A Court of Kings

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Summary

Kageyama Tobio was considered a freak because he had more than one soulmark decorating his arm. He ignores it the best he possibly can. After all, it will all be worth it in the end. But then he meets Oikawa Tooru. Oikawa want's nothing to do with Tobio. What does it matter if the marks on their arms match? It isn't as if they don't have another option.

Notes

*sighs loudly and slams head against desk* Okay, so this was supposed to be a one-shot but after I got to eight thousand words and was nowhere near done, I figured it was going to end up as a chapter fic. And...we'll just hope it doesn't turn out as long as Abandon.

Alright, hope you all enjoy! You know the drill, comment below (please and thank you).
Chapter 1

Kageyama Tobio was born with two soulmarks decorating his left arm. To him, they really weren’t anything special, they were just part of his skin. It wasn’t until he entered elementary school and they had their first lesson on soulmates that he truly understood. A person that was born with a soulmark was the younger soulmate. A person born without a soulmark would receive their matching mark the moment their soulmate was born.

Tobio sat in his desk, staring at his teacher in awe throughout the lesson. That awe quickly turned to guilt when he found out that the older soulmate would feel a burning pain when their soulmark formed. Considering Tobio had two soulmarks, he had put two different people through that pain when he was born. And the oldest soulmate would have had to go through that pain twice. Tobio vowed to himself that when he met them, he would apologize. No matter how long it took to actually meet them, Tobio promised himself that he would never forget to tell them that he was sorry for causing them pain.

Things changed for Tobio after the soulmate lessons began. He had always been a quiet child but he had managed to make a few close friends with some of the boys in his class. But after the soulmate lessons, when the other students realized that Tobio was a freak with a multi-bond, they ostracized him. Invitations to go out after class, to come over on the weekends, or to even sit with them during lunch faded and were replaced by side eyed glares, whispers, and mocking laughter. Tobio was confused at first, not understanding why they would suddenly dislike him because of his soulmarks. It wasn’t as if they didn’t have their own. Then he wondered if it was because of the shapes of his soulmarks. The image of a shrine was on his left forearm and the crown sitting just above it were a bit…showy, he guessed. But he soon realized the true reason.

Multi-bonds were considered to be unstable and a “flaw in fate’s design”, according to his teacher. Tobio had sank down into his chair as the words were said and every eye in the class turned to him. The teacher, a young woman that was new to the school, had flushed brightly once she realized what she had done. She quickly tried to backtrack, saying that there were some cases where such a bond created strong, stable relationships, but the damage had been done.

Any friends Tobio had made were quick to avoid him. The desk chair beside his own was always left open. He sat alone during lunch. And he cried every day after school, not understanding how something that was supposed to be so wonderful could lead to this.

But it was because of that loneliness that Tobio began to search for something to do, something he could spend his time on. He wandered from club to club but it wasn’t until he stepped foot into the gym to watch a volleyball match that he decided. Just watching the ball flying through the air, the way that the person that threw it up had control over the moves of the team, of the way the people that hit it were able to slam it down past the other team’s fingers.
He wanted to do that.

He began to practice on his own, fully aware that he wouldn’t be able to join the team mid-season. That was fine, he didn’t want to embarrass himself by not being able to do the simplest things in front of his teammates. His mother, having figured out what he was doing when she walked in on him throwing the ball around in his bedroom, took him to the local center and got him enrolled in an after-school volleyball club.

He spent the rest of his elementary school days in a pattern of school and volleyball. Word of his freakishness had spread to other classes and, no matter what class he was placed in each year, he always found the students just as unwelcoming as they had been in his first year. During his last year of elementary, Tobio set his sights on Kitagawa Daiichi Junior High. He truly doubted any of his current classmates would be entering Kitagawa Daiichi so there was a good chance that he could hide his soulmarks and actually start over. He could make friends. Not to mention the fact that Kitagawa Daiichi had an amazing volleyball team.

So he graduated from elementary and started Junior High. He made sure to keep the sleeves of his uniform always rolled down so no one would see his soulmarks and he wore a soulmark band so it wasn’t seen during practise. But Tobio found it difficult to talk to the people around him. He told himself that it would just take time. That he hadn’t spoken to anyone his own age in so long that he would just need to refamiliarize himself. He sat in class and watched as everyone around him just seemed to…click together. No one noticed him sitting alone at his desk. No one really tried to speak with him at all. And he felt that his trying to intrude on any of the conversations would just inconvenience them. He didn’t want that. He didn’t want to be known as the freak yet again.

Volleyball was different. When he was in the gym, Tobio felt like he could actually breathe. That he didn’t have to worry about the fact that he couldn’t speak to anyone without stumbling over his words. He didn’t feel bad about hiding his marks because most of his teammates did the same, though there were a couple that didn’t bother. He just wanted to do the best he possibly could so the team would like him. Especially when he saw Oikawa Tooru, the captain of his team, play for the first time. It was at that moment that Tobio decided he wanted to be a setter. Before that day, he had always been unsure about what position he wanted to play. He liked spiking. He liked the feeling of being able to score against the other team. But by watching Oikawa, Tobio finally understood how a setter could shift the dynamic of the match.

He wanted to do that. He wanted to learn how to be a setter. A great setter. Like Oikawa Tooru.

But anytime he tried to speak to Oikawa, the older boy would either make a face at him or he would just stare without saying a word until Tobio grew uncomfortable and walked away. Iwaizumi, the vice-captain and a great spiker, usually yelled at Oikawa after these encounters
before apologizing to Tobio. Tobio wished he wouldn’t. Whenever he did, Oikawa would glare and Tobio just knew that the third year was going to be even more angry with him.

It was during a practice match that Tobio was finally placed in as setter for the team. Oikawa had been off the entire day, his play sloppy and the ball uncontrolled. Tobio had to admit that he was disappointed. The boy he had been watching was certainly not the same one that he saw during that game. Tobio was happy that he could step on the court and take over for him. It looked like Oikawa needed a break and he didn’t want the team’s moral to fall even further than it already had that day.

They ended up winning the practice match and Tobio felt a rush of satisfaction when the team members all congratulated him. He had done it. He had been able to step into Oikawa’s shoes and help the team when they needed it. The only thing that truly worried him had been his serve. He had realized that many times during a game, his teammates relied on Oikawa’s jump serve to score them points, or at least shake up the other team. Tobio couldn’t do a jump serve and the only person he knew that could was Oikawa.

So, he decided to ask him for help.

He regretted it instantly.

Iwaizumi was the only reason Tobio didn’t receive a hit to the face. Tobio supposed he was lucky that the other boy was there. The enraged look Oikawa had had on his face had scared Tobio. And the completely dead eyes that came after were even worse. He shivered as Iwaizumi pulled Oikawa into the clubroom and told the other boy to change. Oikawa did so methodically, his usual humor gone. Tobio bit his lip and began to drink the milk he had purchased after practise. He felt like he should say something. That it was his fault that the other boy was like this. But he didn’t know what to say.

He slowly closed his gym bag and tossed it over his shoulder. He turned his head to wish the other boys a goodnight when he saw it.

Oikawa had taken off his soulmark band.

Tobio had always known that Oikawa’s marks were in the general vicinity of his own. They wore their bands in the same place, after all. But he truly didn’t expect to see the two marks on his forearm.
Two marks that matched Tobio’s perfectly.

Tobio’s mind blanked for a moment. This person, this person that he had been looking up to the entire year, this person was one of his soulmates. Oikawa Tooru, popular, attractive, good at volleyball, was his soulmate. Tobio’s mouth dropped as he continued to stare at the marks. There was a possibility that he was wrong. Maybe there were small differences that he couldn’t notice from across the room. But the longer he stared, the more convinced he became that it was the same.

“It’s rude to stare, Tobio-chan,” Oikawa’s annoyed tone infiltrated Tobio’s thoughts. A sleeve covered the marks Tobio had been staring at so intently and the younger boy had to blink a moment to get his eyes to readjust. When he did, he found Oikawa’s arms crossed over his chest and his eyes narrowed dangerously. Iwaizumi was shaking his head wildly behind Oikawa but Tobio just stared at the third-year setter. “What? Got something to say about my marks?”

Tobio blinked. “I…no…I just…” he took a deep breath and bent at the waist. “I’m sorry!”

“Kageyama-“

“No, don’t stop him, Iwa-chan,” Oikawa said, his voice deceptively soft. “What exactly are you apologizing for, Tobio-chan?”

Tobio stood up straight once again. “I promised myself that I would apologize when I…I mean, I was the youngest, so it had to hurt…”

Iwaizumi’s eyes were widening the more Tobio spoke but Oikawa didn’t show any emotion outside of the slight tightening of his fingers as they dug into his arms. “Youngest?” he questioned coldly.

Tobio didn’t know what to say. How to say it. Should he just blurt it out? Should he try to say it slowly? Just the thought of trying was making him nauseous. Instead, Tobio’s right hand moved, shakily pushing up the sleeve on his left arm. He then turned his arm over to show the matching soulmarks.

Oikawa’s hands fell to his side. Iwaizumi cursed. Tobio frowned. The three of them just stood there in silence, all of their eyes on the two marks Tobio was showing them.

And then they weren’t.
Because Oikawa suddenly turned away from him and placed his forehead against the locker he was standing in front of. “Great. Perfect. Of course it’s you,” he muttered. Tobio’s brows furrowed. This wasn’t the reaction he thought he would get.

“Oi! Trashykawa-“

“Forget about it, Tobio-chan,” Oikawa said, the faux happiness blatant in his voice. “It doesn’t mean anything.”

“I don’t understand-“

“The marks don’t mean anything, Tobio-chan,” Oikawa continued as he bent down and grabbed his own bag. He began walking toward the door, his hand gripping Iwaizumi’s wrist and pulling him behind him. “A stupid mark on my skin isn’t going to change how I feel about you. Besides, there are two marks. It isn’t as if we don’t have another option.”

Tobio’s mouth dropped open in shock and confusion as Oikawa disappeared out the door, Iwaizumi only managing to give Tobio an apologetic smile before the door closed completely behind them. He felt like he had been hit in the chest by a wayward ball. His vision began to blur and he quickly lifted his hand to wipe away the tears that had filled his eyes. With fumbling fingers, Tobio managed to pull down his sleeve once more. He couldn’t look toward the marks. Looking at them made him feel sick.

Oikawa ignored him even more after that night. Iwaizumi was constantly yelling at the team captain to “stop picking on the first year!” but Tobio was just happy that no one on the team seemed to know about their marks. It was embarrassing enough to know that Iwaizumi was aware that he had been rejected. Tobio wasn’t sure he would be able to manage if the rest of the team new as well. Especially Kunimi and Kindaichi.

The two boys had slowly begun to treat Tobio as a friend. Like him, they were first years and Tobio could see the three of them taking their team to Nationals eventually. All they needed was a bit more practice and the chance to show what they were able to do. Kunimi had even invited Tobio to join him and Kindaichi after practice a few times. Tobio didn’t want to imagine what would happen if his two new friends found out that not only did he have two soulmarks, one of his soulmarks was shared by Oikawa Tooru. Who had rejected him. Both boys looked up to Oikawa, in their own way. They would abandon him if they knew.
So, he kept it a secret.

He kept it a secret from everyone. He made sure to wear the soulmark band under his clothes, just in case his sleeve was pulled up at some point. The only time he removed the band was when he was at home, in the safety of his room. His mother never mentioned it. He supposed that was because she had told him to always wear the band in the first place. She had never said “I told you so” when he didn’t and the other students had reacted the way they had. She merely sighed and rubbed his back when he cried each day. He didn’t tell her why he was suddenly taking her advice in junior high and she didn’t ask.

Oikawa and the other third years graduated and Tobio became the official setter for the team. After a few practices and moving around of teammates, it became obvious to everyone that Tobio worked best with his two friends. Kindaichi and Kunimi were placed as starters at his side and they made it all the way to the finals before losing to Shiratorizawa. Tobio vowed that they would win the next year. When they did, he would be able to show Oikawa that he could take the team to Nationals, something that Oikawa had never been able to do.

But at the end of his second year, Tobio’s mother was involved in a car accident and she was pronounced dead at the scene. Tobio felt like his entire world had crashed down around him. He and his mother had been so similar. She had been the one person that understood him above all else. And then she was gone in the blink of an eye. Tobio’s father lived ten minutes away by train and Tobio was placed in his care. It was a difficult adjustment for both of them. His father and mother met when they were in high school and they realized within weeks that they were soulmates. The two had begun dating straight away. Once they graduated, his father had decided to attend a University in Tokyo while his mother stayed in Miyagi. They were had thought that it would be fine for both of them – they were soulmates, after all. But time changed things for them both and when they saw each other when Tobio’s father returned to Miyagi for break, they had trouble fitting together once more. Things were only made worse when his mother ended up pregnant during that break.

She had contacted her soulmate to inform him of the news but Tobio’s father had been hesitant. He was attending a good school, he enjoyed his life at the moment, and he wasn’t ready to be a father. He wanted his soulmate to terminate the pregnancy.

She refused.

From what Tobio had learned, his mother had ended the relationship with her soulmate, dropped out of University, and gotten a job. Her parents had not been supportive of her choice and she eventually found herself a small apartment that she shared with her son. She raised Tobio on her own until he was nine. It was at that point that Tobio’s father returned to Miyagi and asked to be part of Tobio – and his mother’s – lives. She had refused at first. Eventually, she invited him to dinner. It was the first time Tobio had met his father. The man looked like him. Truthfully, the
The dinner was awkward and Tobio had not known what to do or say. His father asked him questions about school and his friends, questions that Tobio couldn’t really answer. He didn’t like school. He didn’t have any friends. It wasn’t until his mother brought up the volleyball team that Tobio began to contribute to the conversation. His father admitted that he didn’t know anything about volleyball but he would like to see one of Tobio’s games. Tobio remembers next what happened exactly. He had been excited about the prospect of his father watching one of his games. He had been waving his hands around as he explained the different positions. When he did, he knocked over a glass on the table. It hit the floor and Tobio quickly got down to pick it up. When he did, he pushed up the sleeves of his shirt. His father’s eyes had instantly locked onto his soulmarks. He remembered the shock that crossed the man’s face. He sputtered something about the marks. Tobio’s mother had coolly replied that Tobio had been born with them. His father turned red.

Tobio had only seen the man a few times since.

He never went to one of Tobio’s games.

And now they were stuck together. Apparently, his father’s parents still lived in the area as well. Tobio hadn’t even known he had grandparents. His mother’s family had left the area once Tobio was born, not wanting to chance running into their wayward daughter and her bastard spawn. Tobio wondered what was worse. His mother’s parents disappearing so they wouldn’t have to see him or his father’s parents being here, watching him, and never saying a word.

He moved into the small bedroom in his father’s apartment. The two avoided each other as often as they could, though it really didn’t take much. His father was away for work often, his job taking him to Tokyo on a regular basis. Tobio had school and volleyball. He often stayed after practice and grabbed food on the way home. He focused his attention on taking the team to Nationals. He thought he was doing okay, coping with his mother’s death.

He was wrong.

He will never forget the moment he tossed the ball and heard it hit the floor. When he turned and saw his team turning away from him. He had heard the whispers, of course. He knew what they called him. “King of the Court”. He wondered if that was what the crown on his arm represented. He wondered which of his soulmates it was tied to. He knew that he had slowly lost the friendship he had formed with Kindaichi and Kunimi. He knew that it was completely over the second he was placed on the bench during his last game. He forced himself to look up, to look away from the team, his team, playing with a different setter. He wondered if this was what Oikawa had felt that day when Tobio was placed in for him.
It was no wonder the other boy had been so upset.

He was trying to stop the tears from falling when his eyes caught on a pair of light brown ones boring down at him. His breath caught in his throat. He knew those eyes. And he knew that look of pure disgust and rage. Tobio quickly grabbed his towel and tossed it over his face, knowing there was no way he would be able to stop the tears now. Not when Oikawa Tooru was watching him in his most pathetic moment.

The game ended. His team lost. And he knew that every single person, whether they be his teammates or in the stands, blamed the loss on him. He forced himself to move, to get on the bus, to make the trip back to his father’s house. It was when he was finally alone in his room that he allowed himself to break.

The rest of the school year was a flashback moment for Tobio. He was glared at in the hallway. Laughter and mocking comments followed him wherever he went. He sat alone during lunch, no longer welcome to sit with the team. He didn’t dare step foot into the gym. He was back to the place he had been in during his first year of elementary school. Only this time was different. This time it wasn’t because of his soulmarks. It wasn’t because of something he couldn’t help. No, this time it was because they hated him.

This time it was worse.

He was thankful when he finally graduated and he could get away from all of them. At the beginning of his third year, he had planned to attend Aoba Johsai along with Kindaichi and Kunimi. It was where most of the athletes from his school went. Tobio was just a bit hesitant because it was the school Oikawa had joined but Kunimi had told him he was being stupid to give up the opportunity because he didn’t like Oikawa. Of course, the other boy hadn’t known about the…issues between him and Oikawa but he supposed the point still stood. But he couldn’t imagine attending now. So he decided to try to get accepted into Shiratorizawa. If he couldn’t play with the people he had once thought of as friends, if he couldn’t play with his soulmate, he could at least play against them on a team that they took seriously. Unfortunately, he didn’t get an offer from the volleyball team so he had to take the entrance exam. And he failed it.

So there went that plan.

There were other schools he considered. Dateko had a good team but they mostly focused on defense. He had seen Johzenji play once and he didn’t think he would fit in well there. He looked at the other powerhouse schools in the area and began to grow more and more frustrated. Karasuno High School was his final choice. They were no longer considered a powerhouse but Tobio heard a
rumor that their previous coach, Coach Ukai, was going to be returning. The team had been considered one of the best under his care. They had even gone to Nationals! If Tobio couldn’t get into Shiratorizawa and refused to go to Aoba Johsai, Karasuno was his best option.

That’s how he ended up standing in the gym at Karasuno High School, getting yelled at by a small, red headed boy that seemed oddly familiar. “How can I defeat you if we’re on the same team? Shouldn’t you be at some other school with strong players? Why didn’t you go there?” The kid demanded loudly.

Tobio had no idea who this person was. “The strongest schools in the prefecture…rejected me,” he muttered, not even sure why he was admitting to the fact in front of this person he didn’t know. What business was it of theirs anyway?

“You didn’t make it?” The kid asked with a confused frown plastered across his face. “Even though you’re the King of the Court?”

Everything in his body seemed to recoil as that name passed the kids lips. “Don’t… call me that!” He snarled. This place was supposed to be different! He wasn’t supposed to be looked at like that! It was supposed to be like Junior High when no one knew about his marks. It wasn’t supposed to follow him!

“The first setter of Kitagawa is on our team?” a voice said. Tobio quickly turned to face the door. “But that guy’s totally cocky.”

Perfect. Apparently his luck had run out. It seemed everyone already know about his ‘reputation’.

“Don’t try to intimidate him, okay?” a different voice asked softly.

Tobio’s eyebrows rose and he crossed his arms over his chest. Someone thought they could intimidate him? He went to school with Oikawa Tooru. No one was going to be able to scare him more than the other setter.

“I-I wouldn’t do something like that.”

Three upperclassmen walked into the gym and Tobio turned his full focus onto them. The one in the middle had dark hair, a powerful build, and a small smile on his face. The one to left was slim
with light hair and a bright, cheerful grin. Then there was the one on the right. He was bald and, obviously, the one that was going to intimidate him. Tobio tilted his head and stared him dead in the eye. “Hey, hey, hey. Who said you guys could…” the bald guy started, taking a few harsh steps forward, but he was cut off as the guy in the middle grabbed the back of his jacket.

“You’re Kageyama?” The one in the middle asked.

“Yes.”

“Glad you’re here.”

“You’re tall,” the one with the bright smile commented.

The bald one moved forward once again. “He needs an initiation, Suga-san! Let’s give him a reason to be intimidated!”

“How tall are you?” the guy in the middle questioned next.

“180 cm,” he replied.

“You’re cocky!” Bald guy commented loudly. Tobio frowned in confusion. They had asked the question. He had answered. How did that constitute him as being cocky?

“Hello!”

Tobio jerked in surprise at the loud voice. Right. That kid was still here.

“Oh! You! Shorty number one!”

…Shorty number one?
The guy in the middle lifted a stack of papers and seemed to focus on something for a moment. “So the other applicant here, Hinata, is…you?” he questioned. “I’m a little surprised. So both of you are here at Karasuno.”

Tobio felt like he was missing something. Was he supposed to know this person?

“We saw your match last year,” the grey haired one explained.

Match? It was the bald kid that gave Tobio more information. “You’re way short and sucked bad! But you have guts.”

“Thanks!” the kid yelled out. Tobio’s brows furrowed in confusion and he concentrated hard on the small kid. He was trying to picture where he had seen him before. Especially since these three seemed to know him as well and acted as if Tobio should know who he was. The image of bright red hair and a green uniform hit him suddenly. This was the kid that had played against him in their first match during the Spring Tournament! The one that had a team that…really, really sucked. Hadn’t he yelled at him after them match? Tobio vaguely remembered something like that.

The three spoke a bit about the kid being able to jump well. Tobio slowly nodded his head. Yes. Yes, he remembered that. But he also remembered the fact that he could barely hit the ball, had absolutely no skill when it came to receives, and barely stood at Tobio’s shoulders. Those were weaknesses that needed to be overcome before the kid had any right to be bragging the way he was. Especially when he began to talk about becoming the ace. Tobio could feel his body tensing in annoyance at the words. An Ace was supposed to be a leader on the team. He was supposed to be strong and dependable. This kid had no right to claim that title for himself.

“If you want to be the ace, I hope you’ve improved,” Tobio said bluntly. “If you goof around, you’ll waste another three years.”

The kid glared and Tobio felt his lips twitch. Well, he could admit that the look was a little bit terrifying. It would be more terrifying if it didn’t look as if it was on a ten year olds face. “What did you say?” He turned to face Tobio and took a step forward. Tobio tilted his head and crossed his arms over his chest. “I played with all my might. Don’t tell me that everything I’ve done is a waste!”

“Guys,” the dark-haired guy tried to break in. “You know, you’re not enemies anymore, right? Volleyball is about teamwork-”
“I’ll challenge you!” The kid yelled, pointing dramatically.

“Hey, Daichi-san was talking!” Baldy shouted.

Daichi? Was that the dark-haired guy’s name? Probably. He had been the only one talking.

“Challenge me to what?” Tobio asked, not even bothering to look at the bald guy. They were talking about volleyball. Tobio couldn’t back down from a challenge and let this…irritating kid win.

“Volleyball, what else?”

Tobio couldn’t help but roll his eyes at the answer. “How do you expect to challenge me one on one?”

“L-like a passing contest!”

This kid really was an idiot.

“How do you compete at passing?” Tobio snapped. He thought he heard yelling but he was completely focused on the kid in front of him.

“Serve! I’ll return them all! I was only able to get one of your serves last year. But I’ve been training with all kinds of people. I’m not the same person I was last year.”

Tobio flashes to the year before. Hadn’t this kid receive the ball with his face? Tobio was pretty sure that didn’t count. “Not the same as last year, huh?” Tobio questioned. He picked up the nearest volleyball. “I’m not the same as last year, either.” He moved quickly to the other side of the gym and prepared himself. “Here it goes!”

He threw the ball up and jumped, hitting the ball with all that he had. He watched the ball fly across the court and Hinata dived out of the way as the ball slammed to the ground. He smirked. He had been working on it whenever he had the chance. It still wasn’t as powerful as…others… but it was certainly nothing to laugh at. “How is that different from last year?”
“One more!” the kid yelled out as he stood and glared at Tobio.

Tobio served once more, aiming for the corner of the court. Let the little guy try to get that-

He blinked in surprise as Hinata was suddenly in front of the ball. Well, he certainly had quick reflexes. But then he closed his eyes when he saw the way the boy was standing. It was the wrong position. In that position, the ball was going to fly toward the three upperclassman in the corner.

He heard a crash and cautiously opened his eyes. Then he cursed. When the hell had the vice-principal entered the gym?! And why was Daichi wearing a toupee? And…he stared at the vice-principal with dawning horror. He had a mark on his face. From a volleyball. Oh, they were in so much trouble.

“He was wearing a wig?” Tobio couldn’t stop the words from escaping. It was like whatever filter he had was broken in his shock over the events. He just…it was his first day! How could something like this happen on his first day?!

“You just noticed?” The redhead asked with an incredulous look. “Everyone as the entrance ceremony could tell.”

“You guys! Shut up!” The bald one said. He looked like he was going to start laughing at any moment.

“Tanaka, you shut up too!” Grey haired boy hissed. Tobio noted the name. Bald head equals Tanaka. Dark haired boy was Daichi. He was pretty sure someone had said the redhead’s name at some point too. He would try to remember.

The vice-principal motioned for Daichi to follow him outside and Tobio hissed under his breath. He wasn’t sure what was going to happen and he didn’t like it. He should have just ignored the other kid! Why did he have to compete? Well, he could never resist a competition…but it was the redhead’s fault! If anyone should be punished, it should be that kid!

Daichi came back in a few minutes later with a strict look plastered across his face. Tobio scowled from where he stood beside the two upperclassmen and the short kid. “Fortunately, he’s not punishing us.” Tobio’s shoulders relaxed. Good. No punishment on his first day. That was good. “Provided you all agree that you saw nothing.” Tobio didn’t think he was the only one that felt
surprised at the words. He turned to the redhead just to see if the other boy had heard the same thing and by the shocked look the other boy was giving him, he supposed he did. “But you guys-” Daichi started.

But Tobio couldn’t hold it in anymore. “All because you couldn’t hit a serve! You suck!” Tobio snapped out as he turned to face the small kid. “What’s so different than last year?”

“You suck!” The other boy returned hotly. Tobio had the urge to hit him upside the head at the childish retort.

“Hey!” Daichi yelled out and Tobio’s eyes grew wide as he turned around once more. Crap. He really didn’t want to upset his upperclassmen on his first day. Or at all, really. “I want you to listen to me! I don’t know what your motive was for attending Karasuno. But I’m sure you came here with victory on your mind.”

“Yes!”

“Of course!” Tobio responded.

“Karasuno was one of the top teams in the prefecture till a few years ago.” Daichi explained plainly. “It happened only once, but we even went to nationals. Now we rank, at best, in the prefectures top eight. We’re neither weak nor strong. Other schools call us things. Things like “fallen rivals” and the “crows that can’t fly”. I remember well when Karasuno competed in spring nationals. Students from my neighborhood, I’d pass by high school students that competed against the countries best teams in a huge gymnasium in Tokyo. It gave me goose bumps. We’re going to go there again!”

Tobio couldn’t help but be a bit skeptical. After all, he had thought the same thing the year before. “There are many schools dreaming of going to Nationals,” he said flatly as he thought of the other schools in the area. Shiratorizawa. Aoba Johsai. They would be…difficult to win against and Tobio had absolutely no idea how this team functioned. He couldn’t believe the words when he didn’t even know how they played.

“Don’t worry. I mean what I say,” Daichi responded confidently. “For us to make that happen, our team has to be unified. And we can’t have the vice principal keeping an eye on us. I’m not telling you guys to become buddies,” Daichi commented, slowly moving forward. Tobio tensed could feel his body tensing at the movement. “Even if you were enemies on opposite sides of the net in junior high, I need you to understand that now, you’re on the same side. Do you get it?”
Tobio shivered at the look on the captain’s face. He didn’t think he had seen a glare like that since the last time he spoke to Oikawa.

“No matter how outstanding you are,” Daichi started, slapping a hand down on Tobio’s shoulder. “No matter how willing you are to give it your all,” a hand on the redhead’s shoulder. “If you fail to get along and hinder our teammates,” they were moving. “You’re not welcome!” Daichi snapped. Tobio froze as his sign-up form was thrown in his face.

This could not be happening.

“Until you realize that you’re both teammates,” Daichi snapped, “you won’t be participating in this club!” The door slammed in their faces.

Tobio stared at the closed door in shock. He…he had come here because he thought it was his last chance. A chance that, apparently, he had already destroyed. What was he going to do now? How was he supposed to prove himself if he wasn’t even able to step onto the court? Was…was his time over? Was that last game the last one he would ever play? No, he couldn’t let that happen! But, but what was he supposed to do?

“What does it mean to realize we’re teammates?” The redhead babbled next to him. “How do you do it?”

“I have no idea!” Tobio snapped, too confused to try and figure it out at the moment. He had to play. He couldn’t…he couldn’t let his volleyball end like this.

“Please let me in! Please let me play volleyball! I’ll get along with Kageyama, too!”

Tobio clenched his fists when no one responded to the pleas. “I apologize! I swear I’ll get along with this guy! Please let me participate in this club!” Tobio jumped back in surprise as the door slid open and an eye peered at him through the small crack. He swallowed hard at the startling image.

“Are you sure you meant that?”

Did he? Could he? Probably not. But did he want to play? “If I had to cooperate with that guy in a
match, I’d rather receive, spike, and toss all by myself.”

“How could you say that?” The boy beside him yelped.

But Daichi was laughing. That…that was a good thing, right? Laughter was good. “I can’t believe you just told me your true feelings. But I think that’s a good thing. Still, in volleyball, you can’t drop the ball, you can’t hold the ball, and one player can’t touch the ball twice. How do you plan to play by yourself?”

Tobio scowled in irritation as the door was closed once more. Alright, so it wasn’t a good thing.

It took some time but Tobio and Hinata (the irritating redhead) managed to finagle their way into a three on three match. They would be playing against the other two new first years. Tanaka would be their third player. If they lost, Tobio would not set foot on the court for the entire year.

He wasn’t going to lose.

He practiced every morning and night with Hinata and, more often than not, Tanaka. Suga, the vice-captain and the team’s official setter, had joined them on more than one occasion as well. At first, Tobio had been weary of the older setter. He hadn’t had much luck with other setters in the past. But Suga was nice and he tried to help them as much as he could. He even convinced Tobio to listen to Hinata a bit. In the end, he and Hinata had won the game. How they had done so was a surprise to the both of them – and every other person in the gym.

His toss. The fast toss he had tried so many times to get Kinaichi to hit. That toss had been hit by this idiotic kid.

While he was shutting his eyes.

Tobio really wasn’t sure how he felt about that and he didn’t want to think about it. It would just make him irritated.

All that mattered was that he was now on the team, officially. Even if he didn’t end up being able to play often (Suga was still the official setter, after all), he still had a chance. A chance to prove himself to his old teammates. He was ready to throw himself into practice with his new team to see what they could do. He was…happy.
So, of course, Oikawa had to find a way to destroy it.

Aoba Johsai had requested a practice match with Karasuno and, judging by the surprised looks on the upperclassmen’s faces, they had never done so before. Tobio knew what that meant. He was trying to figure out what Oikawa was playing at when the next words broke through his thoughts.

“Kageyama-kun must play setter the entire game.”

He had to what now?

Tobio’s mouth was hanging open in shocked surprise while the rest of the team began to discuss this condition around him. Why would this be the request? To prove to Tobio that he wasn’t as good as his former teammates? So Oikawa could analyze his playing style? It didn’t make sense! Oikawa had seen the last game he played. He knew how Tobio tossed. Maybe he thought that a new team would change something? Maybe he just wanted to watch Tobio fail.

Tobio absentmindedly began to rub his left forearm. This was a waste of time. But…but maybe they could use it to their advantage? They would be able to do their own analysis of Aoba Johsai before Inter-High. It could work in their favor. Maybe.

Tobio could admit that he was shocked with Suga agreed to the terms and even admitted that he wanted to see the quick attack Tobio had with Hinata against the other team. He was a bit worried that the older boy was going to be upset with him, even if it really wasn’t his fault. But Suga certainly didn’t seem to be.

He decided to speak to the older boy after practice. He didn’t want to have something like this between them, not when he finally had someone that he could talk to and actually get help from when he needed it. Suga had helped him a great deal during his time training with Hinata. It would be…upsetting for that to change.

“Sugawara-san!”

Suga turned in surprise as Tobio jogged toward him. Tobio had followed after the older setter after practice had ended. “I have to play setter by default this time,” he told him with a small frown on his face. “But from now on I will earn my place.”
“Huh?” Suga questioned with a slight smile. “Oh, I thought you weren’t concerned about me at all. I wasn’t expecting that.”

His brows furrowed at the words. Did people really think that of him? Had he grown so…so whatever that people thought he didn’t care if he upset them? “Why would you think that?”

“Because you’re superior to me in athleticism and talent,” Suga said bluntly and Tobio couldn’t help but grow irritated by the words.

“You can’t make up for a lack of experience that easily!” He growled. “And also…”

Tobio cut off as three separate voices called Suga’s name. They both turned sharply and saw Daichi walking toward them with Hinata and Tanaka. Tobio scowled at the intrusion and turned back toward Suga quickly. He had to get this out and he really didn’t want an audience when he did so. “I have to earn the trust of the other team members.” He forcefully shook his head to rid himself of the image of the ball falling onto the court, no one there to hit it. Of his team turning away from him. “Therefore, I will never give up!”

He barely moved as Suga stared at him with startled eyes. He hoped the other understood what he was trying to say. He just…he didn’t want it to happen again. Though, he truly wasn’t sure how much of the annoyance he received from his previous upperclassman had to do with the game or with…something else. “Yeah,” Suga said finally, a smile crossing his face. “I won’t give up either.” The smile slowly fell off of his face as his eyes stayed locked on Tobio’s, despite the fact that the other three were running toward them and yelling something about pork buns. “Aoba Johsai is where most of the athletes from Kitagawa Daiichi move on to, right?” He finally questioned and Tobio felt his entire body stiffen. This was not a subject he really wanted to talk about.

“You could say that,” Tobio confirmed anyway.

“So…” Suga continued, looking a little uncomfortable himself. “I’m just wondering if you might be uncomfortable with that.”

He paused and thought about his answer. Was he really uncomfortable? Or was he just upset about the things in the past? “I might be if they were on the same team,” he answered slowly. “But if they’re my opponents, I’ll fight with all I’ve got.”
“I see. I suppose you would.”

...was that a compliment?

That was when Tanaka decided it was time to cut into the conversation. “But are you alright with that, Suga-san? I...I just can’t accept that!”

Suga was still smiling when he answered. “Sure, I’m a little frustrated,” he said and Tobio felt himself wince. “But,” Tobio jumped in shock as the third year moved and placed a hand on his shoulder. What was happening right now? Should he be worried? “I also want to show them that Kageyama’s completely different from his junior high days.”

...was he really? Could he even be completely different than his junior high days? Tobio wasn’t sure if that was possible.

“That’s true,” Daichi commented and Tobio bit his lip. It was as if the two boys were trying to counteract everything he was thinking about himself. “Plus, we’ll show them that Kageyama’s not the only one they need to worry about. Right, Hinata?”

Hinata said something and Tobio found himself quickly eating one of the pork buns he was offered. There was some yelling from Tanaka and Hinata about him eating first but he really didn’t care. He was hungry and this way he didn’t have to stop somewhere before he went home. He was surprised when Daichi and Suga asked to speak with him after the other two boys went home. He nodded in agreement and followed the two into a shop on the corner. It turned out that Daichi wanted to speak with him about Hinata’s position on the team. Tobio explained that he thought Hinata would be a good decoy and he believed he should be placed as middle blocker. The two older boys exchanged a look and asked for an explanation, which Tobio quickly gave. In the end, they accepted his reasoning and Hinata’s place on the team was settled.

The two were gathering their things to leave when Tobio let out a deep breath. He had been thinking about something since the match was announced and, now that the two seemed to not hate him, he was thinking that he should probably bring it up. “Sawamura-san, Sugawara-san, do you mind if I speak with you about something?”

The two exchanged a look once more but were quick to place their bags down and return to their chairs. Tobio fidgeted in his seat nervously. “What is it, Kageyama-kun?” Suga asked gently, his brows furrowed in concern. Daichi had a similar look plastered on his own face. Tobio looked
away from them quickly.

“I, uh, thought you should know that Oikawa-san…do you know Oikawa-san?”

“Yes,” Suga replied quickly. “It’s impossible to play in the high school circuit and not know Oikawa. He was your upperclassman in Junior High, correct?”

Tobio’s jaw clenched. “Yeah. He…well, you see…” Tobio let out a deep sigh and closed his eyes quickly as he said the next words. “He’s my soulmate and he doesn’t like me so I’m sorry about all of this! I swear I’ll try my hardest and not-“

“Wait,” Daichi cut in, his voice a low growl. Tobio’s eyes snapped open at the sound. Why did Daichi sound angry? Because Tobio was the reason they were in this mess? “Oikawa-san is your soulmate. And yet you came to Karasuno. Because he doesn’t like you.”

“Yes.”

“Kageyama-kun,” Suga said softly with a frown on his face. “What makes you think Oikawa-san doesn’t like you?”

Tobio frowned in confusion at the question. “Because he told me? He said to forget about it.”

Suga’s mouth dropped open and Daichi’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “Oh, really?” Daichi growled out. Tobio sat back in his chair quickly. That tone was way too close to the one the older boy had used right before he threw him out of the gym.

“Uh, yeah. I just wanted to let you know in case Oikawa-san says something…he’s good at getting into people’s heads and he might try to use it or something…” Tobio muttered uncomfortably.

“Don’t worry about it, Kageyama-kun,” Suga said simply, his eyes bright and somewhat dangerous. Tobio shivered. “Will you be okay playing against them? Do you want us to-“

“No!” Tobio said quickly, shaking his head. “No, I just wanted you to know. Because you’re my… my captain and I don’t know why he decided to…”
“Thank you for telling us, Kageyama-kun,” Daichi replied. “Thank you for trusting us with this.”

Tobio swallowed hard and glanced away. He hadn’t trusted them with everything. He hadn’t mentioned the other mark and he wasn’t planning on doing so. But he didn’t think Oikawa would say anything about it either, so it really didn’t matter.

“Alright,” Suga said brightly. “It’s getting late. I suppose you should be getting home, Kageyama-kun.”

Tobio nodded and stood quickly, grabbing his bag and bowing his head toward the two other boys. He decided not to think about the fact that the two had been getting ready to leave themselves before he told them about Oikawa and now weren’t making any move to do so. In fact, he though he heard them whispering to one another before the door even fully closed behind him.
Wow guys! I had a great response to the last chapter! I hope this one is just as interesting...It’s a bit smaller than the last one. I guess this is going to be another long fic because I really want to highlight Tobio/Oikawa's relationship before Miya get's added in. And then, of course, that entire thing as well. So...yeah, sorry.

To say that Tobio was nervous would be a drastic understatement. He was anxious about seeing Kindaichi and Kunimi again. He was terrified of seeing Oikawa and Iwaizumi. He was worried of the rest of his team finding out that Oikawa was his soulmate. He was a bit relieved that he had told Daichi and Suga because he knew that there was a chance that Oikawa would do something to interfere with his new team. And, on top of all of it, Hinata was a complete idiot.

He actually threw up on Tanaka on the drive to Aoba Johsai.

He could only watch as they got off the bus and Hinata began to trip over his own feet, deathly pale and eyes wild. Then, to make things even better, he stumbled upon Kindaichi and some other member of Aoba Johsai making comments about Karasuno…and Tobio.

He just really, really wanted this to be over.

But when they lined up for the match, Tobio noticed something extremely important.

Oikawa wasn’t there.

His jaw clenched and his eyes moved quickly from one person to the other but there was no mistake. Oikawa was not standing with his team. Which meant that he wasn’t going to be playing. Hell, Tobio didn’t even think he was in the gym. Just that fact made him second guess every single thing he thought he knew about this practice match. If Oikawa wasn’t here, Tobio wasn’t being tested. If Oikawa wasn’t here, Tobio didn’t need to worry about his team finding out anything. Which meant that he didn’t need to tell Daichi and Suga.

Tobio just didn’t understand.
The game was beginning and Tobio quickly stepped into his starting position. He couldn’t help but smirk to himself when he heard Kinaichi make a comment about Hinata’s height. That was exactly what they wanted. They wanted Hinata to be underestimated. And then, once they realized what a horrible idea that was, they would be so focused on him that Tobio could use their other spikers to their full capacity.

It was the perfect plan.

But, when Tobio glanced over at the shaking boy, he couldn’t help but wonder if it was the wrong decision. “Just like the three on three!” he told the still shaking boy.

“I-I know that!”

Tobio didn’t believe him for a second. Not with the way he looked like he was going to pass out at any second…or get sick again. He would really rather avoid that. “Are you sure?”

Hinata didn’t answer as the game began. Tobio was only able to shoot the boy one last contemplative look before he watched as the other team served. The ball flew right toward Daichi and Tobio prepared himself to set it when something completely unexpected happened instead. Hinata stumbled into the ball’s path and messily received it, sending it off course. “Idiot, that obviously wasn’t your ball!” Tobio couldn’t help but snap.

“I’m sorry!”

Tanaka moved in to spike and Tobio dove toward the ball as it bounced off the block. He cursed as the ball hit the floor before he could reach it. He stood and turned toward Hinata, hoping that the first play was enough to knock him out of whatever it was that was happening to him. No such luck. The boy was almost green.

This guy…he’s completely overwhelmed.

Tobio watched in horror as Hinata continued to make a mess of things one play at a time. He slammed into Tanaka, almost tripped Tobio (that really pissed him off), and even ran into the referee stand. It was the last one that had Tobio marching forward angrily, intent on knocking some sense back into the other boy. However, Ennoshita got to him before Tobio was able to reach him and Tobio had to fight against his upperclassman as he tried to break the hold. He was furious.
This was Tobio’s chance to show his old team that things were different now, that he was different. But he couldn’t do that when Hinata was acting like a moron! It wasn’t until Suga came over to pull Hinata away and Daichi told Tobio to calm down that he finally stopped fighting Ennoshita’s hold.

It didn’t stop him from glaring at Hinata every chance he got, though.

After a few more mess ups from Hinata, Tobio couldn’t stand it anymore, no matter what Daichi said. He stormed toward the redhead and grabbed his jersey. “Hey, you! That’s enough nervousness!”

“Give me another chance!”

Daichi pulled the two apart and turned irritated eyes onto Tobio. “Let’s get the points. The next up to serve will be-“ he trailed off as he realized what Tobio had already seen.

Hinata was up to serve.

Tobio cursed and quickly stomped toward his position beside Tanaka. Hinata serving couldn’t have come at a worse time. He mentally prepared himself for the serve to fail and the fact that they were going to be giving the point away. He cursed again and faced Aoba Johsai, carefully not looking any of the players in the eye. “Kageyama, is he still breathing? Can he do this?” Tanaka asked quietly beside him.

“How am I supposed to know?” Tobio snapped back. Truthfully, he had no idea. In most cases, he probably could. But today, with the way he had been playing, no. There was no possible way that Hinata was going to get that ball over the net.

The whistle blew and Tobio’s shoulders tensed as he prepared himself for the failed serve.

He didn’t prepare himself for the explosion of pain in his head when the volleyball slammed into the back of it.

He stumbled forward and blinked his eyes frantically to clear away the black circles in his vision. Once he was sure that he wasn’t going to puke if he lifted his head, he slowly turned to face the idiot that had been making their game a circus.
He was going to kill him.

Hinata was staring at him blankly. Apparently, he couldn’t believe it either. It was then that Tanaka and Tsukishima began to laugh, throwing in comments as they did so. It only enraged Tobio further. He was tired of people laughing at him.

Tobio slowly began to walk toward Hinata and the redhead matched him step for step, his hands up in the air, as he stuttered, “W-w-wait! Once we talk about this, you’ll understand!” The boy was shaking as Tobio continued to move forward. “Kageyama!”

Hinata’s back hit the wall and Tobio continued to move toward him. He was pleased at the look of complete horror the other boy had plastered across his face. “Just wondering…” Tobio started, his voice low once he grew near.

"Y-yes?"

“Why are you so intimidated?” Tobio asked, leaning closer and making his voice lower. If he needed to scare Hinata to get him to focus, he really didn’t have a problem doing so. Actually, he would probably enjoy it. “Why are you so nervous? Is it because your opponents are tall? Is it because this is your first practice match?” He leaned closer with every question and watched as the boy’s eyes grew wider and wider. Tobio slowly brought his hand up and began to hit himself in the back of the head as he spoke. Each time he did so, his vision blackened slightly from pain. Huh. He might need to sit down. “There is nothing scarier than hitting a serve into the back of my head. Is there?”

“I can’t think of anything,” Hinata responded, growing even more pale as he did so.

Tobio continued to hit his head, “In that case, you have no reason to be nervous any more, do you? Because you’ve already done it. The scariest thing possible.” He stopped hitting his head and pointed toward the court as he began to shout, “Get back to normal, you jackass!”

He turned on his heel and quickly walked back into position, ignoring the way Tsukishima and Tanaka continued to laugh at him. Daichi was frowning at him in concern with his hands on his hips. Suga called to him off the court, asking if he was okay. Tobio just nodded his head, even if
the motion made a fresh wave of nausea roll through him.

Damn, his head hurt.

Tanaka finally stopped talking long enough to walk over to Hinata and give him an ‘inspiring’ speech. Tobio rolled his eyes when he heard the words. If anyone was going to believe something like that, it was definitely Hinata. “On this side of the net, everyone is your ally. It doesn’t matter if you’re lousy! It doesn’t matter if you’re a nuisance. You can slow us down. But to make up for those things…that’s why you have your team and your senpais!”

The next set started and Hinata was much calmer than he had been previously, much to the relief of most of the team. Tobio steeled himself to finally use the quick toss. It was a good time. Now that they were in the second set and the other team thought Hinata was completely useless (not that they were completely wrong) they could take the other team by surprise. So, he sent the toss.

And Hinata missed.

Tobio cursed loudly. Apparently Hinata wasn’t the only person flustered during this match. Tobio knew the other boy couldn’t adjust midair – especially when his eyes were closed- and if Tobio was off even slightly the toss wouldn’t work. “If you can’t spike a ball like that,” Kindaichi whispered toward Hinata. Tobio rolled his eyes. That wasn’t even slightly a whisper. It was obvious that Tobio was supposed to hear the comment. “The king will get mad.”

“Hinata!” Tobio said loudly, more loudly than he intended. The last thing he needed was Hinata to once again be tripping over his own feet because he was worried. Especially if he was worried about whatever Kindaichi said. Hinata jumped, startled, and turned toward him. Tobio saw Kindaichi smirk from the corner of his eye.

“You see?” he ‘whispered’ yet again.

Tobio kept his face carefully blank as he answered, “My bad. That toss was too high.”

He turned away but not before he saw the shocked looks that crossed both Kindaichi and Kunimi’s faces. He was going to walk away and let that be the end of it but Hinata just had to open his big
mouth. “I guess I can forgive you!” Tobio turned quickly, his hand reaching out for whatever he could grab. Turned out to be the boy’s hair. He scowled as he pulled it toward him. “Ouch! Ouch! Kageyama!”

“I already apologized, idiot!”

They were called back into position by an annoyed Daichi. Tobio took a deep breath and sent Hinata the correct toss, the other boy already up in the air. The ball hit his hand with a ringing whack and flew toward the other side of the court, slamming onto the ground before the other team even knew what was happening. “Alright,” Tobio announced with a smirk. “Hinata is back in action. Time for a counter attack.”

They ended up winning the second set now that Tobio could use his team members in the proper way and Tobio couldn’t help but feel uneasy as the team stood on the side of the court. His team was getting complacent, thinking that they were doing as well as Aoba Johsai. But the other team was missing a crucial member. “I’m glad they don’t have another serve-hitter like Kageyama,” Ennoshita commented and Tobio felt his hands shake around his water bottle as he once again scanned the other team and the bleachers. He had to be here somewhere.

“Yeah,” Daichi responded with a smile. “I must admit our team is not good at receiving.”

“We can’t let our guard down,” Tobio cut in as his eyes continued to dart around the room. “I’m thinking that maybe their setter wasn’t their main setter…”

He broke off as loud screams began to echo off of the walls. He cursed and ducked his head when he saw the cause.

Oikawa Tooru.

Tobio instinctively reached out to grip his arm, where his soulmarks rested. He glanced up, almost shyly, as Oikawa waved toward the girls in the stands. His jaw clenched. How could he possibly be a soulmate to this person? He knew that many say that a soulmate was able to fill in pieces that you are lacking…considering the fake grin and cheesy expression on Oikawa’s face, Tobio supposed he could agree with that.

“Kageyama-kun, who’s that nice guy?” Tanaka asked creepily and Tobio took a startled step back. Why did he always get that look on his face? It made Tobio uncomfortable. “I find him
Tobio’s lips twitched. He couldn’t really disagree with that statement.

“He’s the captain of Seijoh,” Daichi answered before Tobio could.

“Oikawa-san is a super aggressive setter,” Tobio cut in quickly. If Oikawa was going to be joining the game, his team needed to realize that the other team was going to change completely with him on the court. He was more than just Seijoh’s captain. So very much more. “His attack power is probably among the top of his team. And he’s got a terrible personality,” Tobio continued with a snarl, his right hand still gripping his left forearm.

“You’re saying that?” Hinata gasped. Tobio glared but decided to otherwise ignore the comment.

“Maybe even worse than Tsukishima,” he responded, completely serious. He couldn’t think of anyone that had a worse personality than the blond – well, anyone that Hinata would know, anyway.

“Wow, he must be really bad.”

“Do you know him from Kitagawa Daiichi?” Tanaka question, his face still twisted into a snarl.

“Yes,” Tobio answered flatly. That was all that they needed to know. Hopefully, that was all that they would ever know. “He was my senpai in junior high.”

As if Oikawa knew it was the exact opposite of what Tobio wanted him to do, he turned around with that faux smile. “Long time no see, Tobio-chan?” He said with a wave. “Nice to see you! You still doing the king thing?” he looked down pointedly and Tobio finally became aware of the fact that his hand was on his soulmark. His eyes widened and he dropped his arms to his sides and turned toward the team.

“I learned serving and receiving by watching him,” he told the group quickly before Oikawa could interfere yet again. “His skills are extremely high.” He saw Hinata blanch from the corner of his eye and he turned toward the other first year. He couldn’t lose control. Not again. “But we have to focus on the match now. We’re going to win the final set for sure.”
“Right.”

Tobio glanced to the side to see if Tanaka had understood as well, only to see the older boy giving his ‘thug’ look to Oikawa. Tobio swallowed hard. “Tanaka-san, please stop with intimidation!” The last thing they did needed to do was piss Oikawa off before he even stepped onto the court.

Luckily for him, Oikawa was sent to warm up. If they could just win the third set before the other boy got a chance to play, they would be able to win the entire thing. He put his full attention into the game. He didn’t need to think about anything else. As long as they won this quickly, they could return to Karasuno and Tobio could go back to not having to worry about Oikawa or whatever schemes he was cooking up in his head.

But, just as they were getting ready to win, Oikawa was placed in the game.

Tobio frowned and took a step back and Oikawa was placed in as a pitch server. He watched in apprehension as Oikawa pointed to Tsukishima. Just what was he planning? The ball few toward the blonde and he failed to receive it. Tobio cursed. He had to shut it down quickly or Aoba Johsai would take this round. Oikawa always knew just where the weak spots on the opposing team was and he had found one of theirs way to easily. Oikawa got the ball back in hand and smirked, “Just as I thought. I watched part of the match…you, number 6, and you, number 5. You’re not good receivers, are you?” He asked with that sickly grin. Tobio’s entire body tightened at the sight. He knew that smile. It never meant anything good. “You must be first years. Okay, let’s score another one.”

And he did.

“Oh, one more point and we’re tied,” Oikawa said brightly, sending a grin in Tobio’s direction. Tobio had the urge to make a not very polite gesture in return.

He was sure Daichi would not be amused if he did so.

Even if it was Oikawa.

“Hey! You! Great King!” Tobio turned to Hinata, eyes wide. What the hell had he just called Oikawa? His hand once again found its way to his arm. “Aim here! I’ll receive it! Don’t underestimate me! Aim here!”
Hinata really was a complete idiot.

“Stop raising a fuss, it’s embarrassing!” Tsukishima snapped toward Hinata. Tobio grew a little uncomfortable that he seemed to be agreeing with the blond.

He would rather ignore that.

“What did you say?” Hinata growled. “In volleyball, everyone on this side of the net is your ally!”

Well, that made Tobio feel better. It was always nice to see the completely disgusted look on Tsukishima’s face. Trust Hinata to quote Tanaka at the irritating blonde.

“Alright, all of you scoot toward the back. Tsukishima, you go closer to the sideline,” Daichi commanded. The players did as instructed and Daichi prepared himself for the serve he knew was coming. Tobio felt something like pride toward his captain – it wasn’t everyone that made himself vulnerable to Oikawa. “You can’t defend it by yourself!” Oikawa said as he served – once again toward Tsukishima. But he had to adjust it slightly to do so and it sacrificed some of the power. Tsukishima was able to get it up in the air this time and Tobio saw Oikawa smirk. The ball flew toward Aoba Johsai and Oikawa received it cleanly. The setter set it to Kindaichi and Tobio watched as Hinata was there to block it.

“It’s up!” Tobio yelled out as he ran forward to intercept it.

The second Hinata landed he took off to the other side of the net, ready to spike. I can’t catch up to him if I’m one step, one second behind, Tobio thought. The only thing I can do to catch him... He tossed the ball quickly, knowing Hinata would be there. And he was. Hinata hit the ball, spiking it right past Oikawa’s shoulder. Tobio felt a moment of pure pleasure at the absolute shock that crossed Oikawa’s face.

And then the truth hit him. Karasuno had won. Tobio hurried to the sideline where Takada was waiting and bowed toward him with the rest of his teammates. Takada gave a speech that Tobio was pretty sure he understood. Maybe. But then he saw the way Oikawa was standing beside his own coach, his eyes drilling into Tobio’s form. Tobio shifted slightly and hoped that they would be leaving quickly. His previous interaction with Oikawa was more than enough. He didn’t want to risk another one.
He moved out of the gym the second they were allowed to do so. He figured he could just wander a bit until they were ready to leave. It was when he was walking toward the bathroom that his eyes landed on a familiar dark pair. Tobio froze for a moment but took a deep, shaky breath. He wanted to do this. He knew that the things that had happened last year had been horrible. He knew that most of his was his fault And, truthfully, he missed the friends he had made during the end of his first year of junior high. He missed the way they would go to Kunimi’s house after practice. He missed Kindaichi laughing at the way Kunimi fell asleep whenever he sat for more than a few minutes. He missed that Kunimi would bring an extra box of milk to lunch each day. He just...missed his friends. Eventually, he hoped that they would forgive him.

But maybe this was the time for him to make the first step. “Kindaichi,” he started shakily. But he didn’t have a chance to continue before the other boy spoke.

“Don’t apologize!” Kindaichi snapped loudly. Tobio took a startled step backwards at the exclamation. “Because I won’t apologize either!”

Well, apparently this wasn’t the right time after all. “Okay,” Tobio replied.

“You’re still an oppressive king, as far as I’m concerned,” Kindaichi continued, his hands clenched at his sides as his dark eyes glared into Tobio’s. “You’re irritating, and there’s no one I want to crush more than you.”

“Yeah.” Tobio could certainly understand that.

“So don’t apologize!”

“Yeah.”

“I’m not reconciling with you! We weren’t friends in the first place.”

For the first time during the conversation, Tobio felt a pang in his chest. “Yeah,” this came out weaker than the others, a bit hoarse. Kindaichi either didn’t notice or he ignored it.

“And the next time, we’ll win for sure!” Kindaichi took a step forward menacingly.
That was one thing that Tobio could never agree with. “The next time…” he broke off as he heard Hinata moving toward them, singing about going to the bathroom of all things. He saw Hinata turn the corner but quickly back away when he noticed Tobio and Kindaichi standing there. Tobio rolled his eyes and continued on, determined to ignore his teammate for the moment. “Kindaichi, the next time we battle, we will win again.” Kindaichi reared back and Tobio turned around walked toward Hinata.

“Did you cry?” Hinata asked cheekily when he came into sight.

Tobio frowned at the idiotic question, “Of course I didn’t cry, idiot! Now go use the toilet!”

“You can’t fool me, Kageyama-kun!” Hinata said with a grin.

“Hinata, you dumbass!” Tobio cursed, smacking the other boy in the head.

They were joined a few minutes later by the rest of the team and Tobio could feel his shoulders relaxing as they began to walk toward the school gates. Of course, he should have known Oikawa wouldn’t let it go so easily. “Spoken like a true captain,” Oikawa said with a smirk, interrupting whatever it was Daichi was saying. Tobio scowled at the tone. Gone was the fake nice voice. Instead, it was replaced with Oikawa’s haughty and knowing tone. Tobio’s hands clenched at his sides. “You know your stuff.” He gave them a arrogant smirk and Tobi frowned as half of his team recoiled.

“The Great King makes his entrance!” Hinata said loudly. Tobio’s head snapped toward him at the words. ‘The Great King’…was, was that the reason? Is that why their soulmark… He slowly turned his head to Oikawa but the older setter was focused on Tanaka and Hinata. Probably because they were being idiots again.

“You got a problem?” Tanaka asked Oikawa, stalking forward with Hinata. Tobio rolled his eyes as Hinata made sure to stay behind the older boy as he threw out his own insults.

Sort of.

“Wanna fight, huh?” Hinata questioned. Dumbass.

“Don’t be so hostile,” Oikawa said, that false grin once again plastered on his face. “You, little
one,” Hinata paled, “your last one-touch and broad attack were amazing.”

“Oh…” Hinata stuttered with a blush crossing his face.

“Let’s give it all we got the next time, right from the start,” Oikawa told them. “You didn’t get to see our set up. Oh, yes, and we’ll be improving our serves, too,” he said with a grin at Tsukishima. “It’s true, your offense was amazing but your receives aren’t polished. You’ll reach your limit very quickly. I’m not the only one who hits powerful serves.” He began walking forward slowly, “The Inter-High preliminaries are coming up soon. Don’t get eliminated, okay?” He stopped right in front of Tobio. “Because I…” he pointed and Tobio blanched as the glare hit him full force. “… want to pulverize my dear underclassman, setter-on-setter, in an official match.”

Tobio’s gaze narrowed in on Oikawa. He was aware that Hinata had spoken but he didn’t know what the other had said. He was hyper focused on Oikawa. The other boy moved, walking right past Tobio. Tobio felt himself flinch when Oikawa purposely brushed their left arms against one another. He felt his mark burn. “There’s not much time left till the tournament. I look forward to seeing you there.”

Tobio shook himself out of the daze when Oikawa disappeared. He didn’t know what Oikawa was playing at but he didn’t want to give the older setter the chance to get into his teammates heads. “Please don’t listen. He likes to razz people like that.”

But Daichi just laughed, not seemingly bothered by Oikawa in the slightest. “It’s true. We don’t have much time before the Inter-High preliminaries. But he should be coming back soon.”

“Who’s coming back?” Hinata questioned.

“The Guardian Deity of Karasuno,” the captain answered, making Tobio’s brow furrow in confusion.

He had no idea what that meant.

He found out only a few days later. It turns out that the ‘Guardian Deity of Karasuno’ was actually the team’s libero – a libero that was refusing to play if the teams ace was no longer playing.

Tobio didn’t even know the team had an ace.
After a lot of unnecessary drama, Karasuno officially had a libero, an ace, and a new coach. The coach was actually the grandson of Coach Ukai, the coach Tobio had joined the team to work with in the first place. Tobio couldn’t say he was exactly upset about the change when he saw just how much they needed to work on. That became abundantly clear when Karasuno played a series of practice matches against Nekoma High School, a school that Karasuno had a long standing rivalry with. They played over and over again, losing every single time.

They had a lot of work to do before Inter-high.

They practiced for weeks and Tobio actually felt pretty good about their chances. He didn’t know how they would measure up against Aoba Johsai when they were at their full strength, or if they would be able to defeat Shiratorizawa, but he thought they at least stood a chance. Th team began to grow closer as well. Noya admitted to the group that he and Asahi were soulmates and that was why he had been so upset when Asahi refused to rejoin the team. Asahi was bright red during that conversation. The confession led to discussion about soulmates that had Tobio searching for an escape route. Unfortunately for him, he had a few people on his team that were able to quickly pick up the fact that the conversation was making him uncomfortable.

“The King is trying to escape,” Tsukishima muttered from where he was leaning against a locker. Tobio glared at him, only to receive a smirk in response. Of course Tsukishima wasn’t going to look the other way as Tobio slipped out the door. The blond had himself tried to leave a few minutes earlier, only to be pulled back in the room by an irritated Noya and Tanaka.

“No leaving!” Noya yelled instantly, jumping on Tobio’s back. Tobio stumbled forward at the sudden weight and Tanaka laughed as he gripped Tobio’s arm, both to keep him steady and to make sure he wouldn’t make it out the door.

“Yeah, Kageyama-kun!” Hinata commented with an amused smirk. “Why don’t you tell us about your mark? It’s on your arm, right?”

Tsukishima’s smirk grew as the rest of the team began to agree with Hinata. Daichi, seeing Tobio’s panicked expression, was quick to step in. “He doesn’t have to tell us if he doesn’t feel comfortable—“

“But we told him!” Hinata argued, gesturing to his own mark on his right leg. “It’s only fair!”

“I didn’t ask you to tell me, dumbass!”
“Yeah, but-“

“What’s the matter, King? Is there a certain reason you don’t want us to know?” Tsukishima questioned with a hint of steel in his tone. Tobio’s hands clenched at his sides.

“Okay, that’s enough-“

“It’s Oikawa-san,” Tobio snarled over Suga’s placating words. Every single eye snapped toward him and Tobio fidgeted under their gaze. “My…soulmark is a…that isn’t important,” he muttered, not wanting to hear the various comments (Tsukishima) when they heard he had a crown on his arm. “It matches Oikawa-san’s. But we…we aren’t…”

“That pretty boy?!” Tanaka growled, his face appearing right in front of Tobio’s. Tobio jerked back to escape the sudden invasion of space. “The one that was flirting with the girls. That guy?!”

“Wait! Flirting?! Does he not know that you’re soulmates?!“ Noya demanded, his small hands coming to rest on his hips.

“He knows,” Tobio said shortly. He looked toward the door, trying to ignore the startled, confused, and sympathetic looks he was being given. The sympathetic ones were the worst. “Can I go now?”

“Go,” Daichi growled as he glared at the team.

Tobio didn’t glance back as he walked out the door and made his way home.
You guys are seriously blowing me away with comments on this story! I love it! Please continue! lol

Also, I'm going to ask for you to recommend your favorite fics for me. I've gone through and read all that I can but every so often I find one that I managed to miss. Please give me some recs!

Tobio wasn’t sure what his captain and vice-captain said to the team after he left but not one person, not even Tsukishima, said a word about his confession. Oh, a few of them watched him closely whenever the word ‘soulmate’ was mentioned, like they were afraid he was going to start crying or yelling or something. That quickly stopped when they realized that he wasn’t upset about the topic.

The only time that it even came up was actually during Inter-High. Tobio knew that it was a possibility that he would play against Oikawa eventually. They were in the same division and in he wanted to take his team to Nationals they would have to beat Aoba Johsai first. But he didn’t expect to see the other boy during his very first match.

He was warming up beside the court when Hinata suddenly exclaimed, “Hey, its turnip head!”

Tobio’s head snapped to the side to follow Hinata’s gaze. Kunimi seemed to be chuckling behind his hand, most likely at Hinata’s loud nickname. Kindaichi was standing behind him with a confused frown. Tobio ignored the pang in his chest and tore his eyes away from the two first years to look at the approaching boys behind them. If they were here than that most likely meant…

“Yoohoo!” Tobio couldn’t help but curse as the familiar voice travelled to him. He shifted just a bit to the side and saw Oikawa leaning over the railing, sending him a smile and a peace sign. Tobio’s throat tightened. “Tobio-chan! Chibi-chan! How’s the freak duo doing?”

Tobio scowled but Hinata stepped in front of him before he could say anything. The redhead crossed his arms over his chest and glared up at a surprised Oikawa. Just a second later, Iwaizumi’s hand flew out to smack Oikawa in the back of the head. The other boy whined loudly and Tobio couldn’t stop the smirk that crossed his face at the action. He turned his head to the side, hoping Oikawa wouldn’t see the action, and caught the eye of Suga. The older setter was frowning, his eyes going from Tobio to Oikawa and back again. He tilted his head, as if asking Tobio if he wanted him to interfere. Tobio shook his own head in denial. He didn’t need any help dealing with
Oikawa Tooru. Suga slowly nodded and sent him a small, accepting smile.

By the time Tobio looked back toward Aoba Johsai, Oikawa had moved to take a seat a little way away from the rest of his team. Tobio bit his lip and turned away once more. He had hoped that the other boy would continue walking down the stands until he was watching the other game, like some of the other third years. But, apparently, he had decided to stay to watch Karasuno’s game along with Iwaizumi and Kindaichi. How nice. All of the people Tobio wanted to avoid in one place. At least Kunimi had moved up the stands a bit and seemed to be falling asleep in his chair.

While the first match was won pretty easily (well, easily enough that Tobio wasn’t truly worried), he couldn’t help but be slightly distracted. He could literally feel Oikawa’s eyes drilling into him throughout the game, judging each play that he made, each decision. He second guessed himself more than once because of the other boy, wondering if the decision he made was one that Oikawa would approve of.

It was annoying.

He wanted it to stop.

Tobio was relieved that Aoba Johsai was playing at the same time as Karasuno’s second match. The courts were next to each other, which wasn’t helpful, but at least Oikawa had to focus on his own game and Tobio wasn’t too worried about Oikawa picking apart everything he did. It was a good thing because the game against Dateko was certainly much more difficult than the one they had played earlier that day and Tobio needed to focus.

Karasuno won the game against Date Tech and Tobio found himself ushered in the stands to watch Aoba Johsai’s game. Whoever won the match was going to be Karasuno’s opponent the next day, so Tobio knew that there was a reason for it…but he still would have rather not been there. He was certain that he knew which team it was going to be and he needed time to compose himself before the next day. Despite that, he quickly found himself engrossed in the game. Oikawa was truly an amazing setter. He hadn’t seen the other boy set up close in years and he had drastically improved since then. Tobio felt himself flush just slightly. He knew that he was supposedly good. He heard it often. But, in truth, he was still inferior to Oikawa.

He had a lot of work to do if he wanted to catch up to the other boy.

He was starting to get nervous again.
Oikawa went up to serve and Tobio sat forward in his chair. He stared at the other boy intently. He had worked on his jump serves and they were coming along very well but they were nothing compared to what he saw from Oikawa. Tobio’s throat went dry.

Nervous.

“How do I put this…” Suga started from where he sat beside Tobio. Tobio tilted his head toward the older setter but didn’t look away from the game. “They have a very smooth transition.”

“Oikawa-san and Iwaizumi-san, the #4 on the left, apparently have been on the same team since grade school,” Tobio explained. There was that weird feeling in his chest again.

“They work very well together,” Suga agreed. Tobio could see him looking at him curiously from the corner of his eye. “So you worked with Seijoh’s ace in junior high?”

“Yes.”

Suga was clearly waiting for more but Tobio wasn’t sure what he was supposed to say. He hadn’t played with Iwaizumi in a few years and, even when he had, it wasn’t often that he was able to set for the other boy. He usually stayed on a team with Oikawa when they split up for practice. Luckily, he was saved from trying to figure out how to communicate with the other boy when Hinata spoke.

“The Great King is so awesome!” The redhead yelled out. “I want to hurry up and play him!”

“Yeah!” Noya joined in just as loudly. “I hope he aims his serves at me!”

Tobio will never understand these two idiots. Who would actually want to play Oikawa or have him serve in their direction? Even Tobio didn’t want that.

He didn’t notice until Suga gently placed his hand on Tobio’s, keeping his hand from moving, that he was scratching at his soulmark under the band again.

He ripped his hand away and glared down his arm.
Why did fate decide to put Oikawa’s mark on him, anyway? It wasn’t fair.

“Noya-san is awesome, too!”

“Look, Shoyo!” Noya yelled as he leaned over the railing and pointed to something on the court. “A TV crew is here!”

“TV? Awesome! I want to be on TV too!”

The next moment both Noya and Hinata were reprimanded for being too loud. Tobio smirked as the man referred to them as grade school kids. Well, they were certainly short enough.

Aoba Johsai won the set and Tobio was felt feeling even more inferior than he had before. The way Oikawa interacted with his team, the way they all looked toward him…it was something that Tobio was sure he could never compete with. He might be the better setter when it came to technique, but Oikawa was the best overall.

And they would be playing against one another the next day.

Tobio just had to find a way to keep up.

He found it difficult to sleep that night. The next day he would be playing against Oikawa, Iwaizumi, Kindaichi, and Kunimi in an official match. A match where there weren’t any second chances. He remembered Oikawa’s words to him during his first year of junior high. It had been just after their team lost to Shiratorizawa. Oikawa had tears running down his face and he had stated that he would defeat Tobio. Tobio, at the time, hadn’t really understood what Oikawa was saying. He just stared straight into the face of his soulmate, seeing the tears streaming down his face. It made him feel…awkward because he didn’t know what to do to make the other boy feel better. Because he didn’t like seeing someone so strong cry. Not when he was so good. Tobio had vowed then and there to bring their team to Nationals.

Of course, that hadn’t worked out the way he had hoped.

He remembered offering Oikawa a tissue. Remembered it being ripped from his hand as the other
boy turned around to face forward once more.

That had been their last actual conversation before Tobio saw him at the practice match. Not that he would really consider that meeting a conversation.

Tobio sighed deeply and rolled onto his side. Tomorrow was going to be Oikawa’s chance to keep that promise. If he did…if he actually won against Tobio and his team…

…would Tobio even matter any longer?

He closed his eyes tightly and his hands began to grip the pillow. He knew that Oikawa wanted to ignore the soulmate marks, that the other boy didn’t want anything to do with him outside of volleyball. But, if Oikawa won, would he even care about that rivalry any longer? Or would Tobio become completely insignificant to the older boy? He…he…didn’t like that thought. It hurt.

There was only one thing that Tobio could do. He had to make sure that his team won the game so Oikawa would still be attempting to win against him. He would still be focused on Tobio, at least in some way.

So they were going to win.

Tobio walked toward Karasuno slowly the next morning, his mind spinning over what he needed to do today. He needed to make sure Oikawa didn’t get into his teammates heads. He needed to make sure Hinata was on top form. He needed to let Noya know that Oikawa was probably going to test him. He needed to tell Tsukishima…

….well, maybe not the last one.

“Kageyama-kun!” Tobio broke out of his thoughts as Hinata ran up to him. Tobio tensed, ready to run toward the gym in their usual morning race, but Hinata skid to a stop beside him. “I just wanted to make sure that you’re going to play your best today. Even if we are playing the Great King.”

Tobio straightened in surprise and annoyance. “Wh-of course I will! What kind of question is that?!”
“Well, he’s your soulmate and-“

“Don’t talk about that!”

“Whaa!” Hinata yelled out as Tobio lurched forward to grab at the other boy. Hinata began to run and Tobio was quick to follow him. “I just wanted to make sure!”

“Dumbass!” Tobio roared as they entered Karasuno’s school grounds.

“Stop running, you idiots! We have a game today!” Tanaka bellowed. Tobio and Hinata both came to a stop at the words, hanging their heads in resignation.

The group made their way to the gym not too long later and Tobio had to continuously wipe his hands on his track pants because they kept sweating. It was irritating and Tobio was starting to get angry that he couldn’t just make…whatever this is go away. He needed to focus on the game. Nothing else. He needed to win.

He watched from the corner of his eye as Oikawa and Daichi shook hands before the match. “Kageyama-kun?” Tobio’s eyes landed on Sugawara, who was smiling slightly beside him. “Are you going to be okay?”

Why did everyone think he was going to break down or something during this match? “It’ll be fine,” he muttered as his eyes once again strayed toward Oikawa and Daichi.

“Okay.” Suga replied simply as he clapped his hand down on Tobio’s shoulder. “If you need to talk or feel like you’re being overwhelmed, don’t hesitate to talk to me, alright? Remember, we’re a team.”

Tobio nodded sharply and Suga sent him another smile before hurrying over to where Noya was jumping on Asahi.

“Oikawa-kun! Do your best!” Loud screams erupted from the stands. Tobio twisted his head to see three girls standing in the stands, all staring dreamy eyes at Oikawa. Tobio began to grind his teeth.

He pushed the girls from his mind and began to help his team with warmups. He tossed for each
player, judging their emotional state as he did so. Asahi was nervous but that was his default setting. Hinata was excited, another default. He couldn’t get anything off of Tsukishima. His team seemed to be their usual selves. No one seemed any more worried than they usually were. Good. It should be fine. They could do this.

Karasuno moved off of the court and Tobio watched as Seijoh moved onto the court. Oikawa set for each of his teammates, giving each person some advice as they hit the ball. All of his teammates seemed to appreciate his words…well, all except Iwaizumi. But that was to be expected. Tobio had to admit that it was kind of amusing to see Kindaichi holding Iwaizumi back as he attempted to attack Oikawa.

Aoba Johsai ended their warm ups and the two teams stepped onto opposite sides of the court to line up. Tobio’s eyes took in each member of the opposing team, seeing those that were doing the same and those that were avoiding gazes. Usually, Kunimi was one of those. But not this time. No, this time both Kindaichi and Kunimi were staring at Tobio intently. Tobio met their gazes calmly before he continued looking down the line. Iwaizumi smirked in his direction. Oikawa raised his eyebrows challengingly.

Tobio was moving toward Ukai when he heard it. “Hey, Tobio-chan!” Tobio hadn’t even realized he had twisted to face the person speaking until he was looking at a smirking Oikawa. The other boy’s eyes were sparkling as he placed his hands on his hips. “I came here excited to take down a genius setter, so do your best and hold on.”

Oh, Tobio was certainly going to try. That was the plan, after all.

They needed to win. That was all that Oikawa needed to know. “We will win-“

“We won’t lose!” A loud, familiar voice cut in. Tobio scowled as Hinata jumping in front of him, his view of Oikawa being blocked by the red, gravity defying hair.

“Don’t butt in when I’m talking, Hinata, you jackass!” Tobio yelled as he took a swipe at the back of Hinata’s head. The other boy, probably knowing what was coming, ducked before Tobio could make contact. “We won’t lose this time either!” Tobio said quickly and loudly when Hinata’s maneuver made Oikawa visible once more.

“We’ll see,” Oikawa mused as he turned on his heel and walked away. Tobio scowled after him but complied when Hinata began to pull him toward Ukai yet again.
“Stop staring at the Great King!” Hinata yelled and Tobio felt himself flush as his entire team began to laugh. He swiftly peeked toward Oikawa, hoping Hinata’s voice hadn’t carried, but the older setter was smirking at him in amusement.

Oh, Tobio was going to slaughter Hinata.

After they won the game, of course.

The game began and Tobio could not believe his eyes when Oikawa started with a setter dump. He could only stare in complete shock when the ball fell toward the ground. He – he hadn’t started with a flashy move. He hadn’t started by tossing toward Iwaizumi to show off their strength. No, he had started by doing a setter dump, a blatant challenge toward Tobio.

He was letting him know that, even if they had other people on the court, the true game was between the two of them.

Just like it always had been.

“I’ll be doing the same thing again,” Oikawa said lightly as he turned his back on them. “Don’t stand there so out of it. Pay attention.”

Oh, Tobio was furious.

He waited until he could return the favor. He didn’t have to wait for long. He couldn’t stop the smirk on his face when he landed, couldn’t help but look at Oikawa and mimic the words he had thrown at his own teammates. “I’ll be doing the same thing again. Pay attention!”

“You stupid little brat,” Oikawa snarled. Tobio just raised his eyebrows and turned away.

Oh, that felt good.

Really good.
Of course, Hinata had to ruin it by reminding Tobio that he couldn’t do it again because he was up to serve. That good feeling disappeared rapidly and he stomped toward the back line to serve. A serve that went flying over the net, over the heads of the Seijoh team, and into the back wall. He fell into a bow to apologize to his team, not wanting to look across the net.

He was sure they were laughing at him.

Oikawa was up to serve next and Tobio scowled as the older boy met his gaze before he did so. He knew what he was thinking. That he was going to show Tobio how to do it right. That he should have paid attention when Oikawa was doing his serves in junior high. Tobio glared as Oikawa threw the ball up into the air, ran, and jumped. As Tobio had thought, Oikawa hit the ball right toward Noya. Noya was waiting.

The ball was received cleanly and Tobio was able to get under it easily. He glanced at the net and saw that the opposing team was focused on Hinata. It made sense. Up until now, their opponents hadn’t been aware of their quick attack and it took time for them to understand what was happening. But Aoba Johsai already knew and Tobio had no doubt that Oikawa had come up with something to counteract it. He needed to get them off of Hinata. His mind flashed toward the side eyed look Nekoma’s setter had used on Tsukishima. Would that work?

He glanced toward the left quickly and set the ball to the right. The blockers weren’t completely thrown but at least one of them delayed their jump enough that Hinata was able to spike the ball onto the court.

The game paused as Oikawa bent down to tie his shoe. Tobio tensed as he saw the other boys mouth moving and Kindaichi’s eyes narrowing. “He’s up to something,” Tobio muttered out loud, his closest teammates looking at him curiously. But Tobio couldn’t explain how and why he knew what he knew. “Just…be careful,” he continued.

The game started again and Kindaichi scored the next point. Tobio stared at him through narrowed eyes. He didn’t know what Oikawa had said to him but he knew that the boy had just moved faster and jumped higher than Tobio had ever seen of him. It was something Tobio had tried to get the other boy to do for years. How had Oikawa managed it in such a short amount of time?

The next point was scored by Karasuno and Tobio was cheering with his team when he felt a kind of chilling sensation run up his spine. He turned quickly, ignoring the shocked glances from his teammates, and insincerely met a pair of light brown eyes. Oikawa was smiling broadly – not his fake or annoyed smile, but a real one. The smile he got on his face when he figured something out…
Aoba Johsai called a time out and Tobio watched as Oikawa began to speak with his team, that smile still present. The setter’s eyes flickered toward Tobio once more and Tobio knew that he didn’t imagine the widening of that smile.

He did it.

“Could it be that they’ve already figured it out?” Suga asked as he handed Tobio a water bottle.

“Damn it, that was fast,” Tobio muttered, glad that the other boy had caught on to the same thing he had. If Suga noticed as well, it was probably correct.

“Well, let’s see what happens and go from there,” Suga said softly as he moved off toward Daichi, probably to tell the captain about their suspicions. Tobio continued to stare at Oikawa. How had he figured it out so quickly? It wasn’t as if it was something Tobio had come up with. They were Suga’s idea. Suga was smarter than Tobio. And Oikawa didn’t know Suga like he knew Tobio.

So how had he done it?

“Hey! What’s with the serious face?” Noya asked as he and Tanaka came up beside him. “That’s not like you!”

“Nah, Noya. That’s actually how he always looks,” Tanaka teased. “He has the same face when he’s trying to decide between milk or a yogurt drink.”

“That – that has nothing to do with anything!” Tobio growled as his cheeks began to turn pink. He didn’t know anyone watched him get milk every day!

“But, Noya-san, I’m amazed that you were able to return that serve,” Tanaka continued over Tobio’s sputtering.

“I received that serve once when I was in junior high,” Noya informed him. “It was always an amazing serve, if he could actually get it in, but he missed it a lot and it didn’t have much control.
I’m sure he practiced a lot. Just because they have one guy who can serve really well and their setter is an all-around player, I don’t think those are the only reasons they’ve stayed in the top four for so long. If we let our guard down, they’ll take this game. Let’s give it our all!”

With that rousing speech from Noya, the break was over and Tobio moved back toward the court. The game continued and Tobio could feel himself growing more and more frustrated as the game went on. He couldn’t seem to get ahead of Aoba Johsai. No matter what he did, who he tossed to, it became apparent that they just weren’t…weren’t at the same level as Aoba Johsai. They had the tools to win. They had the talent. But they weren’t as cohesive as the other team.

They didn’t have Oikawa.

Karasuno had Tobio instead.

That’s right, they had him. He might not have won the best setter award in junior high like Oikawa but he was a good setter. A great setter. And he could prove it to everyone in this gym.

He jumped and sent the ball over the net.

And it was blocked.

“There’s nothing easier to stop than a dump when you’re panicked,” Oikawa taunted and Tobio felt his scowl increase. Trust Oikawa to make him feel even worse.

He tried to breathe, to calm himself down. If Oikawa was saying he was panicked than he probably was. Maybe that was why he felt like his mind was spinning constantly. He needed to take a minute and figure out what they were going to do. He sent the ball to Hinata – but it was quickly blocked by Kindaichi.

Were they right? Had Oikawa truly figured it out?

But the game continued and Tobio wasn’t able to find a way around Oikawa’s team. They were always there, prepared for whatever it was they were going to do. He needed to find a way. He needed to or they were going to lose. And, if he lost, he lost….
…he lost Oikawa.

Tobio’s brain faltered at the realization. Was that…what on earth was that…

“Push it, Kageyama!” The words broke Tobio from his thoughts and he quickly realized the ball was there beside him, right over the net. He jumped, intending to push it over, but someone else was there as well.

Oikawa.

Tobio pushed as hard as he could but his hands were shaking. And then the ball was falling.

On Tobio’s side of the net.

Tobio fell to the ground, his feet slipping out from under him and his backside slamming onto the hard floor. He winced and looked up, expecting to see Oikawa smirking down at him. But he wasn’t. Instead, Oikawa’s eyes were narrowed and an undefined expression was on his face.

“Cover that thing up,” the other boy said, nodding toward Tobio’s arm.

Tobio glanced down quickly and paled when he realized the soulmark band had shifted down slightly, revealing the top of the crown. He pushed the band up quickly to cover the mark. By the time he looked back, Oikawa had turned away.

He wasn’t even worth being looked at any longer.

He took a deep breath and pushed himself to his feet. No. No, this wasn’t going to happen. There was one thing he could do to fix this.

He could win.

*I’m not going to lose. I’m not going to lose! I’m going to win and remain on the court!*

He tossed the ball and glanced over his shoulder to watch as Hinata hit it. But it wasn’t Hinata
standing beside him. It was Tsukishima.

Hinata wasn’t there.

He had set for the wrong person.

Asahi managed to save the ball and it flew over to Aoba Johsai. Not that it mattered. The other team got the point.

Because Tobio had sent the wrong toss. Because he had been so wrapped up in other things that he didn’t even know who was standing beside him.

He heard the echo of a whistle and turned his head to the side.

And froze.

Suga was standing there.

Holding a #9 paddle in his hand.

Tobio was being taken out of the game.

He glanced over at Oikawa. The other boy was staring at him with cold eyes. Tobio had officially lost.

He was having trouble getting air into his lungs as he walked toward Suga. They were all watching him. Watching as he was taken out of the game. Just like he had been back then. Because he had messed up. Because his team couldn’t trust him. Again.

His head was bowed as he took the paddle from Suga. He flinched as the older boy slapped his hand down on his shoulder. “Don’t get depressed,” Suga said lowly, “we’re just changing up the rhythm for a bit.” Tobio nodded his head and Suga sighed. “Kageyama-kun, focus on the game. Forget about everything and everyone else. Just the game.”
Tobio stood on the side of the court, turning Suga’s words over in his head. Focus on the game. He could do that. So that’s what he did. He watched as his team slowly closed the gap in points. He watched as Suga focused on what was around him and managed to pull tactics on Oikawa that sent the other setter glaring in irritation. And he began to realize what everyone had continuously been trying to tell him. This game wasn’t a game between him and Oikawa as he had previously thought. It was a game against Aoba Johsai and Karasuno. He and Oikawa were parts of those teams.

He wasn’t going to win if he tried to play individually.

And, looking at Suga, he had a setter very close to him that would be able to teach him how to do that.

He began to get antsy the longer he stood there. While Suga had been able to throw Oikawa off in the beginning, the Seijoh setter was able to quickly switch the flow back around. The gap was once again beginning to grow. He needed to be on the court. He wanted to be on the court.

And then he was.

He was placed back in and he used the things he had learned when he was out of the game to make plays and decisions that helped them fight back against Seijoh. They were at set point when Tobio suddenly realized exactly what Oikawa was going to do. Tsukishima was beginning to jump, thinking that Oikawa would send the ball to Kindaichi. But Tobio knew better. Because he knew Oikawa. Oikawa’s back was against the wall. If he was going to trust this ball to anyone, it was going to be to the person he trusted above all else.

It was going to Iwaizumi.

Tobio grabbed the back of Tsukishima’s jersey to pause the other boys jump. And then the two jumped to block the ace of Seijoh.

The blocked it.

They won the second set.
Tobio had hoped that the win would be able to give his team, and himself, a bit of rebirth. And it did, in a way. The third set went on longer than usual, neither side able to get the two points that would win the game. But then that changed.

Because Tobio forgot something.

He could read Oikawa.

But Oikawa could read him just as well.

He shouldn’t have sent the ball to Hinata during that crucial moment.

Tobio fell to his knees as the ball hit the ground and Seijoh began to cheer. Karasuno had lost. Tobio had lost. He barely noticed that Hinata was beside him with tears running down his face. He slowly climbed to his feet and kept his eyes carefully averted from the other side of the court. He didn’t want to see them celebrating. He didn’t want to see Oikawa’s blank expression when he looked at Tobio. Or worse, Oikawa not looking at him at all.

He ended up running past Oikawa as his team went toward the stands and when he did, Oikawa’s left arm brushed against his. His mark burned. His eyes burned when he realized that Oikawa hadn’t even noticed.

He truly was forgotten.
Tobio was in a daze of anxiety and depression over the next week. He had lost. His team wasn’t going to Nationals because of him. Because he hadn’t been able to outplay Oikawa. Because he wasn’t good enough.

They had lost.

He had lost.

Sure, they had another chance. The third years had decided to remain on the team. The Spring High Tournament was coming up in a few months. They had time to get better. But…but Tobio could feel, somewhere inside him, that whatever small amount of hope he had in his body was now completely gone.

He hadn’t even been aware he was still holding onto that bit of hope.

But now that it was gone…he felt like he was drowning.

It wasn’t until Takeda burst into the gym and announced that they had been invited to a training camp with Nekoma and some other schools that Tobio felt that maybe there was still an opportunity. Because if they could learn, if they could grow, from these National teams then maybe they would be able to win. And if they won, he would have to be noticed again.

Right?

But then, of course, it was announced that the camp had been scheduled – and it was right after their exams. So, if they didn’t pass, they would have to take supplementary tests. Which were scheduled on the same weekend.
And that hope crashed once again.

Hinata seemed to be just as worried as Tobio and the dark haired setter found himself being pulled behind the smaller redhead as he attempted to convince Tsukishima to help them. Tsukishima, the arrogant prick he was, made Tobio practically beg before he agreed – and Tobio was pretty sure the only real reason he did so was because Yamaguchi made him.

Well, at least he cared about what his soulmate thought.

Unlike someone else Tobio could mention.

So, Tobio’s life began to fall into a pattern of waking up, going to morning practice, morning classes, eating lunch with Hinata, afternoon practice, and then studying with Tsukishima, Hinata, and Yamaguchi. He would get home late, usually stopping with Hinata to get pork buns from Ukai’s store (the man complained about them never eating a good meal but he always had extra’s to give them) before heading home. If his father was home, they would exchange a grunted hello before Tobio disappeared inside his room. If he was gone, Tobio would sit in the front room and watch a bit of television before heading to bed.

The pattern only shifted slightly when a new first year manager joined the team. She was a small, nervous girl that Tobio honestly thought would disappear within the first month. But she must have been braver than he gave her credit for because she stuck around and began to help Hinata and Tobio during lunch and even on some weekends with their homework. Soon enough, Tobio thought he might actually be able to call Yachi a friend.

Yachi and Hinata. Friends.

Huh.

So, the exams took place and Tobio had thought he had done pretty well – certainly better than he had done on any in the past. He should have known life wasn’t going to be that kind to him.

He failed his Japanese Literature test by two points. Two! But he wasn’t going to let that stop him from joining his team in Tokyo. He and Hinata, who had also failed one exam, found a way to get to Tokyo after their supplementary test, thanks to Tanaka’s older sister.
He just feared for his life a little.

She was a horrible driver.

He wondered if anyone would come to his funeral if he died.

But they made it to Tokyo in one piece and he and Hinata quickly joined their team in the practice matches. Apparently, Karasuno had lost every single game up until that point so Tobio couldn’t help but feel a little bit of satisfaction when they won. It was nice to know that the team, most of them anyway, thought he was needed. But it just confirmed what he had been thinking for the past month.

They needed to change if they wanted to win.

He was happy he wasn’t the only person to realize it.

Every person on his team seemed to understand that they needed to improve. They needed new plays, they needed new skills. However, they hit a rough moment when Hinata slammed into Asahi when they were playing one of the matches. Kageyama couldn’t help but yell at the smaller boy in irritation. That ball had clearly been set for Asahi and Hinata could have seriously injured one of them with that little stunt. He was hoping the other would realize just how stupid that move had been.

But instead, Hinata had to shock Tobio to his core when he said he wanted to do their quick attack with his eyes open.

“You can’t and that’s why we learned normal quicks,” Tobio told him bluntly, not sure why this was even something that was being brought up. “I don’t know what’s going on with you right now, but if you have something to say, I’ll listen to it later. But if you’re gonna do that right now, I’m not going to set it to a guy who I know is going to miss.”

This wasn’t the time for this. If they were going to switch up the toss, if they were going to experiment, they needed to do so one on one. Not during a game. Even if it was a practice match. So, the game continued and Tobio kept to his word. He set the ball to Tanaka and Asahi and kept it far away from Hinata. He saw the looks he received from the rest of his team but he didn’t care. He wasn’t going to toss the ball to someone that he knew wasn’t going to be able to hit it.
The lost the match – not really surprising since they were playing Nekoma – and Tobio scowled as he began to do the flying falls around the gym. He continued to feel eyes on him as he did so, he knew they were all wondering what was going to happen. In truth, he couldn’t answer them. All he knew was that, at the moment, Hinata didn’t have the skill to do something like that. Not without a lot more practise.

Tobio finished his punishment and moved to step in line in front of Takeda. “You guys are the weakest team out of all the teams here,” the man said with a smile. Tobio felt something in him recoil at the words. He was never the weakest. And his team wouldn’t be either.

There had to be a way for them to improve.

“If we were to have an official match with any of these teams, they would be a troublesome opponent. Are we going to view them as mere opponents, or teachers that we can absorb techniques from? The fact that you are weak just means you have room to grow. There’s nothing more exciting than that.”

“Thank you!”

Tobio and the rest of the team moved away from Takeda and Tobio was led out of the gym with Hinata by his side. Suga was smiling at him softly as he turned to face the two first years. “It wouldn’t hurt to try,” Suga said kindly, “I mean, he was able to do a normal quick on the fly in the last Nekoma match.”

That wasn’t the same thing as what Hinata was proposing now. He wondered if he was the only one that could see the difference. “At the time, there was a possibility the normal quick would work,” Tobio explained to the third year. “And I thought that was the only chance we had.” They had to see what he was saying, right? This wasn’t the right time for them to be trying something like that.

“Before I knew it,” Hinata said softly, making Tobio strain to hear the words. “We lost the last set with Seijoh.” Tobio couldn’t help but flinch at the reminder. Oikawa turning away from him. Not even glancing his way as they passed one another. “When I realized it, the ball that was hit was behind me and on the floor. I don’t want you to apologize Kageyama. I want to fight in mid-air until the very last moment.”

Suga didn’t seem able to move his eyes from Hinata. Tobio was also staring at the smaller boy but not because of his words. He was staring at him because he couldn’t figure out how to explain the thoughts that were in his head. How did he tell the boy that what he was thinking was wrong? “I
sort of realized in the Seijoh match that it’s the setter that brings out 100% of the spikers strength,” he admitted. He was sure Oikawa would be beaming if he heard the words. Or scowling. Tobio was never really sure with him. “That quick is your ultimate weapon. Any slight slippage in that quick becomes a fatal mistake. Your will is not needed for that quick.” He didn’t know if they understood. Didn’t know how else he could explain it. Why didn’t they see that it wasn’t Hinata’s fault that they lost to Seijoh?

It was Tobio’s.

Tobio turned and made his way back into the gym, blinking in surprise when he saw Ukai standing there. He paused for a moment but Ukai merely nodded his head and turned his attention back toward whatever Suga was saying to Hinata. Tobio didn’t care enough to listen. He said what he needed to say. And he was right.

They wouldn’t be able to convince him otherwise.

And he was the one tossing the ball.

Tobio continued to walk inside and began to prepare for their next match. They were playing against Fukurōdani and, from what he had heard the others saying, they were going to need all of their strength to win against them.

“Narita,” Ukai said as he walked back into the gym, “switch out with Hinata this match.”

Tobio’s head snapped around to stare at the coach in horror. He was taking Hinata out of the game? Now? When they were getting ready to play Fukurōdani?

“Despite what you think you want to accomplish,” Ukai said as he walked up to a shocked Hinata. “You need to chill out today. I don’t think it’s gonna work to try things out today.” That’s what I’ve been trying to say the entire time! But to take Hinata out of the game… Tobio wasn’t sure if they had a shot of beating this nationally ranked team without him. “And I’m not gonna have you end up in a contact play like that again and get hurt.”

But, despite Tobio’s disagreement, Hinata stood beside Suga as Karasuno played against Fukurōdani.
They didn’t stand a chance.

Not with Bokuto’s spikes and the way the setter was able to pinpoint exactly what Tobio wanted to do. Tobio was irritated and impressed. The boy, Akaashi, was like a weird hybrid version of Kenma and Oikawa with Suga’s instincts to take care of his team. And the boy was studying him just as much. It made Tobio just slightly uncomfortable but he didn’t feel like he was in any way hostile. It was a different feeling.

Tobio found himself packing up his bag in silence that afternoon. Hinata hadn’t said a word to him the rest of the day and the rest of the team seemed to be lost in their own thoughts. They all moved toward the bus and Tobio quickly stepped on board and took a window seat. From where he was sitting, he could see most of his teammates bidding goodbyes to the friends they had made that weekend. The only people that followed him onto the bus was Tsukishima and Yamaguchi, who had taken seats beside one another and away from Tobio.

Tobio wasn’t really surprised when Hinata took a seat on the other side of the bus, leaving the seat beside him open. It didn’t stop the pang in his chest or his hands tightening into fists. He truly didn’t understand. The same thing had happened to him with Kindaichi in the past. He had just told the truth. He had pointed out the flaw in the plan. Why did that make everyone so angry?

He carefully kept his thoughts away from the fact that there wasn’t a version of Kunimi here to help soothe things over.

Well, until he didn’t, any longer.

Maybe this was his and Hinata’s friendship coming to an end.

Like it had with Kindaichi and Kunimi.

Tobio put his headphones in and drifted into an uneasy sleep. He only woke when he felt the bus come to a stop and people around him began to stand from their seats. Tobio yawned and followed the rest of his team off of the bus. “All right, everyone. Good work,” Takeda smiled. “So, as I mentioned, tomorrow there will be inspections in the gym, so there’ll be no club activities.” Tobio frowned at the reminder. This wasn’t the time for them to skip a day of practice. “You’ve all gone a long time without a break, so please enjoy it.” Why would skipping a day of practice be something to enjoy? It wasn’t as if he had anything else to do.
Letting out a sigh, Tobio threw his bag over his shoulder and started his walk home. He would need to find something to do tomorrow afternoon. Now that exams were over he wouldn’t be focusing on studying. And he was pretty sure his dad was still home so he didn’t want to spend a lot of time at the house. He might be able to go to the community center, though he wasn’t sure if he’d get much done there with so many people around.

“Kageyama-kun,” Tobio stopped in surprise and turned his head. “Give me a toss.”

Tobio gazed at the redhead. Should he try? He knew Hinata wouldn’t give up. He knew that the smaller boy would probably bother him daily until he gave in. Maybe it would be best. Hinata could fail and Tobio would be able to convince him that they needed to find another weapon beside the one the boy had in his head. “Fine,” Tobio muttered as he turned back toward the gym.

The two worked in silence, setting up the equipment and getting things out of the storage room. It was familiar work. They were usually the first to arrive each morning.

“You two aren’t going home yet?” a soft voice asked from the open gym door. Tobio glanced over his shoulder. Yachi was standing there nervously. Tobio was surprised she hadn’t gone home with the others.

“Yachi-san, if you don’t mind, could you throw us some balls?” Hinata asked.

“Huh? Can I do that?”

“You just have to throw the balls above Kageyama’s head.”

“S-sure! I’ll give it a try!”

The three got into position and Tobio quickly explained to Hitoka where she needed to throw the ball. She nodded nervously and Tobio moved into his usual position by the net. “Let’s do this!” Hinata yelled out.

Yachi threw the ball as Hinata began to run and Tobio sent the usual quick toss toward Hinata. Who missed it.
Tobio sighed in irritation. Hinata could never jump his highest when his eyes were open. He got distracted by the ball and never seemed to be able to hit it. This wasn’t going to work.

“One more time!”

But they tried again. And again. Hinata was never able to hit the ball. His jumps weren’t high enough. His swing was off. This wasn’t working.

The longer it went on, the more irritated Tobio grew. Why were they spending all this time working on a move that wasn’t going to work?! They could be working on other things, things that Hinata completely sucked at. But no, here they were, practicing nonstop on something the other boy just wasn’t able to accomplish.

“One more time!”

It was after what felt like the fiftieth time that Tobio’s control of his temper snapped. “Instead of practicing an attack we’re not sure you’ll ever be able to do, you should be working on the attacks we’ve been using, as well as serving and blocking!”

“If this quick doesn’t work,” Hinata yelled back, “there’s no point in me being on the court.”

Tobio was furious. So, the boy didn’t think that he was worth anything if he couldn’t do this? Was everything they had accomplished this year been for nothing?!” “And I told you, your will isn’t needed for that quick!” Tobio roared. “I’ll give you tosses that won’t be stopped by blocks!”

“But then I’ll never get better!” Hinata yelled. Tobio’s jaw clenched. Had the boy not listened to him at all? There were so many other things he needed to be working on! Why was he so focused on this?

“The prelims for the Spring tournament start next month! They’re right around the corner. What do you think will be an effective weapon for us? A complete quick or an absolutely useless quick?” The petulant look on Hinata’s face had Tobio reaching out to grab the other boy’s shirt. Why wasn’t Hinata understanding? Why wasn’t he even trying? “Huh?!”

Damn it! What I’m saying is correct. So why…why does he keep hanging on?!
Hinata scowled and reached up to grab Tobio’s hand in a tight grip. “I want to be strong enough to compete by myself!” The boy snapped.

Tobio moved his other hand to grab onto Hinata. He needed to do something! Why wasn’t he listening?! “Your selfishness is going to destroy the team’s balance!” He pushed against Hinata’s chest and watched with some regret as the boy flew backwards and slammed onto the gym floor. “I’ll toss to anyone who’s essential to winning, but I don’t think you’re essential right now.” It was the same words he had said to the boy before they started their quick. It was the words that had caused Hinata to push himself. If it worked then it could work now. “And I don’t feel any different now.” He turned to grab his bag. He needed to leave. They both needed to calm down. Hopefully, after separated for the night and Hinata was able to think things through, he would realize that Tobio was right.

“Kageyama!” Hinata screamed. Tobio turned back to face the boy quickly and barely managed to brace himself as the smaller boy launched himself at him. Hinata had slammed into his side and Tobio flinched at the impact as it pushed him back, almost making the two fall to the ground.

“Damn it! Let go!” He yelled as he tried to push the smaller boy off of him.

“I won’t let go until you give me a toss!”

Tobio turned sharply and pushed at the smaller body at the same time, forcing the other boy off of him. He took a deep breath and forced air into his lungs. Damn, his side hurt. He was sure to have a huge bruise there in the morning. Idiot. He took a deep breath and turned back to Hinata, only to see him running toward him once more. Tobio cursed as they once again impacted and Hinata’s hand flew up, grabbing just below Tobio’s chin. Tobio felt his throat closing in the other boy’s hold. He moved his own hands forward, trying to force the other off. “Don’t be ridiculous,” Hinata snapped as Tobio gasped for breath, “That quick was stopped! Today and during the Seijoh match!”

Tobio somehow managed to shift Hinata’s hand so it was pressed up on his face instead of his throat. At least he could breathe. “Are you trying to say that my toss was at fault?” he yelled.

“No! That’s not it! It was perfect! It was spot on! And yet it was stopped!” Tobio could barely hear the words the other boy was yelling. Hinata’s hands were still gripping him and he was still trying to push the boy off of him.
“If I don’t get better, it’s not going to work on stronger opponents, either!”

“Stop it you two!” A new voice cut in and Tobio didn’t have time to react when he was once again slammed into. This time he didn’t have time to brace himself and he slammed onto the floor, his head slamming onto the wood. He moaned at the impact. “What the hell is wrong with you two?!” Tanaka demanded as he stood over them. Tobio flinched and managed to pull himself away from the older boy. “Both of you get up and get home!”

Did Tanaka just punch him?!

Tobio staggered to his feet. He was certainly going to be black and blue in the morning. Maybe it wasn’t such a bad thing that they didn’t have practice. “Kageyama-kun! Let me help-“

Tobio shook his head and Yachi stopped speaking immediately. He slowly picked his bag up off the floor and limped home.

When he stepped through the doors, his father glanced up from where he was working (as usual). The man blinked for a moment before letting out a startled yell. “What happened to you?” He demanded, standing and forward to peer at Tobio’s face. Tobio supposed the bruising must have already begun. “You went to a volleyball camp? Right? Did you get into a fight with-“

“I’m fine.”

“You have finger shaped bruises on your throat,” his father responded as he rolled his eyes. “Sit down. I’ll get ice.”

“I’m-“

“Fine. Right. So much like your mother,” the man muttered and Tobio was surprised to see the pain filled eyes at the words. “Sit down, Tobio.”

Tobio was so surprised by these events that he slowly made his way toward the table and sunk into an unused chair. He never sat here. The kitchen table was always used by his father as he worked on…whatever it was he did. He heard a few more muttered words, and curses, from the kitchen before his father returned with an ice pack and a first aid kit. “Alright, let’s see it.”
Tobio frowned. “What?”

“You’re limping,” the man responded, raising his eyebrows in exasperation. “And you’ve been holding your side since you walked in. Shirt off.”

Tobio blinked but did as instructed, wincing as he lifted the shirt over his head. His father let out a hiss as he caught sight of the fresh bruise decorating Tobio’s side. “We’re going to need more ice. But,” he gently prodded the bruise and Tobio growled. His father’s eyes flashed in amusement. “I don’t think your ribs are broken.” He glanced at Tobi’s face yet again and shook his head. “You’re going to have a hell of a shiner. What happened? Argument with an opposing team?”

“No,” Tobio muttered and his father’s eyes narrowed.

“Who then?”

“Teammate.”

His father, who had been shifting the icepack, froze at the words. “Teammate? Someone you play with?”

“We got into an argument.”

“Hell of an argument,” the man muttered. He moved away from Tobio and sat in his chair once more, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Alright. I suppose you know fighting won’t solve anything and all of that. I have absolutely no idea how to do this so…just don’t do it again? Alright? Use the icepack. If you have any trouble breathing or feel like something is wrong, tell me. We’ll go to the hospital.” Tobio nodded at the intense look he was receiving. He was confused. Why was his father acting like this? They hadn’t said more than “I’m leaving”, “I’m home”, or “Did you eat?” since Tobio moved in. “Alright. You can go.”

Tobio stood quickly, more quickly than he should have judging by the protesting of his body, and made his way into his room.

There had already been too many changes today.
He didn’t need another one.

He wasn’t sure when he had fallen asleep but he woke the next morning with groan. His entire body was sore. He pulled himself to his feet and quickly got ready for the day, glaring down at his side in annoyance as it sent a shock wave of pain with every movement. He shuffled out of his room and into the kitchen, ignoring the amusement on his father’s face when he did so. “Morning,” his father chirped. Tobio glared. “I have pain reliever on the counter. Take it with water and make sure you eat.” Tobio nodded and did as instructed, taking the pills with a glace of water before grabbing some milk and a protein bar before leaving.

He stayed to himself throughout the day. Volleyball practice and lunch were the only times he really interacted with anyone. Volleyball was cancelled and there was no way he was going to eat lunch with Hinata. So, he sat with his head on his desk as people laughed and joked around him, some coming up to ask how he got the bruise on his face. Tobio just ignored them until they walked away. He was pretty sure they thought he was asleep.

School ended and Tobio waited until most of the other students were gone before standing from his desk and slowly making his way down the stairs. He thought about where he was going to go. His father was being odd and he didn’t want to go home. The gym was closed. So, he decided to go to the community center. Even if he wasn’t going to practice (judging by the way his body was screaming at him, he probably wasn’t) he could still watch as others did so.

A child bumped into him as he neared the doors and Tobio hissed in pain. The kid started to cry. Tobio sighed. He hadn’t meant to make the kid cry… He began to limp forward once again when he almost ran into another person – this one much bigger than a child.

That would have been painful.

“Sorry-“ he broke off as he looked up at the person he had almost crashed into.

Oikawa Tooru was staring down at him with narrowed eyes and a scowl.

Tobio stumbled back, trying to put distance between himself and the other boy without it looking as if he was running away. Which he sort of was. “O-Oikawa-san, what are you doing here?” Tobio stuttered.
Oikawa was still glaring as his hand moved to his hip. His eyes flickered over Tobio quickly and Tobio just knew that he had catalogued everything. The cut on his forehead, the bruise on his face, the slight discoloring around his throat, the way he was holding his left side…

But he didn’t say anything. “I’m watching my nephew,” Oikawa answered coldly.

“Hey!” Tobio glanced down in surprise. He hadn’t noticed the child standing beside the older setter.

“H-hey,” Tobio stuttered a response. He was never good with children. “What about the club?” he blurted out before the two could walk away. He didn’t want them to walk away. He wanted to talk to Oikawa without volleyball being in the way. He wanted…he wanted the older boy to ask about the marks on his skin. He wanted Oikawa to give him that look. The one he had given him years ago before they older setter decided they were rivals. The one where his eyes seemed to light up and a smile, one of the real ones, crossed his face as he said how “cute, Tobio-chan!” was. The look he had never received after Tobio was placed in that practice match.

“We usually have Monday’s off,” Oikawa responded.

Tobio didn’t understand. Why would they take a day off? “Y-you take a day off during the week? That’s such a waste!”

Well, that was certainly a look. But not the one Tobio wanted.

“Resting and skipping are two different things,” Oikawa muttered as he began to lead Takeru away from him. Tobio bit his lip. “See ya.”

He didn’t want him to leave. What could he say to make the other boy stay? Even if it was just for a moment. A moment where Tobio could prove that he was still here, that the other hadn’t completely forgotten him.

“Oikawa-san, um…”

“Nope! Stupid!”
“I haven’t even said anything yet!” Tobio protested as Oikawa continued to mock him. Again.

Why had he wanted to talk to him again?

“Oikawa-san-“ he started again, searching for something to say.

“Nope! I can’t hear you! Can’t hear a thing!”

Tobio fell into a deep bow and winced at the sharp flare of pain in his side at the action. Oikawa instantly fell silent. “Please listen to me for a second,” Tobio forced out calmly.

“Why should I have to listen to what my opponent has to say?”

Opponent. Right. Because that’s all that he was. An opponent. Something in Tobio’s chest tightened at the words. It tightened even further when he heard the sound of Oikawa’s footsteps moving further away but he didn’t move. He squeezed his eyes shut, willing the other boy to stop.

He didn’t.

“Please, Oikawa-san!” Tobio shouted.

He was still moving away. Tobio’s entire body was shaking. “Please! Please!” Still moving. Tobio moved too. He took off running and managed to move in front of a now shocked Oikawa. “Please!” he begged once again as he bowed. The three just stood there in silence, Tobio not daring to look up.

“Takeru,” Oikawa said when the pause had extended into the category of being awkward.

“What?”

“Take a picture.”
…take a what now?

“Hold this like this…and press this button…”

Tobio didn’t understand himself. Why was he so desperate to want to speak to someone like this? Someone that was going to take his picture in a position of...there was a sudden click and Tobio let out a sigh. Well, that was that. It wasn’t as if Oikawa hadn’t seen him in worse positions.

“Tooru, you’re actually happy about this picture? Lame,” came a childish voice and Tobio felt his lips twitch slightly. He might like Oikawa’s nephew.

“Well, what do you want?” Oikawa demanded. “I’m busy you know.”

“You said your girlfriend dumped you so you had free time!” Takeru disputed.

Girlfriend? Oikawa had a girlfriend? Wha…was she…? No. She couldn’t be. Because their marks were the same and Tobio didn’t think he liked girls. So she couldn’t have been. So why was Oikawa dating her?

And why would someone dating Oikawa break up with him?

“Takeru! Shut up!”

Tobio’s curiosity won over and he slowly stood, his side stinging. Oikawa was glaring at his nephew now, not even looking toward Tobio. Tobio’s lips twitched again as he placed a hand over his aching ribs. Damn Hinata and his-

Hinata.

That was it.

“So, uh, what if you were close to a tournament and, uh…” Tobio started and Oikawa’s eyes instantly snapped in his direction. Tobio looked toward the ground. “And Iwaizumi-san said he
was going to try some impossible attack…”

“Hey.”

Tobio glanced up at the interruption. Oikawa was giving him that look again. Tobio really wished he would stop. Was this punishment for him wanted the other boy’s attention? “If you want to talk to me about something,” why did Tobio feel like there was more meaning to that word than what he was hearing? “Quit with the lame ‘what if’ story and just tell me flat out.”

“Hinata said he wants to hit our quick with his own will even though he had been closing his eyes this whole time,” Tobio blurted. He needed someone else to tell me that he was right. That they could see where he was coming from.

He should have known that wasn’t likely with Oikawa.

“Oh, really?” Oikawa asked wryly. “That’d be pretty impressive if he could do it. Why not let him?”

Anger surged in Tobio’s chest at the words. He couldn’t believe Oikawa was agreeing with Hinata! Especially after everything that had happened the night before! “Please don’t make it sound so easy! Hinata doesn’t have any technique!”

Oikawa stared at him in exasperation, “So you told him, ‘Just do I say’?” Tobio flinched. Well, he didn’t say it in so many words… “You sound like a dictator.” Tobio’s mouth dropped in surprise. “Have you put any thought into it?” Oikawa continued. “Are you giving the shrimp the exact tosses he wants? Have you even tried to?”

Tobio’s head lowered. Had he? He had sent Hinata the toss that he usually sent the boy even though he knew that he wouldn’t be able to hit it. He hadn’t tried to alter it at all. Did he need to? Is that what Hinata wanted?

“If you’re thinking the situation as good as it can be and you’re being defensive about it, you’re basically a coward.” …a what now? Had he really just said Tobio was the coward? “Don’t get the wrong idea. The one who has leadership in an attack isn’t you…It’s Chibi-chan. If you can’t understand that, you’re just regressing back to playing the tyrant king.” Oikawa once again began to walk past Tobio. “Come on, Takeru.”
This time, Tobio didn’t try to stop him.

Regressing? Tyrant King? Was that really what he was doing? He had already lost two of his friends over his stupid pride. Was he going to lose another the same way?

“By the way, Tobio-chan!” Tobio turned quickly. Oikawa had stopped and placed his hands on his hips once more. His lips were pursed. “Who caused all of…that? I want to send them a fruit basket.”

Tobio rolled his eyes at the typical question even though he felt that odd sensation in his chest again. “Hinata.”

Oikawa’s head tilted to the side. “Chibi-chan? I thought you were friends.”

Tobio’s hands clenched into fists. “So did I.”

Oikawa’s eyes narrowed but he turned away once more and waved over his shoulder. “Come on, Takeru. Your mom will be angry if I don’t get you home.”

Takeru shrugged his shoulders in Tobio’s direction before following his uncle down the street. Tobio didn’t look away until the two were completely out of sight. Only then did he begin to make his way back to Karasuno. What Oikawa said had really stuck in Tobio’s head. Had he been regressing? He hadn’t truly attempted to change the toss. He had expected Hinata to fail instead of working with him. He needed to see if the gym was open so he could see if it was even possible for him to slow down the toss or lower it to accommodate Hinata.

He had almost made it to the school when his phone began to ring. Tobio pulled his phone out of his pocket and flipped it open. “Hell-“

“Kageyama! Where are you right now?!“

“Ukai-san?” Tobio questioned in confusion. Had they finished with the gym and decided to have practice after all? “I’m heading to the school right now.”
“What?!" Tobio pulled the phone away from his ear at the loud shout.

“I was gonna see if they were done with the inspection of the gym yet,” Tobio explained to his coach.

“Kageyama!” Tobio turned sharply and flinched back when he saw his coach running toward him at full speed. “Stop walking! Come with me!”

“What?” Tobio questioned yet again. Ukai slapped his hands down on Tobio’s shoulders and stared right into his eyes.

“A toss that stops!” he shouted.

“W-what?”

“A toss that stops!”

“I…I have no idea what that means.”

Ukai exhaled and quickly led Tobio to his shop. There, he explained his idea of a toss that would go to the spikers’ highest point of impact before falling. It would give the spiker, in this case, Hinata, a slight moment to take in their surroundings and aim before they spike. Tobio wasn’t truly sure if it was possible but he was willing to try. He just needed time to work on it.

And he spent over a week doing so. Karasuno had been invited by the Tokyo schools to a summer training camp and Karasuno was quick to agree. Tobio could admit that he was a bit excited but he was weary as well. He hadn’t spoken to Hinata in over a week. He was unsure about this new toss. His team had been doing training on their own and he had no idea what they had been working on. It was a lot of information to be unsure of when they were facing such formidable teams.

Which is why he wasn’t even slightly surprised when they lost most of their games.

He was surprised when he realized Hinata had changed as well. He wasn’t sure what the boy had been doing, who he had been practicing with, but the two of them were completely out of synch.
It was almost laughable.

It took almost the entire week for the team to begin to work together once more. They had all grown a lot and their new plays and skills were clicking into place. Even Hinata and Kageyama’s new quick was working…occasionally.

They still had a lot of work to do.

But he and Hinata were once again getting along. The upperclassman had improved a great deal, even surprising Tobio with a synchronized attack. Tsukishima had even seemed to get into the swing of things and had been spending every night practicing with the captain’s from Fukurodani and Nekoma – along with that setter Akaashi.

Tobio was feeling good by the time they returned to Miyagi and he was looking forward to the Spring High Tournament. The team practiced every day to work out the kinks but Tobio had to admit that he thought they had a pretty good chance of at least placing in the top four at the tournament.

A month later and his team was playing in the Spring High Preliminaries. They won against both Ougiminami High and Kakugawa High, making them eligible to move onto the playoffs.

Tobio practiced each and every night with Hinata on their new quick. They still weren’t close to perfecting it by it worked about 90% of the time – much better odds than it had been during the training camp. When he arrived home each night, his father had taken to asking him about his day, which Tobio responded to in short sentences, and the man would probe further by asking about volleyball. He always got a weird frown between his eyebrows but he would smile and nod his head as Tobio spoke.

He was almost certain the man had no idea what he was talking about.

But it was kind of nice to have someone to tell.

In October, it was finally time for the Playoffs and Tobio knew that they were ready. Their first opponent, Johzenji, was extremely annoying. Tobio couldn’t think of a better way to describe them. They were jumping all over the place, trying things they had never practiced, seeming as if they didn’t care one way or another whether they won or lost. Well, until they did. But by then
Tobio and the rest of his team were on their way to winning. The only reason they had trouble at first was because of the odd moves the team made. After they learned that they mostly did two on two practice, it made sense. They were used to having to cover all areas of the court and they used whatever they had at their disposal. But that meant that they really didn’t function very well as a team.

Of course, the most annoying part of the entire match had been when Tobio took a volleyball to the face. He had been pulled from the game until his nose stopped bleeding and was taken to the nurse to get it checked. He had been worried the entire time what he would find when he returned back to the game, but everything seemed fine. More than fine, truthfully.

They won.

They were moving on to the quarterfinals.

The group headed back to the school shortly thereafter and Tobio found himself sitting on the gym floor as Coach Ukai congratulated them and began to talk about the following day and the team that they would be playing. Tobio was a little concerned that the man stated their defense was similar to Nekoma’s. As of now, Karasuno had not been able to beat Nekoma in straight sets.

He was determined to beat this other team, no matter how much they were like Nekoma.

Wakunan was a well put together team. And their captain, Takeru, was good. Extremely good, in fact. Tobio wondered why he had never head of this boy before. Though he was barely taller than Hinata, he could jump and spike. His receivers were much better than Hintaa’s. As were his serves. Tobio wanted to point this out to Hinata to make him realize that he could be just as much of a… force as this third year but he didn’t think he needed to.

He could see it written all over Hinata’s face.

Though they were good, Tobio didn’t really feel fear that Karasuno would lose until Daichi was injured. As soon as he stepped off the court, it was like a dark cloud settled over the team. Things were falling apart without their captain.

And then they weren’t.
The boys had to pull themselves together, to step up and attempt plays they had never done before because they had always known Daichi was there, watching their backs.

It was nice to know that they were capable of doing so.

But that didn’t mean they didn’t want Daichi on the court with them.

Even through all of that, they won.

They would be playing in the semi-finals.

The question was, who would their opponent be?

Which is how Tobio found himself sitting in the gym, along with the rest of his team, watching the match between Aoba Johsai and Date Tech.

He had mixed emotions. He wanted Aoba Johsai to win so that he could play against them again. He wanted to show Oikawa that his team could improve. He didn’t want the last match between them to be Inter-High. And yet, if Dateko won, he would get to see how their team measured up against the ‘Iron Wall’. And he knew others on his team wanted to play against Dateko once again. No one was truly looking forward to playing Aoba Johsai.

But…Tobio wanted to.

The moment he saw Date Tech’s team, he knew that wasn’t going to happen.

The third years had retired. Date Tech had a new setter.

And the setter didn’t hold a candle to Oikawa.

A team that wasn’t fully functioning. Not at the moment. Come Inter-High, Date Tech would be a force to be reckoned with. But now? Now they couldn’t compare the strength that made up Aoba Johsai.
And then it was settled.

The next match. Karasuno vs Aoba Johsai.

Winner goes to the Finals.

Tobio didn’t speak to anyone as they prepared for the last game of the day. He was well aware of the various eyes on him, eyes that turned away as soon as he looked over, but he didn’t both to say anything about it. This was it. This was going to be his final match against Oikawa. His eyes dropped down to the soulmark band on his arm. Was this going to truly be it? He wouldn’t have a reason to see Oikawa after today. The boy would be graduating at the end of the year. Who knew where he was going to end up. Tobio didn’t think that he would stay around Miyagi.

Was this the last time he was going to see Oikawa?

He followed his team to the court and began warm ups. He kept telling himself to focus on what he was doing but he couldn’t stop his mind from wandering to what was going to happen later. Oikawa hadn’t wanted anything to do with him in the first place. So this…this was all he was going to get. He needed to make sure that Oikawa would remember him. Even if it was twenty years down the line, Oikawa would look back and remember the boy that had been his soulmate.

Even if he found the other person and was living happily with them.

Even if Tobio was alone.

He snapped out of his questioning fog when the volleyball in his hand dropped to the ground and rolled under the net. “Sorry,” he muttered as he ducked underneath and reached for the ball.

But another hand was already there.

Tobio looked up, ready to apologize once more, but met a pair of familiar brown eyes. Eyes that were challenging him. He tightened his hold on the ball and tried to pull it toward him. Oikawa didn’t release it even slightly.
“Well, well,” Oikawa said as he gripped the ball. “If it isn’t Tobio-chan, who was miserably defeated last time.”

“We’ve come to win this time,” he snapped back as he pulled the ball his way once more.

“I depressed the hell out of you last time,” Oikawa growled. “All that’s left is that bastard, Ushiwaka.” Of course. In Oikawa’s mind, the battle between them had already been won. His throat tightened. Oikawa should be focused on him. Not Ushijima.

“I’m gonna have you get out of the way again, Tobio,” Oikawa said loudly, letting go of the ball Tobio was still pulling on. The ball flew out of his hand as Tobio fell backwards. He hit the ground hard and scowled up at Oikawa. The other boy laughed loudly.

Aoba Johsai served first. Which meant Oikawa had the opening move. Their eyes met just briefly, Oikawa’s lips twisting into a smirk, before he began to move. Tobio’s entire body tensed but he didn’t need to worry. Daichi was there instantly, sending the ball up in the air. Tobio sent a smirk in Oikawa’s direction but he didn’t see it, too busy glaring at Daichi. Tobio wanted to laugh. It was always nice when someone else made Oikawa’s eyes snapped dangerously. Them smirk fell when Tobio realized the ball was going back over the net. Tobio shot forward instantly but Kindaichi was already there to push the ball back to Tobio’s side. Tobio managed to receive it before it hit the floor. Noya jumped and tossed the ball for Asahi. Tobio yelled in exhilaration as the ball slammed to the floor on the other side of the net.

The first point went to Karasuno.

And then Kageyama was up to serve. He took a deep breath and tossed the ball up, then he ran. He ran, jumped, and hit the ball, watching as it flew over the net. It was…

…out.

Damn!

Tobio cringed and saw Oikawa’s shaking shoulders. Why did he always seem to mess up his serves when he was playing against the other boy? Tobio shook the thoughts off and focused on the next up to serve.
Iwaizumi.

A jump serve.

When the hell had Iwaizumi learned to do a jump serve?

Tobio scowled in irritation but Asahi managed to save the ball, though it was once again flying over the net. Tobio ran forward and jumped, well aware that Kunimi was also jumping and ready to push the ball down. But Tobio was able to set it, one handed, to Tanaka.

And they scored.

Tobio once again turned triumphantly toward the other irritation and felt a growing sense of achievement when he saw the multiple eyes on him. Even if those eyes were narrowed with irritation.

Tobio had been avoiding tossing to Hinata. During their last match against Aoba Johsai, Hinata’s spike had been blocked and the ball had hit the ground before the red head had even opened his eyes. He knew that the memories were affecting Hinata now. He had hoped if he had waited the boy would realize it was a game just like any other.

But he seemed to be getting worse.

So Tobio tossed to him.

And Kindaichi blocked it.

Tobio cursed and turned his head, ready to watch as the ball hits the ground, only to see something else instead. Tsukishima saved it.

And it was up.
And going back over the net.

Tobio scowled and hurried up beside Hinata, eyeing the redhead in irritation. *He's so worked up that he didn’t see the block!* And he was getting worse. Tobio’s leg shot out, kicking the other boy in the back. He just hoped it would knock some sense into him. “Calm it down you…uh…dumbass!”

Iwaizumi jumped to spike and Tobio jumped, along with Hinata, to block. The ball flew forward and hit Hinata’s hands before flying back toward Asahi. He sent it up and Tobio knew it was time. He sent the new toss toward Hinata and he saw the other boys’ eyes search for a way around the block.

And then he hit the ball.

And scored.

They all cheered, Tobio and Hinata hi-fiving each other. And then, Hinata, “You kicked me for real, you jerk!”

“I woke you up, you dumbass!” Tobio snapped back.

The game continued. It was when one of the third years from Aoba Johsai reentered the game that Tobio realized the boy had come up with a way to counter Hinata’s slide hit. And, shortly thereafter, Oikawa pulled off a serve that not one person on their team even moved to intercept. None of them had realized that the third year had hit the ball until it was already slamming to the floor.

Tobio stared at it in awe.

That was absolutely incredible.

And a bad omen for Karasuno.

Or so he thought.
The ball was out.

Pure relief flooded Tobio’s system. It was pure luck that the ball was out. If it had been in…if Oikawa had another chance to serve…

He would rather not think about it.

They were at set point.

And Tobio was up to serve.

_It won’t be easy to get it over. Don’t put too much strength into it. Our team is strong when all six of us are strong._

He took a deep breath and served. But Aoba Johsai picked it up and scored.

Damn.

And then a player was being switched in. Tobio tilted his head curiously. Bleached hair. An angry expression. Tobio was sure this person hadn’t previously been on the team. He pulled his eyes away from the new player and looked at Oikawa. Oikawa who was also looking toward the new player with dark eyes. Tobio’s shoulders tensed. If Oikawa was worried about this new player, Tobio knew he needed to be on guard.

Oikawa and Iwaizumi met the new player in the middle of the court, Oikawa talking to him with his hands on his hips. Tobio’s jaw clenched.

And then Iwaizumi was up to serve. Daichi received the ball and Tobio set it to Tanaka. It hit the block and went up, Oikawa setting the ball. And Tobio watched, his eyes wide, as Kindaichi, who the ball was clearly set for, went flying onto the floor as the new player ran up and pushed him out of the way. The boy spiked and the ball flew over the net, slamming onto the court.
It was out.

Karasuno had won the first set.

But Tobio didn’t feel as excited as he should. No, he was watching the other team. Watching as Kindaichi picked himself up off the floor. As Oikawa stared at the new player in absolute horror and shock. As Iwaizumi literally slammed his fist into the bleached blonde head and began to yell.

And he was starting the next set.

Tobio didn’t like it.

At all.

Unfortunately, the second set turned out differently than the first. With the new player with Aoba Johsai, the usual well-polished team became unpredictable. Tobio even had trouble figuring out what plays Oikawa was going to do.

And Karasuno lost the second set.

Tobio let out a sigh of defeat as he moved toward the coach and listened to what he had to say. It was nothing Tobio didn’t already know. They needed to get Oikawa’s serve up. They were going to surpass Aoba Johsai.

It was time for the third and final set. Whoever won would win the match and move onto the finals.

Tobio could honestly say he had played better than he ever had. He did everything he could to help his team win. To defeat Aoba Johsai. The teams were neck and neck, neither willing to give in the slightest. They used every tool they had. Hinata. Yamaguchi. Suga. Aoba Johsai did the same.

At one point, Tobio jumped to block and Hinata jumped sideways, slamming his side into Tobio’s. Tobio yelled out in pain but Hinata was able to block the ball so Tobio guessed he could forgive him.
Only a few moments later, Tobio did a dump that had Oikawa lying on the floor, the ball barely missing his hand. The older boy glared up at Tobio with pained eyes and Tobio felt his heart clench. But he turned away.

Focus on the game.

Don’t think of anything else.

His team was jumping on him in congratulations. But...he could feel the weight of the eyes on him. Of the person staring at his back.

He didn’t turn around.

Karasuno was at set point.

Suga served. Iwaizumi received. Oikawa tossed to the bleached blond who spiked the ball – it hit Tanaka’s head but at least the second year got it in the air. Tobio tossed the ball to Asahi. He spiked it but it was saved by Aoba Johsai’s #7. The ball flew off court and Tobio’s jaw clenched when Oikawa went after it. He pointed to Iwaizumi from across the court and Tobio prepared himself. The ball was already in the air and Iwaizumi had already jumped with Oikawa slammed into the table and Tobio flinched at the sound of impact. He ignored it and jumped to block.

But the ball flew past his hands and bounced off Daichi’s arms.

Tobio thought that was it. That they had lost the point.

But then Tanaka was there.

He managed to jump off court and get under the ball before it hit the ground. It hit his hand and flew up. Asahi ran. Jumped. Spiked.

And was received by the libero.
But it hit the net and almost went down to the floor…

…only to be saved by the annoying bleached blond.

It was coming back.

“Hit it, Kageyama!” Daichi yelled.

Tobio jumped and spiked.

But Kindaichi jumped as well.

He blocked it.

It flew down…and bounced off of Suga’s head.

“Give it to me!”

Tobio knew that voice.

Knew what to do.

He ran under the ball and tossed.

Three blockers jumped.

But Hinata spiked.
First the ball hit Kindaichi’s fingers.

And then it bounced off of Oikawa’s arms.

And flew back.

It hit the floor.

And it was over.

They had won.

The team cheered. Tobio cheered. And then there was someone at his back. He turned. Oikawa was standing there, staring at him from across the net. For the first time, Tobio couldn’t tell what Oikawa was thinking. Oikawa turned away and moved toward his team. And didn’t look back.

Tobio swallowed hard.

But they had done it. They had won.

He couldn’t help but wonder if he had lost something else for the final time.
Interlude - Oikawa

Oikawa could honestly say that he wasn’t planning on attending the final match the day after he lost to Karasuno. The mere thought of it sent a wave of misery throughout his body. It had been his last chance to make it to Nationals. His last chance to win against Ushiwaka. And he had lost to the one person he had been terrified of since he was fourteen. A boy with dark hair, blue eyes, and the most adorable-

Oikawa huffed and wrapped his arms around his knees. When he had first met Kageyama Tobio all those years ago, he couldn’t help but notice how precious the other boy was. He had stared at Oikawa with innocent and worshiping eyes and Oikawa couldn’t help but do whatever he could to make those eyes follow him. Well, at first. But then he had overheard his coaches speaking about how Tobio was everything they wanted in a player and that he would one day become the setter of the team.

And a pool of envy began to grow in Oikawa’s chest.

He began to watch Tobio closely after that. Those eyes that had once made Oikawa try his hardest because of an urge to impress were now a threat. Because whatever Oikawa did, Tobio followed. He would work on a toss and suddenly Tobio would be able to do the same. He noticed that Tobio was mimicking his form. And that pool began to grow into an ocean until it completely consumed Oikawa’s body the day he was replaced by the younger setter during a practice match.

Oikawa honestly didn’t know what happened after that. Tobio had come up to him to ask him for his help but Oikawa was so…he didn’t even know what he had been. Even now Oikawa couldn’t put a name on the feeling. He just knew that something in him had seemed to snap and he suddenly had the younger boy’s jersey in his hand and his right hand had swung back, ready to slap the younger across the face.

Oikawa will forever thank Iwaizumi for stopping him.

If it had been any other day, any other day, Oikawa wouldn’t have reacted as he did when he saw the soulmarks on Tobio’s arms. Hell, Oikawa had admitted to his best friend only a couple of weeks before that he found the first year to be extremely cute. Iwaizumi had rolled his eyes and teased Oikawa that everyone could see that. Because of course Oikawa’s little crush had been obvious to his best friend. But Oikawa loved volleyball more than anything. He was good at it.

And he felt like that had been ripped away from him.
Oikawa would never admit that he…regretted the things he had said that night. Iwaizumi had screamed at him after the two left. Oikawa had just walked away stubbornly, refusing to tell his best friend that he had regretted it the moment the door closed behind them. He had thought that, after he had time to calm down, he would be able to apologize. But the anger and jealousy never truly faded and Oikawa took to avoiding the younger boy as often as he could. And then he graduated and no longer had to face Kageyama Tobio every single day.

And he could forget about it.

But then he started to hear the rumors of the “King of the Court”. Oikawa, at first, had been startled and upset because that meant a new setter was going to be joining the high school circuit, one that had already earned himself a reputation and followers. That was until he joined Iwaizumi to watch the junior high matches. And he realized what the true meaning of the nickname was.

And who it referred to.

Oikawa watched Tobio in horror on that day. His hands were tight around the railing and Iwaizumi had placed a hand on his back, trying to get him to calm down. Because this, this person, was not the same person that Oikawa had known two years before. This was not the same boy that had stared up at him with adoring eyes. This was someone completely different.

This person was not Oikawa’s soulmate.

Still, Oikawa’s heart had gone out to him when his team turned away from him. He could see the pure devastation that crossed Tobio’s face when he was left standing there, the ball bouncing beside him as the rest of the team walked away. He stared down at him as Tobio sat on the bench, a towel over his face and his shoulders shaking. Oikawa knew that the other boy was crying. He could practically feel it. But he didn’t go to him. Instead, he felt pure fury well in his chest and he turned away from the railing with a huff.

That was the day he remembered his vow to win against Kageyama Tobio. It was a vow he had made after he lost to Ushiwaka during their third year of junior high. Because Ushijima was a genius. And so was Tobio. If he could beat Tobio, he could beat Ushiwaka.

It had made sense to a fourteen year old.
It was starting to make sense to a seventeen year old as well.

Because Kageyama Tobio needed to remember what being a setter consisted of.

And Oikawa was going to make sure that he was going to be the one to remind him.

Oikawa recommended Kageyama to his coach for entrance to Aoba Johsai. He will never forget the startled and confused look he received in return. His coach had bluntly said that Kageyama was not someone that would fit well onto their team with the way he played. Oikawa argued that the King of the Court was not Kageyama Tobio. In the end, Coach agreed to invited Tobio to the team.

But he turned it down.

Oikawa was furious. He should have known, truly. After all, it was known that both Kindaichi and Kunimi were going to be joining the team. But Oikawa had gone out of his way to make sure that Tobio had the option to join the team and the other boy had thrown it in his face.

Even if he wasn’t aware that it was Oikawa’s doing.

That was the reason Oikawa had convinced his Coach to invited Karasuno to a practice game. And to make sure Tobio was going to play. Oikawa needed to see the other boy play close up. Karasuno wasn’t a powerhouse school, they hadn’t been in years, but that might be a positive for Tobio. Oikawa hoped that the other boy would be able to move forward from…whatever it was that had made him into the ‘King’.

Oikawa could admit that he saw the difference in Tobio during that game. He noticed an even bigger difference during the Inter-High Tournament. And he knew, more than ever before, that Tobio was eventually going to catch up to him. And once he did, he was going to surpass Oikawa before he even knew what was happening.

When they lost the day before, when that ball hit the floor and Karasuno was officially going to the finals, Oikawa could just stare across the net as Tobio’s entire team cheered. As Tobio smiled, a true smile, a smile Oikawa hadn’t seen in years, crossed the other boys face. And when their eyes met, Oikawa couldn’t help but wonder if this was finally it. If Tobio had finally outgrown him.

He cried when he was away from the gym and his team. Many of Aoba Johsai had cried as they
stood on the court but Oikawa couldn’t allow himself to do so. Not when every eye was on him. He couldn’t stop the tears from running down his face when he remembered the ball slamming into his arms and flying off the court. If he had just saved it – if he had been able to receive the ball cleanly – he was their captain. He should have been able to do something.

But he hadn’t. And his team had lost because of it.

After he made sure the redness had faded from his eyes and he had washed his face to keep the evidence from being obvious, he made his way out of the bathroom. He spoke to another member of his team, asking him to start loading the bus, and then hurried off to find the rest of the team. He didn’t get far before he came into contact with Ushijima. “This is a warning, Oikawa,” he said, voice low. “Don’t choose the wrong path again. You chose the wrong path. There was a place where you could have realized your true potential. Because of your worthless pride you didn’t choose it.”

Oikawa’s jaw had clenched and had thrown his hands up in the air in irritation. “So you’re trying to tell me that I should have gone to Shiratorizawa instead of Seijoh, right? No team is guaranteed victory.”

“If nothing else, I can say that my team is the strongest one here.”

And with those words, Oikawa suddenly came to a realization.

Because he had despised Ushiwaka for years. He remembered that day that he overheard his coaches talking. When he heard Tobio referred to as a ‘genius’. The same term that was used to define Ushiwaka. And Oikawa knew that he had taken that hatred for Ushiwaka and transferred it.

And he would have really liked to keep that thought buried somewhere deep inside of him.

But it was out now.

And Oikawa was furious.

He turned sharply and glared at the ace from Shiratorizawa. “Wow, I see you’re still laughably confident! Worthless pride, huh? That’s true.” And it was. Oikawa was well aware of his flaws. How could he not be when Iwaizumi made sure to point them out as often as he did? But he was
aware of his strengths as well. And his pride was both. “Listen up, Ushijima,” he said, uttering the boys real name for the first time in years. “I never thought my decision was wrong and my volleyball hasn’t ended at all. Don’t you ever forget my worthless pride.” He started to turn but stopped when he thought of one last thing to say. “Oh, yeah. If you keep all your attention on me, you’re going to get stabbed from the direction you least expect.”

Ushiwaka’s eyes narrowed. “What is that supposed to mean?”

“My soulmate isn’t that smart and isn’t even close to my level yet. But now that he’s not by himself, he’s strong.” Oikawa smirked and finally turned around to go search for his teammates. “When crows flock, they might even kill a huge, white eagle.” He grinned vindictively when he didn’t hear another word from the third-year captain of Shiratorizawa.

It wasn’t until later that night, when he was at home in bed, that he realized what he said.

He had called Tobio his soulmate.

To *Ushiwaka*.

And that was when Oikawa realized that there was no way he could stay home when Tobio was going to play Ushiwaka the following day.

So, here he was, sitting in a chair in the back of the Sendai Municipal Gymnasium, his knees drawn up to his chest, as he watched the game in front of him. He hissed as Ushiwaka spiked and the ball flew off of the libero’s arms and out of bounds. The man sitting in front of him gasped loudly and Oikawa couldn’t help but scowl. Yeah, it was always shocking the first time you saw Ushiwaka spike.

It didn’t mean Oikawa had to like it.

The third year’s scowl only increased as Karasuno’s team obviously completely fell apart before they had even started. The ball flew toward them and not one person moved. Oikawa cursed under his breath. This had to be overwhelming for them but someone needed to get them back into the correct headspace. Oikawa willed Tobio to do so…but it was the setter standing on the side of the court that managed to do so. He screamed, loud enough that even Oikawa heard him, and every single member of Karasuno hunched in embarrassment and understanding.
The game continued and Oikawa continued to be distracted by the man sitting in front of him. He often stared at the game, muttered under his breath, and pulled out a book before looking something up. After the third time, Oikawa moved forward in his chair to peer at the cover and had to stifle a laugh. It was a volleyball book, one that explained the basics of the game.

Oh, this poor man.

“Sorry to interrupt,” Oikawa said, keeping his voice cheerful despite the fact that he was feeling anything but. The man turned toward him and Oikawa’s breath caught in his throat. The eyes might have been a dark brown but the rest of the features were an almost exact replica of Tobio’s in probably twenty years. The man raised an eyebrow and Oikawa blinked out of his surprise. “Sorry. Do you need help? I play as well and it might be easier than you searching through that book every few minutes.”

A slight blush crossed the man’s face and he gave Oikawa a sheepish look. “If you don’t mind.”

“Not at all,” Oikawa said with a faux smile. The man bowed his head and stood, moving to the row Oikawa was sitting in and sliding into the seat beside him. “So, where are we starting?”

The man cleared his throat. “I – my son is playing. What are the positions?”

The words hit Oikawa’s ears and he knew in that instant who the man was talking about. “Your son? Sorry if I’m out of line, but are you talking about Tobio-chan?”

The man blinked a few times in surprise. “You know my son?”

Oikawa gave a bright smile. “Tobio was my kohai in junior high. We played against each other yesterday…they won, obviously. But Tobio-chan and I talk occasionally.” Very occasionally. But he didn’t need to know that. Oikawa cleared his throat. “Tobio is a setter.” At the man’s confused look, Oikawa smiled. “Sorry, did you play a sport, Kageyama-san?”

“Oh, sorry,” the man grimaced and bowed his head once more. “We didn’t introduce ourselves, did we? I’m Hirata Kaito. Kageyama was my soulmates name.” He hesitated for a moment before continuing quickly, “Tobio decided to keep his mother’s name after she passed.”

Oikawa felt himself sit up quickly. If Kageyama was his soulmates name than that most likely
meant the two had not been together. Coupled with the fact that the man had never seen a game and didn’t even know the positions and the fact that he just said Tobio’s mother had died…

“Oikawa Tooru,” Oikawa said quickly, bowing his own head in return. “Sorry. Did you play a sport in school, Hirata-san?”

Hirata’s lips turned up just a bit. “I did. Basketball.”

Good. Oikawa could work with that. “A setter is kind of like a point guard in basketball. They are in charge of offense and decides where and when the ball goes on the court. The spikers are important, obviously, as are blockers, but a setter is the true power behind a team. They have to be able to see everything on the court and make quick decisions. Tobio-chan,” Oikawa said, his voice fading just slightly as the next words passed his lips, “Tobio-chan is considered to be a genius setter, Hirata-san. It is terrifying just how quickly he can improve.”

Hirata’s eyes widened during Oikawa’s explanation and the boy was happy to see a new understanding in his eye as he looked down at the court once again. Oikawa did the same and his lips twisted up when he saw Karasuno’s libero get Ushiwaka’s spike up in the air.

Good.

Tobio jumped and even Oikawa thought the younger boy was going to spike the ball. However, he tossed the ball toward the bald-headed boy and he quickly spiked it over the net. Oikawa smiled as the stands erupted into cheers. Oikawa felt a rush of pride at the move. Well, it seemed that Tobio was still watching him closely. Hadn’t he pulled that move on him the day before?

He should probably be annoyed.

Oikawa watched with Hirata and explained parts of the game to him whenever the man had a question. Oikawa wasn’t surprised when Karasuno lost the first set – not after the way they had been playing at the beginning of the match. He had to explain to Hirata that it wasn’t the end of the game, that it was broken up into sets and this particular match would be whoever won three sets first. Hirata let out a deep breath at the words and Oikawa wondered just how worried the man had been about the fact Karasuno had lost.

“Something seems…different about that kid,” Hirata said at one point and Oikawa couldn’t help but snort.
“They call him the guest monster. Most blockers use read blocks while playing – that is, they look to see where the block is going before they move. But he goes completely on his instincts.”

Hirata’s brows furrowed and Oikawa was struck yet again by how much the man looked like his son. “That seems as if it could go extremely wrong.”

Oikawa’s lips curled. “It can. But Shiratorizawa is capable of picking up the spikes he misses.”

“Oh,” he said a few seconds later, leaning forward with interest. “They’re putting Refreshing-kun in.”

“Refreshing-kun?” The man questioned in amusement. Oikawa felt himself flush.

“Uh…I don’t actually know his name. He’s Karasuno’s third year setter. He was the starting setter until this year.”

“Until Tobio joined the team.”

“Yes,” Oikawa agreed, watching carefully as Refreshing-kun served. He gasped as Refreshing-kun and Tobio suddenly switched positions before Karasuno went into a synchronized attack. The ball flew to Tobio and Oikawa jumped to his feet as the younger boy spiked it past Shiratorizawa’s blockers. “Yes!”

Hirata gazed at him in amusement as Oikawa sank back in his seat, once again pulling his knees up to his chest. He glanced around to make sure no one else noticed what he had done. Or noticed he was there. “What was that?” the man questioned, gesturing toward the court. “I thought Tobio was the setter?”

“Something completely insane that only Karasuno would have the guts to do,” Oikawa responded with a tired smile.

They continued to watch the came and Oikawa hissed as Freckles-kun was placed into the game. Hirata glanced at him with raised eyebrows and Oikawa shrugged his shoulders. “That first year got a lot of points off us,” he whined. “It was annoying.”
The man chuckled and the two watched as the serve broke Shirtatorizawa’s formation but it didn’t matter when Ushiwaka’s spike blew past the blockers. Oikawa scowled as Freckles-kun stepped back off the court.

How annoying.

The second set was extra long and Oikawa was beginning to wonder if either team was ever going to come out on top when it happened. He saw the ball leave Shirabu’s hand. He saw that it was off. And he saw Glasses-kun move.

And then Ushiwaka’s spike was completely shut down.

By Glasses-kun.

The stands erupted into cheers and Oikawa’s mouth was hanging open. “He didn’t play like that with us!” he huffed in annoyance. Now he was getting pissed again. Why hadn’t Glasses-kun put so much effort into their games?!

But Karasuno had won the second set.

The third set started and both Oikawa and Hirata were engrossed in the game below – until a familiar voice interrupted Oikawa’s conversation. “Oh. You’re here too.”

Oikawa flinched back in his seat but that didn’t stop his best friend from dropping down beside him. He glanced to the side and saw Iwaizumi looking at the man beside Oikawa in confusion before his eyes widened in realization when Hirata turned his head enough for the boy to catch a glimpse of his face. “You said that you weren’t going to come because it’d piss you off, no matter who won.”

With a smirk, Oikawa sat back in his chair. “No matter which side wins, I’m going to see the other teams faces when they lose.”

“You really are a piece of crap.”
“I don’t have time to sit around feeling sorry for myself,” Oikawa muttered as Hirata looked at him with a frown.

Iwaizumi huffed and sat beside Oikawa. “I see that their #10 sure is moving around a lot, like always.”

“He’s definitely some kind of monster,” Oikawa agreed, his eyes on the redhead in question. But then his eyes oved toward the dark-haired boy beside him. “However, it sure must be rough having to stick around that monster.” Oikawa cleared his throat. “Iwa-chan, this is Hirata-san, Tobio-chan’s father. Hirata-san, this is my best friend and the ace of my team, Iwaizumi Hajime.”

“Nice to meet you,” Iwaizumi murmured, bowing his head toward the man beside Oikawa.

Hirata returned the gesture and looked at Iwaizumi curiously. “Did you attend school with my son as well?”

“I did,” Iwaizumi agreed, his brows furrowing as he looked toward Oikawa quickly. It was a questioning glance, one that demanded answers as to how Oikawa ended up at the game with Tobio’s father. Oikawa scrunched up his nose and shook his head, his eyes falling to his covered arm. Iwaizumi’s features relaxed just slightly. “Kageyama’s a good kid.”

Hirata’s lips curled just slightly and he looked back toward the game. “I don’t suppose either of you know why he came home with bruises all over his body a few months ago. I asked but he said he had an argument with someone on his team.”

Oikawa’s mind flashed to the day he had run into Tobio outside the community center. “Oh, he and Chibi-chan were arguing about Chibi-chan wanting to change things on the team. I don’t really know what happened but I saw him afterward. It looked like it got nasty.”

Iwaizumi’s mouth dropped and his hand moved quickly, smacking Oikawa in the back of the head. Oikawa yelped. “Why the hell didn’t you say anything, Trashykawa?!”

“He seemed fine!” Oikawa whined, his hand on the back of his head. “He was bandaged and everything! He asked me about volleyball…” Oikawa trailed off and he let out a dramatic gasp. “Tobio-chan asked me how to beat us! Oh, that little…”
Iwaizumi snorted and Hirata seemed to be amused as well, despite the fact that Oikawa nearly cussed out his son. “He was always good at getting under your skin,” Iwaizumi muttered and Oikawa’s right hand slowly moved toward his left arm to rest over his sweater where his soulmark was located. Well, he wasn’t going to deny that.

He looked up just in time to see realization spread across Hirata’s face as his eyes locked onto Oikawa’s hand. “So, you are…”

“Complicated,” Oikawa muttered, moving his hand firmly away from his arm and soulmark and concentrating once more on the game. “It’s just…complicated.”
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Short chapter! I was going to add Miya this chapter but I decided to have one that was just Oikawa and Tobio. Sorry! Next chapter will be the training camp!

They had won.

They were going to Nationals.

It was almost like a dream.

If Tobio wasn’t afraid to give the opportunity to his teammates (particularly Tsukishima and Hinata), he would have asked someone to pinch him.

Tobio stumbled through the front door of his home that night, his eyes wide and a smile (“so creepy!” Hinata screeched.) plastered across his face. They were doing it. They were going to Tokyo to compete on the National stage. “Congratulations!” His father said as he closed the door behind him. Tobio’s head shot toward the man, his mouth dropping open as he looked at the present that was suddenly thrust into his hands.

“I…what?” Tobio asked in surprise. He looked up briefly to see a satisfied look on his father’s face. He…how did he know? Wait, wasn’t the game televised? “Did you…watch?” he asked, his eyes trailing toward the television.

“I did,” his father commented, a slight smile overtaking his features. Just by looking at his face, Tobio knew he was missing something. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to know what it was.

“…alright. Thanks,” he muttered, walking past his father and into his bedroom. He stopped short at the gift bag sitting on his bed. “What?” he questioned to himself as he stepped forward and peeked inside the bag.

Kneepads.
“A friend of yours said that the ones you had were looking a bit worn,” his father commented and Tobio turned wide, startled eyes to the man as he leaned against the doorframe. “I thought it would be useful before you head to Nationals.”

Tobio blinked in disbelief before looking at the kneepads once more. “I…thanks. I was going to buy some before I left,” he admitted quietly, fingers tightening around the gift.

His father sent him a relieved smile. “Good. I wasn’t sure but…I’m glad it was a good purchase. Well,” he shifted uncomfortably. “You’re probably tired. I’ll let you get some sleep.”

“Wait!” Tobio called as his father turned to walk down the hall. “Who-a friend?”

A mischievous smile was sent over his fathers’ shoulder. “Hmm. He was very helpful.” And with that, his father walked down out of the room completely, closing the door behind him. Tobio continued to stare at the door, wondering who could have possibly help his father with something like this. But he was thankful to whoever had done so.

It made him…happy.

With careful hands, Tobio placed the kneepads on his desk. He had received gifts from his father over the past few years, money and knickknacks, but to actually receive something for volleyball, something that he cared about so much, that was completely different. And his father had watched the game, had cared enough to go out and get him something – that wasn’t something that Tobio had ever expected to happen.

The events of the day suddenly washed over him and Tobio couldn’t help but collapse onto his bed. After the match against Shiratorizawa, the triumphant dinner with the team, and then the conversation with his father, all he really wanted to do was sleep. The question of the mysterious friend was still on his mind when he fell asleep.

The question plagued his mind for the next week. He had asked Hinata, Daichi, and Suga if his father had contacted them. They all shook their heads and asked if something was wrong but he shook his head. He couldn’t imagine who else was even a possibility. He didn’t dare ask his father – he didn’t really think the man would tell him anyway. So he was certain that it was going to be a question he never got an answer to.
Well, until one day a week after the Shiratorizawa game.

“Yoohoo! Tobio-chan!” Tobio froze. He would know that voice anywhere. He slowly turned his head and looked into the light brown eyes of Oikawa Tooru. The older boy sent him a smile that was dripping in charm and superiority. “What is my dear Kohai doing here?”

Tobio’s shoulders were stiff as he answered, “I was going to the manga shop.” He glanced around the street, surprised to see that the older boy was alone. Oikawa always had someone around him, whether it was Iwaizumi, one of the people he was dating, or even his nephew. “Where is Iwaizumi-san?”

Oikawa tilted his head to the side and his lips twisted up just slightly. “I’m not glued to Iwa-chan’s side, Tobio-chan. He’s doing,” he waved his hand and scrunched up his nose, “something. I don’t know. I was actually going to see a movie.” His lips twisted into a pout. “Iwa-chan won’t see it. Said he’s tired of seeing those ‘stupid space movies’. Stupid Iwa-chan,” he muttered. Tobio stared at the older setter in confusion. Why was he telling him this? Usually, he just told Tobio to go away or to stop following him (ignoring the fact that he wasn’t following him at all).

“Uh…”

“Uh,” Oikawa mimicked, rolling his eyes. “Well, come on then.”

“What?”

Oikawa huffed and grabbed Tobio’s wrist, pulling him down the street. Tobio’s mouth dropped. “What are you-“

“Going to a movie. You aren’t going to make me go alone, are you, Tobio-chan? That would be rude.”

“You were going alone in the first place-“

“But you’re here now, so I don’t have to,” Oikawa informed him enthusiastically. Tobio snapped his mouth closed and continued to let Oikawa pull him down the street and to the theater. He couldn’t say he was…upset about sitting in a theater beside Oikawa. Especially since Oikawa seemed to be in one of his moods where he didn’t absolutely hate Tobio. Tobio had forgotten that,
outside of volleyball, the two of them had actually gotten along at one point.

Well, until their soulmarks were revealed.

Oikawa paid for the tickets and pulled Tobio toward the concession stand, not even asking Tobio what he wanted before he bought them food and drinks. Tobio blinked, surprised as he was handed his favorite snacks, and then slowly shuffled behind Oikawa to the seats he had chosen. Oikawa was babbling the entire time, saying something about how he had been looking forward to the movie and it was based on a book. He asked Tobio if he had read it and Tobio shook his head. Oikawa sighed at the answer but went into a detailed description of the book and how there was going to be a sequel. Tobio just nodded, not knowing what else to say. He wasn’t much of a reader and he was surprised to realize that Oikawa was. It seemed odd but somehow seemed to fit the older boy. The lights began to darken and Oikawa slipped a pair of glasses on his nose. Tobio almost dropped his drink.

Since when did Oikawa wear glasses?

“Pay attention, Tobio-chan,” Oikawa chastised, pinching Tobio’s wrist. Tobio snapped his arm toward his chest and glared at the older boy but Oikawa just pointed at the screen.

He rolled his eyes and focused on the movie.

Well, as much as he could, anyway.

It was extremely confusing.

But Oikawa seemed to enjoy it. His mouth would fall open at appropriate times, he would laugh loudly, and he would look at Tobio from time to time, gesturing to the screen in excitement. Tobio would let his lips turn up slightly, just enough to show that he had noticed but not enough that the other boy would recoil like his teammates whenever he tried.

Tobio barely noticed when the lights turned on. For the last hour of the movie he had barely turned his eyes away from Oikawa, amazed at how relaxed and happy the older boy was looking. Oikawa was obviously aware of his eyes but he just rolled his eyes and tapped on Tobio’s arm, his left arm, right where the crown rested, and nodded toward the screen. Tobio would let his eyes return to the movie, only to move back once he knew Oikawa was no longer looking at him. Once the lights were on and most of the theater had emptied, Oikawa stood and stretched his arms up over his head. “Alright, well, it was fun, Tobio-chan. Maybe we should do it again sometime.”
Tobio’s eyes widened. “Really?”

Oikawa’s lips quirked. “Really. I wouldn’t want your father to think I’m neglecting you, after all.” He walked down the aisle and began to head toward the doors. “By the way, I hope you liked the kneepads.”
Tobio and the rest of his team threw themselves into practice after it really set in that they were going to Nationals. Especially since they were hoping that they would be playing against Nekoma and finally fulfilling the ‘Battle of the Garbage Dump’. Hinata had been in constant contact with Kenma, urging the other boy to win their own tournament – Tobio was sure that Kenma was growing irritated though he never actually told Hinata to stop.

Things in Tobio’s life seemed to have shifted slightly. Practices were longer and Tobio was arriving home later. Instead of going straight into his room when he got home, he would usually pause and speak to his father. The man was asking him about his day, about volleyball, and he seemed to actually be interested in Tobio’s answers. It was a change that Tobio found a bit alarming but he was happy about it none-the-less. There was another thing his father asked about regularly as well – and this one wasn’t so easy to answer.

“How is Oikawa-kun?”

“Uh, fine,” Tobio muttered, avoiding his father’s gaze as he did so. Because, in truth, he had no idea. Despite his words to Tobio that day a few weeks ago, Oikawa hadn’t contacted Tobio in anyway since he left him sitting in that movie theater. Since he admitted that he was the friend that had helped his father choose his gift after the Spring Tournament. Tobio was still shocked that the other boy had done so – he was even more surprised that Oikawa had actually come to the finals to watch them play.

He didn’t understand it.

It shouldn’t be a surprise. He never seemed to understand what Oikawa did.
He didn’t really like to think about it. He was content with his new routine. With practice and
dinner with his team, with his developing relationship with his father. But, despite that
contentment, his routine shifted once again one day during afternoon practice.

They were using the basketball court and measuring how high they could jump. Each person on
the team was taking turns, jumping and hitting the backboard so Yachi could measure the height
for the National pamphlets. He felt a rush of accomplishment when his height measured 337
centimeters, four centimeters higher than Hinata’s and the highest on the team, when Takeda ran
excitedly into the gym. They all gathered around the older man and Tobio frowned when he
noticed the way the teacher was panting. He was always like this when he had an announcement.
Some of them were good (like the training camp) and some were not so good (like the practice
match against Aoba Johsai). Tobio felt his shoulder’s tense, wondering which type it would be this
time.

“Thank you for your hard work,” Takeda started. “This is sudden, but I have some big news.
Kageyama-kun,” Tobio tensed even further when Takeda turned his full attention onto him.
“You’ve been asked to attend the National Youth Intensive Training Camp.” Tobio’s eyes widened
as shock spread throughout his body. He barely heard his teammates as they gasped and sent a
multitude of questions the teachers way.

The National Youth Intensive Training Camp?

Him?

That…that was where Ushijima was invited each year. Where the best in the country went. It was
somewhere that even Oikawa had never been invited to.

The thought sent a chill down his spine.

He barely registered the fact that Shiratorizawa was holding a training camp for promising first
years as well – and Tsukishima had been invited.

Tobio couldn’t say he was surprised. With the way the boy had played in the finals…he deserved
it. But, Tobio didn’t think he was the only one. He might have made a comment to Hinata that he
was going to pass him now that he was invited to the National Training Camp but he thought
Hinata deserved to join Tsukishima at the Shiratorizawa camp.
He didn’t really understand why the other boy hadn’t been invited.

Tobio went home that night and told his father the news. His father, after looking confused and prompting an explanation, was almost as excited as Tobio once he understood what it meant. Tobio had stopped breathing for a moment when his father’s arms wrapped around him in a tight hug.

His father had never hugged him before.

It was later that night that Tobio received a message that made his heart stop in his chest.

_Oikawa-san_

_Received 22:37: I heard that Sleepy-chan and Kindaichi-kun were invited to Shiratorizawa’s training camp._

_Received 22:28: I suppose you were as well._

_Received 22:28: Should I warn Shiratorizawa’s monster coach that the three of you will be arguing constantly?_

_Sent 22:32: not going. Invited to national youth camp_

Tobio stared at his phone, waiting for a response.

One never came.

Tobio pushed it from his mind. It didn’t matter. His team, friends, and father were excited for him. He didn’t need Oikawa’s recognition. He shouldn’t have expected it in the first place.

It was December when Tobio made his way into Tokyo to go to the week-long training camp. He got lost, which wouldn’t have surprised anyone. He should thank Takeda and Suga for making sure he had detailed directions. He was able to find his way…eventually. He glanced around the room, seeing the various boys in the middle of practice. He didn’t recognize any of them.
Ushijima had been the only person in their prefecture invited to this camp for years.

He had hoped that there would be someone from one of the Tokyo schools that he knew.

They were split up into teams, the coaches walking around and looking at the different play styles and how each person fit in with players they didn’t know. Tobio was incredibly nervous the first time he played and he instinctively set the quick toward the place Hinata would usually be standing. The ball fell to the floor, no one there to hit it.

Tobio flushed as he stared at the ball. “Uh, this is the first time we’ve played together,” one of the other boys said consolingly. Tobio scowled.

“Sorry. Habit.”

He needed to focus and shake off these nerves. He needed to prove that he belonged here. If he didn’t…he doubted he would be invited back.

The first day ended and Tobio entered the cafeteria, placing himself at an empty table. He was halfway through his food when a familiar looking boy sat down beside him. It was one of the Tokyo school kids – broccoli number two. “So, you beat Shiratorizawa and are qualified for Nationals now, right?” the boy asked.

“Yes,” Tobio mumbled through a mouthful of food.

“We played full sets in the prelim-finals and lost,” the boy grumbled. “I totally thought we’d win too.”

Tobio was saved from answering as someone came up behind him. “Yo.”

He turned, confused to see a tall boy with dark hair and a face mask standing behind him. It was Sukusa, the number one ace in Tokyo, and he was staring at Tobio with hard eyes. “I haven’t watched the tape yet…but how come Shiratorizawa lost? Was Wakatoshi-kun hurt or something?”

Tobio’s head tilted to the side. “He looked in perfect form to me.”
“Huh?” Sakusa questioned, his eyes narrowing as he studied Tobio. Tobio fought against rolling his eyes. He knew that Sukusa was good at volleyball but he was in no way more intimidating than Oikawa or Kuroo from Nekoma. “Then how’d he lose?! What trick did you use? Or what? Did someone actually stuff him?”

“Uh, yeah. We did stuff him,” Tobio responded. Though, truthfully, Hinata did more of a point-blank overhand receive…but this guy didn’t need to know that.

Sukusa began to question Tobio frantically and Tobio just blinked at him. He didn’t know how to answer any of these questions – or even why the other boy wanted to know. It was annoying and he wished the other boy would stop. “Hey, sorry about this!” a voice cut in and Tobio turned his attention to the boy that came up behind the mask wearing boy. “This guy is kinda the most utterly pessimistic person you’ll find on the whole planet. As soon as he thinks somebody might be a threat to him, he just has to know all about them!”

Tobio had a feeling the other boy was scowling behind his mask. “I’m not a pessimist. I’m a realist.”

“Sakusa-san, you haven’t gotten serious yet this camp, right?” Tobio questioned. He had watched the ace during the matches. He didn’t seem any better than Bokuto or Ushijima.

“What makes you think that?”

“It’s just a feeling,” Tobio stared at the other boy intensely. “I mean, compared to the image I had of you, you seem awfully normal so far.”

He must have said something wrong because the other boy began to tease Sukusa and the number one ace in the country turned around and walked away, throwing a comment over his shoulder that he was going to take a bath.

Well, he probably shouldn’t have said that.

It was difficult for him to know what to say without someone around him, letting him know the social cues.

Broccoli number two reprimanded him a bit but Tobio ignored him. If it was really that bad, the
boy should have said something before Tobio finished it. Broccoli number two drew his attention to another boy, talking about how high he jumped. Tobio didn’t have much to say on the subject but he did agree. The boy was good. Very good.

Better than Hinata.

He hoped he would be at Nationals.

It would really push Hinata to improve if he thought someone his height was better than him.

It was the next day that Tobio’s world shifted.

He was playing another game with a new group of boys when his team was placed against Miya Atsumu. Miya was a second-year setter – a good one. Tobio found himself admiring his sets in a similar way that he admired Oikawa’s. And the other boy had a powerful serve as well.

Tobio was a little bit terrified.

He tried to ignore the thought as he spoke to his own teammates, asking the Middle Blocker if the toss was okay. The boy responded that it could be a bit zippier and Tobio nodded to show that he understood. He saw Miya smile at him from across the net but…it wasn’t a real smile. It looked…

Tobio shuddered.

It was after the game when Tobio was confronted by the short kid from the night before. He had been on the same team as Miya and he was annoyed that Tobio didn’t react when he jumped in front of him. He understood why – it would have been annoying if someone didn’t react to Hinata as well. But, well, he was a good reference to what Hinata needed to work on. And Tobio told him that.

Which is when Miya decided to intervene.

“By the way, Tobio-kun,” Tobio flinched back at the name. “For that prickly first year impression you gave…out on the court…you’re an awful sweet Goody-Two Shoes.”
Tobio entire body froze and his blood began to boil. “What?”

Miya’s brows quirked. “Hmm? I can’t be the first person to say something like that. You should work on it, Tobio-kun.” The boy sent him a faux smile and turned away.

Tobio felt like strangling someone.

He was in a rage throughout the rest of the night. He didn’t speak during dinner or when he took a bath. He crawled into his futon early with a frown on his face. He just…didn’t know what the words meant or why he was so irritated by them. He could honestly say that “goody-two shoes” was never a phrase that was said to him. Hell, even Tsukishima still referred to him as “King”.

The two insults just didn’t seem to coincide.

_Oikawa-san_

_Sent 20:14: wat does it mean if someone calls you a goody 2 shoes_

_Received 20:22: Eh?_

_Received 20:23: did someone call you that?_

_Received 20:23: who would do that?_

_Received 20:24: Wait…you're at the National Training Camp._

_Received 20:25: Tobio-chan, what are you doing at that camp that someone called you THAT?! 。°(T丅T)°。

_Sent 20:26: wat is that_
Sent 20:26: I was setting

Sent 20:27: hes a setter

Received 20:30: It’s me crying because I’m laughing so hard.

Received 20:31: I don’t know how you were setting to make him call you that.

Received 20:32: Maybe you should ask him.

Received 20:33: Who is this setter anyway? Why are you so worried about what he thinks?

Tobio sighed and threw his phone down beside him. It was a good question. Why did he care what Miya Atsumu had to say? There was no reason to. And what had possessed him to contact Oikawa for answers? He should have known the other boy wouldn’t be any help. His phone vibrated multiple times beside him but he didn’t bother to look at it. It was probably just Oikawa asking about Miya, anyway.

He really did have issues when it came to other setters.

He sighed and closed his eyes, throwing his arm over his head. He didn’t understand. He had admired Oikawa since the first tie he saw the older boy play. He had wanted to be like him. He thought that he was finally getting there. Wasn’t he doing what Oikawa told him to do?

“Are you putting the ball up exactly how he likes it? Have you even tried to do that? If you can’t wrap your brain around that you’re just going to revert back to being a lonely, tyrannical king.”

That had been the only true advice Oikawa had given him. And he had taken it to heart. He had worked to give Hinata the toss that he wanted. He asked the spikers about his toss so they could adjust to each of their playing styles.

Did that make him a goody-two shoes?
Is that what Miya meant?

Tobio avoided Miya for the next couple of days but he was unable to do so when the two were placed on the same team. Tobio was a bit put out that he was placed in a wing spiker position while Miya was playing setter but he quickly forgot about it once they began to play. He had forgotten how it felt, spiking the ball past the spikers and seeing the shock on their faces. He loved being a setter, he loved being the game master, but…but he had to admit that this was fun as well.

They won the match and Tobio collapsed onto the floor. It had been a long time since he had played in that position and it took a minute for him to adjust. “How was it?” Miya asked, kneeling down beside Tobio. “Spiking?”

“I had a blast,” Tobio admitted. “Your tosses are easy to hit.”

Miya smiled. “Yeah, tell me something I don’t know. People who can’t hit my tosses are nothing but scrubs.” Tobio blinked at him in surprised confusion. Why did this boy seem to talk in a code Tobio didn’t understand? “Tobio-kun, aren’t you more suited to the role of spiker rather than setter?”

“Why do you say that?”

“Well, when you’re setting you have this kind of tortured expression on your face. You looked like you were having a lot more fun as the left spiker.”

Tobio’s brows furrowed. “You think so? But setter is what I am.”

“Well, yeah. I guess,” Miya agreed though his brows were quirking up yet again. He stood and began fiddling with the soulmark band on his arm. Tobio’s brows furrowed. He hadn’t noticed it until now.

“Uh, Miya-san?” Tobio asked, pulling his eyes away from the band. “What did you mean when you called me a Goody-Two Shoes?”

“Literally that,” Miya answered promptly. “Someone who’s diligent, honest and obedient.”
“I don’t understand,” Tobio admitted, his right hand coming up to rest on his soulmate band. He could almost feel the crown burning. “Oikawa-san told me to give the spiker a toss that they wanted.”

“Oikawa-san?”

“My senior in junior high,” Tobio responded, his brows still furrowed. “He’s the best setter I know.”

Miya’s eyebrows shot up. “He is or he was?” he pointed toward himself. “I’m pretty damn good, you know. And I don’t remember this Oikawa person being at the camp.”

Tobio blinked and quickly pulled out his phone. It took him only a few minutes to pull up a video of Oikawa Tooru. He had found videos of Oikawa’s serve years ago and had used the videos as a reference when he worked on his own jump serve. He queued his favorite video and held his phone out to the other boy. Miya’s lips twisted up mockingly but his eyes were interested as he played the video. His eyes narrowed as he watched and Tobio saw him hit the back button to watch it once again. “Well,” he muttered, “isn’t that interesting.” He handed the phone back to Tobio and the younger setter slid it into his pocket once more. “Do you still talk to this Oikawa?”

Tobio’s hand once again found its way to his soulmark band. “Sometimes.”

Miya’s held tilted as he stared at Tobio’s hand. “Hey, Tobio-kun, I heard the coaches talking about you earlier. They said something about the King of the Court,” Tobio flinched. “Ah, hit a nerve,” Miya took a step forward. “From what I saw this week, you are as far away from a King as you could possibly get. Maybe you need to find a bit of the old Tobio-kun and put it in your setting.”

“But-“

“Yes, yes, this Oikawa person told you to give the tosses that the spikers want,” Miya rolled his eyes and waved his hand. “But sometimes you need to give the spikers the toss that is needed to win the game. There is a happy medium between who you were in junior high and the person you are now. You just need to find it.”
Tobio was staring at Miya unblinkingly, trying to understand the words, when the boy took yet another step forward. “One more thing, Tobio-kun,” he quickly reached out and grabbed Tobio’s left arm. Tobio tried to jerk out of his hold but Miya just raised his eyebrows. He turned Tobio’s arm over and gently began to run a finger over the soulmark band. “I noticed that your band and that Oikawa’s is in the same place. And your eyes lit up at the mention of this guy. Oh, don’t look at me like that. You know it’s true. So, I’m going to assume something,” he sent a sharp smile in Tobio’s direction. “Oikawa is your soulmate. That’s why you think he’s the best setter and why you take his advice so seriously.”

Tobio pulled his arm away and grasped his right hand over his soulmarks. “I…he doesn’t…” Tobio didn’t know what to say. He knew Oikawa wouldn’t want anyone to know. Hell, Tobio didn’t want anyone to know. Not really. Not when they knew he had been rejected. But…it wasn’t as if Oikawa and Miya would ever meet one another. It’s different than when he told Suga and Daichi. Or the team. Because he didn’t know Oikawa. “He doesn’t like me,” Tobio muttered, scowling down at the floor. “He rejected the bond.”

“He what?” Miya snapped, his eyes narrowing dangerously. Tobio took a step back in surprise at the vehemence coming off the boy he had just meant and only spoken to a handful of times. “Why would anyone do that?”

“He doesn’t like me,” Tobio repeated.

“And why is that? Because you’re adorable and good at volleyball?” Tobio felt heat rush to his cheeks at the sudden compliment. Miya smirked at his reaction and Tobio sent him a glare. He knew it probably wasn’t very effective with his bright red face. He was proven correct when Miya’s smirk grew. “Aw, does Tobio-kun not know how to take a compliment?”

“Sh-shut up!”

Miya chuckled and glanced over his shoulder. The coaches were ushering everyone close to them. He reached down and grasped Tobio’s wrist, pulling him toward the group. Tobio was just happy that the other boy stopped when they reached the back of the compiled boys and didn’t try to get in the middle. He was always uncomfortable in crowds and he had seen Miya purposely put himself in the center of the action more than once that week.

The coaches thanked everyone and wished them a safe trip home. Tobio waited until most of the boys cleared out, amazed when he received good-byes from many of the boys. Some even asked him for his number before they left. Tobio’s hands shook as he put his information in their phones. They all told him that they would message him before waving and walking out the door.
And then he was left with Miya.

Miya who was currently holding his own phone out to Tobio. “Go on then,” Miya laughed as he thrust the phone into Tobio’s hands. “Can’t give your information out to everyone else and ignore me.” Tobio rolled his eyes and took the phone, repeating the steps to enter his data, and then began to hand the phone back to the older setter.

Only to drop it when he saw what the boy was doing.

Miya was pulling off his soulmark band.

And revealing two marks.

A crown.

And a shrine.

Oh.

“Wow, you didn’t have to throw it,” Miya laughed, bending down and picking up his phone. He studied it for a moment before shrugging. “Seems fine. What the hell was that about-” he broke off when he looked at Tobio and saw his eyes were fixated on the marks. “Oh, yeah. Forgot you didn’t know. I usually cover them for volleyball – don’t want to deal with people looking at them instead of watching us play.”

Tobio’s mouth was dry and it took him a moment before he was able to form words. “Two-“

“Yeah,” Miya said, his voice suddenly losing all amusement. It was harsh and cold. “Two. Got a problem with that?”

What? Oh. “No! I don’t – I mean…”

“I hope not,” Miya said, his voice just as icy as he crossed his arms over his chest. “I like you, Tobio-kun. I wouldn’t want this to change that.”
Tobio’s mouth dropped open. Miya…Miya didn’t wear a soulmark band outside of volleyball? And he was defending his marks and…and saying that he wouldn’t tolerate people that…

Tobio had been hiding his marks since he started junior high.

He had no idea how long Oikawa had been hiding his. At least since junior high as well.

He swallowed hard and shakily moved to pull at his own band. It took a few seconds because Tobio couldn’t seem to get his fingers to move properly and he was having trouble holding it. He finally managed to pull it down and he took a deep, unsteady breath before he glanced up at Miya.

Miya whose arms had fallen to his sides. Miya who was staring at Tobio’s arm with shock.

“You-you said they called me King,” Tobio muttered, his right-hand brushing over the crown. “My- my team call Oikawa the Great King. So…”

“Miya means shrine,” the other boy stuttered, sounding unsure for the first time since Tobio met him. He couldn’t seem to tear his eyes away from Tobio’s arm and Tobio fought the urge to hide it behind his back or pull the band up once more. “You…said Oikawa was your…”

“Yeah.”

“He rejected you.”

“…yes…”

“You still talk to him.”

“Sometimes.”

“…are you going to tell him?”
Tobio swallowed. “Do you want me to?”

Miya finally looked up and his eyes met Tobio’s. “I said you were adorable, Tobio-kun. I think we should get to know each other a bit better.” His brows rose as he looked down at the mark once more. “All of us.”
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Kind of a shorter chapter here but I hope you all enjoy it!

Another thing - one of my stories is coming to an end and I have two more in the works...I want you guys to choose which one I post and work on. I have an ABO fic that's focused on Iwaizumi/Tobio/Oikawa and another fic that's Akaashi/Miya and Oikawa/Tobio. Which one do you want me to post first?

Tobio was a little overwhelmed when he returned from the training camp. He had no idea how to confront Oikawa about Miya, his father had ambushed him with question after question about the camp and, on top of everything else, Tobio was wondering if what Miya had said to him was right. He had been trying so hard to accommodate each and every player, even when he knew that the toss he was sending wasn’t going to make it through the block. Was it possible that he needed to change up his playing style? Or would doing so make his teammates dislike him?

He didn’t want to go through that again.

“Kageyama-kun,” Suga stopped him after his first practice back with the team. It hadn’t been a good practice. He didn’t know what Hinata had been doing while he was gone but the two of them weren’t able to synch at all.

Or maybe it was Tobio.

At this point, he wasn’t sure.

“Is everything alright?” Suga asked quietly as the rest of the team walked out of the gym. Many of them were sending Tobio concerned or irritated glances. Probably because he had been sending out tosses that the team hadn’t really planned for. But it wasn’t as if they were difficult to hit. He made sure not to do that. Actually, they were easy. They just weren’t the tosses that the spiker wanted.

“Are you putting the ball up exactly how he likes it? Have you even tried to do that? If you can’t wrap your brain around that you’re just going to revert back to being a lonely, tyrannical king.”
“Maybe you need to find a bit of the old Tobio-kun and put it in your setting.”

The voices conflicted in his head and Tobio let out a sigh. “I’m fine,” he said, answering Suga who was staring at him worriedly.

Suga gave him a small but uncertain smile. “You can talk to me about anything you’re worried about,” he prodded a bit. Tobio blinked. “Does this have something to do with Oikawa-san?”

Tobio’s brows furrowed and he looked at his vice-captain curiously. Everything the past few days had made Tobio feel as if he was drowning. Maybe – maybe talking to someone would help. And Suga was smart, unlike Hinata. He might tell Tobio what he should do. Hinata would just give him that stupid look and probably begin to panic. And there was no way he would say anything to anyone else on the team. But…but maybe…

“I have two soulmates,” Tobio blurted before he could talk himself out of it.

Suga’s eyes widened. “You…oh. Well,” he smiled slightly, “there’s nothing wrong with that! Does Oikawa-san have two as well?”

Tobio nodded and gripped his left arm. “Yes. We match. I, um, met the other person at the training camp. He’s a setter.”

Suga’s eyebrows rose and his lips twitched. “Another one?”

“Yeah,” Tobio muttered, staring down at the gym floor with a scowl. “I – he wants to meet Oikawa. But I don’t really want to…Oikawa doesn’t like me-“

“I think Oikawa-san likes you more than you think,” Suga cut in, his smile growing when he saw the unbelieving look on Tobio’s face. “You should tell him, Kageyama-kun. Let him make his own decision on whether he wants to meet him or not.”

Tobio bit his lip. That made sense. If Oikawa didn’t want to meet Miya than that wasn’t Tobio’s fault. And he didn’t think Miya would just forget about him if he met Oikawa…he didn’t think. Miya seemed to like him. At least a bit.
It should be fine.

“Right,” Tobio muttered.

Suga clapped him on the shoulder. “Glad that’s settled. You know,” he raised his eyebrows, “you could have told us earlier that you had two soulmates. None of us will judge you for it.” Tobio shuddered at the look on Suga’s face. It was clear that if anyone did have a problem with it, Suga would be quick to put a stop to it. Tobio nodded his head in appreciation and Suga’s smile returned. “Now, was there anything else?” he seemed to hesitate for a moment before continuing. “You seemed a bit…off today during practice.”

Tobio shrugged and didn’t meet his gaze. “I’m fine. Trying something new.”

Suga didn’t respond for a moment but eventually he nodded. “Alright. Well, remember that we’re going to Nationals soon. We need to be prepared.”

“I know.”

“Okay,” Suga responded easily. “Well then, let me know if you need anything.”

“Okay.”

“Okay,” Suga sent him one last smile before walking out of the gym doors and toward the clubroom. Tobio stayed where he was a moment, thinking back on the conversation. Suga was right – this really wasn’t the best time for him to be changing things with the team. But – but what if something unexpected happened during Nationals and Tobio was forced to change things up and the spikers missed because they were unprepared?

He shook the thoughts away and slowly made his own way toward the clubroom. By the time he arrived, most of the team had already changed and left. Hinata was bouncing around, chatting with Noya about something. He told Tobio to hurry when he entered the room. Tobio snapped that he could have headed home without him but Hinata just rolled his eyes before turning back to Noya.

Tobio changed and grabbed his bag then bid those still in the clubroom a goodnight. Hinata did the same, bouncing up and down on his toes, and then the two were quick to escape the room and leave the school. “So…” Hinata started, his eyes boring into the side of Tobio’s head. “What was
“What do you mean?” Tobio growled but various images of Hinata jumping and barely being able to spike the ball coming to mind. Hinata huffed, knowing as well as Tobio did that he knew what he was talking about.

“Don’t do that,” Hinata growled, his head tilting to the side and his eyes intense. Tobio shivered. That look really creeped him out. “You were all…pushy. And our quick was off. Did something happen during the training camp?”

“For that prickly first year impression you gave…out on the court…you’re an awful sweet Goody-Two Shoes.”

Tobio shook the words from his mind. “No. Nothing. Sorry. Off day.”

Hinata didn’t look convinced but he nodded and the two continued down the street in silence until it came to the point where Hinata turned off to go toward the mountain. “Alright. I’ll see you tomorrow!” He called, jumping onto his bike and speeding away. Just watching him made Tobio shake his head. Even after all that practice, he still had so much energy.

Tobio really was surprised that he was able to keep up.

He sighed and began to walk yet again, looking down toward the ground as he made his way toward his fathers’ apartment. Suga’s words were running through his head. Oikawa could make his own decision on whether he wanted to meet Miya or not. Miya had made it clear that he wanted to meet Oikawa but he seemed to like Tobio’s company as well...he didn’t think that the older boy would forget about him if he and Oikawa got along. But he had been wrong before. And if Miya learned about Tobio’s past, about the way he had treated his teammates, there was a possibility that he would be just as disgusted as Oikawa.

But he supposed that was a risk he was going to have to take. Because he couldn’t make decisions for either of them. That was the quickest way to make sure that they hated him.

Tobio pulled his phone from his bag and flipped it open. He scrolled to his last conversation with Oikawa, when he asked about the Goody-two shoes comment. There were a few messages after that, mostly just Oikawa prying information about the other setter Tobio had mentioned, but Tobio had never replied to them. Now he wondered if he should have. It probably would have made
things a bit easier.

Oikawa-san:

Sent 19:28: I met our soulmate during camp

Sent 19:29: he wants to meet you

Incoming call: Oikawa-san

Tobio hesitated as the name appeared on the screen. He really hated talking on the phone and he wasn’t sure if this was a conversation he actually wanted to have with the other boy. He would have been more comfortable just talking about it through messages. But…

He closed his eyes tightly and flipped the phone open. “Hello?”

“Tobio-chan! Are you sure? Why didn’t you tell me when you found out?”

Tobio flushed. “I just… I don’t know,” he muttered. He did know. Of course he did. But he didn’t want Oikawa to know the reason. Oikawa huffed loudly, obviously not believing him, but Tobio continued on before he could say anything else. “He’s a setter as well. His name is Miya-“

“Atsumu,” Oikawa finished and Tobio frowned when he heard the annoyance ringing through his voice. “I know who he is. One of the top setters in Japan. I’ve seen him in Volleyball Weekly.”

“Oh,” Tobio muttered, his hands clenching at his sides. He enjoyed volleyball and he enjoyed watching games but he never really paid much attention to the magazine in question. Actually, the last time he had even looked at one was when Tanaka had mentioned Oikawa being featured.

He wasn’t going to mention that.

“So, Miya Atsumu is our soulmate,” Oikawa murmured. “You two were at camp together. Does he know about me?”
“Yes,” Tobio responded hesitantly. He knew Oikawa didn’t want anyone to know that they were soulmates and he didn’t want the older to be angry at him. Well, angrier than usual. “He doesn’t wear a soulmark band outside of the court. I saw his marks and just—” he broke off, not wanting to admit that he had actually told Miya about Oikawa before he saw the marks. He hoped that Oikawa wouldn’t question him on it.

“I get it,” Oikawa muttered. He took a deep breath, one audible even to Tobio, and then spoke in his usual upbeat tone. “So, I suppose we’re all going to meet up or something? Or did he want you to give me his number?”

“He lives too far for us to all meet,” Tobio responded, blinking at the sudden change. “He, um, yeah. His number. I can… get that for you. Uh, hold on,” Tobio pulled the phone away from his ear but he heard a loud voice calling to him from the speaker. He curiously put the phone up once more and almost pulled it away when he realized Oikawa was practically yelling his name. “What?” Tobio demanded.

“Tobio- oh, good, you heard me.” Hard not to when you yell like that. “Just put us in a group and I can talk to him there. You weren’t going to just ignore us, were you?”

“I – no! I wasn’t-“

“Good. So then, group. It’ll be fun. Now, how was the camp? You never responded to me. Any more issues with Goody-two shoes kid?”

Tobio flushed. “I, well, um, it was Miya.”

“What?”

“Miya. He’s the one that said I was…but we talked about it. He said he called me that because I was diligent, honest and obedient and that I needed to,” he hesitated and then spoke the last of it quickly, “that I needed to find a middle ground between who I was in high school and who I am now.”

There was silence on the other end of the line and Tobio bit his lip nervously as he came to the apartment door. When Oikawa still didn’t say anything, Tobio pushed the door open and stepped inside, calling a quick hello to his father. The man nodded and gestured to the phone, tilting his
head to the side questioningly. “Oikawa-san,” Tobio muttered. His father nodded in acknowledgement and gave Tobio a knowing smile as he walked into his room and shut the door behind him. There was still silence and Tobio sank down onto his bed and pulled the phone away from his ear, wondering if maybe the call had been disconnected.

It wasn’t.

“Oikawa-san?” Tobio questioned.

“Still here,” Oikawa muttered distractedly. “I think I might need you to repeat that… he said you were what now?”

“To find a middle ground?”

“Not that part, Tobio-chan. You’re a Goody-two shoes because you’re what?”

Tobio didn’t need to glance in the mirror to know his face was flushed a bright red. “Diligent, honest and obedient.”

“…right. Okay. You. Obedient. Okay.” He continued to mutter under his breath and Tobio didn’t bother trying to understand what he was saying. He was going to just assume he didn’t want to know. “So, I’m going to hang up now. Don’t forget to create the group.”

“Uh, yeah.”

There was a click and then a beep, signaling the end of the call. Tobio slowly pulled the phone away and took a deep breath. Group. Fine. That was…fine. Right.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Sent 20:03: Oikawa-san, this is Miya Atsumu. Miya-san, this is Oikawa Tooru.
Oikawa: So formal, Tobio-chan! No offense, Atsu-chan, but Tobio-chan can be a little confused sometimes. Mind sending me a pic of your mark?

Miya: Atsu-chan? I saw Tobio-kun’s marks as well. They’re a match.

Miya: But fine.

Miya: Image attached

Oikawa: …

Oikawa: Tobio…kun?

Miya: Problem?

Oikawa: What’s this about Tobio-chan being “Diligent, honest and obedient”? (¬_¬)

Miya: What’s with you telling him to give the spikers the tosses they want? (¬_¬)

Oikawa: you obviously didn’t know Tobio-chan before this year. And there’s nothing wrong with putting the ball where the spikers find it comfortable to hit. (( ￣へ ￣井

Miya: I know him now. And the setter decides what spikers need, not the other way around. ＼( ヽ
t_/¯)

Oikawa: (′ヘtabs2 ツ)

Oikawa: Don’t go filling my Kohai’s head with things you know nothing about.
Oikawa: he’s doing fine the way he is

Miya: He can be a lot better than “fine”.

Miya: maybe you should let him develop his own style

Miya: \( \geq D \leq \) 

Kageyama: can you stop

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! (\(_\ะ\_\ะ\_\) )

Miya: Tobio-kun! \(^{\wedge} _{\wedge} \)

Kageyama: I am

Kageyama: what

Kageyama: y r u doing that

Kageyama: stop

Miya: you seem to be excited to see someone that you REJECTED Oikawa-san. (\(\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\) )

Oikawa: And you seem a little too close to someone you just met, Atsu-chan. (\(\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\) )

Kageyama: ...
Kageyama: u 2 r weird

Kageyama: going 2 bed

Kageyama: nite

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! Wait! Don’t go! ( @ ′__′ @ )

Miya: Don’t leave me here with this guy! ( ▀◕︵◕█ )

Oikawa: ( ︵—with הג gibi) ג∩ג

Miya: ג∩ג ( ▲—▲ ) ג∩ג
Tobio sighed as his phone went off. Again. It had been a week since he had formed the group chat and he was beginning to wish that he had never started this mess. His phone was constantly buzzing and half the time he had no idea what Oikawa and Miya were talking about. He thought they were arguing but at the same time they could have just been involved in some weird sort of flirtation that he didn’t really understand.

He was almost positive they didn’t really notice that he rarely responded.

He forced the thought of the messages he had sitting unread on his phone to the back of his mind and quickly tossed the phone into his locker in the clubroom. He didn’t even know how the two had so much time to message each other. He had been trying to concentrate in class, he really didn’t want what happened last time to happen again, and he knew that Oikawa was at the top of his class. He was pretty sure Miya didn’t really have issues in school, either. But the two never seemed to actually pay attention. He was a little envious that they seemed to be able to spend class time slacking off and they still didn’t have to worry about passing. Even Oikawa and he was a third year.

Tobio changed into his practice clothes quickly and made his way into the gym. He was a bit early but he was surprised that no one else was there. They had all been coming earlier since they won against Shiratorizawa. Yet even Hinata wasn’t there yet.

He began to set things up in the gym, unsure about what Ukai would be having them doing that day. At least once a week he was still giving them free practice so they could work on their own things. One day last week they had spent the entire practice on serves. Another time was just spent with Tobio, Suga, and Noya tossing to each player. Yesterday they had split into two teams and had a practice match. He had no idea what they would be doing today.

It wasn’t long before Hinata entered the gym and began to help him. Noya and Tanaka arrived next, closely followed by the rest of the second years. Tsukishima and Yamaguchi arrived shortly after everything was set up and the third years arrived after that. Ukai, Takeda, and the managers walked in as the team was warming up. “Alright, gather round,” Ukai called. They all did so quickly and the older man crossed his arms over his chest as they all stood in front of him. “As some of you noticed, things have been a bit strained with the team the past two weeks. Your vice-captain has a…suggestion that I think has merit. Sugawara?”

Suga smiled brightly and stepped up beside Ukai. Tobio’s shoulders stiffened at the glint in the older setters eyes. He wasn’t sure he was going to like where this was going. “We’re having a team bonding night!” Suga announced.
There was a moment of silence as everyone processed the words. “A…bonding night?” Daichi finally questioned, frowning at his best friend. “Suga-“

“I have it all planned!” Suga said quickly, cutting his captain and best friend off mid-sentence. “Tomorrow night after practice, we are all going to go to my house. We’ll order pizza, watch movies, and play games. Practice on Saturday morning is cancelled.” Tobio’s mouth dropped. Cancellation a practice right before Nationals? Was he insane? “Oh, don’t look at me like that,” Suga chastised. Tobio flushed as all eyes turned to him. He quickly ducked his head. “We all need a break and things have been a bit…tense as of late. I think we all need the time together.”

“Because we don’t spend most of the week together,” Tsukishima said in disgust, his lips curling in displeasure. “I think I have plans-“

“I have already contacted all of your parents and you each have permission to come,” Suga said darkly. Tsukishima snapped his mouth shut. “I expect all of you to bring a change of clothes and anything you think we all might enjoy doing. And don’t look so dismayed! I have it on good authority that Nekoma and Aoba Johsai both do bonding nights once a month! They say it really helps pull the team together!”

“Nekoma?” Daichi asked darkly.

“Aoba Johsai?” Noya and Tanaka yelped.

“How do you know that, Suga?” Asahi questioned, his voice shaking just at the mention of the other two teams.

Suga beamed. “Kuroo and Oikawa, of course!”

“You’re talking to Kuroo?” Daichi again.

“The Great King!” Hinata screamed.

Tobio just blinked. It was a bit disconcerting that Suga was talking to both the scheming Nekoma captain and Oikawa-san. It made him a little weary of his vice-captain, if he was being honest.
“Why I’m talking to them isn’t important,” Suga said, waving his hand around like he was waving their concern away. “But you all have to admit that both Nekoma and Aoba Johsai show some of the best teamwork of any teams we have played! And they said that this helps with that! So we’re doing it!” the last was said almost threateningly. Tobio found himself nodding quickly, most of his teammates doing the same.

“Right,” Ukai said, clearing his throat and rubbing the back of his neck a bit nervously. “I, uh, well, I hope you all have a good time-“

“We will.”

“Right,” he said once more. “Uh, today is free practice. I want to see everyone working.”

Tobio was quick to grab Hinata and move toward the net. Their quick was still a bit off ad they needed to fix it. He could think about the ‘bonding night’ and Oikawa’s hand in it later.

Right now he needed to focus on volleyball.

Practice ended quicker than expected and Daichi refused to let Tobio and Hinata stay late. He said that they had been working too hard and needed the time to relax. Tobio pointed out that they would be doing plenty of relaxing on Saturday with the cancelled practice but the third year just got that dark look on his face, the one that he had worn right before he kicked Tobio and Hinata out of the gym on their first day, and Tobio had quickly relented. He didn’t want a repeat of that experience.

As usual, he and Hinata walked together until they reached the intersection. Hinata waved as he climbed onto his bike and Tobio responded as he pulled his phone from his pocket. It had become a nightly routine, the only time he really looked at the massive amount of messages he had. But this night, he didn’t even bother to read what the two had been discussing. He had his own topic to talk about.

*Group Message*

*Oikawa-san and Miya-san*
Sent 18:25: Oikawa-san y r u tlking 2 Suga-san

Oikawa: Tobio-chan!

Oikawa: ( °_¬ ° )

Oikawa: Refreshing-kun and I had some things to discuss!

Miya: Who the hell is Refreshing-kun? And why do you insist on the stupid nicknames?

Miya: Hi, Tobio-kun! ♡_♣_♣ You’ve been ignoring us!

Kageyama: skool

Oikawa: Which you apparently need. Is it too hard for you to actually type a sentence? I get a migraine trying to decipher your messages. (¬_¬)

Miya: You’re such an ass.

Miya: And you cause most of the migraines.

Oikawa: ( △_△ )

Oikawa: ( _-_- ) ran

Miya: └∩┐( •_• ) └∩┐

Kageyama: we r hving a ‘bonding night’ bc u told suga-san it helps
Miya: …Bonding night? (¬_¬)

Oikawa: Bonding nights are amazing! My team does it each month! You’ll have so much fun, Tobio-chan! o(„▼‟„▼‟)o

Miya: Are you serious? And who is Suga-san?

Kageyama: vice-captain

Miya: Wait. Your vice-captain asked this loser how to help the team? Didn’t you guys win against them?

Oikawa: (□■益■)

Oikawa: Karasuno needs all the help they can get!

Miya: But they beat you.■『』■

Kageyama: seijoh is good

Kageyama: oikawa-san is better than me

Miya: And yet you’re the one that was invited to the National Youth Camp

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! (=./_/./.)

Oikawa: Atsu-chan. (ノ■益■)ﾉ

Miya: bite me
Kageyama: but bonding night

Kageyama: why

Oikawa: Just give it a try! It’ll help your team get to know one another and you’ll all work better together.

Oikawa: Maybe you and Glasses-kun will become friends!

Kageyama: no

Miya: who cares about getting along with your teammates

Miya: as long as you can play together, that’s all that matters

Oikawa: …

Oikawa: Of course you would say that.  \_■_■_/।

Oikawa: Keep your poisonous ways away from Tobio-chan!

Miya: Which of us is nationally ranked again?

Oikawa: งณรระรร

Kageyama: …

Kageyama: but y r u talking to suga-san?
Oikawa: Are you still on that?

Kageyama: yes

Oikawa: Refreshing-kun and I are going to the same university.

Oikawa: we’ve been assigned to room together.

Kageyama: oh

Miya: wait.

Miya: you’re older than me.

Oikawa: What a marvelous deduction, Atsu-chan! You deserve a medal!

Miya: I have plenty.

Miya: That was more of a statement of amazement.

Miya: How the hell is an idiot like you older than me?

Oikawa: (ノಠ益ಠ)ノ┻━┻

Oikawa: show some respect!

Oikawa: and I’m at the top of my class.

Miya: Maturity level and intelligence are two different things.
Kageyama: Suga-san said he was talking to Kuroo-san.

Oikawa: It’s a four person room, Tobio-chan.

Oikawa: and I don’t want to talk about that annoying cat.

Kageyama: 4?

Miya: Kuroo… from Nekoma?

Kageyama: u know kuroo-san?

Miya: yeah. They haven’t been to Nationals in a few years but Bokuto talks about him a lot.

Kageyama: bokuto-san is nice

Kageyama: we had training camp with them

Kageyama: they always won

Miya: Bokuto is one of the best spikers in the country.

Miya: and his setter fits him well

Miya: he isn’t better than me, of course, but I would rather not deal with Bokuto’s moods.

Oikawa: what moods?
Miya: hmm? Why the interest?

Oikawa: Bokuto is my fourth roommate.

Miya: ゚(T T) ゚.

Miya: Good luck to you.

Miya: Wait, were you all scouted?

Oikawa: I was

Oikawa: so was Bokuto and Kuroo

Oikawa: Refreshing-kun wasn’t

Oikawa: not sure how he was put in our dorm

Miya: I don’t know your “refreshing-kun” but good luck with Bokuto and Kuroo.

Miya: you’re going to need it.

Oikawa: Great.

Kageyama: wait. What about iwaizumi-san?

Oikawa: Hmm? Iwa-chan is going to a different school.

Oikawa: And not playing volleyball.
Oikawa: I don’t want to talk about it.

Miya: Iwaizumi-san?

Oikawa: Just said I didn’t want to talk about Iwa-chan!

Kageyama: oikawa-san’s best friend. They hv played together since elementary. He is seijohs ace

Miya: oh

Miya: that would be hard.

Miya: kind of like if Osamu went somewhere else.

Kageyama: who?

Oikawa: And who is Osamu? Does our dear Atsu-chai have friends?

Miya: my twin brother

Miya: and Oikawa

Miya: ㄏohen(△_◢)ㄏohen

Oikawa: Wait.

Oikawa: YOU HAVE A TWIN BROTHER???
Oikawa: how did I not know this?!

Miya: no idea

Miya: we’re featured together a lot

Miya: he’s a spiker

Miya: well, he is now.

Oikawa: hmm? What does that mean?

Miya: he was a setter

Miya: but I wanted it

Miya: I’m better at it anyway

Oikawa: …I think that says a lot about you, Atsu-chan. (¬－－¬∧)

Oikawa: Tobio-chan, I forbid you to talk to Atsu-chan any longer.

Kageyama: what

Miya: Tobio-kun, ignore the whining idiot in the corner.

Miya: there’s nothing wrong with fighting for what you want.

Oikawa: he is your BROTHER!
Miya: I know.

Miya: kind of hard not too when we look so much alike.

Oikawa: You are a horrible person.

Oikawa: Tobio-chan, have fun tomorrow! Let me know how it goes!

Miya: hope you don’t die.

Miya: sorry you got stuck doing something so stupid.

Oikawa: ( ︶︿︶ )_ r ∩ γ

Miya: γ∩γ ( △_ ▽) γ∩γ

Kageyama: right. Nite.

Tobio shook his head and closed his phone. Half the time he had no idea what was going on in those conversations. But he did learn a lot this time. He couldn’t believe that Oikawa and Iwaizumi were going to different schools. It would be so weird seeing Oikawa playing without Iwaizumi by his side. He wondered how upset Oikawa was when he found out. Or if he was the one that decided they were going to different schools. He wondered what Iwaizumi thought about it.

And that Oikawa would be playing on the same team as Kuroo and Bokuto…

Wow, he wasn’t sure if he wanted to play against them or just avoid them at all costs.

And then there was the fact that Miya had a brother that played volleyball as well. He hadn’t seen him at the camp…so his Miya had to be the better of the two, right? Even Miya had said that he had taken the spot as setter. So that had to be true. It wasn’t bragging if it was true.
Well, at least he knew why Suga was talking to Oikawa and Kuroo. It made him feel better to know that they weren’t planning anything. He was a bit afraid of what those three could come up with if they put their minds to it.

“Are you excited for tomorrow?” his father questioned as soon as Tobio stepped through the door. Tobio blinked, a bit confused about the question, but then he remembered that Suga said he contacted the parents.

“Uh, yeah,” Tobio responded, shrugging his shoulders. “It should be…fun.”

His father beamed. “Great! It will be nice to see your friends outside of practice. You should invite them over sometime!”

“Right. Yeah. I’ll…do that.”

“Good!”

Tobio nodded, unsure of what he should say, and hurried toward his room. He wanted to change and escape the awkward situation. How was he to tell his father that most of his team wouldn’t want to come to his house? The only one that might consider it was Hinata but the other boy would probably be bored in the apartment.

Once Tobio had changed and gone out to eat dinner with his father, he went back inside his room and began to throw some clothes into a bag. Suga had said that they were just going to hang out at his house after practice, right? So he didn’t need anything except a pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt and some clothes for Saturday. The older setter had said to bring something that he thought they all might enjoy but, well, the only thing Tobio had in his room was a volleyball.

He was pretty sure that wasn’t what Suga meant.

He shrugged and placed the bag by his door so he wouldn’t forget it in the morning, then he pulled his laptop toward him. Something Miya had said had intrigued him. That he and his brother were always featured together. He pulled up his video website and searched “miya twins” in the bar.

There were hundreds of results.
Tobio blinked, surprised he had never seen any of the videos before now, and clicked on the first link. It was a play during one of the games, with his Miya setting and the other Miya spiking. He knew who was who because of the hair. His Miya’s hair was dyed.

He could see why Miya number two (what had his Miya called him again? O-something) didn’t make it into the national training camp. He was good, really good, but he lacked initiative. Actually, he kind of reminded Tobio of Nekoma’s setter. He had that nonchalant, tired air about him. But he and Miya worked well together. It was obvious that the two had been playing together a long time.

It was when Tobio clicked on the sixth (or was it seventh?) link that he sat up in bed, his brows furrowing. Miya had set the ball to what seemed like an empty spot on the court – and then, suddenly, his brother was there to hit it. It wasn’t like his quick with Hinata where the other boy jumped and Tobio tossed the ball to him. It was like Miya had just known his brother would get it, even if he tossed it to a place no one was. He watched it again. He was right. He knew he was. He copied the link and pasted it into their chat.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Sent 21:36: link

Kageyama: how

Miya: Tobio-kun! Did you google me??? 💗‿❤️

Kageyama: how

Miya: not telling! We might have to play each other at Nationals. Can’t give away our secrets!

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! Why are you watching videos of this idiot?!
Miya: he watches them of you too

Miya: he showed me one at the camp.

Miya: of you serving

Oikawa: I...

Oikawa: don’t know whether to be pissed or flattered.

Miya: ???

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! I told you I wouldn’t teach you to serve!

Kageyama: you didn’t

Oikawa: So you learned by watching videos of me.

Miya: ( ) ʻ

Miya: I’ll help you, Tobio-kun!

Miya: you’re already watching videos of me. Look up my serve!

Oikawa: go away

Miya: you’re the one that said you didn’t want to teach him.

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! Meet me in the park on Saturday!
Miya: Jealous~

Oikawa: I am not!

Miya: Yeah, okay.

Miya: doesn’t he have that bonding thing?

Oikawa:…

Oikawa: Sunday then!

Kageyama: I know how to serve

Miya: rejected!

Oikawa: Yeah, because you watched videos of me!

Kageyama: Miya-san u know how 2 float serve

Miya: I do

Oikawa: NO!

Oikawa: ( > · < )

Oikawa: (ノ─~─ノ)・⊥\(^ω^\)
Miya: ( ° - ° ; ; )

Tobio shook his head and closed the chat, going back to watching the video he had started when the two were arguing. Miya’s serve was...good. Very good. But he didn’t have quite the same control that Oikawa had. The float serve was a good way to mix it up. Maybe he should ask Yamaguchi to help him learn it.

>>> Practice was odd the next afternoon. Some people, like Noya and Hinata, were so excited about the bonding night that they were barely able to focus on training. Others, like Tsukishima and Ennoshita, were obviously dreading it.

Tobio wasn’t sure how he was feeling. He couldn’t remember the last time he had spent so much time around a group of people. He might never have done so. He hadn’t stayed the night at someone’s house since his second year of junior high when he slept over at Kunimi’s with Kindaichi.

He really hoped this didn’t turn out like that.

“Alright, everyone get changed and then we’ll head out!” Suga beamed once they had finished practice and cleaned the gym. “My mom’s excited to meet all of you!” Tobio winced. Great. He was never very good with parents.

“Come on, Kageyama-kun!” Hinata said happily, bouncing up and down as Tobio slung his bag over his shoulder. “Let’s go!”

“Not everyone is ready, dumbass!”

“Well, this is going to be fun,” Tsukishima muttered. Tobio sent the first year a glare but just received a cool sneer back.

“Alright, is everyone ready?” Suga asked, that bright smile still plastered on his face. “Let’s go then! My house isn’t a very far walk!” There were murmurs of agreement and the group made their way toward the third years home, only pausing long enough for Daichi to lock the clubroom before they left.
Tobio kept quiet as they walked, not really sure what to expect from this. Hinata and Noya were running around the group, yelling loudly. No one tried to stop them and Tobio supposed it was so that they wouldn’t be too hyped up once they were inside. He certainly didn’t want to be trapped in a room with the two of them if they didn’t have a way to expend that energy.

After what seemed like an absurdly long time, they came up to a western style, two story house. Tobio blinked and a few of his teammates came to a surprised stop. None of them had expected Suga’s house to be like this. Tobio wondered what Suga’s parents did to be able to afford such a home.

“We’re here!” Suga called as they stepped through the front door and began pulling off their shoes.

“Oh, good!” A woman said brightly, her voice hitting that same tone as Suga’s. Tobio turned his head and saw a small woman walking toward them, her face creased into a familiar smile. She hugged Suga quickly and brushed her silver hair out of her face before beaming at the rest of the group. “Oh, I am so excited!” She clapped her hands together. “Daichi! Asahi! Nice to see you both again! Oh, introduce me, Koushi!”

“I will!” Suga laughed. “Everyone, this is my mother, Sugawara Ami. Mom, this is…” Tobio tuned out as Suga went through each person, only bowing his head politely when his own name was said.

“Nice to meet you all! Oh, I have snacks prepared and drinks. Suga will show all of you where to go! I’ll order pizza in an hour or so…do you need anything? I can order whatever you guys want-“

“Thank you, Sugawara-san,” Daichi said calmly and then winced with the small woman, who barely reached his shoulder, slapped him on the shoulder. “Right, sorry. Ami-san. Anything you order will be fine.”

“Oh, you’re so sweet!” she cooed. Daichi blushed. “Well, go on then! Go have your bonding time!” she giggled and Suga rolled his eyes.

“We will!” he motioned for everyone to follow him and they did so, Tobio looking around curiously. There was a living room and a kitchen, then a dining room. He saw a bathroom and two closed doors before they began to walk up the stairs. They stepped into another large room. The couches had been pushed to the sides and the floor was covered with futons. The coffee table was also against a wall and it had various snacks and drinks piled on top of it. Suga sighed. “I told her that we would do this,” he muttered. Daichi laughed and even Asahi chuckled.
“She’s not my mother and even I knew this would happen,” Daichi teased, throwing his bag down on one of the futons. That seemed to be the signal for the rest of the team and each person hurried to grab the futon they wanted, Tobio ending up in the far corner with Hinata beside him and Tsukishima right in front of him. Yamaguchi was in front of Hinata and Tobio sighed in relief that he had a bit of space from the second and third years.

“Look at all this!” Noya yelled out in amazement as he gazed down at the snacks. “Suga-san, your mother is amazing!”

Suga laughed. “Do you want her?”

Daichi rolled his eyes. “You wouldn’t give her up even if you offered.”

Suga smiled and shrugged his shoulders, falling down onto the futon beside Daichi’s. “There should be some movies in that room,” he motioned to the first door down the hall, “and board games as well. Across from that is the bathroom. Uh, my room is down the hall a bit. So, what do you guys want to do first?”

“Game!” Noya and Tanaka yelled. Ennoshita winced and hit them both in the back of the head.

“Not so loud!”

“It’ll be hard to find a board game with this many people,” Suga commented worriedly.

Daichi waved him off, “it’s fine. We can split into a couple of different groups and change things up later. Don’t worry so much.” Noya and Tanaka yelled once again, earning a disapproving look from Ennoshita, and ran toward the door Suga had motioned to. Hinata jumped to his feet and hurried after them. Tobio sighed and stood, deciding it was better to see what they were doing then sit in the corner. At least it looked like he was trying this way.

Noya was jumping up and down, trying to reach a game on the top of the shelf. Tanaka was beside him laughing widely. Hinata ran forward, jumping up beside Noya and managing to snag the box. Unfortunately, all the games under it were dislodged and an avalanche fell to the floor. “Dumbass!” Tobio snapped, dropping to his knees and attempting to sort the different pieces.
“Sorry!” Hinata wailed.

“What happened-” Suga started as he walked in. He merely sighed once he saw the chaos, probably already knowing what had transpired. “It’s fine. We can clean it. First bonding exercise! Hey! All of you come help!”

Despite the grumblings and groans, every person joined Tobio on the floor and soon enough they had all the pieces back in their proper boxes. “So, what are we going to play?” Noya questioned, a satisfied smile on his face.

“Nothing after that,” Tsukishima muttered, pushing himself to his feet.

“I hate to agree with Tsukishima,” Tanaka started, getting a glare from the blond in question, “but I really don’t feel like playing any of those now.”

“We could watch a movie,” Narita suggested as his eyes strayed toward the various DVD’s on the shelves around the room. “I don’t think I’ve seen half of these.”

“Suga’s dad is a bit of a movie buff,” Daichi laughed as he looked around as well. “You guys choose some and we’ll vote.” Tobio really didn’t care what they ended up watching. He merely listened as they read off various titles and argued. Once they finally figured it out, they all went back into the other room and Tobio sank onto his futon.

“Boys! Pizza!”

“I’ve got it!” Suga said quickly. Daichi sighed and hurried after him.

Asahi set up the movie and had the main screen on when the two third years reappeared, boxes in hand. “I think she overdid it,” Asahi muttered as he looked at the stack of pizza boxes they were both carrying.

“I think we’ll end up eating them all,” Suga declared, putting the boxes down on the floor. “And this one is mine!” he snagged a box and sat on his futon, opening it happily as he pulled out a slice. Daichi shook his head.
Soon enough, pizza boxes were scattered throughout the room and the movie began to play. Tobio watched it with a bit of interest but he quickly found himself bored. He always did have trouble focusing on movies and television shows. He would rather be watching volleyball videos but Suga had made it clear this was a volleyball free night. He munched happily on a slice of pizza and pulled out his phone.

So many messages.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Oikawa: You have to at least kind of like them. They’re your teammates!

Miya: All I care about is if they can hit the ball.

Miya: they don’t like me either

Oikawa: I’m sure that isn’t true, Atsu-chan!

Miya: it is, they’ve said it multiple times. I don’t care.

Oikawa: you have to care at least a bit.

Miya: no

Oikawa: sigh.

Oikawa: this is why you’re a bad influence on Tobio-chan!

Miya: he’s as much my soulmate as he is yours
Oikawa: 

Miya: (ノ出众)<br/>

Kageyama: u 2 r weird

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! (．・∀・)_跨界

Miya: Tobio-kun! □^

Oikawa: Aren’t you supposed to be with your teammates?

Kageyama: image attached

Kageyama: bored

Miya: that’s…a lot of pizza

Oikawa: what movie is that? It doesn’t look familiar.

Kageyama: no idea

Kageyama: something they picked

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! You’re supposed to be paying attention to your teammates and getting to know one another!

Miya: gross
Kageyama: I no them

Miya: *know

Oikawa: uh huh. Sure. What’s Glasses-kun’s favorite color?

Oikawa: Refreshing-kun’s birthday?

Oikawa: what does Freckles-chan want to do after high school?

Oikawa: Is Chibi-chan planning to go to college?

Miya: wow. Do you call any of his teammates by their names?

Oikawa: they have names?

Oikawa: Pay attention to your team, Tobio-chan! We’ll talk to you later!

Miya: what he said, I guess.

Tobio sighed and turned his attention back to the movie. He really had no idea what was happening. Tobio noticed that Tsukishima was bored as well and had his headphones on again. Noya was curled up against Asahi, the bigger boy’s arm wrapped around Noya’s shoulders. Tanaka was whispering to Ennoshita.

Maybe he wasn’t the only one not paying attention.

The movie ended, finally, and Suga turned the lights back on. Noya instantly jumped to his feet, earning a cry of surprise from Asahi. “Let’s play truth or dare!”

“Let’s not,” Daichi rebuffed instantly.
“Why not?!”

“No.”

“I have a question for the King,” Tsukishima drawled, his golden eyes fixed on Tobio’s form. Tobio’s entire body tensed. “Who were you messaging throughout the movie?”

“No one.”

“I saw you.”

“None of your business.”

“This is supposed to be about team bonding. So who were you talking to?”

“You were listening to music!”

“Who was it, King?”

“My soulmates!” Tobio finally snapped. Tsukishima was so infuriating! Why couldn’t he just let it go?

“Woah,” Hinata squeaked. “You’re talking to the Great King?!”

“Did he just say soulmates?” Asahi questioned out loud. Daichi nodded.

Tobio felt the blood drain from his face. He quickly turned his eyes away so he didn’t have to see anyone’s reactions. “Yeah,” he muttered. There was silence around the room and then Tsukishima spoke.
“I don’t believe you.”

Tobio’s head snapped up. “What?”

The blond shrugged and reached around Yamaguchi to grab another piece of pizza. “That you have more than one soulmate.”

“I do.”

“Prove it.”

With a snarl, Tobio jerked his soulmark band off of his arm and thrust his left arm out, letting the crown and shrine be on full display for the first time in years. It was only after he did so that he realized what happened.

Tsukishima had tricked him.

Maybe Suga wasn’t the only one he needed to worry about hanging out around Kuroo.

“Wait…” Tanaka gasped. “I know those marks!”

“Huh?” the team asked as one, some turning questioning eyes to Tanaka and the others continuing to stare at Tobio’s arm. Tobio moved it behind his back.

Stupid Tsukishima.

“Yeah! Some guy in volleyball weekly had two marks! They did a story about them! Well, about him but the marks were most of it…” Tanaka’s eyes narrowed as he tried to think about the article. “He…was a setter I think…”

“He is,” Tobio muttered, knowing who they were talking about. “We met at the National youth camp. Miya Atsumu.”
“The best high school setter in Japan?” Suga gasped. A wicked expression crossed his face a moment later. “Oh, I’m sure Oikawa loves that.”

“They always fight,” Tobio murmured, averting his gaze once more. He already knew that Suga was okay with his marks. But…but he wasn’t sure about the rest of the team and he didn’t want to-

“Why do you look like that?” Hinata demanded, his face suddenly appearing in Tobio’s vision. Tobio yelled out in surprise, pushing himself away from the too close redhead.

“Like what ?!”

“Like you’re nervous or something. We don’t care if you have two marks. Why would you think we’d care?”

Tobio blinked at the red head. He just…he didn’t understand. He didn’t know how people treated those that had more than one mark. Okay, so maybe Hinata didn’t care but that didn’t mean that-

“He’s right, you know,” Tsukishima sighed. “We really don’t care. Though I, for one, would rather not picture you in any sort of relationship.”

“Mean, Tsukki.”

“That is so cool!” Noya yelled, running over and gripping Tobio’s arm. Tobio tried to pull back but the smaller boy held fast. He peered down at the marks and then began to poke them. Tobio jerked his arm away. “I wish I had two marks!”

“Yuu!” Asahi wailed. Noya shrugged at Tobio and then ran toward his soulmate, throwing his arms around the older boy and laughing wildly.

“Will he be at Nationals?” Daichi asked and Suga giggled and whispered something about “papa bear” that everyone ignored. “We would like to meet him.”
“Uh, yeah. He’ll be there,” Tobio said, uncomfortable with the questions.

“Good.”

“Congratulations, Kageyama-kun,” Yamaguchi said softly, giving Tobio a small smile. “I’m glad you all met.”

“Uh…”

“Alright, I think that’s enough!” Suga laughed, clapping his hands. “Let Kageyama breathe. Now, who’s up for those board games?”

Muffled laughter and complaints were heard but Tobio bit his lip and grabbed his phone yet again. Surely they wouldn’t be upset if he sent one last message? He thought that he should warn both Miya and Oikawa that his team was aware of…everything.

That would be okay, right?

He glanced around the room but no one was looking at him. They were all arguing over what they were going to do next. He thought he was in the clear when he met a pair of gold eyes. Tsukishima sighed. “Go ahead.”

Tobio huffed. It wasn’t as if he asked the other first year for permission.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Kageyama: my team knows

Miya: Tobio-kun! ✿‿✿
Miya: hah! I got it first this time.

Oikawa: (︶︿︶) r n γ

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! (・.o・)˘̑̑ ̀ o

Oikawa: I thought you were spending time with your team!

Oikawa: wait, they know what?

Kageyama: about the 2 of u

Miya: Ah, is Tobio-kun bragging?

Kageyama: no

Miya: I think you are!

Miya: so cute, Tobio-kun!

Kageyama: they want 2 meet u

Kageyama: I think

Kageyama: Daichi has a weird look on his face

Miya: Daichi?

Miya: And of course I’ll meet your team!
Miya: Though if we play each other, I’m not going easy on any of you.

Kageyama: y would u

Kageyama: daichi is captain

Miya: Tobio-kun, I think I might love you.

Miya: what happened to the idiot?

Miya: Yo! Oikawa!

Miya: ( °( I ) ° ) /

Oikawa: I’m here! _ ^__(¬τ¬__)>

Oikawa: your team already knows me, Tobio-chan! ( □□ □)

Oikawa: I think I’ll let you have this little meet and great without me. ( ♪(_)◡▌)

Miya: …what the hell is wrong with you?

Oikawa: Nothing! ( ♪(_)◡▌)

Oikawa: Go back to your friends, Tobio-chan.

Oikawa: I have to study now. Night! ( ♪(●_●)ﾉ) α:*
Miya: …yeah, sure.

Miya: Nothing’s wrong.

Miya: I believe that.

Miya: Anyway, Tobio-kun! You should go back to your friends now! Osamu is getting irritat

Miya: Excuse me. My brother is busy at the moment. He will speak with the two of you tomorrow.

Miya: Or not.

Miya: It depends on whether he tells me where he hid my DS.

Miya: Until I get it back, I’m keeping his phone.

Miya: Goodnight.
Okay so there might be some spoilers in this chapter! I used a bit of the dialogue from the manga during Nationals but only during Ukai describing Miya. I try not to go into what happens at Nationals...

Tobio was nervous. How could he not be? The first day of Nationals was completed and Tobio had spent a considerable amount of time looking for Miya but he had never run into the second year setter. He had seen a few of the boys that he was at the youth training camp with, he had even watched some of their games with Hinata, Yamaguchi, and Tsukishima at his side, but he had never seen Miya.

He was a little disappointed.

It had taken Miya a considerable amount of time to get his phone back from his brother, more than Tobio had expected. He had a feeling that the cold war between the two would have gone on much longer if the chat wasn’t the only way Miya had to contact him and Oikawa.

Even if his soulmates still argued every chance they got.

Half the time, Tobio didn’t think even they knew what they were fighting about.

But the chat had been oddly silent all day. The night before, Oikawa had grudgingly wished them both luck, which Miya had teased him about, but neither boy had said anything since. It was odd because Tobio had grown used to the almost constant vibration of his phone in his pocket. He even found himself checking it multiple times once his game had finished to make sure that he hadn’t missed anything. But now he was sitting in the hotel with his team surrounding him, listening as Coach Ukai went over the players for the team they would be playing against the following day.

Tobio was listening carefully as the man went through the spikers, talking about their weaknesses and strengths, and then the words coming from the man made him blink in surprise. “Trouble also lies in the one who can make superb use of all their spikers, including their main two point scorers. Their setter, Miya Atsumu.” Every eye shifted to Tobio and he found himself biting his lip as he ducked his head. Ukai’s eyebrows rose. “Uh, Kageyama would have met him at the youth training camp.”
“…yes…” Tobio took a deep breath. He had known, of course, that it was Miya’s team they were up against next. But he hadn’t really thought of what that meant. It was obvious that Miya didn’t like to lose. As Oikawa constantly pointed out, he had taken the setter position from his own brother just because he wanted it. He made it clear that he and his teammates fought often, mostly because Miya didn’t believe they tried hard enough. It was oddly reminiscent of Tobio’s time during junior high. But he had people behind him – even if they didn’t like him.

Tobio sighed. If they were going to do this, he was going to contribute what he knew. No matter what the consequences would be. “Apparently, he creates the illusion that the spikers have improved. It’s true though that his set-ups are incredibly easy to hit.” He thought back to the camp when he spiked Miya’s toss. “They never waver and are never off.”

“Miya’s set ups aren’t the only dangerous thing about him,” Ukai mused, his eyes sharp as he waited for Tobio to continue. Tobio wondered if the coach was aware of the fact that Miya was his soulmate or if he just thought that Tobio had information because the two had attended the camp. He should probably mention it at some point.

Or not. It hadn’t affected his game with Oikawa.

“His serves,” Tobio supplied quickly.

Ukai nodded and then gestured toward the television. He had gotten a tape of the day’s game and they watched as Miya served. Tobi felt the air leave his lungs at the sight. He had to admit, he was impressed. He wondered if Oikawa had looked at any of Miya’s serve videos.

Probably not. He would have heard about it if he had.

“Those look intense,” Asahi said quietly.

“Up to now, we haven’t had absolutely any we couldn’t get,” Daichi said quickly.

Tobio shook his head. He knew they were all thinking about Oikawa. And yes, they had managed to get them in the air but… “Miya-san has recently added both spike serves and jump floaters to his repertoire.”
The team turned toward him with worried eyes. “So we won’t know which one he’s doing until the very last moment,” Noya commented, his eyes staring unblinkingly at the screen as Ukai replayed Miya’s serve.

“He received the best server award for both middle school and the Inter-High,” Tobio informed them solemnly. They all knew about his skills as a setter. They should know about this as well.

Asahi buried his face in his hands. “I really didn’t need to know that.”

Oh. “My bad.”

The rest of the night was spent with the team making plans of how to counter Miya and his team. Tobio listened carefully and commented when necessary, but he thought that they had a good chance. After all, one thing his team had that Miya’s team didn’t was teamwork. Despite the different views on…everything…that was the one thing for sure that Tobio agreed with Oikawa on. Or maybe it was Iwaizumi he agreed with. After all, it was his voice that Tobio heard echoed in his head. There are six players on the court. You aren’t alone.

It wasn’t until he was settling on his futon that his phone vibrated for the first time that day. He practically jumped toward it, ignoring the snickering from various people around the room, and flipped it open.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Oikawa: good luck

Miya: Wow, that seemed really sincere.

Oikawa: (¬_¬)
Kageyama: thanks

Oikawa: (°▽°)

Miya: Tobio-kun! I didn’t see you today! Excited for tomorrow?

Miya: I’m excited to ground your team into the ground

Oikawa: (╦╤╦≈)

Oikawa: You better win, Tobio-chan!

Kageyama: we will

Miya: yeah, keep dreaming

Oikawa: I guess we’ll see.

Oikawa: Get some sleep, Tobio-chan! You don’t want to be tired tomorrow!

Miya: Wow, feeling the love

Miya:**(|°_°|)

Oikawa: (ﾉ°`益`° )ﾉ

Kageyama: thank u oikawa-san

Oikawa: (°˘_˘°)
Miya: yeah, okay.

Miya: I guess we’ll find out tomorrow.

Miya: but remember it’s a game

Miya: and on the court our soulmarks don’t matter

Oikawa: \_■_■_/¯

Oikawa: Tobio-chan, I suddenly feel worried for you.

Kageyama: y

Oikawa: …

Oikawa: you saw the same thing I did!

Kageyama: but they don’t

Kageyama: we will win

Oikawa: ¯

Oikawa: why do I even try?

Miya: ٩(˘affles˘)۶
“Well, they seem to be a handful,” Tsukishima commented. Tobio turned his head in horror. The other boy was standing behind him, a smirk on his face as he looked down at Tobio and, in extension, Tobio’s phone. “Put the phone away, King. I’m not going to let you be off your game tomorrow because you’re too busy flirting.”

Tobio’s stuttered. “I wasn’t!”

“Because it’s you, I actually believe that,” Tsukishima rolled his eyes.

“Shut up you two!”

Tobio wasn’t sure who said the words but Tsukishima sent a glare toward the right side of the room before he sank down on his own futon. Tobio wondered how it was that he got stuck with the futon beside the blond. They usually made sure at least someone was between them. He felt himself flush when he realized that Tsukishima had seen the messages from his soulmates.

Great. Perfect.

Another thing for the middle blocker to tease him about.

>>> They had some time before their first game and Tobio wandered around the gymnasium, looking at the various items and thinking about what food he would get after the game was over. If they lost, they would be going home today. If they won they would get to move onto the next round.

So, he was hoping they would win.
No, he knew they were going to win.

No matter what team they were playing against.

“Tobio-chan!”

Tobio froze. That…that was not something he was expecting to hear. Not here. Not at Nationals. In Tokyo. Maybe he was just-

“Tobio-chan! Why are you ignoring me?”

Tobio turned quickly, his mouth falling open when he saw two familiar faces looking back at him. Iwaizumi waved from where he was standing just behind Oikawa. Oikawa smiled and flicked his hair out of his eyes before giving Tobio his trademark peace sign. “Surprised?”

He didn’t know what to say. He slowly nodded his head. “I – yes.” Very surprised, in fact.

What the hell was Oikawa doing here?

Oikawa laughed loudly and swung his arm up and over Tobio’s shoulders, causing him to stumble just slightly at the sudden weight. “Well, I figured if I was going to watch this game, it was going to be in person! I made Iwa-chan come with me.”

“Because you knew you would get lost if I didn’t,” Iwaizumi muttered. Oikawa scrunched up his nose but didn’t bother to correct his friend.

“You didn’t say you were coming,” Tobio protested, unable to fully comprehend that the older boy was there. They had just messaged each other the night before. He had wished them luck! Surely he could have told them that he was coming to Tokyo!

“Surprise!”

“A horrible one,” Iwaizumi muttered as he gave Tobio and apologetic smile.
“Iwa-chan!”

“What? Just telling the truth, Trashykawa.”

“Oh, that is a nickname I could certainly get behind.”

Tobio whirled around, dislodging Oikawa’s arm and making the older boy yell out in shock and annoyance. Miya Atsumu was standing behind them, smirking as he looked at Oikawa. His eyes travelled from the top of his head to his feet before moving back up again and meeting Oikawa’s eyes. “Hmm, yes, definitely a keeper.”

“The name?” Oikawa questioned, blinking and tilting his head to the side innocently.

“Sure.”

“Stop being gross,” a new voice cut in. Tobio turned his attention to the person beside Miya and stifled a gasp. He had seen videos and Miya had said he had a twin but… well, he guessed he just hadn’t really thought about the fact that they would look so much alike. Maybe it was because their hair was different and Tobio hadn’t thought much about it beyond that.

“Oh. My brother,” Miya said, gesturing to the boy who wore a ‘so done’ expression beside him. For some reason, Tobio was reminded of the setter from Fukurodani. What was his name? Akaashi something. “Ignore him. He’s not important.”

“You’re disgusting.”

“Go away,” Miya snapped, not even sparing his twin a glance. He turned toward Tobio and smiled. “Tobio-kun! I didn’t see you all day yesterday! And to think I see you now before we have to face each other on the court. And with him,” he frowned at Oikawa. “Since when were you coming here?”

“I don’t tell you my plans.”
“This is stupid,” Iwaizumi muttered. “Trashykawa decided that this was the perfect weekend to visit campus and get a few things settled. He’s had tickets to today’s games for weeks.”

“What if we didn’t make it in?” Miya asked thought it was clear from the expression on his face and the tone of his voice that he didn’t truly think that had been a possibility.

“I don’t care if you made it in,” Oikawa snapped defensively.

Miya rolled his eyes. So did Iwaizumi. “Stop lying. You said it would be “statistically improbable for Inarizaki to lose their first game”. So here we are.”

“Iwa-chan!”

“Oh, you must be the best friend,” Miya said as he sent a smirk Oikawa’s way. “Props for dealing with this guy for so long. Elementary school, right?”

“Before that. We’re neighbors.”

“Ah.”

“I’ve had to deal with you since we were in the womb,” Miya number two muttered. “Why don’t I get props?”

“Shut up.”

Tobio couldn’t help the snort of laughter that escaped and he quickly put his hand up in front of his face. Every single eye turned his way and he quickly glanced down at the floor, feeling awkward with everyone’s attention suddenly focused on him. “Aw, Tobio-chan! You’re supposed to be on my side!”

“What exactly is your side in this, Trashykawa?”
“Don’t call me that!”

“Why not? Seems to fit.”

“Like hell it does!”

“Your soulmates are exhausting,” a voice commented and Tobio glanced up from the corner of his eye. Miya number two was standing there, watching his Miya and Oikawa argue. “I actually feel bad for you.”

“Me too,” Iwaizumi agreed as he appeared on Tobio’s other side. “Kageyama, I really have no clue what you did in a past life to deserve this.”

“Neither do I,” Tobio responded, shaking his head as Miya and Oikawa began to argue about the best way to set and relationships within their teams. He sighed and glanced at the clock. He needed to go meet the rest of his team. “Hey! I have to go.” Neither seemed to hear him. He pursed his lips and glanced at Iwaizumi. “Iwaizumi-san, will you let Oikawa-san know I left?”

“Sure.”

“Miya-san-“

“Yeah, I’ll let my brother know. Idiots should be paying attention.”

Tobio shot one last glance at his soulmates and, when they didn’t even look his way, scowled in irritation and turned on his heel. He had been afraid something like this would happen when the two actually met face to face. Well, he wasn’t sure if they were going to hit each other or suddenly become attached at the hip.

He walked slowly, hoping one of them would notice he was gone and either call out or come after him, but it didn’t happen. Soon enough, Tobio had reached the rest of his team in the designated meeting area. “Why are you so angry?” Tsukishima asked as Tobio walked up to the group. The team, as one, turned toward him and Tobio suddenly realized why so many people from other schools seemed to turn white with fear when they did that.
“Huh? Is someone messing with Kageyama?” Tanaka demanded, stomping toward Tobio and looking over his shoulder for the threat.

“We’ll show them!” Noya declared loudly.

Asahi sighed and buried his face in his hands. “Please don’t.”

“Hey! Cut it out!” Daichi growled, grabbing both Tanaka and Noya by the back of their shirts. They wilted instantly but Daichi still pushed the two toward Ennoshita for him to keep an eye on. The second year sighed and glared at the two trouble makes who hung their heads in shame.

“Everything okay?” Suga asked in concern, reaching out and placing a warm hand on Tobio’s shoulder. Tobio nodded but hesitated after he did so. He might as well tell them in case Oikawa did something stupid.

“Oikawa is here. He and Miya are,” he gestured behind him. “They’re being themselves, I guess.”

Suga giggled and quickly turned the sound into a cough. “Oh! I guess Oikawa-san is here to support you!”

“I think he just wants to watch one of us lose,” Tobio clarified.

Suga raised his eyebrows and frowned. “Well then, I guess we’ll make sure we aren’t the ones losing.”

“Yeah!” Hinata yelled, causing Tobio to jump in surprise. When had he got here? “We’ll show the Great King who the better setter is!”

“Will you now?”

Tobio’s shoulders hunched at the drawled voice. Hinata yelped in terror and quickly jumped behind Tobio, using his body to shield him from the vicious glare he was receiving. “Tobio-chan! Don’t be rude! I came to support you!”
“You came because you want to see Miya play so you can laugh at him later,” Tobio disagreed. Oikawa huffed and Iwaizumi smirked.

“He knows you well, Shittykawa.”

“Don’t call me that!” he glared at Iwaizumi. The third year ace shrugged his shoulders and nodded in acknowledgment to Daichi, who had come up beside them.

“Oikawa. Iwaizumi. Nice to see the two of you.”

“I’m sure!” Oikawa gave a grin that clearly showed that he knew no one at Karasuno was truly happy to see him. “Tobio-chan, do your best! We need to find our seats now!”

“Good luck,” Iwaizumi commented, grabbing Oikawa’s arm and pulling him through the crowds. They could all hear Oikawa whining about ‘mean Iwa-chan!’ until the two were finally out of sight.

“I-“ Suga started, his voice choking as he stared after the two third years. “I truly don’t know what to say.”

“None of us do,” Daichi sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Alright, forget about that. Are we all ready for the next game?”

“Yeah!”

They moved out onto the court and began to warm up. It wasn’t long before Inarizaki joined them. Tobio flinched when a group of girls began to scream for ‘Miya-senpai’.

It was bringing back some unpleasant memories.

“You have another pretty boy for a soulmate, huh?” Tanaka asked, scowling toward the team and glancing up at the girls. “Well, at least this one isn’t flirting back,” he muttered, lightly patting
“Hey! Tobio-kun!” Tobio glanced toward the voice. Miya was watching him, his hands on his hips. “I get bored and annoyed when people choke under pressure. Don’t annoy me.”

“Why you-“ Tanaka growled, hands balling into fists.

Tobio was quick to step in front of the second year. “I won’t. You should go back to your team now.”

“Tsk,” Miya pouted. “So mean, Tobio-kun! But don’t worry,” his carefree expression fell, “we’ll be talking when this is over. Until then, keep me entertained!”

Miya turned and walked toward his team, stopping to say something to his brother who just rolled his eyes in response. “King,” Tsukishima muttered. “I didn’t think you could have a more irritating soulmate than Oikawa-san. But you really outdid yourself with that one.”

There were nods from his team but Suga sighed. “Now, now. We all know that isn’t how it works. I’m sure there’s a reason the universe placed Miya, Oiakwa-san, and Kageyama together.”

“Like punishment?”

“Enough,” Daichi sighed, though he himself was sending a glare in Inarizaki direction. “Focus on the game. Nothing else. Right?”

“Right!”

Tobio nodded and turned his back on Inarizaki. It was a game like any other. It didn’t matter who was on the other side of the net. All that mattered was that if they beat this team, they were one step closer to their goal.

They were going to win.
Chapter Notes

Thank you guys so much for the support on this story! I'm happy so many of you are enjoying it!

I will be going out of town for a con this weekend and won't be back until Monday, so don't expect any updates from me after this until then! I was trying to get another chapter up as well but I was at work all day, still have homework to finish, and I need to clean out my car before we leave... :( Anyway, hope you enjoy!

To say that Tobio was nervous was an understatement. After Nationals, there had been a couple of weeks of awkwardness in the group chat and then endless mocking before things slowly seemed to get back to normal. Now, here he was, pacing a hole into the kitchen floor as he waited for the sound of the doorbell.

“You seem nervous,” his father commented. Tobio sent him a glare, knowing that the man was enjoying this. “Everything will be fine. I have to admit, I’m a bit excited to finally meet the third of your trio.”

Tobio groaned and buried his face in his hands. Oikawa had come by the apartment a few times within the past month, usually to grab Tobio and force him to accompany him on trips that Iwaizumi refused to go on. Each time, he and Tobio’s dad seemed to grow closer. Miya had been complaining for weeks now about the selfies Oikawa kept posting that featured Tobio or Tobio’s father.

He was excited to get his own chance.

Tobio still wasn’t sure this was a good idea.

Message From: Miya-san

Received 09:12: so, I have an idea
Sent 09:15: what

Received 09:16: oikawa is graduating

Received 09:16: and I want to visit

Received 09:16: so let’s surprise him at graduation!

Sent 09:18 how

Received 09:20 (¬_¬)

Received 09:20: Tobio-kun I’m saying I should come to Miyagi and stay with you and we can go to Oikawa’s graduation together.

Sent 09:26: he wont want me there

Received 09:26: …

Received 09:27: Tobio-kun, you really frustrate me.

Received 09:28: do you really think that idiot would show up and take you places if he didn’t like you?

Received 09:28: and it isn’t because Iwaizumi was busy.

Received 09:30: he LIKES you Tobio-kun.

Received 09:31: so do I
Tobio wasn’t sure if he trusted Miya in his belief that Oikawa liked him. Hell, he wasn’t sure if Miya was telling the truth when he said that he liked Tobio. But – but he wasn’t the only one that thought so. 

“You seem to be getting along well with Oikawa-san,” Suga commented when he appeared one day for practice. The third years had retired after Nationals but they still made time to stop in at least once a week. Tobio was thankful for it. He had been afraid that he would never see them again after they stopped playing.

“What?” he questioned, confused.

Suga smiled. “I saw the two of you together this weekend. The two of you seemed to be having a good time. I didn’t want to intrude.”

Tobio felt himself flush. This past weekend, Oikawa had appeared at Tobio’s door, loudly explaining that Iwaizumi was doing family things this weekend and Oikawa was bored. He had grabbed Tobio by the arm and told his father that he was taking the younger boy for the day. Tobio had looked at his father for help but the older man just chuckled and waved before telling them to not have too much fun.

Tobio didn’t think he had ever been so red.

“Iwaizumi-san was busy,” Tobio explained. Suga’s eyebrows rose and an amused chuckled escaped from his lips.

“I think it was more than that, Kageyama-kun. Make sure to spend as much time with him as you
Tobio nodded his head but inside he felt like his chest had formed a deep pit.

Oikawa was going to be leaving Miyagi. He wouldn’t just be showing up at Tobio’s door. He would be hours away.

Right.

The doorbell rang, pulling from his thoughts. He paused in his pacing to look tentatively at the door. His father laughed and it took only three steps for him to be standing in the entry way. He sent one last teasing grin over his shoulder and pulled the door open. “Hello! You must be Atsumu-kun. I’m Hirata Kaito, Tobio’s father. Please come in.”

“Sorry for intruding,” Miya murmured as he stepped inside. His face lit up when he saw Tobio standing in the kitchen. “Tobio-kun!”

Tobio bit his lip as he saw the familiar figure for the first time in almost two months. “Miya-san!” he said quickly and, surprisingly, a bit breathlessly.

Tobio’s father smirked as neither boy moved toward one another. “Well, Atsumu-kun, I think we’ll be fine for you to stay in Tobio’s room. You two just behave, alright? Tobio, show Atsumu-kun around.”

Tobio swallowed hard and nodded his head. Why was he feeling so…weird? His hands felt tingly and he had that kind of light headed feeling he always got whenever Oikawa showed up. “R-right,” he muttered. He turned quickly and started down the hallway, hearing the swift footsteps begin to follow him. He pushed open the door to his bedroom, a futon already set up on the floor, and stepped aside to allow Miya entrance.

Miya stepped in and his eyes flickered around the room, cataloguing everything he was seeing. Tobio could almost see the information being stored in some “Tobio-kun” filing cabinet in the other boys mind. He looked around himself, anxious to see his room the way Miya was seeing it. But it just looked normal. Nothing was out of place, a pile of volleyball magazines (which he had begun to collect after realizing just how many times his soulmates were featured) were piled on his small desk right next to his school books that he should be using. “Nice room, Tobio-kun,” Miya finally said, setting his bag down against the wall.
“…thanks,” Tobio muttered, clasping his hands together behind his back.

Miya’s eyebrows rose as he sent a smirk Tobio’s way. “Why are you so nervous? We talk all the time.”

Tobio sputtered, “I’m not!”

“You are,” Miya responded, his head tilting as he took a step closer. Tobio bit his lip and forced himself to stay still, to not back away. He wasn’t even sure why that one small step mattered so much but he couldn’t get it out of his mind. “That’s alright, Tobio-kun. I’m nervous too.”

Tobio blinked. “You are?!”

“Course,” Miya responded, shrugging his shoulders. “First time we’re together that doesn’t revolve around volleyball. And I’ve only seen Oikawa for like, twenty minutes, tops. We barely spoke after the game at Nationals. I was busy with my team. That’s gonna be weirder than this.”

Tobio let out a deep breath. Right. He always forgot that Oikawa and Miya had only met the one time. They talked so often that it always seemed to escape him. “He doesn’t know you’re here.”

“I should hope not,” Miya laughed, flopping down onto Tobio’s bed. Tobio wondered why that didn’t bother him. He usually hated it when people sat on his bed. He even made Hinata sit on the floor. “Wouldn’t be a surprise if he did.”

“I don’t think he’ll come here tonight,” Tobio told him, sitting down on the edge of the bed. He was careful not to brush against Miya as he did so. “Well, I hope not, anyway.”

“The team is taking the third years out, remember? Since graduation is tomorrow,” Miya sighed, looking at Tobio curiously. “Seriously, Tobio-kun. I’m not gonna bite. Well, I won’t if you don’t want me to,” he sent Tobio a grin that had him blushing from head to foot. “Come here.”

Tobio’s brows furrowed but he moved down the bed just a bit. Miya rolled his eyes and, before Tobio knew what was happening, sat up and wrapped his arms around Tobio and pulled him down onto the bed. Tobio let out a loud “hmph!” as he somehow ended up on his side, Miya curled
around him. “Better,” Miya huffed, his breath tickling Tobio’s ear. Tobio held himself tense, not sure what he should be doing or why he was in this position. But he could admit, grudgingly, that it felt…pleasant.

Well, he could admit it to himself.

He would never say such a thing to Miya.

“You talked to Iwaizumi, right?”

Tobio nodded against the pillow. “Each class has a party planned for after graduation but he said Oikawa-san and he were planning on celebrating with Hanamaki-san and Matsukawa-san. He said we could join them.”

Miya chuckled and Tobio swallowed hard when the older boy’s head was suddenly resting against his shoulder. “I’m sure Oikawa won’t be thrilled with us around his Makki and Mattsun. I’m kinda excited to meet them.” Tobio’s shoulders tensed even further as Miya’s lips brushed against the back of his neck as he spoke.

“Th-that’s what Iwaizumi-san said,” Tobio’s voice squeaked. He cleared his throat. He needed to move. This was making him feel weird again. “Uh, you wanted to meet my team, right?”

Miya chuckled. “Hmm, not sure how happy they’ll be to see me. Not after that game.”

Tobio’s nose scrunched at the reminder. “You weren’t very nice.”

“Neither were you. Or that four eyed kid.”

Tobio couldn’t stop the laughter that erupted. He blinked at the loud sound. When was the last time he laughed like that? “Tsukishima’s never nice. It’s why he gets along so well with Kuroo-san.”

Tobio could feel Miya smirking against his skin. “Right. The cat. Yeah, I could see that.” He sighed and his arms, finally, loosened their hold around Tobio’s waist. Tobio didn’t hesitate to pull away and sit up on the bed, finally letting his shoulders relax now that there was some distance
“Uh, so, my team wanted us to all meet up for dinner,” Tobio said, a bit uncomfortable with the words. It was odd to think that he would be introducing Miya, his soulmate, to his team. To his friends. “Uh, Suga, my ex vice-captain, invited us all to his house. Daichi-san and Asahi-san are going to be there as well.”

Miya sighed and threw a hand over his eyes. “Why do I feel like this is going to be one of those meet the parent’s situations? I already met your dad. Do I have to go through it again?”

Tobio’s brows furrowed. “They aren’t my parents.”

“Right,” Miya chuckled. “I’ve been told plenty of things about your captain and vice-captain. Or ex captain and vice-captain, I guess. Trust me, Tobio-kun. They’re your parents.”

“That doesn’t make any sense,” Tobio pushed. “How could they be my parents? They’re only a couple years older than me.”

“Don’t mind,” Miya finally said, shaking his head and his lips curling up into a kind of fond smile. “So, when are we going?”

Tobio glanced at the clock. “Uh, it will take some time to get there so…leave in ten minutes?”

“Great,” Miya sighed, finally sitting up and meeting Tobio’s eyes. “Mind showing me where the bathroom is? We can leave after that.”

“Alright,” Tobio stood, waiting for Miya to do the same, and then led him down the hall and into the bathroom. Tobio returned to his room, grabbing his phone from the dresser, when he saw that he had multiple unread messages.

*Group Message*

*Oikawa-san and Miya-san*
Oikawa: Image attached

Oikawa: Look! All my team together again! ( ꒕ ˚◡˚ ꒕ )

Oikawa: They’re buying us food! And then taking us to karaoke!

Oikawa: hello?

Oikawa: what are you two doing? Why aren’t you answering me?!

Oikawa: Look at my picture! It’s adorable!

Oikawa: Tobio-chan!!!!!

Oikawa: Atsu-chan!!!!!

Oikawa: (¬_¬)

Kageyama: sorry

Kageyama: going to Suga-sans to celebrate the third years graduation

Oikawa: Tobio-chan! I knew you were my favorite! ( ꒕ ˚◡˚ ꒕ )

Oikawa: bet Atsu-chan doesn’t have that excuse!

Oikawa: he hates his third years.
Oikawa:...

Oikawa: Where is he?!

Kageyama; maybe busy

Oikawa: Busy enough that he isn’t messaging us?!

Tobio sighed and glanced up thankfully as Miya walked into the room. “Answer Oikawa-san. I don’t know what to say.”

Miya’s brows quirked but he grabbed his phone and quickly scrolled through the messages. Tobio was interested to watch the emotions play out across his face as he did so. He had expected to see irritation and anger but...but that wasn’t it. Amusement. Fondness. Something else he couldn’t name. “Impatient, isn’t he?” Miya questioned as his fingers flew across the keys.

Miya: so sorry I wasn’t prompt enough for you, your highness.

Miya: I was dealing with something

Oikawa: ( △ △ △ △△ )

Oikawa: What’s more important than your soulmates?!

Miya: nothin

Oikawa: Then where did you go?

Miya: [^-^-]^ [ ]

Oikawa: ( △ △ △△ ) ∩
Miya: go be with your team. Have fun.

Miya: the picture is cute.

Miya: I guess.

Oikawa: I will!

Oikawa: ( ˚◡˚ )

Miya: ooh? Is that for me?

Oikawa: No.

Oikawa: where did Tobio-chan go?!

Kageyama: what

Oikawa: ( ˚◡˚ )

Kageyama: ...right.

Miya: lmfas

Miya: (•ᴗ•)° (T ippets)°

Oikawa: ¯\_\_\_/¯
Oikawa: I'm going back to the people that love me!

Miya: I thought the party was for Iwaizumi-san.

Oikawa: …

Oikawa: ( ︶︿︶ ) —∩╮

Miya: ┌∩┐ (◣_◢) ┌∩┐

Miya was chuckling as he snapped his phone shut and glanced up at Tobio. “You could say more than ‘what’, you know.”

“Why?”

“That too,” Miya shook his head and motioned toward the door. “Are you ready to go?”

Tobio nodded and the two quickly left the apartment, both saying goodbye to Tobio’s father as they did so. Miya looked interestedly around the streets during their thirty minute walk and Tobio pointed out various places he visited. They ended up walking past Karasuno and Miya stopped at the gates to stare at the school. Tobio had no idea what was so captivating, it was just a school, but Miya finally just nodded his head and began walking. Tobio was quick to fall in beside him, both of them knowing that Miya had no idea where he was going. “So, all of your team going to be here?”

“Yeah.”

“We gonna play volleyball?”

Tobio shrugged. “Maybe. Suga-san has a net set up in the backyard and the last time we went to his house we all played a game. Why?”

Miya smirked. “I said I was gonna toss to that little friend of yours. Might as well be now.”
Tobio’s eyes narrowed. “Hinata is always on my team.”

“It’s good to change things up every so often, Tobio-kun.”

Tobio was going to protest, really he was, but he felt something slip into his hand. He blinked, startled, and glanced down. Miya was holding his hand, his fingers tangling with Tobio’s as they walked. His step faltered slightly and Miya’s hand tightened around his own. His mouth was hanging open as his eyes traveled up the tanned arm to Miya’s face.

For the first time, Tobio saw a slight pink tinge across Miya’s cheekbones.

“What?”

“What?”

“To your friend’s house. We close?”

“I…yes.”

“Let’s keep going then,” Miya took a quick step, pulling Tobio along with him. Tobio bit his lip and reached up to rub his chest with his free hand. That weird feeling was there again.

They were near Suga’s house when Tobio heard his name being screamed. He stopped and turned slightly, his hand still in Miya’s. Hinata was riding toward him, flying down the street on his bike. The other boy came to a screeching stop. “Hi!” Hinata whooped, jumping off his bike and waving his hand. “I thought I was going to be late but you’re just getting here so it must be okay. Hi, Miya-san! Kageyama said you were coming. So, you two are going to surprise the Great King tomorrow?! That’s so cool! I wish I could-“

“Stop talking, dumbass!” Tobio snapped, already feeling a headache forming. Hinata was always worse on days they didn’t have practice. It was like all his energy was built up and had nowhere to go.
“Sorry!” Hinata squeaked. Tobio wasn’t fooled. He saw the smile that his best friend was directing at him and the way his eyes kept flickering down to his and Miya’s hands.

“Hey,” Miya greeted, giving Hinata a lazy wave. “Hinata-kun.”

“Hi!” Hinata said again as they walked up the path to Suga’s door. Hinata jumped forward to ring the bell but the door was pulled open before he could do so. “Oh! Hi Sugawara-san!”

“Hinata-kun!” Suga’s mother said warmly, “So nice to see you! Oh, and Kageyama-kun as well! I don’t think we’ve met,” she smiled at Miya.

“Miya Atsumu,” the boy responded charmingly. Sugawara-san giggled. Tobio rolled his eyes. “Kageyama-kun is my soulmate.”

“Oh, how nice!” Sugawara-san gasped, clapping her hands together. “I’m so glad you could join us! Hinata-kun, Kageyama-kun, the boys are upstairs. You know the way!”

“Thank you!” Hinata and Kageyama chimed as they stepped into the house and slipped out of their shoes. Miya and Kageyama’s hands separated momentarily but they were quick to find each other again as soon as they moved up the stairs.

Once again, most of the furniture had been pushed to the sides of the room. Tobio saw the second years were all bent over a game, Noya frowning in annoyance as Tanaka laughed. Ennoshita just looked pleased with himself. Tsukishima and Yamaguchi were standing in a corner, Yamaguchi saying something and Tsukishima nodding his head. Yachi seemed to be crying as Kyoko and Suga tried to calm her down. Daichi was talking to Asahi.

Every eye turned to them as they walked in.

There was a brief pause as the eyes fell to Tobio and Miya’s hands.

And then they exploded.

“Woah!” Noya yelled out.
“What?!” that was Tanaka.

“You two shut up!” Ennoshita.

“King has a boyfriend.”

“We already knew that, Tsukki.”

“Alright, everyone calm down,” Suga said loudly.

He was ignored. Tobio flushed as Noya and Tanaka continued to yell and tried to run toward Miya, only to be stopped by an increasingly annoyed Ennoshita.

“Enough!” Daichi finally stepped in.

Yet again, every person in the room froze. Suga sighed. “Miya-kun, it’s nice to see you again. Kageyama-kun told us you would be coming.”

“He did?!”

“He didn’t tell us!”

“Because you two are idiots,” Tsukishima murmured from his corner. Of course, every person in the room still heard.

“Tsukishima, you bastard!”

“Fight me!”
“Now now, enough,” Suga placated. He smiled at Tobio and Miya. “Come in, have fun. We’ll probably play volleyball later if you’re interested.”

“I’m always interested in volleyball,” Miya smirked and Noya’s eyes narrowed. “It’ll be nice to play with all of you.”

Tobio rolled his eyes yet again. Everyone on his team had played against Miya. They all saw how he was when he played.

They knew better than to take him at face value now.

Still, the night went by and Tobio was pleased to note that most of his team seemed to relax around Miya and Miya seemed to warm up to them. Tsukishima still got under his skin but, well, the blond still got under Tobio’s skin so he couldn’t really fault him for that. They did eventually move out into the backyard to play a game and Tobio was quick to offer to play as a spiker. It was the last time any of his team would be playing with Suga and he wanted them to enjoy it. And they all knew that everyone was interested in hitting Miya’s tosses – he was considered the best setter in Japan, after all. They all agreed to the arrangement and Suga said they could switch after the first match. Hinata was, in fact, placed on Miya’s team but so was Tobio. Tanaka and Noya joined them with Asahi, Daichi, Tsukishima and Narita on the other side with Suga. Tobio was annoyed to find that Tsukishima had been getting even better at blocking and was able to block more than one of his spikes. Miya sent him a mocking glance each time it happened and Tobio pointedly ignored him. Besides, he was able to send the same look right back when it became obvious that Miya and Hinata had trouble synching.

When the next match was played, Tobio stood across from Miya with Hinata on his team.

Miya was quick to rid himself of the small spiker.

Tobio was going to tease him about that later.

Miya and Tobio decided to leave after the match, receiving knowing grins and gentle teasing as they walked away. Tobio ignored his teammates but Miya just winked their way and wrapped an arm around Tobio’s waist.

He slapped Miya’s hand away.
They made it back to Tobio’s apartment fairly quickly. “Did you two have a good time?” Tobio’s father asked tiredly from where he was once again bent over a stack paperwork.

“Sure did,” Miya laughed, his arm coming up to rest on Toboi’s shoulders. “Have to say, I see why Tobio-kun gets along with his team so well. Now I just need to meet Seijoh and everything will be perfect.”

Tobio frowned. “We aren’t meeting all of them. Just Iwaizumi-san, Matsukawa-san, and Hanamaki-san.”

“Yeah, I know,” Miya soothed, tightening his hold on Tobio. He had been told of Tobio’s history with the first years of Aoba Johsai. Tobio was fairly sure that was the only reason he had decided not to crash the volleyball team’s party that night. “It’ll still be fun.”

Fun wasn’t the word Tobio wanted to use. Nerve wracking was closer. But Miya seemed excited and Iwaizumi-san had said it would be fine for them to join in so Tobio was trying to keep a positive attitude. Well, as much as he could.

“Tooru-kun is leaving soon, right?”

“Next week,” Tobio agreed. He kept his face down, not wanting the present company to see the scowl forming on his lips. Oikawa had volleyball camp before classes started so he, Kuroo, and Bokuto were moving into their dorm a week before Suga was scheduled to join them. It wasn’t something Tobio really enjoyed thinking about.

“Well, make sure he stops by before he goes.”

Tobio didn’t respond but Miya was quick to assure the man that he would let Oikawa know. As soon as they entered Tobio’s room, Miya turned to him with a soft, knowing smile. “You upset about Oikawa going to Tokyo?”

Tobio avoided his gaze and turned to face the desk. He shuffled through his papers in an attempt to look like he was searching for something. “What? No.”

“It’s okay to be,” the other boy said, coming up behind him and wrapping his arms around Tobio’s waist. He leaned forward and rested his chin on Tobio’s shoulder and Tobio froze in his hold.
“You two had problems but you got used to him being here. You’re accustomed to me being far away but it’s gonna be an adjustment that he’s gone as well.”

Tobio’s teeth ground together as the boy said the exact words that had been ringing in Tobio’s head for the past few weeks. “I know,” he finally muttered in annoyance. “I don’t even know why I—“ he broke off and sighed, not sure how to explain what he was feeling at the moment.

But Miya didn’t seem to have any trouble.

“Look, Tobio-kun,” he said seriously, pulling away from the smaller boy and grabbing his hand yet again. He pulled him toward the bed and forced him to sit, pulling himself into a sitting position in front of him. “Oikawa said and did some things that he regrets. He hurt you when he did and he never really knew how to take it back. He’s an arrogant prick and apologizing isn’t something he’s gonna do. But any idiot could see that he cares about you.”

Tobio’s head shot up. “He doesn-“

“He does. And so do I,” Miya chuckled, rubbing the back of his neck a bit self-consciously as he said the words. “You know, I was a bit upset during camp when you told me about Oikawa. I saw that band on your arm and the thought had crossed my mind…” he flushed and avoided Tobio’s eyes. “It’s kind of why I took my band off in front of you. I mean, I wasn’t lying or anything. I really don’t wear it outside of volleyball,” he held out his arm pointedly, showing off the marks that decorated his skin. Tobio’s own hand came up to rest against his soulmark band. “But I usually wait until I’m out of the gym. But then they matched and I was irritated because of what I learned of the bastard…” he sighed. “But I knew the moment we started messaging that he cared for you. And yeah, I couldn’t stand him at first but things changed. Hell, I’m here for his graduation.” He rolled his eyes, mocking himself. “Point is, I like you. I like Oikawa. Oikawa likes you. Pretty sure he likes me too. He better or I’m going to be seriously pissed off,” he muttered shaking his head. “But the two of you have known each other for a long time. There’s history there and most of it isn’t good. But he’s trying. He wants to spend time with you. He isn’t coming here because Iwaizumi is busy. He’s coming here because he wants to spend whatever time he can with you before he leaves for Tokyo.”

Tobio’s hands fisted in his blanket. “You don’t know that-“

“I do. Now it’s just a matter of getting you to believe it,” Miya sighed, falling back against the bed and staring up at the ceiling. “And I’m gonna make sure you do before I head back home. Even if I have to force the bastard to tell you himself.”
Chapter 12

Tobio was shifting from one foot to the other and staring down at the pavement. He felt people’s eyes on him. He knew that Kindaichi and Kunimi had spotted him during the ceremony, the former nudging the back-up setter he was sitting next to and pointing toward Tobio. The second years eyes had rested on Tobio for just a moment before he turned and said something to the person on his other side. That person’s eyes had immediately snapped in Tobio’s direction as well and Tobio recognized him as the libero for the team.

They had barely looked away from him the rest of the ceremony.

Miya, who had been sitting next to him. Noticed his discomfort quickly and leaned over to ask Tobio what was wrong. Tobio had just let his eyes wander to the Seijoh team before he faced forward once more. He saw Miya follow his eyeline and then saw him tilt his head slightly before his hand ended up in Tobio’s once more. “Which two are Kindaichi and Kunimi?” he asked, his voice low enough that Tobio doubted anyone but him could hear the question.

“The two on the left. Kunimi’s the one that looks like he’s going to fall asleep. Hinata calls Kindaichi onion-head.”

Miya snorted a laugh. “Knew I liked that kid.”

Tobio lips twitched. “You didn’t seem to like him so much when you had to play with him.”

“We aren’t talking about that.”

The two had sat there through the rest of the ceremony and now that it was over, they were waiting for Oikawa to finish up with his ‘fans’ before they made their own appearance. They had swarmed Oikawa the moment the ceremony had ended. Iwaizumi, who Tobio had pointed out to Miya because apparently the other had been too distracted at Nationals to remember him, had just rolled his eyes before heading toward his own family. Tobio noticed that the Seijoh team had disappeared and he just hoped that they were able to meet with Oikawa before any of them suddenly appeared before him.

“Well, this is annoying,” Miya sighed, crossing his arms over his chest and watching as girls, and a few boys, swarmed Oikawa. He was smiling at them and nodding his head, his eyes darting from one person to the other. The volume increased as the group began to try and talk over one another and Tobio winced.
“Very,” he agreed.

Miya chuckled and wrapped his hand around Tobio’s. “Should we go make our entrance?”

Tobio’s eyes widened in shock. “What? But there’s so many-“

“That’s why it’ll be so fun,” Miya said firmly, walking forward and tightening his grip on Tobio’s hand when the younger attempted to let him go. Tobio tried to protest and dislodge himself but before knew it, he was standing in front of the group at Miya’s side. “Oi! What’s this? We come to see you and this is what we find?”

Some of the group turned. Some continued to talk. Some sent them glares. But Oikawa’s smile froze on his face as his eyes slowly travelled from the group around him to Miya and Tobio. Tobio had to admit, it was amusing to see Oikawa’s mouth drop open and his eyes widen in shocked surprise. “Wh-what are you two…”

“What are we doing here? Figured we should come and support our,” Miya’s eyes glanced at the group and Tobio’s hand tightened around his. He wasn’t going to do it, was he? He couldn’t. Tobio knew that Oikawa’s friend didn’t even know about Oikawa having two soulmates. Well, except Iwaizumi. Miya wouldn’t tell this entire group- “…friend.”

The relief of the world was palpable and Oikawa stepped forward, the group parting for him instantly though most looked unhappy to do so. His eyes drifted down to land on Tobio and Miya’s hands and they narrowed slightly before he looked up at Miya. “Oh, really? You just happened to make the trip from Hyogo to come see me graduate?”

“Well, I wanted to visit Tobio-kun too,” Miya drawled, sending a wink Tobio’s way. Tobio blushed brightly and once again attempted to regain his hand.

It didn’t work.

“Oh, I’m sure Tobio-chan appreciates it,” Oikawa said sweetly as he slid his own arm over Tobio’s shoulders. “So the two of you are going to-“
“Come out with you and your friends tonight? Yes, yes we are! Thank you for inviting us!” Miya purred.

Oikawa blinked. “I – oh. Right. Of course you can! I’ll talk to-“

“I already asked Iwaizumi-san,” Tobio muttered and that surprise flashed across Tobio’s face yet again. “And he told Hanamaki-san and Matsukawa-san.”

“He- but he didn’t say anything!”

“Hence the surprise!” Miya sighed, shaking his head. “Do either of you know the meaning of the word? It took me forever to convince Tobio-kun to do this. He didn’t think you’d want him here,” Miya’s eyes narrowed as he pointed toward Oikawa with his free hand.

Tobio was really going to need to get used to that astounded expression on Oikawa’s face. He seemed to wear it often when Miya was around. “Tobio-chan! Of course I want you here! But don’t your seniors graduate today as well? Didn’t they want you there?”

“Oh, they’re fine,” Miya commented, waving his hand to wipe away the comment. “Tobio-kun and I went to Suga-san’s house last night. I got to meet the team! Well…again…but better circumstances this time…”

“Oh?” Oikawa questioned, his eyes narrowing once more. “So the only person that didn’t know you were here was me?”

“Surprise!”

“Right,” Oikawa rolled his eyes. “Well, Iwa-chan is going to eat with his parents first and Mattsun and Makki said they would meet us later so…”

Miya rolled his eyes. “Idiot.”

“…excuse me?!”
“They made other plans because Tobio and I are taking you out for dinner,” Miya sighed, shaking his head. “So they are meeting up with us later.”

“…you are?”

“We are?” Tobio questioned. He didn’t remember anything about taking Oikawa out to dinner. He thought they were just going to hang out with the other boy’s third year friends. He wasn’t even sure he had enough money to take Oikawa out to a celebratory dinner.

“We are,” Miya confirmed.

“But Iwaizumi-san never said-“

“I got his number from your old captain last night and messaged him,” Miya shrugged his shoulders and glanced over Oikawa’s shoulders. “We should go before your fan club decides to flock again. Any idea where you want to go?”

“I…” Oikawa’s face shifted into a multitude of expressions before indecision finally won out. “I don’t really know. Uh, what do you want, Tobio-chan?”

“Nope!” Miya said quickly before Tobio was able to sputter anything out. “This is your graduation dinner so you pick! Besides,” Miya smirked at Tobio, “I don’t think Tobio-kun would be comfortable choosing. He’d probably panic that he’d pick something we wouldn’t like or something.”

Tobio felt himself flush but he couldn’t argue against the words. Just that one second after Oikawa asked him had sent him into a tailspin.

“Fine,” Oikawa sighed but his lips turned up just slightly. “Well then, let’s go! I’m sure we can find something we all agree on fairly close by. And quick because I don’t think Iwa-chan’s dinner is going to take long.”

The three began to make their way out of the school when they heard a voice yelling for Oikawa-senpai!. Tobio stopped, as did both Oikawa and Miya, and Oikawa blinked down at a determined
girl that had run up in front of him. “Oikawa-senpai,” the girl said once again, her hands wringing in her skirt. “Can I – can I have your second button?”

Tobio’s mouth dropped. He couldn’t believe this girl had just walked up to Oikawa and asked for the button! She- she wasn’t even his soulmate! What made her think that Oikawa would just hand it over-

“Sorry!” Oikawa said, his smile bright as he looked at the girl. “I’m afraid the only person that would receive that would be my-“

“Your soulmate, right? But we could be! I mean, you always wear the soulmark band and my mark is in the same area-“

“Sorry,” Oikawa said again as Tobio tried to process what the girl was saying. Was she trying to convince Oikawa that they could be soulmates? How could she think that they were? Just because their marks were on their left arms didn’t mean anything! Tobio couldn’t help but clench his free hand and Miya’s hand squeezed his. Tobio glanced to the side at the older setter and he saw that Miya was glaring at the girl. She didn’t seem to notice. “I already know my soulmate. I hope you find yours soon.” Oikawa turned his head toward Tobio and Miya and gestured for them to follow him. They only made it a few steps before the girl was there yet again.

“I don’t believe you,” she snapped, shaking her head. “You’ve never mentioned them before! And why aren’t they here? If you were my soulmate I would make sure that-“

“Alright, enough of that,” Miya drawled, his hand leaving Tobio’s as he stepped forward. The girl’s eyes snapped toward him and Oikawa’s blinked. “Whether he mentions it or not really isn’t your business. Why don’t you go back to your friends and leave him alone?”

The girl’s eyes flashed dangerously. “Who are you?!”

“My soulmate,” Oikawa responded. Miya’s arms, which had been crossed over his chest, dropped to his sides and Tobio’s eyes flew open. Oikawa didn’t bother to look at either of them.

“Stop lying to me! I saw him and that guy holding hands-“

“Both of them. They’re both my soulmates.”
The area around them seemed to go quiet and Tobio’s mouth dropped slightly. The girl was blinking frantically, probably trying to understand the words Oikawa had just said. Oikawa didn’t bother to look away from the girl and see the reactions around him. But Tobio did.

Groups of people around them had fallen silent and the students were openly staring at Oikawa. Tobio bit his lip when he saw that one of those groups included the Seijoh team. Kunimi was the only person not staring at Oikawa. Instead, his eyes were fixed on Tobio. As Tobio looked at him, Kunimi’s eyes drifted from Tobio’s arm, which was covered by both his soulmark band and his long-sleeved shirt, up to meet Tobio’s eyes. For the first time in over a year, Kunimi’s eyes didn’t flash in anger as they looked at one another. Instead, Tobio thought he saw understanding. Kunimi jerked his head to the side, toward the door, and Tobio let out a deep breath. “Let’s go,” he muttered, walking toward the door. He heard footsteps behind him and he knew that his soulmates were following.

This time, no one stopped them as they walked out the doors.
Tobio wasn’t sure how he ended up sitting beside Oikawa in the booth but there he was, his leg pressed tightly against the older boy’s. He had tried to move closer toward the wall to give Oikawa a bit of space but Oikawa had only shifted so they were still pressed against one another. Tobio tried to ignore the warmth against his side and the way Miya was smirking at the two of them from across the table but the blush that adorned his face was quick to give him away.

“So, feel better?” Miya questioned, only giving the menu in front of him a brief glance before he fixed his eyes on Oikawa.

The older boy raised an eyebrow. “Better?”

“To finally tell the truth,” Miya clarified, his lips twitching up. “Might as well take that thing off now,” he nodded toward Oikawa’s arm and leaned forward, placing his elbows on the table and resting his chin on his hands. His eyes innocently flickered from Oikawa to Tobio and back again. “No need to hide it anymore.”

Tobio’s face burned and he quickly lifted his menu so the other two couldn’t see his red cheeks. It was true that his team knew that he had two soulmates – they even knew that those soulmates were Oikawa and Miya – but just thinking about the rest of the school knowing…

…it made him feel a little sick.

“You wear long sleeves to class anyway,” Miya continued. Tobio bit back a yelp as the menu he had been using as a shield was pulled out of his hands. He glared at Miya. Miya just smiled in return. “You can put it back on for practice or games, if it makes you feel more comfortable. But…” the smile fell and he hesitated for a moment before letting out a deep breath. “I would like it if you two just…” he seemed at a loss for words and his eyes finally left the two of them to peer at the menu. Or, well, at least it looked like he was studying the menu. Tobio was pretty sure the other boy wasn’t actually reading anything. His eyes weren’t moving.
“You want us to stop hiding,” Oikawa sighed, leaning back against the booth and pressing his shoulder against Tobio’s. Tobio’s breath hitched slightly but he wasn’t sure if it was because of the words or the fact that Oikawa was now pressed to him from his shoulder to his thigh. “Right?”

Miya’s jaw clenched but he nodded his head once. He didn’t bother to look up as he responded, “I know how people look at us. Because we have more than one mark. And you two probably had problems because you didn’t really –” he sighed and closed his eyes. “I had my brother. Even if he says he dislikes me half of the time, he still stood by me if someone had something to say.” Miya shrugged his shoulders as he finished and Tobio tried to imagine what it would have been like to have someone beside him during elementary school when everyone thought he was a freak. Would he have ended up like Miya? Would he have truly not cared what others said about him?

“I had Iwa-chan,” Oikawa sat up straight and snapped the words but Tobio saw his knuckles were white as he gripped the edge of the table. Miya’s eyes shot up to meet Oikawa’s gaze and the moment their eyes connected, Oikawa seemed to sag in his seat and sighed. His left arm moved so he could pinch the bridge of his nose as he squeezed his eyes shut. “I – was always taught to keep it hidden,” he said lowly, the words feeling like they were somehow being forced out. Tobio wanted him to stop. He could feel how hard this was and he didn’t want Oikawa to force himself to continue. “My parents are not very…understanding. I’ve been wearing a soulmark band before I really even knew what it was for,” he muttered as his hand fell once more and his eyes opened. The pain in them was evident and Tobio reacted on instinct. He reached out and pressed his right hand against Oikawa’s left. Oikawa jumped and Tobio realized just what he did. Face burning, he quickly pulled back but Oikawa was already gripping his fingers tightly in his own. Tobio’s throat went dry and he glanced at Oikawa’s face, only to see a slight pink dusting Oikawa’s otherwise fair skin.

“That reminds me,” Miya suddenly said loudly and Tobio jerked his eyes toward the other setter in panic. But Miya was watching the two of them with amusement. Tobio relaxed. “Were your parents at the-“

“No,” Oikawa muttered before Miya could even finish the question. “We don’t exactly get along well. I, uh, was planning on staying at Iwa-chan’s tonight.”

Tobio’s brows furrowed and he saw Miya scowling from the corner of his eye. “I see. Well,” he forced some cheer into his voice. “I’m not leaving until tomorrow. I’m sure Tobio-kun wouldn’t mind another houseguest for the night.”

Tobio blinked, surprised at the words, but he couldn’t find it in himself to protest when Oikawa turned hopeful eyes on him. Instead, he just nodded his head and wondered if they had another futon in the apartment that the older boy could use. Oikawa smiled brightly and his hand tightened around Tobio’s. “Thank you, Tobio-chan.”
“S-sure.”

“Right,” Miya said quickly, picking the menu (Tobio’s menu) up from the table and scanning it over quickly. “Let’s order. I’m starving.”

Tobio found himself enjoying the company after that. Miya and Oikawa were still quick to tease one another and snap occasionally but they did it with smiles on their faces so Tobio assumed that everything was okay and they weren’t actually angry. They asked Tobio about his team and things with his father, not letting him get away with a few muttered words. They would push and pull until he actually began to include himself in the conversation and he soon found himself saying more to the two of them than he had said in…months. Years? It was hard to tell.

But he enjoyed it.

They had just finished eating when Oikawa’s phone sounded. He glanced at it before replying quickly with a frown. “So, Iwa-chan wants to know when we’re going to meet. Are you two sure you want to come along? I mean, we could always-“

“Nope!” Miya said swiftly, standing from the booth and stretching his arms over his head. Tobio’s eyes wandered down to see the thin strip of skin that revealed itself as Miya did so and he felt himself flush. He averted his eyes quickly but he was almost certain that both Miya and Oikawa had noticed. Oikawa’s hand tightened around his and Miya’s amusement was clear in his voice as he spoke, “no way we’re missing this. I want to meet your Iwa-chan properly! And those two that you always complain about.”

“But I don’t want to!” Oikawa whined. “Makki and Mattsun tease me enough without adding you into it!”

“I like them already!”

“But they’ll tease Tobio-chan!”

“They wouldn’t dare,” Miya responded flatly, the amusement gone. Tobio glanced up, confused, but Miya was still looking at Oikawa. “I’m sure the two of them can let them know that is off limits.”
Oikawa frowned slightly but he nodded as he stood and pulled Tobio up after him. “They’re at Iwa-chan’s house. We were just going to have a movie night—“

“Sounds fun.”

Oikawa sighed once more. “Fine! I’ll tell them we’re on our way. But we can leave at any time! I can see them before I leave for Tokyo.”

“Aw! Oikawa, are you wanting us to yourself?” Miya fluttered his lashes and Oikawa shot him a quick scowl as he dropped Tobio’s hand and reached for his phone.

“Watch it,” he growled as he began to type out a reply. “I’m not going to see Tobio-chan as often after I leave.”

Miya rolled his eyes as Tobio blinked in surprise. “Yeah, about that. This one,” he threw an arm around Tobio, making the slightly smaller boy stumble in surprise, “seems to think the only reason you’ve been taking him places is because your friends are busy. Mind correcting that?”

“Hmm?” Oikawa glanced up from his phone. “Oh. Yeah, that was a lie.” At Tobio’s flabbergasted expression, Oikawa let out an irritated sigh and shrugged his shoulders. “What? You would have panicked and been completely irrational about everything—“

“Right, because he’s the one that’s usually irrational.”

“-and it was just easier this way. But now,” he flashed that smile again. The one that made Tobio feel like he needed sunglasses. And heart medication. “Tobio-chan came to me! And invited me over!”

“Actually, I invited you over.”

“So I can stop pretending now. What is your practice schedule next week? We need to make plans to see each other before I leave for Tokyo. I have to be there early for my own practice.”
Tobio was still trying to understand the words that had been coming out of Oikawa’s mouth when he responded. “I…uh…morning practice.”

“Good! We can go to lunch and spend the afternoon together! Um…maybe Tuesday? I have an appointment on Monday. And Wednesday is my last day teaching at Little Tykes. And we can do something Thursday too! I leave on Friday afternoon because I want to get settled in before practice starts on Monday. Does that sound okay?”

“I –yes?”

“Great!”

Miya glanced at the two of them with amusement. “Left out again, I see. How you wound me.”

Oikawa rolled his eyes. “You’re too far away. I’m just happy we saw each other this weekend.”

“You’re welcome.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Oikawa waved his hand. “Besides, you’re going to come to Tokyo after you graduate, right? You told me you were!”

“That’s the plan.”

“And then Tobio-chan will come a year after that and we’ll all be together! It’ll be great! Just like we talked about.”

When did that conversation occur?! Tobio was pretty sure he didn’t agree to any of that. And, well, Tokyo? “I – don’t think I have the marks-“

“You’ll get a volleyball scholarship,” Oikawa cut in, shaking his head as if the thought of Tobio not getting a scholarship was unheard of. “And you can always ask us for help on your schoolwork. I was the top of the class, you know. And Miya’s not too bad either.”
“Well, thank you, your highness.”

“Don’t mention it.”

The only thing Tobio could do was stare and try to wrap his head around what he had just been told. Miya was planning on going to Tokyo after he graduated next year. And they were both planning on Tobio joining them the year after. They were talking like this thing was going to work out between them. Like neither of them expected that they would be better off with other people.

Tobio was feeling a little light headed.

“I’ll come back as often as I can,” Oikawa said suddenly and Tobio focused in on the other boy. He was watching Tobio closely and biting his lip in a nervous manner. Tobio didn’t think he had ever seen that expression on Oikawa’s face before. “I mean, I’ll want to see Iwa-chan. And I’ll see you as well, of course, while I’m here. And the three of us will still be able to message each other so…so it won’t be that different than it is now.”

“I’m sure Tobio-kun and I will be in Tokyo for Nationals next year,” Miya said, sounding unconcerned but the small frown on his face contradicted the tone. “And Tobio-chan will surely be invited back to the youth training camp.”

Tobio blinked at the surety in which Miya said the words. Tobio certainly hoped that his team would make it to Nationals again the following year. And he assumed that, as long as nothing horrible took place, he would be invited back to the youth training camp. He didn’t think anything had happened at the camp this year that would stop that from happening but, well, when he thought about camp, he always thought of Miya being there with him.

He had forgotten that Miya would be graduating next year.

He wouldn’t be invited to the camp.

So, if he wanted to see Miya during the next school year, he needed to get to Nationals again.

Tobio was suddenly really interested in seeing what first years would be joining their team this year. He was sure they would have a lot of work to do.
“I’m sure we can find a time to meet up in Tokyo as well,” Miya continued. Tobio wondered why they were having this discussion. Miya seemed to be almost… comforting. Was he trying to console himself? Tobio knew that they would all be separated. He had accepted that. And Miya should be used to living far from them. So why was he…

…oh.

Miya’s calm gaze was fixed on Oikawa and he had reached out to twine their fingers together as they walked. Oikawa was looking down at the street, not lifting his gaze, but his free hand was gripping his shirt tightly at his side.

Miya wasn’t trying to comfort himself or Tobio.

He was trying to comfort Oikawa.

Tobio wasn’t really sure what to think about that. He didn’t think he had ever seen Oikawa in a position where he needed to be reassured. Not like this.

But he suddenly wanted to wipe that unsure expression off of his face.

“You’re rooming with Kuroo-san and Bokuto-san, correct?” he asked lowly. Both Miya and Oikawa’s eyes flew to him and Tobio swallowed hard and looked down at the ground. “We, uh, I mean, Karasuno goes to practice matches and has camps with Nekoma and Fukurōdani. I’m sure Kuroo-san and Bokuto-san will want to come visit. Maybe you could…come with them?”

There was silence and Tobio wondered if he had done or said something he shouldn’t have. He was never good at making people feel better. He should have just kept his mouth shut and let Miya handle it. He clenched his jaw and hunched his shoulders a bit before he began to lengthen his stride so he could put some distance between himself and the other two boys. But he didn’t get far.

Long arms wrapped around him and Tobio suddenly found himself pulled against a strong chest. “Tobio-chan! Of course I’ll visit! Oh! I’ll message Tetsu-chan and Kou-chan now! And I’m sure Refreshing-kun with want to come see your team! We can make a group date out of it!”
“Wow,” Miya muttered. Tobio glanced up, still shocked about the fact that he was being hugged by Oikawa and that the older setter was practically shouting in his ear, and saw Miya was standing beside them with glee spread across his face. “You just made his week.”

“Not true!” Oikawa protested but Miya just laughed. The second year took a step forward and wrapped his own arms around both of them. Tobio let out a loud “oomph!” as he and Oikawa both lost their balance and fell toward Miya. Oikawa let out a yell in surprise.

And then they were all lying in the middle of the street, arms and legs tangled together. Miya began to laugh loudly. “Stupid! So stupid! Mean! Let me up!” Oikawa yelled out but he was laughing as well. Tobio didn’t know what was so funny but hearing the laughter from both of his soulmates made his own lips turn up as he struggled to extract his limbs from the other boys and get to his feet. He could feel eyes on them and he wanted them to get out of here as soon as they possibly could. He finally managed to get to his feet and looked down at both Miya and Oikawa in exasperation. The two were still tangled together – actually, Tobio was pretty sure they had curled into each other now that Tobio had moved. Oikawa’s forehead was resting on Miya’s shoulder as he giggled and Miya’s hand had curled up to bury itself in Oikawa’s hair.

Tobio wondered if he should feel jealous. That would be normal, right? But, for some reason, the only thing he felt was…fond.

He shook his head and held out his hands. “Come on. Iwaizumi-san is waiting for us.”

The two boys looked up at Tobio with tears of laughter in their eyes and then they both reached out to grasp one of his hands. Tobio took a large step back as he pulled and soon the other two were on their feet. “Alright,” Oikawa said, still giggling as he locked elbows with Tobio and leaned against him slightly. Tobio would have fallen with the sudden weight from the slightly taller boy if Miya hadn’t done the same on the other side to brace him. “Let’s go see Iwa-chan! But Tobio-chan is right – we need to hurry or he’s going to yell at me again.”

“Doesn’t he always yell at you? Seems you should be used to it by now,” Miya chuckled.

“Mean!”

The three boys made their way down the street and Oikawa was still laughing as he led them up to a small, western style house. Oikawa was grinning brightly as he pulled away from Tobio and ran up the steps. He didn’t bother to knock as he threw the door open and yelled out a greeting. “Tooru!” a woman appeared as Tobio and Miya cautiously entered the home. “Welcome home. Are these them?” she asked excitedly.
A bright flush appeared on Oikawa’s face and Tobio was surprised to see the older boy nod his head as he reached up rub the back of his neck. “Yes. This is Kageyama Tobio and Miya Atsumu, my soulmates. Tobio-chan, Atsu-chan, this is Iwaizumi Emica, Iwa-chan’s mother.”

“Nice to meet you,” Miya said smoothly, bowing toward the woman. Tobio followed his example quickly.

“Oh, I’m so happy to meet the two of you! Tooru’s told us so much.” Tobio blinked and couldn’t help but glance at Oikawa. He had been talking about them?

Oikawa avoided his gaze.


“Of course. It is nice to meet the two of you. I hope you come visit us again! Oh, and Tobio-kun, you’re always welcome to stop by at any time.” Tobio blinked frantically, trying to understand the words, but Emica just sent him a wink before disappearing through a door.

“Wh-why would I-“

“She knows you live close by,” Oikawa muttered, “and Iwa-chan decided to live at home during his first year. She just wants you to know you can come by if you need anything.”

Tobio still didn’t understand but he nodded and followed after Oikawa as he led the way down a short hallway. He waited until both Miya and Tobio were beside him before he turned the door knob of the last door and threw it open. “Yoohoo! I’m here!”

“Dumbass! I told you not to do that!”

“Ooh, Hanger-kun brought friends!”

“No, Hanger-kun brought his soulmates!”
“Soulmates we didn’t know he had.”

“Because he never told us.”

“Some friend he is.”

“True. We would have made things easy for him if he had bothered to tell us.”

“But he didn’t.”

“So we won’t.”

Tobio’s head was snapping from one person to the other at the volley of conversation. He recognized the two boys, of course he did, but he had absolutely no idea what was happening right now.

He was really considering escaping from the room.

And the house.

But Miya was behind him and seemed to know what he was thinking because he reached out and put his hands on either side of Tobio’s hips and gripped him tight, almost daring him to try to break the hold.

“Hanger-kun?” Miya questioned wickedly in Tobio’s ear.

Oikawa screamed and jumped toward the two boys but they both stood quickly. Oikawa fell to the floor as the two boys separated on either side of the room. “Wow,” Iwaizumi muttered, raising an unimpressed eyebrow as he looked down at his best friend. He poked Oikawa’s side with his toes. “Oi! Get off the floor!”
“You see, one day at practice-“

“Stop!”

“-our dear captain was running late.”

“As always.”

“True. But this time he was really late.”

“And our vice-captain was upset.”

“Also normal.”

“So, Iwaizumi called our kingly captain and, surprise surprise, found out that he was still asleep.”

Oikawa jumped to his feet and lunged toward the boy on the left. The one with the light hair. Tobio really wasn’t sure which one was Makki and which was Mattsun. Anyway, Oikawa slammed into the desk and Iwaizumi scowled fiercely as a book fell to the floor. “Trashykawa!”

“Why are you yelling at me?!”

“So Iwaizumi wakes up Oikawa and tells him he needs to be at practice. And then our captain shows up, hair a mess, shoes untied, and…”

“…the hanger still in his shirt.”

Tobio blinked. Had he just heard that right?

Miya seemed to be just as confused. His hands fell away from Tobio and his head tilted slightly. “Excuse me?”
“I have pictures!” The light haired one said helpfully. Oikawa wailed and began to move forward but one glare from Iwaizumi had him freezing in place. Tobio was barely able to register that before a phone was suddenly shoved in his face.

And there it was. Oikawa, looking more of a mess than Tobio had ever seen him, with a hanger hanging out of the back of his shirt.

He couldn’t help what happened next.

Something began to bubble up in his chest and exploded out of his mouth. Everyone gaped at him as laughter rang throughout the room and Tobio quickly turned, pressing a hand against his mouth. Miya, who he was now facing, laughed as well and pulled Tobio toward him. Tobio gratefully hid his face in Miya’s neck as he tried to stop his laughter. His shoulders were shaking and tears were beginning to fill his eyes. He tried to stop, really, he did. But – but the thought of Oikawa, perfect Oikawa, showing up to practice like that…with a hanger in the back of his shirt…

His laughter increased once again and Miya’s chest was shaking as well. “I’m gonna need that picture,” Miya rasped a moment later.

“Atsu-chan! No!”

“Oikawa, if anything can get Tobio-kun to laugh like this, I need it.”

Tobio pressed his face even further into Miya’s neck at the words and he desperately tried to stop laughing. He didn’t want to upset Oikawa. Things had been going so well. He didn’t want him to be upset with him. He needed to control himself and tell…whatever his name was…that they didn’t need the picture. Miya and Oikawa didn’t need to start fighting again.

“…I guess,” Oikawa sighed and Tobio turned his head, incredulous, to stare at the older boy. “First time I’ve ever seen you laugh like that, Tobio-chan. So I suppose its fine.” He pouted and crossed his arms over his chest. “Even if it’s about me.”

“Look who’s finally growing up.”
“Iwa-chan!”

“Give me your contact details,” the light haired boy demanded of Miya. Miya held out his hand and the boy plopped the phone down. Miya was quick to enter his information and hand it back. The boy glanced down and then looked up quickly. “You’re Miya Atsumu?”

“Yes?” Miya frowned.

“Sorry. That guy,” the other boy pointed toward Oikawa. “Seriously didn’t tell us anything. We found out this afternoon with everyone else. We know Kageyama,” he nodded toward Tobio and Tobio just nodded back, unsure what else to do, “but we just saw you. And we didn’t get an introduction.”

“I just got here!”

“Apparently, you’ve had years to tell us.”

“I just found out that Atsu-chan was-“

“But you knew about Kageyama, right? That’s why you’ve been so obsessed with him.”

“I’m not obsessed-“

“You kind of are.”

“I am not!”

“You’ve been talking about him since our first year,” the dark haired boy said, rolling his eyes as he grabbed the light haired one’s phone and began to copy Miya’s details into his own. Tobio glanced at Miya but the other boy just shrugged. “And I don’t think you’ve gone a day not mentioning him since he entered high school.”

“I didn’t-“
“Before that,” Iwaizumi cut in and Oikawa gasped. “Since we watched him play last year. This one hasn’t stopped talking about him since then.”

“Iwa-chan!”

But Tobio was closing in on himself. He quickly wrapped his arms around his stomach and hunched his shoulders. Since the game they saw when he was in junior high. Since the game where his team had turned away from him. Oikawa had seen that. He had watched as Kindaichi and Kunimi, the only friends Tobio had ever had, had turned their backs.

“Obsessed seems appropriate,” Miya cut in, his voice loud. “So, which of you is which? You were right about the lack of introductions.”

“Atsu-chan! Don’t encourage them!”

“Right, sorry,” the light haired one said, ignoring Oikawa. “Hanamaki Takahiro. Call me Makki.”

“Matsukawa Issei,” the dark haired one said. “Mattsun.”

Right. Good. Tobio didn’t want to admit he wasn’t sure who was who.

“Can’t believe Oikawa has two soulmates,” Makki said, sighing loudly as he scowled at the boy in question. “And both of them are setters.”

“It’s kind of amusing,” Matsun said, his face deadpanned. “Considering how annoyed he gets whenever another setter does something he can’t do.”

“Hey! I don’t-“

“You do,” Iwaizumi snapped, shaking his head. “Don’t lie.”
“Well, I’ve never actually seen him play,” Miya cut in and every eye turned to him in surprise. He shrugged. “What? We never played you guys and you never-“

“If you say we never made it to Nationals, I’ll scream.”

“…don’t you do that anyway?”

“Atsu-chan!”

“Anyway,” Miya ignored the pout he was being given. He glanced around the room and then placed his hand on Tobio’s back and led him further into the room. Iwaizumi was sitting on his bed and Oikawa had pulled himself up beside him. Mattsun was sitting in the desk chair. Makki was sitting on the floor, his back against a wall. Miya led them over to an open space and sat, crossing his legs. He gripped Tobio’s hand and pulled him down beside him. “I saw a video of your serve. Tobio-kun showed it to me at camp but I never really saw anything beyond that. Though,” he flashed a mocking grin, “from what I’ve heard, your style and mine are a bit different.”

Oikawa scowled. “Of course they are! And stop telling Tobio-chan to forget about his spikers and just give the tosses that he-“

“Hey, that wasn’t what I said! I said that the setter is the one that decides on the play-“

“But they need to listen to their spikers as well! Teamwork, Atsu-chan!”

“But he doesn’t need to let them walk all over him!”

“Wow,” Makki cut in as Miya and Oikawa glared at each other. Tobio just groaned. “I think Kageyama is doing well on his own.”

“Seriously,” Iwaizumi agreed, shaking his head at the two setters. “He doesn’t have to play like either of you.”

“But Iwa-chan-“
“If anyone should have a say in the way he plays with his team, it should be Sugawara, Trashykawa,” Iwaizumi snapped. Oikawa gaped.

“But he’s my kohai-“

“I really don’t think you have any right to call him that.”

“But-“

“No.”

“But I’m the reason he – wait a minute,” Oikawa turned toward Tobio and Miya once again. “Did you just say that Tobio showed you a video of me?”

Tobio’s head snapped toward Miya and he saw that the other boy was already looking at him. Tobio pleaded with his eyes for Miya to change the subject but the slow smile that was spreading across his face told Tobio exactly what he was going to do. He drew his legs up to his chest and buried his face into his knees to hide his blush. “I did,” Miya purred. “Didn’t I already tell you that?”

“If you did I wasn’t paying attention,” Oikawa responded coyly. “Tobio-chan, are you showing me off?”

“No!”

“He was,” Miya said at the same time and Tobio really, really wanted to slam his hand down on the other boy’s mouth and make him shut up. If it had been Hinata, he would have done it. But Miya…Miya would probably fight dirty. “He hadn’t even told me you were his soulmate yet but he kept talking about you. Actually, didn’t you say he was the best setter you knew, Tobio-kun?” Tobio groaned. “And I pointed out that you hadn’t been invited to the youth training camp-“

“Hey!”

“And this one just pulled out his phone and showed me a video of that serve of yours. Gotta admit,
I was impressed.”

“Wait,” Mattsun said, amused. “So Kageyama defended Oikawa? By showing you a video of him?”

“He did.”

“Tobio-chan!” Oikawa yelled out and Tobio barely glanced up before Oikawa was on the floor beside him. “So cute!”

“Get off!” Tobio snapped as Oikawa hugged him yet again.

“No!”


Iwaizumi and Mattsun didn’t even hesitate before they answered. “Yes.”

The topic of conversation, thankfully, changed and Tobio slowly began to feel more comfortable and the blush faded from his face. After he felt like he was safe from anymore ridicule, he straightened his legs out and looked up. Oikawa had made himself comfortable on the floor beside Tobio and Miya was still leaning against his side. The boys were all reminiscing about their time in high school and Miya was laughing at the stories they were exchanging, most of them focused on idiotic things that Oikawa had done. Miya, of course, was extremely amused by this. Oikawa was not.

Tobio wasn’t listening.

It was late when Miya mentioned that they should be heading back. Tobio, who had been yawning for about twenty minutes at that point, nodded and quickly climbed to his feet. Oikawa did as well, telling Iwaizumi that he was going to be staying with Tobio and Miya for the night. Iwaizumi’s eyebrows rose as Mattsun and Makki began to whistle and look at them suggestively. Tobio blushed for what felt like the thousandth time that day. “It isn’t like that!” Oikawa sputtered.
“It could be,” Miya commented. Tobio’s eyes flew toward the second year in a panic but Miya just chuckled and ruffled his hair. “Kidding, Tobio-kun.”

“You’re going to make him uninvite us!” Oikawa reprimanded as he pushed Miya out the door.

“He’s fine!”

“Bye!” Oikawa waved toward his friends. They all repeated the sentiment and Tobio quickly bowed as he hurried after his soulmates. “So formal, Tobio-chan,” Oikawa teased as he pulled the front door open and ushered them out onto the street.

They were all tired and they quickly made their way to Tobio’s apartment. As he pulled open the door, Tobio was reminded that he hadn’t told his father that Oikawa was staying over as well. His father blinked at them from where he was working at the table as they walked in. “Tooru-kun! Nice to see you!”

“Hi!” Oikawa waved as he slipped his shoes off. “I hope you don’t mind that I’m staying tonight.”

“Oh, are you?” Tobio blushed as his father’s eyes landed on him. “Of course I don’t mind. Tobio, there’s another futon in the hall closet. Get is set up. Do you boys need anything?”

Tobio hurried into the hall as his soulmates spoke to his father. He pulled the futon out of the hall closet and quickly rolled it out on his bedroom floor. There really wasn’t much space and it ended up being pushed up close against Miya’s. He didn’t think either boy would mind – he had been shoved into situations like this during volleyball camps. He was sure they had as well. It should be fine.

He hoped.

He had just finished getting an extra blanket when Miya and Oikawa stumbled into the room. “I don’t know about you, but I’m ready for sleep,” Miya sighed as he leaned down and grabbed some pajama pants and a t-shirt. He began stripping right there in the room and Tobio blushed and quickly averted his eyes.

Oikawa did no such thing.
Tobio’s blush intensified as Oikawa let out a low whistle. “Well, aren’t you deceivingly thin.”

“I work out as much as you do,” Miya laughed. “I’m going to assume that means you like what you see.”

“You can assume,” Oikawa haughtily replied. Tobio squeezed his eyes shut. Why were they like this? “Oh, Tobio-chan! I didn’t grab any clothes from Iwa-chan’s. Do you have anything I can use?”

Tobio swallowed. He was still slightly shorter than Oikawa and the other boy was broader than him in the shoulders. Anything he had would be too short. He mentioned this but Oikawa just sent him a grin. “So? It’s either that or I sleep in my boxers.”

“I wouldn’t mind,” Miya leered.

But Tobio was quick to grab a spare pair of sweatpants and a shirt and throw it at the third year. Miya and Oikawa both laughed as Oikawa began to unbutton his shirt.

Tobio decided it was a good time to change in the bathroom.

By the time he got back, Miya was lying on the futon he had slept on the night before and Oikawa was spread out on the other. There was an obvious distance between them and Tobio hoped they weren’t uncomfortable. “I’ll turn out the light,” he muttered. Both boys nodded in acknowledgement and he flipped the switch before carefully stepping toward the edge of the futons. He didn’t want to step on anyone but his bed was on the other side of the room and it really was too dark to see.

Maybe he should just turn the light back on and have one of them turn it off once he was safely in his bed.

Suddenly, two hands reached out and gripped his arms. Tobio yelled in surprise as he was pulled down onto the futon. “What are you-”

“You can’t expect us to sleep down here without you, Tobio-chan.”
“This is our first time sleeping together. We aren’t going to leave you out.”

“I have a bed.”

“But you can sleep here for the night,” Oikawa muttered. He yawned as he curled on his side, his chest pressing against Tobio’s back. Miya turned on his side as well, his face right in front of Tobio’s. He raised an eyebrow challengingly as he placed his arm around Tobio’s waist. Tobio felt Oikawa shift and he looked down to see that he had tangled his fingers with Miya’s and rested them both on Tobio’s hip. “Sleep, Tobio-chan. Atsu-chan is leaving early tomorrow.”

“I wouldn’t want to miss the train,” Miya commented, yawning as his eyes closed.


Tobio closed his eyes and relaxed into the hold. As he drifted off, he hoped they hadn’t remembered to set an alarm.
Okay, so, before you ask - YES THERE WILL BE MORE! lol. I have a few one-shots planned that take place between the last chapter and this one. And then I'll probably do a short sequel that takes place after this. BUT - school and work are killing me right now, so it might take some time. I graduate in December so...that will certainly help!

Tobio bit his lip and stared at the door in front of him. He shifted from one foot to the other, his hand tightening on the bag in his hand. He didn’t understand why he was so nervous. He had been here countless times before. He had helped Miya move in almost a year ago. But now, now when Tobio himself was finally there, he felt like he was going to be sick with nerves.

Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea after all.

Yes, they had talked about it for...years at this point. But, try as he might, he still didn’t remember their first conversation where he supposedly agreed to this plan. Both Oikawa and Miya had informed him that the conversation had taken place and Tobio had even responded to it but he still thought they were lying to him. But, now after all this time, he couldn’t take it back.

He really wasn’t even sure he wanted to.

Tobio’s phone buzzed in his pocket, tearing him away from his thoughts, and he pulled it out of his pocket and stepped away from the door. He gratefully leaned against the wall, happy that he was out of sight for the moment and had a reason to be lurking in the hallway.

Group Message

Oikawa-san and Miya-san

Oikawa: Tobio-chan!

Oikawa: ( ° v ° )
Oikawa: Are you coming in or are you going to continue panicking in the hallway?

Miya: You’re such an ass.

Tobio had barely read the messages, choking on his own saliva as he did so, when the door was pulled open and Miya stepped out. He turned his head and raised an eyebrow when he saw Tobio leaning against the wall. “Are you finished with the second thoughts and all that crap? We made dinner.”

Tobio scowled at him but sighed and nodded his head. Right. Of course they knew he was here. He had told them what time his train would arrive. Knowing Oikawa, he was probably watching out the window or something. And, once Tobio didn’t come straight inside, he and Miya would have easily been able to guess what was happening.

It wasn’t as if it was the first time.

No, that happened when Oikawa officially moved to Tokyo two years ago. With the new schedules and distance, communication between the three had been limited and Tobio had been forced to realize just how much he had come to rely on the other two. He hated to admit it, but he was happy when he realized he wasn’t the only one affected by their change in circumstance.

And then, of course, there was that incident when Oikawa came to the Tokyo training camp during his second year.

And then when Miya graduated and he moved to Tokyo.

Then the whole thing with the two of them playing for the same team and fighting for the same position.

And then the other incident. The one they didn’t talk about.

But now, here they were. The three of them. Together, in Tokyo.
Tobio still wanted to run.

“I unpacked everything that arrived last weekend,” Oikawa said brightly, bouncing over to him and wrapping his arm around Tobio’s waist as if he didn’t notice that something was wrong with their youngest member. He pulled Tobio inside the apartment and slammed the door closed, officially locking Tobio into his cell. “You know where the bedroom is, Tobio-chan! And the bathroom. And, well, everything. But we made food so hurry up!”

“Such an ass,” Miya muttered from where he had wandered into the kitchen.

Oikawa lost his smile instantly and he glared through the wall. “I can hear you, Atsu-chan!”

“It would defeat the purpose if you couldn’t!”

Oikawa huffed and rolled his eyes. He leaned forward and pressed his lips against Tobio’s cheek. Despite two years and the many experiences between the three, Tobio still flushed. “Glad you’re finally here,” Oikawa sighed as he pulled away. “Now, go do what you need to do! But hurry!”

Tobio did as he was bid, shuffling into the bedroom that he had stayed in whenever he visited and glancing around curiously. He noticed that his clothing was now hanging beside Oikawa’s and Miya’s in the closet, his favorite pillow placed in the middle of the large bed. He set his duffle bag down on the floor and hurried toward the bathroom. All of his things were there, unpacked and intermingled with Miya’s and Oikawa’s. Like they had always been there.

But, until now, they hadn’t.

Tobio closed his eyes as a wave of relief swept over him. It was okay. This was good. He wasn’t intruding. He was here, like they had planned. He was supposed to be here. They wanted him here. He opened his eyes and glanced at himself in the mirror. He looked tired. That wasn’t all that surprising considering the journey, but he knew it was because he had stayed up half of the night worrying.

But he was here and everything was fine.

He took one last deep breath before opening the bathroom door and making the short walk to the kitchen. There was a small table pushed against the far wall, big enough for the three chairs they
had situated around it. Food was already in place, as was Miya and Oikawa. They both glanced up with smiles on their faces as Tobio walked in and he gave a cautious smile back as he slid into the chair he sat in whenever he made it to Tokyo. “Itadakimasu,” the three muttered before they began to eat.

“So,” Miya started after Tobio had stuffed some rice into his mouth. “Ready for practice? It should be interesting,” he smirked in Oikawa’s direction but the older boy ignored the insinuation.

“Of course he is! Back on the team with his favorite senpai! What could be better?” Tobio swallowed, “Iwaizumi-san was my favorite.”

Oikawa’s smile didn’t waver, “Oh, no need to lie, Tobio-chan! There’s nothing to be embarrassed about!”

“Pretty sure that ain’t a lie,” Miya scoffed as he leaned forward in his chair. “I’m sure he’s just happy to finally be on a team with me. Right, Tobio-kun?”

“Um…”

“It isn’t like the two of you will be playing together often,” Oikawa cut in, his voice syrupy sweet. “Coach has agreed that we can sometimes use two setters on the court but three is out of the question. So we’ll have the starting setter and—”

“Who says you’re going to be starting?”

“I have the last two years,” Oikawa pointed out, grin still firmly in place. It was beginning to send shivers down Tobio’s spine. “And I’m vice-captain.”

“That don’t mean—“

Tobio sighed loudly enough that Miya cut himself off mid-sentence. This was why he had been anxious about joining the two of them at the same school. Sure, he could have moved to Tokyo and attended somewhere else, but the two of them had protested when he suggested it. So, he had accepted the scholarship to where his soulmates were attending.
He had just known they would end up arguing about volleyball.

They were all competitive. They all loved the game.

And they all wanted the same position.

“Sorry,” Miya muttered, Oikawa repeating the sentiment only a moment later. The three ate in silence a moment but then Miya set his chopsticks down and reached out, wrapping Tobio’s hand in his. Tobio blinked, surprised at the sudden contact, and met the older boys’ eyes. “Really am sorry. We’ll try to…tone it down. At least until practice starts next week.”

“We’ll try,” Oikawa agreed quickly, smiling sheepishly as he leaned his chin on his folded hands. “We…we really are happy that you’re hear, Tobio-chan. Truly.”

"We are," Miya agreed.

And with those words, Tobio felt most of his worry melt away. Though he might still have some trepidation about how the next few years were going to play out, or even how the next week would play out, he knew that in the long run, this was where he was supposed to be.

And he would never want to change that.

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