here on Ao3 until I decided to publish it last year. It's available everywhere on paperback or ebook, so if you haven't checked it out already, please do!

(Also, if there are any DA fans, I've started up a story in that universe as well!)

As always, I hope you enjoyed reading!

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